

Influence of Peter Obi's Media Engagement on 2022 Voters Registration among the Youths of Nkanu West L.G.A Enugu State

Odii, Chijioke PhD[♦], Mrs. Ijeoma Adeline Ikwueze[♥], Sebastine C. Okafor[▲] & Nwobodo, Amarachi Josephine[↔]

Abstract

This work aimed in investigating the “Influence of Peter Obi’s Media Engagement on 2022 Voter’s Registration among the Youths of Nkanu West LGA of Enugu State”. In conducting this work four research objectives were raised, among this objectives are; To ascertain the extent to which youths in Nkanu West LGA were exposed to Peter Obi’s media engagement, To find out the extent to which Peter Obi’s media engagement influenced the knowledge level of youths on the voter’s registration and to also determine the extent to which Peter Obi’s media engagement influence the attitude of youths on voters registration. Relevant materials were reviewed and theories of Agenda Setting and Social Judgment were use as theoretical framework for this research work. Survey research method was used to investigate the variables in this work using the instrumentality of questionnaire; after the analysis finding showed that the youth of Nkanu West LGA were greatly exposed (90%) to Peter Obi’s media engagement it was also found that (60%) of the Youths have a good knowledge Peter Obi’s media engagement and the result also showed that the Peter Obi media engagement influence their behaviour. Based on this findings it was recommended among others that the political candidates should embrace the media engagement especially social media for successive political campaigns that grants the electorate the interactive opportunity with the political candidates. Also, the government should think of trying to regulate the operations of media. They should think out a way of verifying or regulating “who posts what” in these media urgently. Also, very pertinent that the media and INEC should introduce strategies that will enhance the effectiveness of the media in enlightening and sensitising the

[♦] **Odii, Chijioke** PhD, is of the Department of Mass Communication, Renaissance University Ugbawka and the Dean, Faculty of Management and Social Sciences. chijiokeodii@gmail.com, 08030880896

[♥] **Mrs. Ijeoma Adeline Ikwueze** is a Lecturer Mass Communication Department, Faculty of Management Sciences. Enugu State University of Science and Technology, Enugu. ijeoma.ikwueze@esut.edu.ng, 08063278835

[▲] **Sebastine C. Okafor** is a Lecturer in the Mass Communication Department, Faculty of Management Sciences. Enugu State University of Science and Technology, Enugu

[↔] **Nwobodo, Amarachi Josephine** is of the Department of Mass Communication, Faculty of Management Sciences, Enugu State University of Science and Technology (ESUT)

electorate so as to positively change their perception of the influence of political candidate on voter registration exercise.

Introduction

The media is regarded as a crucial component of the political system in developing nations like Nigeria. This is due to the fact that they make information available on which the public bases its political opinions and informs its political activities. The level of awareness, responsibility and participation in any democratic society such as ours depend largely on the activities of the mass media (Santas, Asemah & Jumbo, 2020). Media play an important role in motivating the voters as Alexis de Tocqueville also considered media as a source of increasing political participation.

Election period consists of series of processes and activities leading to the actual day which electorate would cast their vote for the preferred candidate. Periodic elections are essential to the efficient operation of a democratic system in a normal democratic environment because they provide the platform and mechanism by which citizens can select the leaders and representatives they wish to represent them in the administration of political governance in the state. In the entire process of the election period, the media play critical roles throughout the electoral process. In addition to promoting public debate and educating citizens, they monitor the integrity of the process and can be a primary vehicle for accountability demands (International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, 2015).

Election period in Nigeria is usually characterised by heightened activity where almost all aspects of the nation's life are pushed to a fever pitch. Election period generates a lot of interest among the political candidates, the electorate and civil society, because the destiny of the people and the nation rests squarely on the shoulders of the successful candidates at the polls (Ende, 2013). One of the major activities in the build up to the election is the voter's registration exercise, which is organised to ensure that only members of the public who are registered by the electoral body are allowed to vote during elections (ACE Project, 2016).

