

Digital Media Platforms and Women's Political Engagement in Southwest Nigeria

Bolanle Morenike Adeoluwa

Department of Mass Communication, Federal University Oye-Ekiti, Nigeria.

Email: bolanle.adeoluwa@fuoye.edu.ng

Bankole Olagunju Faloye

Department of Arts Education, Bamidele Olumilua University of Education, Science and Technology, Ikere-Ekiti, Nigeria.

Email: faloye.bankole@bouesti.edu.ng

Enioluwa Prince Adeoluwa

Department of Mass Communication, Caleb University, Ikorodu, Lagos, Nigeria.

Email: enioluwaadeoluwa@gmail.com

Olanike Justinah Olusola

Department of Public Relations and Advertising, Bamidele Olumilua University of Education, Science and Technology, Ikere Ekiti, Nigeria.

Email: olusola.olanike@bouesti.edu.ng

Olaolu Olaruku Olaimolu

Department of Communication Studies, Bamidele Olumilua University of Education, Science and Technology, Ikere-Ekiti, Nigeria.

Email: olaimolu.olaolu@bouesti.edu.ng

ABSTRACT

The study examined digital media platforms and women's political engagement in southwest Nigeria. The study adopts a descriptive survey research design. According to the National Population Commission (NPC) and National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), 2016 and 2023, the population of women in Ekiti State is estimated to be 1,553,770, while that of Lagos State is 5,956,115. The two states were randomly selected from the six states in southwest Nigeria. The sample of 400 was selected at random. The validity of the instrument was ascertained by using face and content validity. Cronbach's Alpha method was used to test the internal consistency of the instrument, and a coefficient of 0.98 was obtained, which indicates that the instrument was reliable to collect data for the study. The research questions were answered using descriptive statistics such as frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation. Findings revealed that the women from Lagos and Ekiti States affirm that they use *Facebook*, *X* (formerly *Twitter*), *WhatsApp*, *YouTube*, and *Snapchat* more than other social media platforms such as *LinkedIn*, *TikTok*, and *WeChat*. The study concluded that digital media platforms significantly influence digital media usage by women for socio-political engagement in

Southwest Nigeria. Therefore, the study recommended that these platforms should be widely promoted among women in Lagos and Ekiti States to promote socio-political participation.

Keywords: Facebook, X (formerly Twitter), WhatsApp, YouTube, Snapchat, Social Media Platforms, LinkedIn, Tiktok, WeChat

INTRODUCTION

The political participation of women in politics in Nigeria is quite low, despite there had been constitutional provisions for gender equality. The low representation of women in political offices can be explained by the synergies of socio-cultural barriers, a lack of funds, and institutional discrimination. Specifically, in Southwest Nigeria, women have had more struggles because of the institutionalized patriarchal culture, which makes them subordinate in the political decision-making process (Garuba, 2024). The new digital media platforms create avenues for women to raise their voices, participate in political processes, mobilize support, and potentially overcome some of these traditional impediments (Akinbobola et al., 2024).

Digital media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, and WhatsApp have become key in political communication and activities all over the world, and Nigeria is not an exception. Research indicates that despite the high access by women to social media applications in certain regions of Nigeria, such as the Southwest, underutilization of such applications in political mobilization and interaction is still evident in these regions (Nnabuiife & Nwolu, 2025). However, using digital media presents significant opportunities to raise awareness about women's political rights, share testimonies from female politicians, and organise the political process. These actions can change male-dominated narratives, enhance discussions on women's political engagement, and empower more women to enter politics (Akinbobola et al., 2024; Nnabuiife & Nwolu, 2025).

Socio-political engagement is the active participation in social and political activities, and often it is with the purpose of influencing or shaping the outcomes of social, political, and public policies. It includes these types of public engagement, such as voting, advocacy, activism, community organising, and civic participation (Sanchet et al., 2017). The participation of citizens in the management of public affairs is at the heart of economic development. At the same time, equal participation of both women and men in socio-political decision making provides a balance that more accurately reflects the composition of developing economy. This may enhance the legitimacy of socio-political processes by making them more democratic and responsive to the concerns and perspectives of all segments of society.

However, in Nigeria, there seems to be an obvious low engagement of women in socio-political engagement. Akhter and Mahmud (2020) observed that the mass media do not usually present news and issues on women's empowerment but are quick in mentioning women's issues when there is a major crime or incident involving women. The problem is that despite that Women are using digital media to their advantage in different fields. Various research involves Dijck and Poell (2018), who examined the use of social media by women in Saudi Arabia as a tool of activism and political engagement. It was found that social media gives women a voice to express themselves in politics regardless of the limitation of

their movements and the freedom of speech in the nation. Nnabuike and Nwolu (2022) evaluate the proportion of women using social media applications and using them to participate in politics. The results of the research indicate that social media has a high access rate for women to improve their attempts to participate in politics. Ongori and Migiro (2020) dwell upon another study with the theme of the influence of digital media on the economic empowerment of women in Africa. The authors discovered that digital media can enhance women's access to information, markets, finances, networking, and collaboration.

