Social Media Engagement and Public Service Delivery: Evidence from Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube Use by INEC in Akwa Ibom State

Abasiekong, Hannah S.[1], Ibok, Enefiok E.[2], Udoh, Unwana-Abasi S.[3], Mbon, Namso[4]

[1,2,3&4] Department of Public Administration, Faculty of Management Sciences, Akwa Ibom State University, Obio Akpa, Nigeria.

Abstract

This study examines the influence of Facebook, X, and YouTube on service delivery of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. The study specifically assessed the effect of Facebook, determined the extent of X's influence, and examined the effect of YouTube on INEC's service delivery. A survey research design was adopted, with 400 questionnaires administered to INEC staff, ad hoc personnel, and registered voters; 381 valid responses were analyzed. The instrument was validated and found reliable (Cronbach's α = 0.86). Data were analyzed using SPSS (version 25) through descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, and multiple regression analysis, with relevant diagnostic tests conducted to ensure model robustness. Findings revealed that Facebook, X, and YouTube exerted statistically significant positive effects on INEC's service delivery, with Twitter showing the strongest influence. The study concludes that strategic use of social media enhances electoral service delivery and recommends that INEC strengthen its institutional social media framework to promote effective public engagement and transparency.

Keywords: Social Media, Service Delivery, Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), Facebook, Twitter (X), YouTube.

1.1   Introduction

The rapid evolution of digital communication technologies has significantly transformed how information is disseminated and how people interact across the globe. Social media, which includes a variety of platforms, has emerged as a powerful tool for communication, thereby enabling the exchange of information and fostering bidirectional connections among users (Setiawan, 2021). Social media platforms such as Facebook, X, and YouTube provide users with opportunities to engage, share content, and interact in ways that were previously impossible, offering vast potential for participation and collaboration (Banday & Mottoo, 2013). These platforms have not only reshaped social interactions but have also transformed various sectors, including governance, public service, and political processes (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).

Social media has been praised globally for its ability to improve governmental transparency, foster citizen participation, and enhance public service delivery. For instance, in the United States, the use of social media by federal agencies under President Barack Obama was encouraged to promote openness and citizen engagement. In Nigeria, social media platforms have been employed by agencies such as the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) to coordinate disaster responses and communicate effectively with the public (Iyoho et al., 2024). This paradigm shift has also been reflected in INEC's operations, where social media is seen as a means to better inform and engage the electorate, particularly through increased voter education, transparency, and active citizen participation (Boulianne, 2015).

The widespread use of social media in Nigeria, with over 40% of the population actively engaging with these platforms (NCC, 2021), presents a significant opportunity for institutions like the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) to enhance service delivery. Historically, public service in Nigeria relied on traditional, often bureaucratic channels that were slow and inefficient. The introduction of social media into the realm of public service delivery represents a shift towards more dynamic, interactive, and transparent communication methods. INEC, as a key electoral body in Nigeria, has increasingly adopted platforms such as Facebook, X, and YouTube to engage with citizens, provide updates, and promote transparency, particularly during election periods (Boulianne, 2015). These platforms facilitate real-time sharing of critical information on voter registration, electoral processes, and election results, which can significantly enhance public engagement and trust in the electoral system (Madueke & Duru, 2019).

The focus of this study is to examine the impact of specific social media platforms (Facebook, X, and YouTube) on INEC's service delivery in Akwa Ibom State. The first objective is to investigate the influence of Facebook on INEC's service

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delivery, focusing on its role in disseminating information, promoting transparency, and engaging citizens. The second objective is to assess the extent to which X (formerly called Twitter) influences INEC's service delivery, particularly in terms of real-time communication and addressing public concerns. Lastly, the study will explore how YouTube, as a multimedia sharing platform, impacts INEC's service delivery by improving voter education and enhancing public trust through visual content. These platforms offer unique opportunities for INEC to reach diverse audiences, including younger voters and individuals in remote areas, while providing a cost-effective means of communication compared to traditional media channels (Mansoor & Faiz, 2021).

Despite the potential benefits, the integration of social media into INEC's operations has faced several challenges, including inconsistent messaging, misinformation, and the digital divide that limits access to these platforms in rural areas (Ibrahim & Nwanyanwu, 2020; Olayemi & Afolabi, 2021). These issues highlight the need for a more strategic approach to social media use in electoral management. This study, therefore, aims to provide insights into the role of Facebook, X, and YouTube in enhancing service delivery by INEC in Akwa Ibom State and to offer recommendations for improving the use of social media to foster a more engaged, informed, and inclusive electorate. By examining the effects of these platforms, the study hopes to contribute to the development of a more robust framework for utilizing social media in public service delivery, with a particular focus on electoral processes.

1.2   Statement of the Problem

The growing role of social media in public service delivery presents both opportunities and challenges for the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) in Akwa Ibom State. While platforms like Facebook, X, and YouTube have the potential to significantly enhance voter engagement, education, and transparency in electoral processes, there are critical gaps in how these platforms are utilized by INEC. First, the lack of a strategic framework for Facebook usage results in inconsistent messaging and outreach efforts, potentially leading to misinformation and confusion among the electorate regarding election-related information. The absence of a coordinated approach limits the platform's potential to effectively engage and educate voters.

Second, the underutilization of Twitter (X) for real-time election updates and quick responses to public queries raises concerns about INEC's ability to engage with the electorate in a timely manner. Furthermore, while Twitter offers a fast-paced platform for interaction, there is a failure to address the challenges of misinformation and the activities of unauthorized bloggers, which may distort public perception and influence voter behavior. This lack of effective utilization hampers INEC's ability to

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maintain transparency and respond to citizens' concerns in a dynamic electoral environment.

Third, INEC's limited use of YouTube for multimedia sharing, particularly in voter education and election event coverage, raises questions about its reach and inclusivity. While YouTube is a powerful tool for disseminating detailed content, its underuse prevents INEC from effectively educating voters, particularly in rural areas where access to reliable internet may be limited. These challenges, along with issues of misinformation, access equity, and the need for a coordinated social media strategy, present significant barriers to INEC's effective service delivery. Therefore, a comprehensive evaluation of how Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube can be leveraged to enhance INEC's service delivery in Akwa Ibom State is crucial for improving transparency, engagement, and public trust in the electoral process.