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) is the electoral umpire that is charged with the conduct of elections in Nigeria. The Commission is responsible to organise elections into various political offices in the country.

In preparation to the 2019 general elections, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) on the 27th of April, 2017 to 30th September, 2018 announced the commencement of the Continuous Voter Registration (CVR) exercise. This is in pursuance to the 2010 Electoral Act (as amended) which mandates the Commission to carry out Continuous Voter Registration Exercise. The exercise was targeted at the registration

of citizens who turned 18 years of age after the last registration exercise; or those who hitherto were 18 and above but for one reason or the other could not register in the previous registration exercise (INEC, 2018).

As part of their pre-election activity, the INEC was expected to mobilise Nigerians to participate in the voter registration exercise. In order to fulfill this mandate, the Commission in collaboration with the media where to provide the electorate with trustworthy electoral information, education on voter registration, candidates and party options, and voting processes and locations.

The media is vital to this function considering the power they wield in public opinion formation and mass mobilisation effort in ensuring citizens participation in national causes. It is worthy of note that part of the preparation expected by INEC and the media to ensure the success of any voter registration exercise is voter education. Prior to the build up to the 2023 elections majority of Nigerian voters were apathetic to the electoral process. The emergence of Peter Obi, former two-term governor of Anambra state as the Presidential candidate of Labour Party has changed all that. Peter Obi current media engagement has trigger many youths interest toward the 2023 election which the nation is witnessing the first real emergence of a people's movement that is focusing on Nigerians coming together to elect their government on the basis of the recognition that it is all about them and their future. The movement called "OBIDIENTS" is causing a shift in political organizing and engagement with support groups emerging daily to support the organic growth of what is now the Peter Obi phenomenon (Thisday news, 16th December, 2022). In a marked departure from political grandstanding, the face of the movement, Peter Obi, is consistently elevating political discourse, not tearing at others' throats but rather engaging in well-articulated national agenda based on a new approach to governance, an approach that underlies his perspective and future-forward positioning for the country. It is against the backdrop of this revelation that this study examines the extent to which Peter Obi's media engagement influence youths to participate in 2022 voter's registration.

Statement of the Problem

Nigerians are generally less concern or even totally uninterested in electoral matters, resulting in low voter turnout at elections. President Goodluck Jonathan adopted the use of Facebook in his presidential election campaigns and actually became the first in Nigeria to adopt such strategy that has increasingly made an inroad into our electoral process and in the overall political environment. This youths apathy towards election obviously does not augur well for sustenance of democracy in the country, hence the sensitization and mobilization drive by former

governor of Anambra State Mr. Peter Obi and Peter Obi support group to encourage youths of eligible age to participate in the electoral process by registering and also voting for candidates of their choices. Apart from the traditional media, the social media is another medium through which the presidential candidate of the labour party has been engaging the youths in preparation of the 2023 general election. This study is to examine the use of media as a veritable mobilization tool for electioneering campaigns in general elections with a focus on south eastern Nigeria. The study therefore seeks to examine the influence of Peter Obi's media engagement on 2022 voter's registration among the youths of Nkanu West LGA of Enugu State.

Research Question

1. To what extent does youths in Nkanu West L.G.A were exposed to Peter Obi's media engagement?
2. To what extent does Peter Obi's media engagement influence the knowledge level of youths on the voter's registration?
3. How does Peter Obi's media engagement influence the attitude of youths on voter's registration?
4. To what extent does Peter Obi's media engagement influence youths in Nkanu West to participate to voters registration?

Research Hypothesis

The following hypothesis is stated below;

H0: Peter Obi's media engagement has no significant influence the on 2022 voter's registration among the youths of Nkanu West LGA of Enugu state.

H1: Peter Obi's media engagement has significant influence the on 2022 voter's registration among the youths of Nkanu West LGA of Enugu State.

