

Persuasive Technologies on Political Propaganda and Misinformation on Social Media during Elections in Ogun State Nigeria

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Abstract

The rapid integration of digital technologies into political communication has redefined electoral engagement, yet it has also amplified the spread of propaganda and misinformation. In Nigeria, this development poses a growing threat to democratic processes, as political actors increasingly exploit persuasive technologies to manipulate public opinion. This study critically investigates how persuasive technologies, particularly on platforms like X (Twitter) and Facebook, influence political propaganda, misinformation, and voters' opinions during election campaigns. Anchored on a cross-sectional survey design, data were gathered from 395 registered voters in Ogun State using a multistage sampling method guided by Cochran's formula. The study was structured around three key objectives: to assess the extent of use of persuasive technology during elections, examine its impact on political propaganda, and appraise its influence on voter decision-making. Findings revealed that persuasive technology significantly shapes electoral narratives, with statistical analysis confirming its predictive effect on misinformation dissemination ($R^2 = .103$, $p = .000$). The study concludes that digital platforms enhance political engagement and serve as a fertile ground for manipulation. It recommends proactive regulatory frameworks, the promotion of ethical political communication, and the implementation of comprehensive media literacy campaigns.

Keywords: Electoral Campaigns, Misinformation, Persuasive Technology, Political Propaganda, Social Media.

Introduction

Human beings are influenced by a complex interplay of internal and external stimuli, which may stem from diverse domains such as career aspirations, social relationships, economic conditions, and political environments. These motivating forces often evoke varied interpretations and responses. Interestingly, individuals frequently exhibit attitudes and behaviours that stand in contrast to their personal beliefs and values (Pradeep, 2023). Recent scholarship highlights that such inconsistencies can give rise to a state of psychological discomfort or cognitive dissonance, prompting efforts to restore internal coherence (Harmon-Jones & Mills, 2019). To understand the dynamics of cognition that resulted in the development of persuasive technology to support people in overcoming differences between their belief and actual behaviour. To assist in this regard, scientists have employed human-computer interaction targeting various domains, including politics; different persuasive systems for politics are designed primarily to facilitate democracy. Persuasive technology is now deeply integrated into thousands of digital applications, with major corporations such as X (formerly Twitter), Facebook, Snapchat, Amazon, Apple, and Microsoft strategically employing it to influence and direct human behaviour. Social media platforms like Facebook, X, YouTube, and TikTok extend beyond their identities as mere technology companies; they increasingly function as sophisticated psychological ecosystems (Pradeep, 2025). This fusion of behavioural science and digital design has profoundly transformed the political landscape, altering how political messages are crafted, disseminated, and received by the public.

Persuasive technology embedded within social media applications exerts significant psychological influence, shaping and directing human behaviour in ways that extend across various fields, including advertising, public relations, strategic communication, and, notably, political communication. In recent years, a substantial and growing body of scholarly work has illuminated the strong link between social media and electoral processes, indicating that the increasing prominence of these platforms in political discourse holds considerable potential for enhancing political participation. This evolution reflects a shift towards a new paradigm of political engagement, commonly referred to as digital political campaigning, which necessitates that political candidates develop a strategic understanding of social media to effectively engage and persuade the electorate.

Indeed, the use of social media in political campaigns has become a critical tool for disseminating tailored political messages to a broad and diverse audience, particularly those interested in a candidate's political trajectory and agenda. Numerous empirical studies affirm the effectiveness of digital platforms in shaping public perception, influencing voter behaviour, and fostering greater civic engagement. As such, the integration of social media into political strategy is no longer optional but essential for candidates seeking to maintain relevance and connection in an increasingly digitised political environment.

Consequently, political parties and contenders to political offices carry out electioneering campaigns prior to the elections as a way of galvanizing the support of the electorate in order to become victorious. These campaigns are usually done through different platforms among which are the social media. Media mediated propaganda and misinformation have become a powerful weapons to control and influence the modern day digital space/spheres influencing people, communities and democracies on never-before scale (Olanipekun, 2025).

Technology has brought a new paradigm to the dissemination of propaganda that had proliferate the digital era that resulted to new method that subtly succoring and swaying public opinion, like deep fakes, bots, and targeting advertising as deployed in political arena. (Rogers, Bienvenue& Kelton, 2019 stated that digital propaganda has become a potent weapon for influencing political results and public opinion due to tis capacity to micro-target individuals based on their online activities.