1.3   Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study was to examine the effect of social media on service delivery by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. The specific objectives include:

i.   To examine the effect of Facebook (social network) on service delivery by INEC, Akwa Ibom State.
ii.   To determine the extent to which X (micro-blogging) influences service delivery by INEC, Akwa Ibom State.
iii.   To ascertain the effect of YouTube (multimedia sharing) on service delivery by INEC, Akwa Ibom State.

1.4   Research Questions

This study attempted to provide answers to the following research questions:

i.   What is the effect of Facebook (social network) on service delivery by INEC, Akwa Ibom State?
ii.   To what extent does X (micro-blogging) influence service delivery by INEC, Akwa Ibom State?
iii.   What is the effect of YouTube (multimedia sharing) on service delivery by INEC, Akwa Ibom State?

1.5   Significance of the Study

This study is significant as it seeks to evaluate the impact of social media platforms (Facebook, X, and YouTube) on the service delivery of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) in Akwa Ibom State, offering valuable insights into the

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role of digital tools in enhancing voter engagement, education, and transparency. By identifying the strengths and limitations of INEC's current social media usage, the study will inform the development of more effective, inclusive, and strategic social media frameworks that can improve public trust, counter misinformation, and bridge the digital divide. Furthermore, the findings will contribute to the broader discourse on the integration of technology in electoral processes, providing practical recommendations for INEC and other electoral bodies in Nigeria to strengthen their communication strategies and ensure more equitable, informed, and transparent elections.
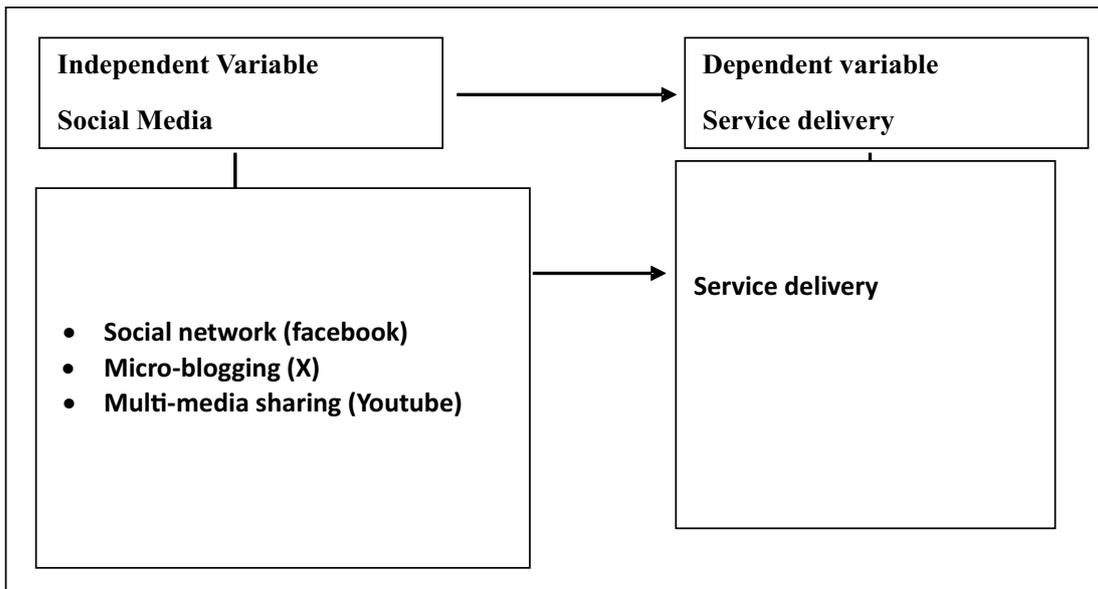
1.6   Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated to guide the study:

i.   There is no significant effect of Facebook (social network) on service delivery by INEC, Akwa Ibom State.

ii.   The extent to which X (micro-blogging) influences service delivery by INEC, Akwa Ibom State, is not significant.

iii. There is no significant effect of YouTube (multimedia sharing) on service delivery by INEC, Akwa Ibom State.

2   Literature Review
2.1   Conceptual Review
Conceptual Model

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2.1.1   Social Media

Social media is referred to as a devolutionized and democratized communication (Igbashangev, Abdullahi, Basil, Gbasha, Meshach, & Terhide, 2023). It is the interactive technologies and ways in which they can be used when individuals interact among themselves, sharing the content generation (Suminas, 2010). According to the International Telecommunications Union (ITU), social media has emerged in recent years as an integral tool for hundreds of millions of internet users worldwide and a defining element of the internet generation. According to Suminas (2010), this is one platform that has been used on various occasions to educate the electorates on election participation. It is growing worldwide regardless of political system, economic development, and culture. Newson & Patter (2008) assert that social media are online tools and utilities that allow communication of information online, participation, and collaboration. The word "social media" means a collection of applications (Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, LinkedIn, YouTube, etc.) and websites that link people to share information and create awareness among people about events. It is driven by the internet to bring together a community of heterogeneous people to form a close-knit group who collaborate to share information on political discourses. As such, it represents the wide range of internet-based and mobile services that allow users to participate in online exchanges, contribute user-created content, or join online communities, sometimes referred to as Web 2.0 (Research Information Network, 2011).

Social Media Marketing Statistics (2019) asserts that there are 3.2 billion social media users worldwide. This population equates to about 42% of the current world population. Among others, Facebook is the most widely used social media platform, with over 2.32 billion active monthly users. Social media is characterized by its ability to foster community and facilitate bidirectional communication, thereby transforming traditional modes of information dissemination into more participatory and engaging formats (Igbashangev et al., 2023). Unlike traditional media, social media allows for real-time interactions, enabling users to respond to content and engage in discussions, which enhances user participation and collaboration (Suminas, 2010). Social media platforms empower users to create and share their content, which democratizes information dissemination and amplifies diverse voices within the public discourse (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Social media transcends geographical boundaries, connecting users from different parts of the world and enabling a rapid exchange of information, which has led to the concept of a "global village" (Friedman, 2007). Social media fosters the formation of online communities where users with shared interests can collaborate, share resources, and support one another, leading to increased social cohesion (Igbashangev et al., 2023).