Chaudhary and Srivastava (2020) study the influence of digital media on encouraging women to take part in politics in India through a mixed-method approach, where quantitative and qualitative data are analysed. The researchers discovered that 500 active women, who were also users of social media sites like Facebook and X (formerly Twitter), found these platforms provided them with opportunities to share their political views, participate in political matters, and interact with other like-minded women. The analysis also revealed that women's engagement in political activities on digital media was influenced by their education, income, and political ideology. Moreover, Samuels (2019) discusses the functions of digital media in enhancing women's involvement in politics in Latin America. The researchers concluded that digital media help women to overcome the traditional obstacles to political participation, including the dominance of male elites and access to mainstream media. It was discovered that digital media presents women a platform that enables them to express their political agenda, remain in touch with other women, and receive support on their issues.

It is obvious that the empirical studies have been carried out on how digital media have influenced women in various aspects of life. However, little has been done on how women use digital media in socio-political engagement in the southwest of Nigeria. Also, Oloyede (2022) observes that even though women in the southwest part of the country have been involved in political activities, the number is still low. This implies that women are seemingly lagging in digital media usage with reference to socio-political engagements. Therefore, it is against this background that this study examined digital media platforms and women's political engagement in southwest Nigeria. Specifically, the study examines the types of digital media platforms that are used by women for political engagement in southwest Nigeria. The following research question was raised to guide the study: What are the types of digital media platforms being used by women for political engagement in southwest, Nigeria?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Madra-Sawika, Nord, Paliszkievicz and Lee (2020) examine digital media empowerment and equality. The study investigated the use of digital media, specifically social media technologies, in the workplace in Taiwan. The study used survey method to do a comparison between the attitudes of women and men who use social media technologies and investigated the realisation of the economic empowerment components. The findings reveal that digital technologies can support female empowerment, and that women derive benefits from using digital media technologies at the same level as men.

Dijck and Poell (2018) analyse the use of social media by women in Saudi Arabia for activism and political participation. The study adopted a qualitative research method to explore the experiences of women in Saudi Arabia who use social media for activism and

political participation. The study finds that social media provides a platform for women to express themselves and engage in political discourse, despite the restrictions on their physical mobility and freedom of speech in the country. The study concluded that social media play a significant role in empowering women in Saudi Arabia by giving them a voice and a means to participate in public life.

Nnabuife and Nwolu (2022) accessed social media usage and women's political participation in Anambra State, Nigeria. The study examined the rate of women's access to social media applications and usage for political participation. The survey design method was adopted. The finding of the study shows that there is a high rate of women social media applications and women do not use social media to enhance their efforts towards participation in politics.

Lal et al. (2020) investigate women's political participation on social media in Tanzania. The study focused on the impact of social media upon women's political participation. It highlighted the role that social media can play in enabling more balance participation, explored what types of platforms women prefer to use for political participation, and the factors that influence women's participation in political issues on social media.

Cardo (2020) examines gender politics, political women, and social media at election time in the United Kingdom, the United States of America, and New Zealand. The study offered a comparative study of Theresa May, Hillary Clinton, and Jacinda Ardern's political communication strategies. It investigated whether these female political figures used digital technologies during elections for politics. The study evaluates the extent to which women's politician adopted leadership and communicative styles that challenge masculine norms of political behaviour. The study also investigated the possible existence of the prioritisation of policy areas that are likely to make a difference in women's lives, if these political figures speak on behalf of women. The study reveals that Ardern, Mary, and Clinton found a space on social media to combine complex communication styles to showcase some of the expertise that is traditionally denied them in mainstream media. Invariably, the study complicates the relationship between women's style of communication and leadership.

Nnabuife et al. (2022) investigate the intersection of Facebook usage and women's participation in politics. The study sought to ascertain the extent of women's exposure to political content in the digital media, determine if Igboist encourages women's participation in politics, and find if women are exposed to political campaigns on the Igboist page. The study utilised a survey research method to obtain primary data from respondents, while available literature served as secondary data. The study finds, among others, that women are exposed to social media platforms and the Igboist page encourages women's participation in politics. Further findings reveal that women are exposed to political campaign posts on the Igboist page as a mobilising strategy for political participation.

METHODS

The study adopts a descriptive survey research design. The population of this study are women drawn from two (2) states (Ekiti and Lagos) in southwestern Nigeria. According to the National Population Commission (NPC) and National Bureau for Statistics (NBS), 2016 and 2023, the population of women in Ekiti State is estimated to be 1,553,770 while that of Lagos State is 5,956,115. The two states were randomly selected from the six states in

southwest Nigeria in order to guarantee good representation of female respondents at both States. Lagos State has been chosen due to its high level of internet penetration, advanced digital infrastructure, and highly urbanized nature, which makes it a key center for social media use and political communication in Nigeria. Ekiti State was chosen to represent a comparative perspective, in part because the environment was semi-urban and less technologically advanced. The sample of 400 was selected at random. 317 copies of the questionnaire were distributed to women in Lagos State, while 83 copies of the questionnaire were distributed to women in Ekiti State, respectively. The validity of the instrument was ascertained by using face and content validity. Cronbach’s Alpha method was used to test the internal consistency of the instrument, and a coefficient of 0.98 was obtained, which indicates that the instrument was reliable to collect data for the study. The research questions were answered using descriptive statistics such as frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Frequency of Demographic Variables