Literature Review

Overview of Peter Obi's Media Forum that Ignite Youths into Massive Voters Registration

Since leaving office as governor of Anambra State four years ago, Mr. Peter Obi, has been active in the public space as if on a campaign trail giving lectures and speeches on leadership and management. No doubt he deserves the attention coming to him on account of his perceived performance in office. It is not in our character that a governor left his state better than he met it; outside Lagos, Obi is the only governor that remarkably improved on the state's fortunes from what he inherited.

For instance, Obi inherited a state that was largely politically divided and captured by some vested interests that appropriated its resources for personal gains. Its infrastructure was run down and some wilfully destroyed to score politically point. Development projects were non existence because public resources were hijacked by the god fathers to feather their own nest. A place like Onitsha, the commercial centre and a major source of internally generated revenue for the government, was in deplorable condition and a no-go area as vicious hoodlums held its residents and travellers hostage, beside the atrocious and really frustrating traffic.

Obi rose to the challenge and in eight years proved that once there is the will anything can be accomplished. The transformation in Onitsha, for instance, was breathtaking. He declared war against the Bakassi Boys who took laws into their hands for the slightest pretext, using soldiers to checkmate their reign of violence; then he cleared the town of the hoodlums and robbers who terrorised everybody day and night; he cleared the environmental eyesore in the town and removed all the traffic bottle necks that kept people for as much as four hours for just a ten minutes drive across the town from head bridge to Upper Iwaka. Recently, the overwhelming turn-out in the just concluded INEC Continuous Voter Registration (CVR) exercise by youth who earnestly desire to collect their Permanent Voter Cards (PVCs).

According to The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), it recorded a total of approximately 12.3 million fresh registrants out of which 8.8 million, that is 71%, are youth, as at July 31, 2022 when it ended the exercise. Recall that this CVR started as far back as June 2020, but it was only after Obi dumped PDP and pitched his tent with Labour Party in June this year did the nation witness the unprecedented surge in voter registration. Take note also that since the return to democracy in 1999 this nation has never witnessed this sort of massive youth involvement.

Also this, in the 2019 general elections, more than half of the registered voters (51.11%) were between the ages of 18 and 35, while 30% were between the ages of 36 and 50. So with an additional over eight million Nigerians, between the ages of 18 and 35 who have already registered to collect their Permanent Voters Card (PVC) for the 2023 elections, the youth percentage has further increased astronomically.

Another factor to note is the use of BVAS technology and the expected adherence to the 2022 Electoral Act which states that results must be electronically transmitted. Bimodal Voter Accreditation System (BVAS), as you know, is an electronic device designed to read Permanent Voter Cards (PVCs) and authenticate voters - using the voters' fingerprints - in order to prove that they are eligible to vote at a

particular polling unit. This will drastically reduce rigging of elections. The Peter Obi Movement, against some permutations has not stymied but seems to be gathering steam. What is it that ensures this upsurge in Obi's popularity?

In a nutshell, it has to do with his issues-based messages, his persona, and his pedigree. Peter Obi's message is clear and it resonates. It is the mindset of a true change agent. He tells the youth that it's not about him and Datti Baba-Ahmed, but it's about them, you and I, our dreams, aspirations, beliefs and hopes. He makes it abundantly clear that it's about Nigerians and the government he will form in May 2023 working together to make things happen. His emphasis for the true change that endures is about focusing on our issues, our dreams, our beliefs and our aspirations.

It's essentially his pedigree, his remarkable life of exemplary prudent conduct in his private life and public service as former governor of Anambra state, for eight years. Unlike the other candidates, he is credible and has no baggage which makes the youths to believe.

Some of his outstanding accomplishments, Anambra state was rated the least indebted state in Nigeria by the Debt Management Office (DMO). During his tenure, Anambra was adjudged by the Federal Ministry of Works as the state with the best network of roads in the country having asphalted over 800 kilometres of roads.