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Despite its potential benefits, the use of social media in public service delivery is fraught with challenges. Issues such as the digital divide, misinformation, and the need for strategic communication frameworks must be addressed to ensure effective engagement (Ibrahim & Nwanyanwu, 2020). The digital divide, particularly in Nigeria, raises concerns about equitable access to information, as marginalized populations may lack the necessary resources to engage with digital platforms (Olayemi & Afolabi, 2021). Furthermore, the rapid spread of fake news poses a significant threat to the reliability of information shared on social media, necessitating proactive measures to monitor and counter false narratives (Norris, 2002).

Idiong et al. (2025) also examined the growing influence of social media within the Nigerian information ecosystem, emphasizing its dual role as both a facilitator of information access and a conduit for the dissemination of fake news. The study argued that the proliferation of misinformation on platforms such as Facebook, WhatsApp, and Twitter is driven largely by users' curiosity and the absence of adequate regulatory mechanisms. Anchored on Technological Determinism Theory and Disruptive Technology Theory, the study highlighted how technological advancement reshapes information consumption patterns while simultaneously disrupting traditional gatekeeping processes. They further identified challenges in combating fake news, including weak technological infrastructure, lack of coordinated institutional responses, and poor regulation. The study proposed solutions such as strengthening media literacy, promoting critical thinking, and enforcing government regulation, concluding that effective mitigation of fake news requires collective action by government agencies, civil society organizations, and professional journalism bodies.

The term "social media" is defined as the application that allows users to converse and interact with each other; to create, edit, and share new forms of textual, visual, and audio content; and to categorize, label, and recommend existing forms of content. As regards the intentions of social media usage, Oye et al., (2019), in a study with Malaysian youths using social networking sites and their influence on their social performance, showed that social networking site usage for only social and non-social needs has an adverse effect on social performance. Social media can also be defined as forms of electronic communication through which users interact with people in which they create, freely share, exchange, and discuss information, ideas, personal messages, and other content about each other and their lives using a multimedia mix of personal words, pictures, videos, and audio, utilizing online platforms while they are connected to the internet (Mingle & Adams, 2015).

Research by Lau (2022) using youths in Hong Kong examined the use of social media and social multitasking and their effects on social performance. He asserted that

the use of social media for social purposes was not a significant predictor of social performance. Whereas the use of social media for nonsocial purposes adversely predicts social performance. Ravizza, Hambrick, and Fenn (2014) reported that the use of the internet, including social media, for non-social purposes by university youths in the classroom was adversely associated with classroom learning and performance.

According to Junco (2020), social media are a collection of internet websites, services, and practices that support collaboration, community building, participation, and sharing. The growing dimension of the use of social media among the youth of today cannot be overemphasized. Over the years, social networking among second-cycle youths has become more and more popular. It is a way to make connections not only on campus but also with friends outside of school. Social networking is a way that helps many people feel as though they belong to a community. Due to the increased popularity of it, economists and professors are questioning whether grades of youths are not being affected by how much time is spent on these sites.

According to Lenhart (2020), about 57% of social network users are 18-29 years old and have a personal profile on multiple social media websites. In a study also, he stated that the amount of time spent daily on social network sites varied greatly. However, an analysis of the data indicated most participants spent approximately thirty minutes a day socializing, mostly during the evening hours between 9p.m. and 12a.m. Youths spent an average of forty-seven minutes a day on Facebook. More than 50% of college youths go on social networking sites several times a day. Quan-Haase and Young (2020) found that 82% of college youths reported logging into Facebook several times a day. Younger youths tended to use Facebook more frequently than older youths to keep in touch with friends from high school or from their hometown.

Many researchers, such as San Miguel (2019) and Enriquez (2020), whose studies on youths' use of the social media sites revealed a negative effect of the use of social media sites on youths' social performance. A Nielsen Media Research study conducted in June 2020 stated that almost 25% of youths' time on the internet is spent on social networking sites. The American Educational Research Association conducted research and declared at its annual conference in San Diego, California (2019), that social media users study less and generate lower grades.

2.1.1 Social network (Facebook)

According to Adams (2019), Facebook is an American online social media and social networking service owned by Facebook, Inc. Founded in 2004 by Mark Zuckerberg with fellow Harvard College youths and roommates Eduardo Saverin, Andrew McCollum, Dustin Moskovitz, and Chris Hughes, its name comes from the face book

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directories often given to American university youths. Membership was initially limited to Harvard youths, gradually expanding to other North American universities and, since 2006, anyone over 13 years old. As of 2020, Facebook claimed 2.8 billion monthly active users and ranked seventh in global internet usage. It was the most downloaded mobile app of the 2020s, which has been used to influence the electoral processes.

Facebook can be accessed from devices with Internet connectivity, such as personal computers, tablets, and smartphones. After registering, users can create a profile revealing information about themselves. It is noted that a lot of people use this media platform to give opinions during the electioneering process. They can post text, photos, and multimedia, which are shared with any other users who have agreed to be their "friend" or, with different privacy settings, publicly. Users can also communicate directly with each other with Facebook Messenger, join common-interest groups, and receive notifications on the activities of their Facebook friends and pages they follow. The subject of numerous controversies, Facebook has often been criticized over issues such as user privacy (as with the Cambridge Analytica data scandal), political manipulation (as with the 2016 U.S. elections), mass surveillance, psychological effects such as addiction and low self-esteem, and content such as fake news, conspiracy theories, copyright infringement, and hate speech. Commentators have accused Facebook of willingly facilitating the spread of such content, as well as exaggerating its number of users to appeal to advertisers.

Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) stated that a social network is a group of individuals who share a common interest, activity, or real-life connection and who interact with one another through online platforms. Boyd and Ellison (2007) asserted that social network sites are web-based services that allow individuals to (1) construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, (2) articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and (3) view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system, and its use in the election process cannot be overemphasized.