The increased accessibility of cell phones has encouraged voters to spread messages during electioneering campaigns, especially among grassroots voters (Baguma et al. 2015). This has new implications for democracy. Social media is therefore being utilized in both pre-election and post-election activities. While technologies can generate new opportunities for political campaigns, mobilization, involvement, and participation, they might also produce false information intended to harm a political rival.

In contemporary times, peUPLrsuasive technologies, particularly social media platforms—have assumed a pivotal role in political mobilisation, civic participation, and electioneering processes, both in developed and developing nations across the globe. Historically, political campaigns have continuously adapted to the evolving landscape of available technologies, with each advancement offering new avenues for political actors to disseminate their manifestos (Ridzuan et al., 2023).

In Nigeria, the 2011 general elections marked a watershed moment in the political use of digital media. For the first time, social networking platforms such as Facebook, blogs, LinkedIn, and other digital channels were harnessed to facilitate political communication and engagement (Kamalrunzzam et al., 2023). This signalled a significant shift in the political communication paradigm, as civil society organisations, political parties, and candidates alike began to explore the potential of these emerging technologies.

Today, persuasive technologies have become indispensable tools through which political actors engage with the electorate, conveying essential information regarding their policies, programmes, and manifestos (Akeliwira et al., 2022). Social media, in particular, has emerged as a powerful medium not only for political discourse but also for fostering social interaction, making it a central component of modern electoral strategies.

Statement of the Problem

In political campaigns, social networking platforms can become potent, and at times, detrimental, tools in the hands of political candidates. These platforms are frequently employed to disseminate a range of content, including videos, voice recordings, feature articles, headlines, and broadcasts, which are often strategically crafted to discredit opposing candidates or individuals. It may therefore be inferred that social media exerts a considerable influence on electioneering activities, both within Nigeria and globally. However, when utilised unethically, such technologies can significantly damage the reputations of political aspirants, contributing to the proliferation of misinformation and political propaganda. In light of this, it is imperative that political communication be grounded in truth, transparency, and substantive content. Only then can the electorate be sufficiently informed to make judicious decisions that support the election of credible and capable leaders into public office.

Public opinion is manipulated through political propaganda to support a political goal or specific government policy. Social media today, serves as a potent instrument for influencing people's choices and decisions. People use what they read or see online to judge and make snap

judgments. It provides the populace with a framework for decision-making that may ultimately influence their choice of lousy leadership.

Because of how the media affects people, some may not be able to think for themselves because the media is in control of them. Media are been used a dangerous weapon by the politicians in order to get citizens to vote and support their opinion during election. The media is used as a medium of passing false information there by misleading people on who to choose as their leader. Often time the media is used to choose who and what the public's to follow as it have a way of sharpening its audience life. It is against this backdrop that this study seeks to evaluate the influence of persuasive technologies on political propaganda and misinformation during the 2023 presidential election.

Objectives of the Study

The primary objective of this study is to investigate the impact of persuasive technologies on political propaganda and the spread of misinformation during election campaigns. The specific objectives are as follows:

- i. To assess the extent to which persuasive technologies are utilised during election periods.
- ii. To examine the influence of persuasive technologies on the dissemination of political propaganda.
- iii. To evaluate the impact of persuasive communication on public opinion during elections.

Research Hypothesis

H₁: There is a significant relationship between the use of persuasive technologies and the propagation of political propaganda and misinformation during elections.

H₀: There is no significant relationship between the use of persuasive technologies and the propagation of political propaganda and misinformation during elections.

Conceptual Review

Persuasive Technologies in Social Media

Persuasive technologies refer to interactive systems designed to change users' attitudes or behaviours through persuasion and social influence, rather than coercion. In the context of social media, these technologies manifest through algorithms that curate content to maximise user engagement, often by exploiting psychological triggers. According to Inobemhe, Ja'afaru, and Garba (2024), the integration of multimedia and algorithm-driven content in social media platforms has significantly influenced voter perceptions and behaviours during Nigeria's 2023 elections. Similarly, Uwalaka, Amadi, and Enyindah (2025) highlight how social media influencers, leveraging persuasive technologies, have become pivotal in shaping political narratives and public opinion in Nigeria. These technologies, while enhancing user experience, raise concerns about manipulation and the ethical implications of influencing political decisions through tailored content.