Obi re-opened long-closed schools and returned Missionary schools to the original owners with a grant of N6 billion for their rehabilitation, distributing over 30,000 computers and internet access to over 500 schools.

With this transformational activity, Anambra state students for the first time achieved first place nationwide in the 2011, 2012, and 2013 WASSCE and NECO examinations. He also ensured the payment of over N35 billion in outstanding pensions and gratuities in the state since 1999.

Perhaps Obi's greatest legacy in office was his financial prudence. He funded development projects without borrowing money from financial institutions nor raising bonds, and he handed over to his successor the sum of N75 billion in form of cash, local and foreign investments. I could go on, ad infinitum.

Peter Obi View on a New Nigeria

It is evidently clear. It is an integrated thinking. For him, it goes beyond the tokenism that attends our attempts at building infrastructure, on the rent seeking that we have all come to regard as the way of doing business. The way forward for him is that all investments whether in the structure of the nation, the educational system, rail, power, roads, health, and security must answer one question: How will Nigeria be globally

competitive in the new age – the post digital age? How do we enhance and release the creative energies of our people instead of turning on each other? This new thinking is a developmental future forward positioning as against politicking posturing. It is only Peter that can commit to this new thinking because he has embraced at his core, the concept of transparency in government and accountability to the people.

But more important is the admonition and note of caution which Dele Farotimi, lawyer and human rights activist, gave on Arise TV, your sister station, very recently, and also published in your paper subsequently.

He said Obi is the only candidate that has energised the youth and giving them hope in this season and if that hope is dashed, or if the Nigerian state contrives to take away what, according to him, “appears to be the only reason that the Nigerian youth wakes up in the morning with hope in his heart then there would be reasons to be afraid, there would be several reasons to fear, because hope denied provokes violence.”

Voters Registration Exercise

Voter registration is an important basis to ensure equal and universal participation of eligible voters in a given election. It entails the capturing and registering of all eligible voters so that they can exercise their civic responsibilities during period of elections. In addition, based on the number of registered voters, important decisions are taken during an election process, such as determining the number of administrative units and location of polling stations, the number of ballots and election materials to be printed and allocated to polling stations and the calculation of voter turnout. Transparency, accuracy and inclusiveness are key aspects to ensure the integrity of a voter registration process and the credibility of voter lists (Hand Book for the Observation of Voter Registration, 2012).

A transparent, accurate and inclusive voter registration process allows eligible voters to exercise their fundamental civil right to vote, while acting as a safeguard against attempts to manipulate the process. The voter list informs voters of the specific location where they are able to vote and indicates their eligibility to polling officials. At the same time, a voter list ensures that every voter is only able to vote once and prevent those who are ineligible from casting a ballot. Voter registration also offers opportunities to enhance public confidence in the election process. It has also been described as process of gatekeeping with the capacity to take into account on eligible voters – providing the needed access whilst ensuring that only those registered are given access to voting at polling centers (Celeste, Thornburgh & Lin, 2006). A key important recommendation is that voters be given access to the voter register prior

to election day to check that their information is correct, and a window of opportunity be given to them, so they should be able to challenge any inaccuracies through a timely process. Again, certified true copies of the voter register are also provided to political parties and candidates so they can verify that their supporters are included and use the information to conduct their campaigns.

A popular opinion in the democratic setting is that voter registration establishes the eligibility of individuals to vote. As one of the more costly, time-consuming and complex aspects of the electoral process, it often accounts for a considerable portion of the budget, staff time and resources of an election management authority. If conducted well, voter registration confers legitimacy to the election process. The entire electoral process may be perceived as illegitimate should the registration system be flawed. Voter registration, by virtue of its importance is considered to be the most central and expensive aspect of the electoral process. The task of registering voters and producing voters' lists often accounts for more than 50 percent of the overall cost of administering elections (Electoral Knowledge Network, 2020). In modern times, funds are budgeted for technology acquisition in a bid to reduce the vulnerability of the system to manipulations and it is that singular exercise that makes the process expensive. This is done to reduce to its minimum cases of electoral irregularities in the Nigerian electoral system.