Donath and Boyd (2004) opined that social network sites are online communities that allow users to create profiles, specify their connections to other users, and traverse their connections to others. Wikipedia (2020) opined that a social networking service is an online platform that people use to build social networks or social relationships with other people who share similar personal or career interests, activities, backgrounds, or real-life connections and is capable of contributing to electoral transparency. Oxford Dictionary (2019) stated that social media is a website or application that enables users to create and share content or to participate in social networking. Merriam-Webster Dictionary (2020) sees it as a platform or site (like

Facebook or LinkedIn) used for social networking, which also becomes an instrument of educating members of the public or voters on electoral processes. Ellison et al., (2007) opined social network sites are online platforms that enable users to create profiles, connect with friends, and share information. Kietzmann et al., (2011) stated that social media is a set of online tools that enables users to create, share, and exchange information in virtual communities and networks, which helps to create awareness of the voting procedure in an election in Nigeria.

2.1.2   Micro-blogging (X)

Debbie Weil (2003) asserted blogging as a form of unedited, authentic self-expression" and "an instant publishing tool." Boyd and Ellison (2007): Describe social network sites, including blogging platforms like Twitter, as web-based services that allow individuals to (1) construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, (2) articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and (3) view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system. To them, these are networks that are commonly for national politics before, during, and after the election, which become a useful tool for the citizens to channel political support and make known to the people their choice of candidates.

Hootsuite (2023) stated that Twitter is a real-time micro-blogging and social networking platform that allows users to share 140-character updates with other users who follow them". Micro-blogging: The Definitive Guide (2023) describes micro-blogging as "a type of blogging that focuses on short posts and brief interactions with an audience" and highlights its differences from traditional blogging in terms of platforms, content, marketing strategies, and tools. This platform, however, enhances the result announcement in any election.

Twitter is an American microblogging (social networking service) on which users post and interact with messages known as "tweets." Registered users can post, like, and retweet tweets, but unregistered users can only read those that are publicly available. Users interact with Twitter through browser or mobile frontend software, or programmatically via its APIs. Prior to April 2020 services were accessible via SMS. The service is provided by Twitter, Inc., a corporation based in San Francisco, California, and has more than 25 offices around the world. Tweets were originally restricted to 140 characters, but the limit was doubled to 280 for non-CJK languages in November 2022. Audio and video tweets remain limited to 140 seconds for most accounts.

Twitter was created by Jack Dorsey, Noah Glass, Biz Stone, and Evan Williams in March 2006 and launched in July of that year. It is, however, worthy of note that this

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media platform has gone a long way to making contributions in terms of election monitoring in Nigeria. By 2022, more than 100 million users posted 340 million tweets a day, and the service handled an average of 1.6 billion search queries per day. In 2013, it was one of the ten most-visited websites and has been described as "the SMS of the Internet." As of Q1 2019, Twitter had more than 330 million monthly active users. Twitter is a some-to-many microblogging service, given that the vast majority of tweets are written by a small minority of users. (Jaclyn, 2021).

2.1.3   Multimedia Sharing (YouTube)

Oxford Dictionary (2019) defines multimedia as the combination of different forms of media, including text, images, sound, and video. Merriam-Webster Dictionary (2020) defines multimedia as involving or consisting of several media (such as video, audio, and text). This video feature is what politicians used to carry out their manifesto during electioneering. It is a video-sharing platform where users can upload, share, and view videos. Kim and Lee (2008) described video sharing as a type of online community where users can upload, share, and view videos; the video feature possessed by it has made it possible for online campaigns and manifestos to take place on this platform.

Carmo and Marques (2010) described YouTube as a social media platform that allows users to upload, share, and view videos, as well as interact with other users through comments and ratings." Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) described social media as a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0 and that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content. It is in this essence that Kaplan is of the opinion that this platform has yielded much impact in election outcomes and even post-election activities.

Henderson and Gilding (2004) described multimedia sharing as the process of sharing multimedia content, such as images, audio, and video, through online platforms. Boulos and Wheeler (2007) asserted that Web 2.0 comprises a set of technologies and design principles that empower users to create and share content, engage with one another, and participate in online communities. These features have been utilized historically and continue to be relevant in political activities, significantly shaping political outcomes through various influences.

2.1.5 Service Delivery

Public service evokes the thought of government involvement in service delivery that is devoid of profit motives. Service delivery is a fundamental aspect of governance that focuses on how government agencies provide essential services to citizens. It encompasses various services, including education, healthcare, transportation, and

public safety, aimed at enhancing the quality of life and welfare of the population. Ogunna (2004) reiterates that the desire to satisfy the public through the implementation of public policies, enforcement of laws, and realization of public welfare culminates in effective public service delivery. Public service delivery can be defined as the processes and mechanisms through which government entities design, implement, and manage services for the public (Agarwal et al., 2012). It serves as a tangible link between government and citizens to the government, and it also promotes the values of nations to the citizens and finally services as a bond between the state and citizens (Walle & Scott, 2009).

Public service delivery is integral to democratic governance, enhancing citizen participation, transparency, and accountability. Citizens are more likely to engage with government when they perceive services to be responsive to their needs (Peters, 2010). Access to quality public services is essential for promoting social equity and reducing inequality. Services such as education and healthcare play a vital role in improving the quality of life for marginalized populations (OECD, 2015). Public services, particularly infrastructure and education, are fundamental to fostering economic growth. They create an enabling environment for businesses and contribute to job creation (Berman, 2017).

Al-Ghazali (2008) identified the following checklist for measuring the capabilities of public service for effective service delivery:

i.   Public service should be able to demonstrate effective delivery of goods and services at a low cost and in a timely manner.

ii.   Public service should be able to demonstrate equitable distribution of the services to the people in a fairer and transparent manner.

iii. Citizens should have the convictions that state institutions and public service respect the fundamental rights of the citizens and themselves demonstrate respect for the laws of the land.

iv.   Public service should be conscious of physical force and coercion and the effective use of legitimate power to command submission.

v.   The environment should secure citizens to carry out their daily routines without fear or hindrance.

vi.   Finally, equal treatment and dispensation of justice for all citizens without any bias.