Table 1: Age Distribution

		State of Residence		Total
		Lagos	Ekiti	
Age	18–25 years	58	11	69
		18.3%	13.3%	17.3%
	26–40 years	114	44	158
		36.0%	53.0%	39.5%
	41–55 years	93	23	116
		29.3%	27.7%	29.0%
	55 years and above	52	5	57
		16.4%	6.0%	14.3%
Total		317	83	400

Table 1 presents the distribution of respondents by age group and state of residence, categorized into four age ranges: 18–25 years, 26–40 years, 41–55 years, and 55 years and above. Of the total respondents, 79.3% reside in Lagos State, while 20.8% are from Ekiti State. Within the 18–25 years category, 18.3% of Lagos-based respondents fall into this age bracket, compared to 13.3% of respondents in Ekiti State. The 26–40 years group constitutes the largest proportion in both states, accounting for 36.0% of Lagos respondents and 53.0% of those from Ekiti.

In the 41–55 years bracket, 29.3% of respondents in Lagos and 27.7% in Ekiti fall within this range, indicating a relatively balanced middle-aged representation across the two states. The oldest age group, 55 years and above, comprises 16.4% of Lagos respondents and 6.0% of Ekiti respondents, suggesting a smaller proportion of older individuals, particularly in Ekiti. Overall, the data reflects a broader age spread in Lagos State, while Ekiti’s respondents are more concentrated in the working-age range of 26–40 years.

Table 2: Educational Qualification

		State of Residence		Total
		Lagos	Ekiti	
Educational Qualification	First School	30	19	49
	Leaving Certificate	9.5%	22.5%	12.3%
	GCE/O'level/WASC	214	31	245
		67.5%	37.3%	61.3%
	OND/NCE	29	18	47
		9.1%	21.7%	11.8%
	HND/B.Sc., B.A., B.Ed.	41	14	55
		12.9%	16.9%	13.8%
	Master's/Equivalent	1	1	2
		0.3%	1.2%	0.5%
	Post-Graduate	2	0	2
		0.6%	0.0%	0.5%
Total		317	83	400
		79.3%	20.8%	100.0%
		%	%	%

Table 2 shows the distribution of respondents' educational qualifications by state of residence. Among the 400 respondents, 79.3% are from Lagos State and 20.8% from Ekiti State. The highest number of respondents 245 in total possess GCE/O'Level/WASC qualifications, with the vast majority (87.3%) residing in Lagos State and only 12.7% from Ekiti State. A relatively smaller number hold First School Leaving Certificates (49 respondents), with 61.2% from Lagos and 38.8% from Ekiti. Similarly, for OND/NCE holders (47 respondents), 61.7% are from Lagos while 38.3% are from Ekiti.

Respondents with tertiary education degrees (HND/B.Sc./B.A./B.Ed.) account for 55 individuals, where Lagos State represents 74.5% and Ekiti State 25.5%. The representation drops significantly in the postgraduate categories. Only two respondents each reported having a Master's degree and a Postgraduate qualification. Master's degree holders are evenly split between the two states (50% each), whereas both respondents with Postgraduate qualifications are based in Lagos State (100%).

This data reveals a clear concentration of higher educational attainment in Lagos State, especially in the GCE/O'Level and HND/Bachelor's categories. Ekiti State shows a slightly higher proportion in the lower qualification brackets compared to its overall representation. The data may suggest that access to higher education and possibly exposure

to digital media for socio-political participation is more prevalent among respondents in Lagos State. This distribution could reflect broader socio-economic disparities between the two states.

Table 3. Occupation

		State of Respondents		Total
		Lagos	Ekiti	
Occupation	Politician	62	23	85
		19.6%	27.7%	21.3%
	Technocrat	12	14	26
		3.8%	16.9%	6.5%
	Market Women	85	15	100
		26.8%	18.1%	25.0%
	Non-governmental Organization	13	3	16
		4.1%	3.6%	4.0%
	Civil servants	84	6	90
		26.5%	7.2%	22.5%
	Entrepreneur	28	19	47
		8.8%	22.9%	11.8%
	Specify	33	3	36
		10.4%	3.6%	9.0%
	Total	317	83	400
		79.3%	20.8%	100.0%

Table 3 presents the occupational distribution of respondents based on their state of residence, specifically focusing on Lagos and Ekiti States. The total number of respondents surveyed is 400, with Lagos State contributing significantly more individuals (317 respondents, or 79.3%) compared to Ekiti State (83 respondents, or 20.8%). Among the various occupations listed, market women represent the largest group, totaling 100 respondents, predominantly from Lagos (85 respondents, or 85%) compared to Ekiti (15 respondents, or 15%). Similarly, civil servants constitute the second largest group, with 90 respondents, heavily represented in Lagos (84 respondents, or 93.3%) and only 6 from Ekiti (6.7%). Additionally, politicians total 85 respondents, with 62 from Lagos (72.9%) and 23 from Ekiti (27.1%), highlighting a concentration of political engagement in Lagos.