The ethical considerations surrounding persuasive technologies are multifaceted. On one hand, they offer opportunities for positive engagement and information dissemination; on the other, they pose risks of manipulation and misinformation. Okolo (2024) discusses the challenges posed by AI-generated propaganda in African democracies, emphasising the need for regulatory frameworks to mitigate the spread of disinformation. In Nigeria, the lack of stringent regulations has allowed for the unchecked proliferation of persuasive content, often blurring the lines between genuine information and propaganda (Osimen & Adeyefa, 2023). This underscores the necessity for policies that balance technological innovation with ethical standards to safeguard democratic processes.

Political Participation via Social Media

The advent of social media has revolutionised political participation, particularly among the youth in Nigeria. Platforms like X (Twitter), Facebook, and WhatsApp have become instrumental in mobilising voters, disseminating information, and fostering political discourse. Bello and Kaufhold (2023) note that social media significantly predicts civic engagement and political participation among Nigerian citizens, especially the youth. This digital engagement has been pivotal in recent elections, where online campaigns have translated into increased voter turnout and activism.

However, the influence of social media on political participation is not without challenges. Suemo, Kusugh, and Okonkwo (2023) observed that while social media campaigns have educated voters, they have also been marred by negative ideological themes, including hate speech and misinformation, which can lead to voter apathy. The 2023 general elections in Nigeria witnessed a surge in such content, affecting the quality of political engagement. Therefore, while social media remains a powerful tool for political mobilisation, there is a pressing need for digital literacy programs to help users critically evaluate online content.

Political Propaganda and Disinformation

Political propaganda on social media involves the strategic dissemination of biased or misleading information to influence public perception and political outcomes. In Nigeria, the 2023 elections highlighted the pervasive nature of such propaganda, with various actors leveraging social media to spread disinformation. Osimen and Adeyefa (2023) argue that the lack of regulatory mechanisms has allowed political actors to exploit social media platforms, spreading misleading information that undermines democratic consolidation. This unchecked spread of propaganda poses significant threats to informed decision-making among the electorate.

The international community has also raised concerns about the role of disinformation in democratic processes. Okolo (2024) emphasises the challenges posed by AI-generated propaganda in African democracies, including Nigeria, where such content can influence electoral outcomes and destabilise political systems. The proliferation of deepfakes and other forms of synthetic media further complicates the information landscape, making it difficult for voters to discern truth from falsehood. Addressing these challenges requires a multifaceted approach, including technological solutions, policy interventions, and public awareness campaigns.

Social Media Influence on Nigeria's 2023 Elections

The 2023 general elections in Nigeria underscored the profound impact of social media on political campaigns and voter behaviour. Candidates and political parties extensively utilised platforms like X (Twitter) and Facebook to reach voters, particularly the youth demographic. According to Suemo, Kusugh, and Okonkwo (2023), social media was more frequently used for political campaigns than traditional media, reflecting a shift in campaign strategies. This digital engagement facilitated real-time communication between political actors and the electorate, enhancing transparency and inclusivity.

However, the elections also highlighted the challenges associated with social media use in political contexts. Inobemhe, Ja'afaru, and Garba (2024) discuss how the decentralised nature of social media and the digital divide exacerbated the spread of misinformation during the elections. The lack of effective regulatory frameworks allowed for the unchecked dissemination of false information, undermining the integrity of the electoral process. These challenges underscore the need for comprehensive reforms to enhance transparency, accountability, and ethical standards in the use of social media for political purposes.

Instances of Persuasive Technologies on Political Propaganda and Misinformation during Election 2023 General Elections.

In the 2023 Nigerian general elections, persuasive technologies, particularly X (Twitter) and Facebook, were strategically deployed by major political parties and their presidential candidates to influence public opinion, frame political discourse, and propagate campaign narratives. Bola Ahmed Tinubu of the All Progressives Congress (APC) leveraged targeted Facebook advertisements and algorithmically-boosted content to promote his Renewed Hope agenda, while simultaneously countering opposition narratives with curated testimonials and selective data visualisations (Adebisi&Okonjo, 2023). AtikuAbubakar of the People's Democratic Party (PDP) relied heavily on Twitter to circulate campaign promises and engage followers through emotionally resonant hashtags, many of which were amplified by party-affiliated influencers and digital volunteers (Nwachukwu& Bello, 2024). Peter Obi of the Labour Party (LP), with significant youth support, harnessed both platforms to build a decentralised digital campaign, though some of the content shared by his supporters included doctored videos and unverifiable claims that raised ethical concerns about information accuracy (Eze&Bakare, 2025). These instances reflect a broader trend in which persuasive technologies were not only instrumental in mobilising voters and shaping political allegiance, but also in blurring the boundary between legitimate political persuasion and the dissemination of misinformation, thereby challenging the integrity of electoral communication.