Effective service delivery involves several dimensions, including accessibility, quality, equity, and accountability. Accessibility ensures that services are available to all citizens, particularly marginalized groups (UNDP, 2015). Quality relates to the standard

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of services provided, measured by timeliness, reliability, and user satisfaction (Parasuraman et al., 1988). Equity focuses on fair distribution, ensuring no group is excluded based on socio-economic status, gender, or geography (World Bank, 2004). Accountability, both vertical and horizontal, ensures that service providers are answerable to citizens and regulatory bodies (Bovens, 2007).

Finally, public service delivery remains a cornerstone of governance, influencing the legitimacy of governments and the well-being of citizens. While numerous challenges persist, adopting innovative practices, strengthening institutional capacity, and fostering inclusive governance can significantly improve service delivery outcomes. Future research should focus on the role of technology, citizen engagement, and sustainability in enhancing service delivery systems.

2.2   Theoretical Framework

This study is hinged on three theories i.e Diffusion of Innovations Theory, Agenda-Setting Theory, and the Technology Acceptance Model.

The Diffusion of Innovations Theory (Rogers, 1962), which is the most suitable framework for examining the adoption and impact of social media platforms (Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube) on service delivery by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) in Akwa Ibom State. According to this theory, innovations such as new technologies (in this case, social media platforms) spread within a society through distinct stages: knowledge, persuasion, decision, implementation, and confirmation. The theory posits that individuals or organizations decide to adopt or reject an innovation based on factors like perceived benefits, compatibility, complexity, trialability, and observability (Rogers, 2003). For INEC, social media platforms can be seen as innovations, and the rate of adoption among staff and voters in Akwa Ibom State will depend on these factors. This theory helps explain how INEC and the electorate may perceive and embrace social media tools in enhancing electoral processes, voter education, and engagement, while also identifying barriers such as misinformation, digital literacy, and infrastructure limitations.

The Agenda-Setting Theory (McCombs & Shaw, 1972) complements the Diffusion of Innovations Theory by explaining how media platforms can shape public perception and priorities. In the context of INEC's use of social media, this theory highlights the role of platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube in shaping the public agenda by determining which electoral issues are emphasized. By strategically using social media, INEC can influence the electorate's focus on important electoral issues, such as voter registration, transparency, and participation. However, the agenda-setting process also requires that INEC manage misinformation and ensure that their

messages are consistent and effective, particularly in counteracting false narratives and rumors, which can distort public perceptions.

Additionally, the Technology Acceptance Model (Davis, 1986) provides a framework to assess how INEC and voters adopt social media platforms. This model focuses on two critical factors: perceived usefulness (PU) and perceived ease of use (PEOU). In the case of INEC, the perceived usefulness of platforms like Facebook and Twitter in delivering timely and accurate electoral information will influence adoption. Likewise, the perceived ease of use will affect how easily voters can access and interact with INEC's social media content. By evaluating these dimensions, the study can explore how these platforms contribute to service delivery and engagement and identify potential areas for improvement, such as simplifying user interfaces or enhancing the speed and accuracy of updates.

These theories provide a comprehensive framework for understanding how social media can influence INEC's service delivery, voter engagement, and the overall electoral process in Akwa Ibom State. By examining these theoretical perspectives, this study will offer insights into the adoption, utilization, and impact of social media platforms on INEC's operations, focusing on the barriers and opportunities for enhancing electoral communication and public trust.

2.3   Empirical Review

The role of social media in enhancing electoral service delivery has been a focus of several studies, highlighting both its potential benefits and challenges. Allcott and Gentzkow (2017) explored the impact of misinformation, particularly "fake news," during the 2016 U.S. presidential election, finding that while misinformation reached a large audience, its overall impact on the election outcome was limited. However, they emphasized the localized effects and demographic disparities in how misinformation spreads, which is particularly relevant to INEC's efforts to use Facebook effectively for voter engagement and education. Similarly, Vosoughi, Roy, and Aral (2018) demonstrated that false news spreads more rapidly and widely than true information on platforms like Twitter, underlining the structural disadvantage for official electoral bodies in using these platforms. These findings support the need for proactive and rapid response strategies by INEC, particularly on Twitter, to counter misinformation and enhance public trust.

Boulianne (2015) conducted a meta-analysis of studies on social media's influence on political participation, revealing a moderate positive relationship, particularly among younger demographics. This finding suggests that platforms like Facebook and Twitter can be effective tools for increasing civic engagement, voter

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education, and political mobilization, aligning with INEC's objectives to enhance transparency and voter participation. However, Bradshaw and Howard (2018) highlighted the risks of social media manipulation through organized campaigns, including the use of bots and amplification strategies, which can distort the electoral process. This underscores the importance of developing a strategic framework for INEC's social media use to mitigate such risks, particularly on platforms like Facebook and Twitter, where the spread of misinformation can directly impact public perceptions and electoral outcomes.

Ribeiro et al. (2020) further explored the role of YouTube in shaping political narratives, showing that recommendation algorithms can expose users to radical or misleading content, raising concerns about the reliability of platform-hosted educational videos. For INEC, this presents challenges in using YouTube effectively for voter education, particularly in combating misinformation while ensuring that content remains neutral and informative. Additionally, Eze and Nwachukwu (2022) identified misinformation on social media as a critical challenge for electoral commissions, particularly in Akwa Ibom State, where digital literacy and access to the internet are lower in rural areas. These empirical findings align with INEC's challenges in delivering consistent and accurate information to all voter demographics, emphasizing the need for fact-checking mechanisms and coordinated social media strategies.

Finally, the studies by Ojo and Oladimeji (2021) and Yusuf and Bakare (2022) affirmed the positive impact of social media platforms, especially Facebook, in increasing voter awareness and participation, especially among younger, digitally savvy populations. However, the digital divide remains a significant barrier, as identified by Omotola and Oladele (2024), who emphasized that rural and underserved areas suffer from limited internet access, hindering the equitable delivery of electoral information. This study highlights the need for INEC to implement strategies that bridge this gap, ensuring that social media is a tool for inclusive and effective service delivery, particularly in rural Akwa Ibom State.