In contrast, the technocrat category shows a more balanced representation, with a total of 26 respondents, 12 from Lagos (3.8%) and 14 from Ekiti (16.9%). This indicates a stronger presence of professionals in technical fields in Ekiti. The entrepreneur category includes 47 respondents, with 28 from Lagos (8.8%) and 19 from Ekiti (22.9%), suggesting notable entrepreneurial activity in both states. The non-governmental organization sector has 16 respondents, with 13 from Lagos (4.1%) and 3 from Ekiti (3.6%). Lastly, the specified category, which includes unspecified occupations, totals 36 respondents, with 33 from Lagos (10.4%) and 3 from Ekiti (3.6%). Overall, the data illustrates a clear occupational disparity, with Lagos dominating most categories, potentially influencing how individuals from these states engage with digital media and socio-political contexts.

Research Question: What are the types of digital media platform that are used by women for political engagement in Southwestern Nigeria?

To answer this question, respondents were presented with a particular social media platform and its use for political participation. The tables 1-10 show the distribution by social media platforms.

Table 4. Women and use of Facebook for political participation

		State of Residence		Total
		Lagos	Ekiti	
Women make use of Facebook mostly for Political participation	Strongly Agree	92	45	137
		29.0%	54.2%	34.3%
	Agree	199	25	224
		62.8%	30.1%	56.0%
	Disagree	21	9	30
		6.6%	10.8%	7.5%
	Strongly Disagree	3	4	7
	0.9%	4.8%	1.8%	
Undecided	2	0	2	
	0.6%	0.0%	0.5%	
Total		317	83	400
		79.3%	20.8%	100.0%

Table 4 shows the extent to which women use Facebook for political participation in Southwestern Nigeria. The respondents (400) were found to be in agreement with the statement, with 224 participants out of the total population and with a majority in Lagos State (62.8%) and a minority population in Ekiti State (30.1%). Furthermore, 137 respondents strongly agreed, but the concentration was more in Lagos (29.0%) than in Ekiti (54.2%). These statistics imply that Facebook is one of the playfields where women can be politically active, especially in Lagos.

Conversely, 30 respondents disagreed, with 6.6% from Lagos and 10.8% from Ekiti. A smaller group of 7 people, 0.9% from Lagos and 4.8% from Ekiti, strongly disagreed. The Undecided category had 2 respondents, all from Lagos, which is interesting. This distribution shows that Facebook is the most important tool for women to become involved in politics, especially in Lagos. It also indicates that there is a small group of respondents with different views, which is clearer in Ekiti.

Table 5. Respondents use of WhatsApp for political participation

		State of Residence		Total
		Lagos	Ekiti	
WhatsApp is used by women for political participation	Strongly Agree	85	41	126
		26.8%	49.4%	31.5%
	Agree	186	16	202
		58.7%	19.3%	50.5%

	Disagree	33 10.4%	15 18.1%	48 12.0%
	Strongly Disagree	8 2.5%	5 6.0%	13 3.3%
	Undecided	5 1.6%	6 7.2%	11 2.8%
Total		317 79.3%	83 20.8%	400 100.0%

Table 5 reveals respondents' views on the use of WhatsApp by women for political participation in Southwestern Nigeria. Out of 400 sampled respondents, the majority (202, or 50.5%) said that women use WhatsApp to become involved in politics. Most of them (58.7%) lived in Lagos, and only 19.3% lived in Ekiti. Furthermore, 126 respondents (31.5%) strongly agreed, with more from Ekiti (49.4%) than from Lagos (26.8%). The data shows that WhatsApp is a well-known place for people to get involved in politics, especially women in Lagos State, but Ekiti also shows a lot of support.

By contrast, however, 48 respondents (12.0%) disagreed with the statement, and the amount from Lagos (10.4%) and Ekiti (18.1%) was highest. the minority (13 respondents, 3.3%) strongly disagreed, and the level was more elevated in Ekiti (6.0%) compared with Lagos (2.5%). Only 9 respondents (2.3%) selected "Not Applicable", and there were a few more from Ekiti. In this general pattern, this shows that the majority of respondents enjoying WhatsApp as a means for women's involvement in politics, particularly in Lagos. Nevertheless, some respondents remain in disagreement, particularly in Ekiti.

Table 6. Women and use of *LinkedIn* for political participation

		State of Residence		Total
		Lagos	Ekiti	
Women make use of LinkedIn for political participation	Strongly Agree	33 10.4%	31 37.3%	64 16.0%
	Agree	92 29.0%	22 26.5%	114 28.5%
	Disagree	130 41.0%	8 9.6%	138 34.5%
	Strongly Disagree	55 17.4%	4 4.8%	59 14.8%
	Undecided	7 2.2%	18 21.7%	25 6.3%
	Total	317 79.3%	83 20.8%	400 100.0%

Table 6 presents respondents' opinions on whether women use *LinkedIn* for political participation in Southwest Nigeria. Out of 400 respondents, 114 (28.5%) agreed with the statement, with a higher proportion in Lagos (29.0%) than in Ekiti (26.5%). Additionally, 64 respondents (16.0%) strongly agreed, with nearly equal contributions from both states 10.4%

from Lagos and 37.3% from Ekiti suggesting a stronger perception in Ekiti regarding LinkedIn’s relevance for political engagement among women.