Ethical Implications of Persuasive Technologies

The deployment of persuasive technologies in political contexts raises significant ethical concerns, particularly regarding user autonomy and informed consent. These technologies, designed to influence behaviour, can be exploited to manipulate political opinions and decisions. Uwalaka, Amadi, and Enyindah (2025) highlight the role of social media influencers in Nigeria, who, leveraging persuasive technologies, have been instrumental in shaping political narratives, sometimes without disclosing their affiliations or intentions. This lack of transparency can mislead voters and distort democratic processes.

Addressing the ethical challenges posed by persuasive technologies requires a concerted effort from various stakeholders. Okolo (2024) advocates for the development of regulatory frameworks to govern the use of AI-generated content in political contexts, emphasising the

need for transparency and accountability. In Nigeria, implementing such frameworks is crucial to prevent the manipulation of public opinion and to safeguard the integrity of democratic institutions. Public education campaigns can also play a vital role in enhancing digital literacy and empowering citizens to critically assess the information they encounter online.

Theoretical Underpinning

The Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM), developed by Petty and Cacioppo in 1986, posits two routes to persuasion: the central route, which involves scrutiny of information, and the peripheral route, which relies on superficial cues. Supporters argue that ELM effectively explains how individuals process persuasive messages, particularly in digital contexts where both routes are prevalent (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). However, critics contend that the model oversimplifies complex cognitive processes and does not adequately account for the influence of emotions on persuasion (Stiff & Boster, 1987). In the context of this study, ELM provides a framework for understanding how users of Twitter and Facebook may be influenced by political propaganda and misinformation, depending on their level of message scrutiny.

Social Cognitive Theory (SCT), introduced by Bandura in 1986, emphasizes the role of observational learning, imitation, and modeling in behavior change. Proponents highlight its applicability in understanding media influences on behavior, noting that individuals may adopt attitudes and behaviors observed in others, especially in online environments (Bandura, 1986). Conversely, some scholars argue that SCT underestimates biological predispositions and overemphasizes environmental factors (Schunk & Usher, 2019). Applying SCT to this study suggests that exposure to political content on social media platforms can shape users' perceptions and behaviors through mechanisms of observation and imitation, thereby facilitating the spread of propaganda and misinformation.

Material and Methods

This study employed survey research design to achieve the overall objectives of examining the influence of persuasive technology on political propaganda and misinformation during the election in Ogun State, Nigeria. The population consists of registered voters in Ogun State that was put at 3,751,140 residents according to National Population Census (2006). The sample size was 395 with the adoption of Cochran sample size formula at 95% confidence level and a 5% margin error. Multistage sampling technique was deployed via stratification and simple random sampling techniques. Data were collected through structured questionnaire and analysis was done via descriptive statistics and frequency counts.

Demographic Characteristics

Findings from this study indicate that 61.5 percent (n=243) of the respondents were female electorates. This suggests that female electorates were largely represented and they formed majority of electorates. Also, 57.0 percent (n=225) of the respondents were between the age of 18-25 years. This implies that youth are very active in electoral processes. In addition for a study carried out in south-west geo-political zone, 59.2 percent (n=234) of the electorates were Yoruba.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Table 1

Electorate's opinion on the use of persuasive technology for political campaigns

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Informative	116	29.4	29.4	29.4
Persuasive	174	44.1	44.1	73.4
Interactive	52	13.2	13.2	86.6
Mind changing	36	9.1	9.1	95.7
Credible	17	4.3	4.3	100.0
Total	395	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Work 2025

As depicted in Table 1, 116 (29.4%) of the respondents enunciated that political campaigns on social media platform are informative, 174 (44.1%) of the respondents claimed that political campaigns using social media is persuasive, 52(13.2%) of the respondents stated that political campaigns on social media platform is interactive, 36(9.21%) of the respondents averred that political campaigns on social media platform result to change of mind while 17(4.3%) of the respondent stated political campaigns on social media platform is credible. This result suggests that persuasive technology has revolutionized political processes, approaches and practices.