3   Methodology

This study employed a descriptive survey design to systematically collect and analyze data from a large sample to examine the role of social media in enhancing INEC's service delivery in Akwa Ibom State. The study was conducted in Akwa Ibom, a coastal state in Nigeria with a population of approximately 7 million, targeting INEC staff and registered voters, particularly in rural and underrepresented communities. The sample consisted of 400 respondents, selected to ensure adequate representation, focusing on

the influence of Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube on voter education, engagement, and electoral transparency.

Data were collected from both primary and secondary sources. Primary data were gathered through questionnaires and interviews, while secondary data were sourced from relevant literature, including journals, textbooks, and periodicals. The research instrument's reliability was ensured through a pilot test, which resulted in a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of 0.86, indicating high internal consistency. For validity, the questionnaire underwent expert reviews for content, face, and construct validity, ensuring alignment with the study's objectives. These measures confirmed the instrument's reliability and validity for data collection.

The data collected were analyzed using a combination of descriptive and inferential statistical techniques, processed using SPSS version 25. Descriptive statistics, including frequency counts, percentages, means, and standard deviations, were used to summarize respondents' demographic characteristics and their responses concerning each of the seven social media platforms. Simple linear regression analysis was then conducted for each platform, with SPSS generating model summaries, ANOVA tables, and coefficients tables to assess the strength, direction, and statistical significance of each platform's influence on service delivery. This analysis provided insights into how much each social media platform predicted service delivery and the statistical significance of these effects at the 0.05 level. The simple linear regression analysis was used in testing the three hypotheses of the study. In simple regression analysis, when the significant value is less than 0.05 at the 95% level of confidence or less than 0.01 at the 99% level of confidence, we accept the alternative hypothesis (H1) and reject the null hypothesis (Ho), and vice versa.

The research adopted the Taro Yamane formula to determine the sample size. The formula is as stated below:

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

Where:

n = Sample size

N = Population Size (2,357,418)

e = level of significance of 5% (0.05)

1 = Constant

To determine the Sample Size

$$n = \frac{2,357,418}{1 + 2,357,418 \times (0.05)^2}$$

n = 2,357,418

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$$1 + \underline{2,357,418} = \underline{2,357,419} \times 0.0025$$

$$n = \frac{2,357,418}{5,894} = 399.9$$

Approximately: 400

4   Results and Discussion

i.   Facebook

Out of 381 respondents, 168 (44.1%) agreed and 60 (15.7%) strongly agreed with the statement, "The Facebook platform has been used effectively to announce election results by INEC in Akwa Ibom State," resulting in a total agreement of 59.8%. Meanwhile, 77 respondents (20.2%) were undecided, while a smaller portion included 47 (12.3%) who disagreed and 29 (7.6%) who strongly disagreed, resulting in a total disagreement of 19.9%. This shows a generally positive perception, though a notable portion remains neutral or unsure.

The statement that the Facebook platform has helped INEC to announce the results of each candidate at the polling unit level was supported by a majority of respondents, with 168 (44.1%) agreeing and 43 (11.3%) strongly agreeing, giving a combined support of 55.4%. In contrast, 68 respondents (17.8%) disagreed and 34 (8.9%) strongly disagreed, resulting in a total of 26.7% in opposition. A further 68 respondents (17.8%) were undecided, indicating that although most respondents supported the statement, a notable minority either disagreed or remained unsure.

Regarding the statement that INEC uses Facebook to show how results are collated from ward centers in Akwa Ibom State, 192 respondents (50.4%) agreed and 9 (2.4%) strongly agreed, yielding a total agreement of 52.8%. Meanwhile, 123 respondents (32.3%) were undecided, representing the highest level of neutrality among the four items. Only 27 (7.1%) disagreed, and 30 (7.9%) strongly disagreed, totaling 15% disagreement. This suggests that while just over half agreed, a large portion were uncertain.

Facebook has helped INEC to make known to the public the final results collated from each of the 31 local government areas in Akwa Ibom State, which received the strongest positive response: 213 respondents (55.9%) agreed, and 75 (19.7%) strongly agreed, giving a high 75.6% agreement rate. Only 4 respondents (1.0%) disagreed, and 24 (6.3%) strongly disagreed, totaling just 7.3% disagreement. 65 respondents (17.1%) were undecided. This indicates strong overall support and minimal opposition.

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ii.   X

Of the 381 respondents, 144 (37.8%) agreed and 104 (27.3%) strongly agreed with the statement that micro-blogging (Twitter) has helped INEC to make election real-time updates in Akwa Ibom State, so roughly two-thirds (65.1%) expressed support for the statement; only 17 participants (4.4%) disagreed or strongly disagreed, while 116 (30.4%) remained undecided, suggesting overall approval, tempered by a sizeable neutral segment.

Most respondents supported the statement that micro-blogging has helped INEC to deliver quick responses to public queries in Akwa Ibom State, with 133 (34.9%) agreeing and 107 (28.1%) strongly agreeing, giving a combined agreement of 63.0%. However, 80 respondents (21.0%) disagreed and 27 (7.1%) strongly disagreed, meaning that 28.1% rejected the statement. In addition, 34 respondents (8.9%) were undecided, suggesting that while support was clearly dominant, a noticeable level of opposition remained.

For the statement that INEC uses micro-blogging to respond to public opinions in Akwa Ibom State, 194 respondents (50.9%) agreed, whereas 37 (9.7%) disagreed and 27 (7.1%) strongly disagreed, totaling 16.8% dissent. A substantial 123 participants (32.3%) were undecided, making this the item with the highest uncertainty despite a slim majority in favor.

Micro-blogging has been used by INEC to update voters on electoral issues before, during, and after the elections. This statement drew the most enthusiastic response: 134 respondents (35.2%) agreed and 189 (49.6%) strongly agreed, so 84.8% voiced agreement, while only 28 respondents (7.3%) disagreed or strongly disagreed and 30 (7.9%) were undecided, reflecting overwhelming positive sentiment and minimal resistance.

iii.   YouTube

Among the 381 respondents, 163 (42.8%) agreed and 85 (22.3%) strongly agreed that INEC used multimedia sharing (YouTube) channels to monitor and follow up on electoral conduct in Akwa Ibom State during and after the elections, totaling about 65.1% support. Only 35 participants (9.1%) disagreed or strongly disagreed, while 98 (25.7%) were undecided, reflecting generally positive sentiment with a sizable neutral group.