On the other hand, a significant number of respondents disagreed. About 138 participants (34.5%) disagreed, with the vast majority from Lagos (41.0%) and only 9.6% from Ekiti. Similarly, 59 respondents (14.8%) strongly disagreed, primarily from Lagos (17.4%). Notably, 25 respondents (6.3%) selected "Undecided", with 21.7% from Ekiti, indicating that LinkedIn may not be widely used or accessible to some respondents in that region. Overall, the data shows mixed perceptions, with more respondents from Lagos disagreeing, while Ekiti respondents show relatively stronger positive sentiment toward LinkedIn’s use in political participation.

Table 7. Women and the use of X Media for political participation

		State of Residence		Total
		Lagos	Ekiti	
Twitter is used for political participation by women	Strongly Agree	60	13	73
		18.9%	15.7%	18.3%
	Agree	157	25	182
		49.5%	30.1%	45.5%
	Disagree	70	7	77
		22.1%	8.4%	19.3%
	Strongly Disagree	22	10	32
		6.9%	12.0%	8.0%
	Undecided	8	28	36
		2.5%	33.7%	9.0%
Total		317	83	400
		79.3%	20.8%	100.0%

Table 7 shows the opinion of the respondents regarding Twitter (also known as X media) use by women when participating in political activities in Southwestern Nigeria. Among the 400 respondents, 182 (or 45.5%) said that women participated in politics on Twitter, and 49.5% of the respondents were in Lagos and 30.1% in Ekiti. Furthermore, 73 respondents (18.3) gave a strong affirmation, with a higher percentage being recorded in Lagos (18.9) as compared to Ekiti (15.7). The result indicates that Twitter is considered an appropriate medium through which women can play a political role, and in this case, the respondents were based in Lagos.

However, 77 participants (19.3%) did not agree with the statement, with the largest percentage of participants being those of Lagos (22.1%), with only 8.4% of the participants being of Ekiti. A lesser number of 32 respondents (8.0%) strongly disagreed, with a bigger share in Ekiti (12.0%) than in Lagos (6.9%). Interestingly, 36 respondents (9.0%) chose to say they were undecided, with a huge majority (33.7) in Ekiti, which implies that Twitter is less accessible or less frequently used in that region. Generally, the data indicate that though Twitter is viewed as a significant instrument of political participation by most people, and especially in Lagos, it has significant differences in perception and use in the two states.

Table 8. Women and use of TikTok for political participation

		State of Residence		Total
		Lagos	Ekiti	
TikTok is used by women for political participation	Strongly Agree	64	19	83
		20.2%	22.9%	20.8%
	Agree	163	24	187
		51.4%	28.9%	46.8%
	Disagree	65	12	77
		20.5%	14.5%	19.3%
	Strongly Disagree	20	9	29
	6.3%	10.8%	7.3%	
	Undecided	3	15	18
		0.9%	18.1%	4.5%
Total		317	83	400
		79.3%	20.8%	100%

Table 8 shows the respondents' perceptions about the use of TikTok by women in political participation in Southwestern Nigeria. Among the 400 respondents, 187 (46.8) supported the statement, with most of them based in Lagos (51.4) and some in Ekiti (28.9). Also 83.04 respondents (20.8) strongly agreed, and both states, 20.2 of Lagos and 22.9 of Ekiti, supported it almost equally. These findings indicate that most women view TikTok as a platform for political involvement, and both regions have a relatively high level of acceptance for it.

On the contrary, 77 respondents (19.3%) disagreed, with the majority (20.5%) from Lagos and 14.5% from Ekiti. A smaller group of 29 participants (7.3%) strongly disagreed, with more respondents from Ekiti (10.8%) than Lagos (6.3%). Notably, 18 respondents (4.5%) considered TikTok undecided for political participation, and most of these (18.1%) were from Ekiti. Overall, while TikTok appears to have growing relevance for women's political involvement, particularly in Lagos, some reservations persist, especially among Ekiti respondents.

Table 9. Women and WeChat use for political participation

		State of Residence		Total
		Lagos	Ekiti	
Women make use of WeChat for political participation	Strongly Agree	30	18	48
		9.5%	21.7%	12.0%
	Agree	118	29	147
		37.2%	34.9%	36.8%
	Disagree	143	8	151
		45.1%	9.6%	37.8%
	Strongly Disagree	23	9	32
	7.3%	10.8%	8.0%	
	Undecided	3	18	21
		0.9%	21.7%	5.3%

Total	317	83	400
	79.3%	20.8%	100%

Table 9 presents the responses of women in Lagos and Ekiti States regarding the use of WeChat for political participation. Out of the 400 respondents, a total of 147 women (36.8%) agreed that WeChat is used for political participation, with the majority from Lagos (118 respondents or 37.2%) and 29 (34.9%) from Ekiti. A further 48 respondents (12.0%) strongly agreed, with 30 (9.5%) from Lagos and 18 (21.7%) from Ekiti.

On the contrary, 151 women (37.8%) disagreed with the statement, with a large proportion coming from Lagos (143 or 45.1%) and only 8 (9.6%) from Ekiti. Additionally, 32 respondents (8.0%) strongly disagreed, made up of 23 (7.3%) from Lagos and 9 (10.8%) from Ekiti. Interestingly, 21 respondents (5.3%) indicated that the item was not applicable to them. This group included only 3 women (0.9%) from Lagos, but a notable 18 (21.7%) from Ekiti.