Voting and election are virtuous features of the modern democratic society. To appreciate the connection between voting and election, eligible voters must be enlightened and sensitised about their rights and obligations, the modus operandi of the electoral process, the informed and non-prejudicial choices they make during election, amongst others. By educating voters, they will meaningfully participate in elections; and turnout will also increase, thereby providing a frame for protecting, sustaining and institutionalising a culture of credible elections and popular participation in governance (Centre for Democracy and Development, 2015). It is upon the basis of the foregoing, that the legitimisation of the electoral process in modern democratic societies rests and Nigeria is not an exception.

In Nigeria, by the virtue of Section 2 B (1) of the Electoral Act of 2010 (as amended), INEC is responsible and has the power to conduct voter registration and election in the country. However, INEC alone cannot shoulder this onerous task without the collaboration of other stakeholders. It is imperative and instructive to note that INEC has over the years partnered with so many stakeholders from both public and private domains like National Orientation Agency (NOA), Civil Society Organisations (CSO's), Political Parties, Religious Organisations, local, national, regional and international Non-governmental Organisations

(NGO's) and a host of other bodies to provide the electorate with basic information on how to embark on voter registration, collection of Permanent Voter's Cards, and Continuous Voters Registration Exercise. Galadima (2019), citing Chiroma (2018) further identified the functions of INEC to include:

- i. Arrange and conduct the registration of persons qualified to vote and prepare, maintain and revise the register of voters for the purpose of any election under this constitution.
- ii. Organise, undertake and supervise all elections to the offices of the President and Vice- President, the Governor and Deputy Governor of a State and to the membership of the Senate, the House of Representatives and the House of Assembly of each state of the federation.
- iii. Register political parties in accordance with the provisions of the constitution and Act of the National Assembly.
- iv. Monitor the organisation and operation of the political parties, including their finances; conventions, congresses and party primaries.
- v. Arrange for the annual examination and auditing of the funds and accounts of political parties and publish a report on such examination and audit for public information.
- vi. Undertaking of civic and voter's education.
- vii. Monitor of campaigns Politics.
- viii. Delimitation of constituencies.
- ix. Conduct referenda and recall of elected officials.
- x. Conducting sound democratic election process.

Electronic Voting and Voters Registration in Nigeria

A register of voters is an indispensable document for the conduct of elections; which should consist of only the eligible voters in a constituency. A reliable voter's register is one that contains no names of under aged, deceased persons and fictitious or fake names. In addition, the voters register should also consist of names of eligible voters resident in the area where they intend to vote; and in an ideal situation provisions should be available for making claims and observations about the details of the electorate contained in the register. Thus, the process of voter registration is a major test of the credibility of the election administration system; and the extent to which any election would be successful is determined largely by the credibility of the voters register (Moveh, 2015:16). Relatively, Diamond (2010) affirms that the Internets decentralised nature and capacity to reach large numbers of people instantaneously are well suited to grassroots organising. In contrast to

television and radio, the new ICTs are two-way and even multiday forms of communication.

Relatively, the methods used in registration of voters and conducting elections in Nigeria from 1999 to 2017 ranges from the use of typewriters to Direct Data Capture Machine (DDCM), Electronic Voters' Register (EVR), Smart Card Reader (SCR) and e-collation. (Ayeni and Esan, 2018:2). In the same vein Moveh (2015,p.22-23) noted that unlike in the 1999-2011 general elections a fresh voter registration exercise was not conducted for the 2015 general elections. Instead a continuous voter registration exercise was conducted to give Nigerians who just turned 18years and those who did not register in 2011 the opportunity to register and vote in the 2015 general elections. The continuous voter registration exercise for the 2015 general elections therefore commenced in November 2014; and the major improvement over the previous registration exercises conducted by INEC for the 1999-2011 general elections, as earlier noted was the issuance of permanent voter cards to the electorate, which INEC insisted was going to be used in the 2015 general elections.