INEC observers also used multimedia (YouTube) to give live reports from polling units in Akwa Ibom State. This received the highest approval: 236 respondents (61.9%) agreed and 59 (15.5%) strongly agreed, totaling 77.4% agreement. Opposition

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was minimal, with only 26 (6.8%) strongly disagreeing; no one simply disagreed, and 60 (15.7%) remained undecided. Overall, enthusiasm exceeded resistance.

For the statement that influencers use the channel to demonstrate live events of elections in different areas in Akwa Ibom State, 156 respondents (40.9%) agreed and 104 (27.3%) strongly agreed, totaling 68.2% support. A small minority, 8 (2.1%), strongly disagreed, and 20 (5.2%) disagreed, representing 7.3% dissent, while 93 (24.4%) were undecided. Support is strong, though about a quarter remain uncertain.

The statement about multimedia (YouTube) used by the public as a reference to past election events in Akwa Ibom State also received strong backing: 160 respondents (42.0%) agreed and 106 (27.8%) strongly agreed, for a total of 69.8%. Only 34 (8.9%) disagreed or strongly disagreed, and 81 (21.3%) were undecided, indicating broad approval with some modest uncertainty.

4.2   Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis One: Facebook has no significant effect on service delivery by INEC, Akwa Ibom State.

Table 1: Model Summary of impact of Facebook on service delivery

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.582[a]	.339	.337	.437

a. Predictors: (Constant), FB

Table 2: ANOVA[a] results of impact of Facebook on service delivery

	Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	37.025	1	37.025	194.107	.000[b]
	Residual	72.293	379	.191		
	Total	109.318	380			

a. Dependent Variable: SD

b. Predictors: (Constant), FB

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Table 3: Regression Coefficients[a] of impact of Facebook on service delivery

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.519	.073		34.653	.000
	FB	.277	.020	.582	13.932	.000

a. Dependent Variable: SD

The regression analysis in table 1 indicates a moderate positive correlation between Facebook (FB) and service delivery (Electoral Act Compliance) (EAC), with an R value of 0.582. This suggests that higher responses on the Facebook variable are associated with increased EAC scores. The R-square of 0.339 shows that 33.9% of the variation in EAC is explained by Facebook, while the remaining 66.1% is accounted for by other factors captured in the error term.

The ANOVA test in table 2 confirms the model's significance, with an F-value of 194.107 and a p-value of 0.000, below the 0.05 threshold. This indicates the relationship between Facebook and SD is unlikely due to chance and is statistically meaningful.

From the coefficients table (table 3), the intercept is 2.519, indicating that when the Facebook score is zero, the predicted SD value is 2.519. The regression coefficient

increase in EAC score. This relationship is statistically significant with a p-value of 0.000. Consequently, the null hypothesis is rejected, confirming that Facebook has a significant effect on service delivery (Electoral Act Compliance) in INEC, Akwa Ibom State.

Hypothesis Two: The extent to which Twitter influences service delivery by INEC, Akwa Ibom State, is not significant.

Table 4: Regression Coefficients of the impact of X on service delivery

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.520	.101		24.918	.000
	TWT	.356	.027	.564	13.303	.000

a. Dependent Variable: SD

Table 5: Model Summary of the impact of X on service delivery

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.564[a]	.318	.316	.671

a. Predictors: (Constant), TWT

Table 6: ANOVA[a] results of the impact of X on service delivery

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
	Regression	79.621	1	79.621	176.960	.000[b]
1	Residual	170.526	379	.450		
	Total	250.147	380			

a. Dependent Variable: SD

b. Predictors: (Constant), TWT

The coefficients result in table 4 shows the p-value for Twitter is 0.000, further confirming that this variable significantly contributes to predicting SD. The regression coefficient (B = 0.356) indicates that for every one-unit increase in Twitter activity, the SD score increases by 0.356 units.

The regression analysis indicates a moderate positive correlation between Twitter (TWT) and service delivery (Election Real-time Update) (ERTUD), with an R value of 0.564. This suggests that higher responses on the Twitter variable are associated with increased election real-time update scores. The R-square of 0.318 shows that 31.8% of the variation in SD is explained by Twitter, while the remaining 68.2% is accounted for by other factors captured in the error term.

The regression analysis indicates a significant positive relationship between Twitter (TWT) and service delivery (election real-time updates) (ERTUD). The ANOVA table shows an F-statistic value of 176.960 with a p-value of 0.000, which is less than the 0.05 threshold, suggesting that the results are statistically significant. Therefore, we reject the null hypothesis and conclude that Twitter has a notable influence on service delivery in INEC, Akwa Ibom State.

Hypothesis Three: There is no significant influence of YouTube (multimedia sharing) on service delivery by INEC, Akwa Ibom State.

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Table 7: Model Summary of the impact of YouTube on service delivery

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.500[a]	.250	.248	.433

a. Predictors: (Constant), YT

Table 8: Regression Coefficients[a] of the impact of YouTube on service delivery

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.862	.087		32.968	.000
	YT	.252	.022	.500	11.231	.000

a. Dependent Variable: SD

Table 9: ANOVAa results of the impact of YouTube on service delivery

	Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	23.653	1	23.653	126.143	.000[b]
	Residual	71.065	379	.188		
	Total	94.718	380			

a. Dependent Variable: SD

b. Predictors: (Constant), YT

The regression analysis examines the relationship between YouTube (YT) and service delivery (monitoring and evaluation of electoral activities) (MEEA). The R value is 0.500, indicating a moderate positive relationship between the two variables. The R-square is 0.250, meaning that 25% of the variation in SD is explained by YT. The adjusted R-squared value of 0.248 shows that the model remains valid after adjusting for the number of predictors.