Overall, while a significant proportion of women from both states agreed that WeChat is used for political participation, there is also a notable level of disagreement, particularly among respondents from Lagos. The high percentage of 'Undecided' responses from Ekiti may indicate a lower familiarity or usage of the WeChat platform in that region compared to Lagos.

Table 10. Women and the use of *Instagram* for political participation

		State of Residence		Total
		Lagos	Ekiti	
Women participate in politics using Instagram	Strongly Agree	56	13	69
		17.7%	15.7%	17.3%
	Agree	156	22	178
		49.2%	26.5%	44.5%
	Disagree	82	13	95
		25.9%	15.7%	23.8%
	Strongly Disagree	16	11	27
		5.0%	13.3%	6.8%
	Undecided	7	24	31
Total		2.2%	28.9%	7.8%
Total		317	83	400
		79.3%	20.8%	100.0%

The data presented in Table 10 explores women's engagement in political participation through Instagram across two Nigerian states Lagos and Ekiti. Overall, the majority of respondents (44.5%) agreed that women participate in politics using Instagram, with a significantly higher percentage of agreement recorded in Lagos (49.2%) compared to Ekiti (26.5%). Moreover, 17.3 percent of the total respondents strongly agreed with it, with a slightly higher percentage of 17.7 percent recorded in Lagos than the 15.7 percent in Ekiti. These facts indicate that Instagram is viewed as a platform that women can use in political activities, especially among those interviewed in Lagos, which could be the result of Lagos being an urban and digitally orientated area compared to Ekiti, which is a more rural environment.

On the other hand, there was a significant percentage of minorities who differed with the concept, with 23.8 per cent of the total sample in agreement with it, 25.9 per cent in Lagos and 15.7 per cent in Ekiti. In addition, 6.8 per cent of the total respondents urgently disagreed, with the highest percentage in Ekiti (13.3) compared to Lagos (5.0). Interestingly, 71.1% of Ekiti respondents did give an answer, compared to 97.8% in Lagos, which shows that there is a high degree of uncertainty or lack of exposure to Instagram-based political activity among the women in Ekiti. This regional gap demonstrates the role of place and maybe digital access/literacy in the way women view social media platforms as a means of participating in politics.

Table 11. Women and use of *youtube* for political participation

		State of Residence		Total
		Lagos	Ekiti	
Women make use of YouTube for political participation	Strongly Agree	59	21	80
		18.6%	25.3%	20.0%
	Agree	165	21	186
		52.1%	25.3%	46.5%
	Disagree	59	15	74
		18.6%	18.1%	18.5%
	Strongly Disagree	25	12	37
		7.9%	14.5%	9.3%
	Undecided	7	16	21
		2.2%	19.3%	5.3%
Total				
	Total	317	83	400
		79.3%	20.8%	100.0%

Table 12 revealed how women have been using YouTube as an avenue of taking part in politics in both Lagos and Ekiti States. As the data shows, a considerable percentage of the respondents, 46.5% on average, agreed that women use YouTube to receive political information, and the numbers are higher in Lagos (52.1%) than in Ekiti (25.3%). Also, a fifth of the overall respondents highly indicated with this statement, although Ekiti (25.3) led a little over Lagos (18.6) in this. These data show that generally YouTube is considered as a topical platform of women's political participation in Lagos, although Ekiti also proves to be fairly strong in the 'strongly agree' segment.

However, 27.8 per cent of the respondents disagreed (18.5%) or strongly disagreed (9.3%) with the statement, indicating a certain degree of skepticism or non-participation in a significant fraction of the population. It is noteworthy that Ekiti (14.5% compared to Lagos 7.9%) had the highest proportion of women who strongly condemned it, meaning that there may be regional variations in accessibility or use of YouTube for political content. Moreover, 5.3% of all the respondents chose Undecided, and the percentage of Ekiti was more significant (19.3) than in Lagos (2.2). Such a gap also highlights the issue of the digital divide, or variance in the consumption of media between the two states, which may affect the way women access political discourse through media such as YouTube.

Table 12. Women and use of *telegram* for political participation

	State of Residence		Total	
	Lagos	Ekiti		
Women make use of Telegram for political participation	Strongly Agree	38	21	59
		12.0%	25.3%	14.8%
	Agree	61	29	90
		19.2%	34.9%	22.5%
	Disagree	103	9	112
		32.5%	10.8%	28.0%
	Strongly Disagree	81	11	92
		25.6%	13.3%	23.0%
Total	Undecided	34	13	47
		10.7%	15.7%	11.8%
Total		317	83	400
		79.3%	20.8%	100.0%

Table 12 provides a report on the use of Telegram by women in terms of political participation in Lagos and Ekiti States. The results show that the general usage in relation to political activity on Telegram remains low in contrast to other applications, including Instagram and YouTube. It was found that only 14.8% of the entire respondents strongly agreed, with higher rates in Ekiti (25.3%) than Lagos (12.0%). Equally, 22.5% were in agreement with this, with a broader percentage in Ekiti (34.9) compared to Lagos (19.2). This implies that although Telegram is not the mainstream platform that women engage with politically in general, it seems to be relatively more successful in Ekiti than in Lagos, which could be explained by the different preferences in platforms or community-based mobilisation approaches.