According to Assibong and Oshanisi (2018,p.2), the smart card reader which was used for the first time in Nigeria's electoral process was the most contentious issue and a critical component of the 2015 general elections in Nigeria but remains one of the greatest innovative technologies in the history of Nigerian elections. The smart card reader is a technological device setup to authenticate and verify on election day a Permanent Voter Card (PVC) issued by INEC. The device uses a cryptographic technology that has ultra-low power consumption, with a single core frequency of 1.2GHz and an Android 4.2.2. Operating System. In other words, the card reader is designed to read information contained in the embedded chip of the permanent voter's card issued by INEC to verify the authenticity of the Permanent Voter's Card (PVC) and also carry out a verification of the intending voter by matching the biometrics obtained from the voter on the spot with the ones stored on the PVC.

Anderson *et al.*, (2017:78) concludes that the 2011 general elections in Nigeria heralded the use of Information Communication Technologies (ICTs) in the history of electioneering process, while 2015 elections experienced an explosive use of it. President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan and other contestants made extensive use of the platforms enabled by ICTs in the campaign process. Some key players who were active in the 2011 and 2015 general elections are political candidates, civil society organizations (C.S.O), INEC, volunteer groups, security agents and electorates. Conforming to Assibong and Oshanisi (2018,p.3) the use of the card reader for the 2015 general elections was also criticized on the premise that its timing was too close for over a sixty eight million Nigerian voters. Considering the fact that the device was relatively a new

technology that has not been tested or tried in Nigeria, it was therefore argued that INEC should step aside the card reader in the 2015 general elections.

The media was at the forefront of the agitation for electoral reforms, reporting irregularities and malpractices that characterized the 2003 and 2007 elections and called for immediate actions after elections (Omoera, 2010). There is sadness in every Nigerians eye regarding election due to the huge electoral mal practice. To Nigerians everything about the elections in remains bad because mandate are bought and sold without reflecting the Nigerians mandates. However, the media played a crucial role in the emergence of Buhari as the president of Nigeria and for the first time in 16th years PDP lost presidential election. Everything worked well for Buhari due to the media and Nigerians were able to report real voting situation to INEC handle to face book page. For Nigerian politician, they are aware that social media have changed the way Nigerians think, write and react to all the political process build up before and after elections. They all have political digital campaignist who strategically manage their social media platform either through face book, YouTube or twitter to sell their political agenda and party manifestos to the public to know their candidates and why they should vote for their party. Through the reading or watching this in return influence their voting decision. Therefore there is a strong relationship between social media and politics. The new digital media tools as earlier mentioned have not only changed political campaigning through the internet and news reporting but as well influence voting and vote casting. In developed countries like US votes are also cast online. As well electoral fraud are also reported online with this, in Nigeria social media can serve as means to reduces electoral violence and with hope that 2019 could be fair and better than 2015 general elections.

Media as Political Engagement in the Electoral Process

Today, due to increased mass media platforms, the number of political information is also increasing. This increased information is directly correlated with the increased number of voters.

For instance, in 2004, more than 75 million United States population actively engaged in gathering political information through different media platforms. However, in 2000, only 29.0% of the population searched for political information through media resources (Larson, 2004). Various studies focused on the influence of mass media on voters' political engagement during elections. In this regard, D. V. Dimitrova et al., (2011) also examined the effects of mass media on political information and knowledge during the elections.