Table 2

Presidential election candidate uses persuasive technology(social media) during election

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Strongly agree	119	30.1	30.1	30.1
Agree	198	50.1	50.1	80.3
Neutral	50	12.7	12.7	92.9
Strongly disagree	13	3.3	3.3	96.2
Disagree	15	3.8	3.8	100.0
Total	395	100.0	100.0	

Source:Field Work 2025

As demonstrated in Table 2, 119(30.1%) of the respondents strongly agree that presidential election candidate uses persuasive technology (social media) during election, 198(50.1%) of the respondents agree that presidential election candidate uses persuasive technology (social media) during election, 50(12.7%) of the respondents remain neutral that that presidential election candidate uses persuasive technology (social media) during election, 13(3.3%) of the respondents disagree that presidential election candidate uses persuasive technology (social media) during election while the rest 15(3.8%) of them strongly disagree that presidential election candidate uses persuasive technology (social media) during election.

Table 3

Persuasive technology as tools for political propaganda and misinformation during election

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly agree	150	38.0	38.0	38.0
Agree	100	25.3	25.3	63.3
Neutral	86	21.8	21.8	85.1
Strongly disagree	21	5.3	5.3	90.4
Disagree	38	9.6	9.6	100.0
Total	395	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Work 2025

As demonstrated in table 3, 150(38%) of the respondents strongly agree that persuasive is a tool for political propaganda and misinformation during election, 100(25.3%) of the respondents strongly agree that persuasive is a tool for political propaganda and misinformation during election, 86(21.8%) of the respondents remain neutral that persuasive is a tool for political propaganda and misinformation during election, 21(5.3%) of the respondents strongly disagree that persuasive is a tool for political propaganda and misinformation during election while 38(9.6%) of them disagree that persuasive is a tool for political propaganda and misinformation during election.

Table 4

Persuasive technology has an influence on voters' opinion when choosing a political candidate

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly agree	92	23.3	23.3	23.3
Agree	202	51.1	51.1	74.4
Neutral	47	11.9	11.9	86.3
Strongly disagree	15	3.8	3.8	90.1
Disagree	39	9.9	9.9	100.0
Total	395	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Work 2025

As demonstrated in table 4, it shows that 92(23.3%) of the respondents strongly agree that persuasive technology has an influence on voter's opinion when choosing a political candidate, 202(51.1%) of the respondents agree that persuasive technology has an influence on voter's opinion when choosing a political candidate, 47(11.9%) of the respondents remain neutral that persuasive technology has an influence on voter's opinion when choosing a political candidate, 15(3.8%) of them strongly disagree that presidential election candidate uses persuasive technology (social media) during election while remaining 39(9.9%) of the respondents disagree that persuasive technology has an influence on voter's opinion when choosing a political candidate.

Hypothesis Testing

The regression analysis technique in particular, simple linear regression was used to test the hypothesis in order to determine the influence of Persuasive Technology on political propaganda and misinformation among voters

H1: Persuasive Technology has significance influence on Political propaganda and misinformation among voters

Tables depict the result of the linear regression for the influence of persuasive technology on political propaganda and misinformation among voters. Table 5 depicts the model summary; Table 6 depicts the ANOVA while table 7 displays the coefficient information. The result revealed that Persuasive Technology statistically significantly influence Political Propaganda and Misinformation at $p < 0.05$. The R square is .103, accounting for 10.3% of the variance explained. The 10.3% of the R square suggests Persuasive Technology predicts Political Propaganda and Misinformation. The p-value is .000, indicating that the coefficient is statistically significant at the $p < 0.5$ level. It also implies that Persuasive Technology is a significant predictor of political propaganda and misinformation, meaning that Persuasive Technology significantly influences Political Propaganda and Misinformation

Table 5

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.321 ^a	.103	.101	.82906

a. Predictors: (Constant), Persuasive Technology

b. Dependent Variable: Political Propaganda & Misinformation

Table 6

ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	31.113	1	31.113	45.266	.000 ^b
	Residual	270.125	393	.687		
	Total	301.238	394			

a. Dependent Variable: Political Propaganda & Misinformation

b. Predictors: (Constant), Persuasive Technology

Table 7
Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
(Constant)	1.379	.112		12.284	.000	1.158	1.599
1 Persuasive Technology	.329	.049	.321	6.728	.000	.233	.425

a. Dependent Variable: Political Propaganda & Misinformation

b. Predictors: (Constant), Persuasive Technology

Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study reveal that 61.5% of respondents were female, indicating a notable level of female participation in the electoral process. This observation corresponds with recent scholarship pointing to the growing involvement of women in Nigerian politics (Okon&Ojedor, 2025). Additionally, 57.0% of participants were aged between 18 and 25 years, underscoring the increasingly active role of young people in political engagement. This trend is consistent with earlier research that emphasises the central role of youth in shaping political discourse through social media platforms (Owolabi, 2025). Furthermore, 59.2% of respondents identified as Yoruba, which reflects the demographic composition of the South-West geopolitical zone and suggests that ethnic identity may play a role in shaping patterns of political engagement.