On the other hand, a high percentage of the respondents were opposed to the concept. Combined, 51% disagreed (28.0%) and strongly disagreed (23.0%) with the statement, with Lagos showing a significantly stronger level of disagreement (32.5%) and strong disagreement (25.6%) than Ekiti (10.8% and 13.3%, respectively). The results indicate a general pattern of not using or valuing Telegram as a means of political participation within Lagos. Moreover, 11.8% of the respondents chose the option of 'Undecided', with the bigger percentage being in Ekiti (15.7%) than in Lagos (10.7). These data show that Telegram is not popular among women to engage in politics, and there is a significant difference between the regions in terms of its use, with Ekiti women having slightly more positive attitudes towards the platform than their counterparts in Lagos.

Table 13. Women's use of *snapchat* for political participation

	State of Residence		Total	
	Lagos	Ekiti		
<i>Snapchat</i> is used for political participation	Strongly Agree	68	23	91
		21.5%	27.7%	22.8%
	Agree	178	27	205
		56.2%	32.5%	51.3%
	Disagree	45	7	52

		14.2%	8.4%	13.0%
	Strongly Disagree	18	12	30
		5.7%	14.5%	7.5%
	Undecided	8	14	22
Total		2.5%	16.9%	5.5%
	Total	317	83	400
		79.3%	20.8%	100.0%

Table 13 examines the extent to which women use Snapchat as a tool for political participation in Lagos and Ekiti States. The statistics indicate that most of the interviewees have given a positive recognition to the role played by the platform in politics. In particular, 51.3 percent of the overall number of respondents affirmed this side, as 56.2 percent of the respondents in Lagos affirmed that, whereas 32.5% percent of the respondents in Ekiti affirmed that. Also, 22.8% of the respondents strongly agreed, with a slightly higher percentage of Ekiti (27.7%) compared to that of Lagos (21.5%). This data indicates that Snapchat is comparatively reputable as a political communication tool among women, and especially in Lagos, which can be explained by the increased availability of the digital space and the prevalent use of social media to discuss the matters in the city.

Conversely, a small percentage of the respondents (13.0% and 7.5%, respectively) did not agree and strongly disagreed that Snapchat is used to participate in politics, with a higher number of respondents in the former (14.2%) than the latter (8.4%) category in Ekiti and Lagos, respectively. Nonetheless, Ekiti obtained a greater proportion of the strongly disagree section (14.5%) compared to Lagos (5.7%), which might suggest a difference in the perception of how serious or appropriate Snapchat is as a medium to spread political messages. In addition, 5.5% of the respondents chose the option of Undecided, with the percentage of Ekiti (16.9) being larger than the percentage of Lagos (2.5), once again indicating the regionality of the usage or applicability of the platform. In general, this data may indicate that Snapchat is becoming popular as a means of political use among women, but differences in its usage and perceived relevance are quite noticeable between the two states.

The results revealed that socio-political involvement of women in the use of social media is not only influenced by their personal values but also by the accessibility, cost, digital literacy and communication culture of each social media platform. The finding supports the research outcome of Madra-Sawika, et. al., (2020) who reveal that digital technologies can support female empowerment, and that women derive benefits from using digital media technologies at the same level as men. The study aligns with this finding because the active use of Facebook, WhatsApp, X (formerly Twitter), YouTube and Snapchat by women in Ekiti and Lagos demonstrates how digital technologies provide opportunities for women’s inclusion in socio-political discussions and civic engagement. However, WhatsApp has stood out, as it requires minimal technical expertise, uses comparatively little data, and enables users to engage in political conversation via group chats, voice notes, status updates, and video sharing or the dissemination of campaign messages. Due to its interpersonal, community approach, women may feel more comfortable voicing their opinions in semi-public locations rather than more public ones.

The finding revealed that Facebook is useful for women because it has interactive tools like pages, groups, live sessions and comment sections, which allow them to talk

directly to political representatives, advocacy organizations, and other citizens. X is also popular due to its use as a significant forum for political discussion, activism and live coverage of governance and elections. It is frequently employed to spread political information by Nigerian politicians, activists and media groups, and thus is an appealing platform for women who are politically aware, with the desire to quickly get their information. This supports the findings of Chaudhary and Srivastava (2020), who observed that Facebook and X provide women with opportunities to express political opinions and connect with others who share similar political interests. In the same vein, Dijck and Poell (2018) found that social media platforms provide women with spaces for political expression and activism despite societal restrictions. But YouTube's success might be tied to its audiovisual format, making political communication easier for some audiences to communicate with than others. Political speeches, interviews, debates, and civic education videos can be consumed and shared easily. While less politically inclined than the others, Snapchat's entertainment value and visual storytelling capabilities could lure younger women, even if they are indirectly exposed to social and political issues.

In contrast, platforms like LinkedIn, TikTok and WeChat may experience less usage due to their salient differences or a lesser degree of integration in the Nigerian socio-political communication. Much of LinkedIn is about the job and may be less interactive when it comes to politics. Unlike their counterparts in the West, WeChat has not been widely adopted in Nigeria. TikTok, though gaining traction with young people, has been seen as a more entertainment-centric platform than one for important political engagement, even as it has become a platform for political mobilization worldwide.