Matthes (2011) noted that media educate the public about the importance of their votes to strengthen the democratic process. By reporting about the election campaigns, media platforms also facilitate the public to raise their concerns and voice their opinion. Political parties communicate with the public, convey their message, and actively encourage them to participate in the electoral process. Burford, (2012) also investigated the impacts of mass media on voters' participation in the elections. Moreso, many posts motivated the audience to participate and vote actively for the Muslim Council of Britain (MCB). Likewise, Sokhan, (2014) investigated the impacts of mass media on motivating and reinforcing political participation during- the Cambodia elections in 2014. Gil de Zúñiga *et al.*, (2014) considered reinforcing political participation as a joint effort of conventional and new media strategies. As newspapers, television, and radio deliver information, new media further motivate to share, receive and validate this information. This describes the multifunctional role of media platforms being as informers, motivators, and ensuring political participation. In this regard, Moeller *et al.*, (2014) scrutinized the impacts of both traditional and new media on political activities and participation during the elections.

According to Baran (2010) "The internet is characterized by freedom and self governance, which are also the hallmarks of true democracy. It is no surprise then that computer technology is often trumpeted as the newest and best tool for increased democratic involvement and participation."

Since the 2000 U.S elections, more and more Americans have begun using the internet for receiving their news and political information. As a result, Politicians as a whole have begun using the internet more and more for campaigning. (Deluca 2009). However a certain Senator Barack Obama took it to another level entirely in 2008. Senator Obama was aspiring to accomplish what had never been achieved before in U.S politics someone from a minority race (Afro-Americans, Hispanics, Jews,) becoming the President of the United States of America. In order to stand a chance at all Sen. Obama had to find a way to reach out to a critical segment of the electorates that were hitherto "unreachable" and minorities. He found the 'bridge' in the form of social media. Being internet -savvy, he put his skills to good use by opening and operating a Facebook account My Space account, Twitter account. He also uploaded speeches on You Tube and created a website mybarackobama.com which he used for mobilizing supporters and campaigning. Obama's utilization of social media for campaigning proved to be very popular not only among the youths, grassroots and minorities but also among the majority of Whites in America. According to Twitaholic.com Obama has about 9 million followers on Twitter, while he has got about 22 million 'friends'

on Facebook. He is credited as having 'cultivated' the largest number of volunteers and also setting a new record of largest campaign donations in the history of D.S politics. The 2008 D.S presidential election also witnessed an unprecedented mass participation of and minorities group in the electoral process which eventually led to the epoch making victory of internet savvy Sen. Obama over his internet-deficient rival Sen. John McCain. Back home in Nigeria, politicians, including Ex-President Goodluck Jonathan, have joined the social media bandwagon for political purposes. As if seemingly taking a cue from President Obama's successful use of the internet to win his election, Ex-President Jonathan also made aggressive use of social media to connect with millions of electorates on both Facebook and Twitter. It would be recalled that Ex-President Jonathan finally declared his intention to run for the post of Presidency in the 2011 presidential election on Facebook three days before formally announcing at a rally. He has about 590, 190 followers on Facebook as at 14th of July.

The increasing penetration of internet and telephone technology has culminated in an embrace of social media platforms by the Nigerian electorates, especially the youths who are increasingly becoming very vibrant and technology savior-faire. To connect with this target group, Nigeria politicians had no choice but to leverage on the media platform through which they could be reached easily. President Goodluck Jonathan of Nigeria joined Facebook about 10 months ago, and was able to attract over 100, 000 fans in less than 20 days. At present, he has over 500, 000 fans on the social networking site. His current Facebook fan base number places him second only to that of United States, President Obama among other world Presidents on Facebook.

The role of Media in Mobilization for Electoral Participation

The new media technologies have arguably enhanced the communication process in a wide range of human endeavours and the political environment no doubt is experiencing a great deal of the impact of new media phenomenon (Nwabueze & Ezebuonyi, 2012). However, the growing recognition and utilization of social media and their application in the political process underscore the role which social media have assumed in the world today. In Nigeria for instance, the unwholesome reliance on godfatherism is gradually giving way to online tactical crafting and packaging of persuasive messages by campaign managers and political parties with an aim to consciously persuade Nigerian voters to vote in their candidates (Ezebuonyi & Ejezieh, 2012).