With regard to the use of persuasive technology in political campaigning, 44.1% of respondents perceived social media campaigns as persuasive, while 29.4% found them primarily informative. These findings underscore the dual function of social media as both a persuasive tool and a conduit for political information, significantly shaping voter perception. This aligns with the study by Okon and Ojedor (2025), which found that social media campaigns played a critical role in influencing voters during the 2023 general elections. The interactive nature of digital platforms allows for direct engagement between political candidates and the electorate, thereby enhancing both the credibility and reach of campaign messages.

A substantial majority (80.2%) of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that presidential candidates made use of persuasive technology during election campaigns. This widespread adoption is supported by Owolabi (2025), who observed that by 2019, all major political parties in Nigeria had established and continually expanded their presence across digital platforms. The strategic deployment of these technologies enables political actors to reach wider audiences, customise messages for specific demographic groups, and respond swiftly to emerging political developments.

However, the study also draws attention to concerns regarding the use of persuasive technology as a vehicle for political propaganda and the dissemination of misinformation. A combined 63.3% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that social media was employed for such purposes during elections. This is consistent with the findings of Onigbinde et al. (2024), who documented the prevalence of fake news, conspiracy theories, and politically motivated disinformation across Nigeria's media landscape. The spread of unverified or deliberately

misleading content can significantly distort public opinion, exacerbate political polarisation, and undermine the integrity of democratic processes.

Additionally, 74.4% of participants agreed or strongly agreed that persuasive technology influences voters' decisions when selecting political candidates. This highlights the considerable impact that digital campaigns can have on electoral outcomes. Supporting this, Okon and Ojedor (2025) found that social media not only increased political participation but also played a determinative role in shaping the outcome of the 2023 presidential elections. Given the speed at which information circulates online, both constructive messages and misleading narratives can exert substantial influence on voter behaviour.

The hypothesis was tested using linear regression analysis, which revealed that persuasive technology has a statistically significant effect on political propaganda and misinformation ($R^2 = .103$, $p < 0.05$). This suggests that approximately 10.3% of the variance in political propaganda and misinformation can be explained by the use of persuasive technologies. These results corroborate the findings of Onigbinde et al. (2024), who noted that social media platforms have become key conduits for disinformation, strategically used to shape public perception during electoral cycles. The statistical significance of this relationship underscores the need for effective countermeasures to mitigate the misuse of persuasive technologies.

Overall, the findings are in harmony with existing literature and theoretical perspectives that acknowledge the dual-edged nature of persuasive technologies in political communication. While such platforms offer unprecedented opportunities for civic engagement and information dissemination, they also introduce significant risks concerning the propagation of false or manipulative content. These insights underscore the urgency of implementing robust media literacy initiatives and regulatory frameworks to ensure that persuasive technologies contribute constructively to democratic governance.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study concludes that persuasive technologies, particularly social media, play a critical role in shaping political discourse, influencing public opinion, and facilitating both the dissemination of legitimate information and the spread of misinformation during election campaigns. The findings reveal that social media serves as an effective tool for political engagement, persuasion, and mobilisation, while also functioning as a channel through which propaganda and false narratives may be disseminated. Furthermore, the data indicate that a significant proportion of voters rely on these platforms for political information, with a measurable and statistically significant impact on their electoral choices.

Based on the findings of this study, it is recommended that:

- Electoral and media regulatory bodies should implement stricter measures to curb the spread of misinformation on social media platforms, thereby safeguarding the integrity of the electoral process.
- Political parties and candidates must commit to ethical standards in their campaign strategies, prioritising transparency, accuracy, and disseminating verifiable information rather than resorting to disinformation or smear tactics.
- Comprehensive media literacy campaigns should be intensified to equip citizens, particularly young voters, with the skills to critically evaluate political information, distinguish credible sources, and resist manipulation.
- Social media companies should strengthen content moderation policies and algorithms to detect and limit the spread of misleading political content, while ensuring that measures taken do not infringe upon legitimate freedom of expression.

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