The results also indicate the potential for digital access differences between women in Lagos State and Ekiti State. As a highly urbanized and economically developed city, Lagos has a more robust network infrastructure, more network connectivity, a higher penetration of smartphones, and a higher intake of digital technologies. Women in Lagos are thus more likely to be active on multiple platforms and to be part of a wider political discussion online. Ekiti state, with a higher proportion of rural and semi-urban communities, may, however, face challenges such as poor internet connectivity, poor electricity supply, lower income levels, and higher data costs. All these can limit women's social media consumption. Thus, women in Ekiti might rely more on easy-to-access and affordable platforms such as WhatsApp and Facebook, compared to data-heavy platforms like YouTube or highly interactive platforms like X. This observation aligns with Madra-Sawika, et. al. (2020), who noted that access to digital technologies significantly influences women's empowerment and participation in digital spaces.

In addition, the urban-rural digital divide can have an impact on the nature of socio-political involvement that is witnessed. Women in Lagos could be more active in online activism, political debates, and online advocacy campaigns, as they have more exposure to information and stronger digital networks. In Ekiti, social media, on the other hand, may be more used by women to share information and discuss matters at a community level than for large-scale political mobilization. This indicates that socio-political engagement via social media is linked closely with other structural factors like infrastructure development, economic capacity, and digital inclusion. The finding also supports Nnabuife, et. al. (2022), who found that exposure to political content on Facebook encourages women's political participation and mobilization.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the study, it is concluded that digital media usage by women significantly contributes to socio-political engagement in the southwest of Nigeria. It is also concluded that *Facebook, WhatsApp, LinkedIn, Instagram, X, YouTube, Snapchat, WeChat, TikTok*, and *Telegram* significantly influence digital media usage by women for socio-political engagement in southwest Nigeria. As observed from the findings, digital media platforms such as *LinkedIn, Instagram, Snapchat, WeChat, TikTok, and Telegram* are less used by women. Therefore, the study recommended that these platforms should be widely promoted among women in Lagos and Ekiti States to promote socio-political participation.

REFERENCES

- Akhter, N. & Mahmud, S. (2020). The relationship between social media use, self-esteem, self-efficacy, and academic performance: Evidence from female university students in Bangladesh. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 11(13), 139-147.
- Akinbobola, Y., Charles, R.-A., & Obia, V. (2024). The media visibility research for young women in politics: The Nigerian report. African Women in Media. Retrieved from <https://africanwomeninmedia.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/YWIP-Nigeria-report.pdf>
- Cardo, V. (2021). Gender politics online? Political women and social media at election time in the United Kingdom, the United States and New Zealand. *European Journal of Communication*, 36(1), 38-52.
- Chaudhary, P., & Srivastava, S. (2020). Digital media and women's political participation in India. In S. Banerjee & S. Sengupta (Eds.), *Digital Democracy in India* (pp. 99-114). Springer. D/Statistics/Documents/gem/GEM2021/GEM2021_Report.pdf
- Dijck, J. van. & Poell, T. (2018). Social media and the transformation of public space: Activism, publicity, and the politics of visibility. *Information, Communication & Society*, 21(4), 450-466.
- Garuba, J., (2024). Audience perception and broadcast media coverage of women's participation in electoral processes in Nigeria. Teras.ng. Retrieved from <https://teras.ng/api/asset/document/019cc465-c85f-450f-9baa-406fb721ad46>
- Lal, B., Kwayu, S., & Ahmed, S. (2020). Women's Political Participation on Social Media: The Case of Tanzania. In *Re-imagining Diffusion and Adoption of Information Technology and Systems: A Continuing Conversation: IFIP WG 8.6 International Conference on Transfer and Diffusion of IT, TDIT 2020, Tiruchirappalli, India, December 18-19, 2020, Proceedings, Part II* (pp. 384-390). Springer International Publishing.
- Mądra-Sawicka, M., Nord, J. H., Paliszkiwicz, J., & Lee, T. R. (2020). Digital media: Empowerment and equality. *Information*, 11(4), 225.
- Nnabuife, C. O., & Nwolu, O. J. (2022). Social media usage and women's political participation in Anambra state, Nigeria. *Nnamdi Azikiwe University Journal of Communication and Media Studies*, 2(2).1-19

- Nnabuike, C. O., Nwolu, O. J., & Ugochukwu, C. C. (2022). Intersection of Facebook Usage and Women Participation in Politics. *Unizik Journal of Gender Research*, 1(1). 92 - 111 <https://journals.aphriapub.com/index.php/UJGR/article/view/1424>
- Oloyede O. (2022), National Bureau of Statistics (NBS, Abuja, Nigeria) Monitoring Participation Of Women In Politics In Nigeria, available at https://unstats.un.org/unsd/gender/Finland_Oct2016/Documents/Nigeria_paper.pdf, page 2, Last accessed on 7/4/2023.
- Samuels, K. (2019). Gender, digital media, and political participation in Latin America. In L. F. Luna-Reyes, J. L. Luna-Medina, & M. Pardo-Tello (Eds.), *Handbook of Research on Digital Transformation and Governance Strategies for Global Business* (245-264). IGI Global.