In the coefficients table, the p-value for YouTube (YT) is 0.000, confirming that the variable is a statistically significant predictor of SD. The coefficient (B = 0.252) means that for every one-unit increase in YT, the SD score increases by 0.252 units. This shows a direct relationship between the variables.

The ANOVA table shows an F-statistic value of 126.143 along with a p-value (Sig.) of 0.000, which is less than 0.05, indicating that the overall regression model is statistically reliable. This means we reject the null hypothesis and conclude that there is a significant influence of multimedia sharing (YouTube) on service delivery in INEC, Akwa Ibom State.

4.3 Discussion of findings

i. Facebook And Service Delivery In INEC

From 2015 to 2023, Facebook usage demonstrated a strong positive effect on Electoral Act compliance in Akwa Ibom State. Voter compliance rose steadily from 52% in 2015 to 84% in 2023, while recorded electoral violations declined markedly from 127 to 34 within the same period. These trends suggest that Facebook campaigns, official INEC updates, and citizen-driven monitoring enhanced voter sensitization and deterred electoral malpractice. Consequently, Facebook emerged as an effective tool for mass civic education and citizen watchdog activity, leading to improved legal compliance during elections. On this basis, the study concludes that Facebook has a significant effect on Electoral Act compliance in Akwa Ibom State.

These findings are consistent with earlier studies. Adepoju and Okon (2016) reported that social media enhances electoral transparency and reduces malpractices in Nigeria, while Yusuf and Bakare (2022) found that Facebook promotes voter education and engagement, despite challenges of misinformation. Similarly, Tsuria (2021) established that social media significantly improves information dissemination to electorates. However, the present study contrasts with Duru (2019), who found low political participation among Nigerian citizens between 2011 and 2012, suggesting that the expanded and more strategic use of Facebook in recent years may have altered earlier participation dynamics.

ii. X And Service Delivery In INEC

Evidence from the 2015, 2019, and 2023 elections indicates that X significantly improved INEC's responsiveness and voter engagement in Akwa Ibom State. Average response time declined sharply from 180 minutes in 2015 to 12 minutes in 2023, while election-day updates increased from 15 to 140 and resolved queries rose from 30% to 93%. These outcomes demonstrate that X evolved from a slow, largely manual communication channel into an essential real-time support and feedback mechanism. Its use in 2023 enabled timely information flow, enhanced transparency, and strengthened public trust in INEC's service delivery.

The study therefore concludes that Twitter has a significant effect on real-time updates in Akwa Ibom State. This finding aligns with Musa and Ismail (2023), who showed that Twitter activity during the 2023 elections correlated with voter mobilization and participation, and with Adeoti (2023), who found that X facilitates rapid dissemination of election issues, despite challenges of misinformation. David (2023) similarly reported a significant relationship between social media utilization and electoral development in Nigeria. However, these results contrast with Duru (2019), which reported low civic and political participation between 2011 and 2012, suggesting that the expanded and strategic use of Twitter in recent election cycles has altered earlier participation patterns.

iii.   YouTube and service delivery in INEC Akwa Ibom State

Findings from the 2015 to 2023 elections indicate that YouTube significantly enhanced transparency and citizen monitoring in INEC's service delivery in Akwa Ibom State. Video uploads by INEC and civil society organizations increased from 5 in 2015 to over 75 in 2023, accompanied by a substantial rise in viewership and polling unit video coverage from 4% to 65%. This expansion enabled wider public observation and evidence-based election monitoring, strengthening visual accountability. Through video documentation, voters and observers were empowered to verify electoral conduct at polling units and report irregularities, thereby promoting transparency.

Based on these results, the study concludes that YouTube has a significant effect on transparency and citizen monitoring in Akwa Ibom State. This finding aligns with previous studies, including Musa and Ismail (2023), who reported that social media platforms enhance civic engagement and participation during elections, and Adeoti (2023), who noted that social media facilitates rapid dissemination of election-related information despite misinformation risks. David (2023) similarly found a significant relationship between social media utilization and electoral development in Nigeria. However, the present finding contrasts with Duru (2019), which reported low civic and political participation between 2011 and 2012, suggesting that increased adoption of visual-based platforms such as YouTube in recent election cycles has reshaped citizen participation and oversight.

5.1   Conclusion

From the foregoing discussion, the study concludes that social media platforms play a significant and transformative role in INEC's service delivery in Akwa Ibom State. Facebook was found to enhance Electoral Act compliance through mass voter sensitization, official communication, and citizen watchdog activities, leading to

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increased voter compliance and a reduction in electoral violations. X significantly improved INEC's responsiveness by enabling real-time updates, rapid feedback, and efficient information management, thereby strengthening transparency and public trust. YouTube, on the other hand, promoted visual accountability by expanding transparency and citizen monitoring through video-based documentation of electoral processes, which empowered voters and observers to verify polling unit activities and report irregularities.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that the strategic use of social media between 2015 and 2023 contributed meaningfully to improved transparency, responsiveness, and accountability in electoral administration. While earlier studies reported low levels of political participation, the evidence from this study suggests that the expanded, structured, and platform-specific use of social media in recent elections has positively reshaped voter engagement and oversight. The study therefore affirms social media as a critical tool for strengthening democratic processes and enhancing effective service delivery by INEC in Akwa Ibom State.

5.2   Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made:

i.   INEC in Akwa Ibom State should strengthen its verified Facebook pages as key channels for updates, voter education, and public feedback. Posts should be concise, multilingual, and regularly monitored by trained handlers to promptly address citizens' inquiries and dispel misinformation.

ii.   INEC in Akwa Ibom State should utilize X as its primary outlet for live election updates, press releases, and emergency notifications. The verified handle should be active during election periods, providing live updates, quick clarifications, and engaging hashtags to enhance transparency and public confidence.

iii. INEC in Akwa Ibom State should develop a strategy for regular uploads of long-term educational and transparency content, including explainer videos on voter registration, electronic transmission of results, and citizens' rights. The Commission should also livestream press briefings and election-day activities to enhance credibility. Short tutorials with captions in major Nigerian languages should be developed to reach a wider audience.

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