According to Dunu & Oraka (2004), the tremendous fact of the new media technologies has definitely furnished the communication industry with revolutionary positive changes unprecedented. According to them,

Nigeria, like other countries of the world, has also benefited in terms of improved technology output, variety offerings, improved resources and quality output occasioned by the new media revolution. This art and science of information management through the new media seem to be gaining more grounds in our political landscape.

Thus, political advertising is today carried online (Kur & Melladu, 2007, p.31). The election campaign that saw Barack Obama become the President of the United States of America (USA) in 2008/ 2012 was characterized by effective and efficient information management ability interfacing the deployment of the new media technologies by his ability to use online platforms to attract the electorate commonly known as friends of Obama with the slogan “change is possible”. Following the same trend, President Goodluck Jonathan also adopted an online information management skill in his 2011 presidential election campaigns and actually become the first in Nigeria to use such strategy that has increasingly made an inroad into our electoral process and in the overall political environment (Ezebuonyi & Ejezieh, 2012).

Social media help large groups to gather in a short amount of time. They also provide a platform for people to express their solidarity both within the country and with others in the region and beyond. Platforms like Facebook, Twitter are being credited with helping to propel the Arab Revolution (Hunter, 2011). Still harping on the role of the new media, Ikem (2011, p.5) argues:

The place of social media (new media) to rally political support is no longer in doubt. To advance the conversation and mobilize political support, social media have become a crucial political tool. Facebook, Twitter and other social networks reinforce political messages and build online and offline support that will help drive interesting debates about any politician and/or political party. In fact, the social media provide a potential to stream and broadcast real live political rallies and party conventions online, in such a way that supporters, who cannot participate physically can be involved from a distance effortlessly.

Commenting further, Ikem (2011) observes that whereas the dependence of the politicians on traditional media for political campaigns will certainly be noticeable and cannot be completely discarded, modern trends of the new media seem to be eroding the gains of the traditional media. In a changing world, it is impossible to advance democratic change and development with old tools. Today, leaders need to understand the role of changing communication technology for politics

and society. This is the use of the new media in the field of governance and political development to increase citizens' participation in the political process. The topic, "e-government" was presented as a vision that will give impetus to greater socio-political interactivity.

Furthermore, through the diffusion of the Internet, new media have been variously involved in the restructuring of socio-cultural economic and political relationships and environments all over the world (Nkala, 2012). This has been evident in the pervasiveness of user-generated content and the ways it is used to support social networking. The diffusion of this development is already revolutionizing all facets of human endeavor and the political process is not left out (Nwabueze, 2005). With the rise of social networking technologies, isolated actors with common aims increasingly use online tools to connect, share, discuss and organize.

Impoverished Hierarchies of Participatory Influence in the April 6th Youths Movement Facebook Group", seeks to better understand the mechanisms of influence and participatory structures of a single, open political Facebook group that has successfully organized offline action without relying on a defined hierarchical structure.

Empirical Review

Several studies have been undertaken by scholars to investigate media coverage of the electoral process in Nigeria. Few of these studies would be discussed in order to establish the role played by the media in the conduct of elections in the country. The literature review section will also provide a view of the key aspects of electoral matters the media has given prominence in their coverage and focus with a view to unravel their contribution so far. This is done with a view to better understand the input of the media with respect to voter's enlightenment as per the 2019 general elections in Nigeria. It is important to note that the media is an important stakeholder in electoral matters. Asemah (2011) notes that communication is generally aimed at persuading the members of the public. The media is considered the oxygen that sustains democratic governance whilst also nurturing ideal and norms of democracy (Odunlami, 2014). Therefore, the media is needed to constantly educate and enlighten the people on electoral matters. In line with the foregoing, Oluwatosin et al. (2020) aver that a significant relationship exists between the media and political knowledge among people in Nigeria.

In a study conducted by Okon (2013) to appraise voter education by the Nigerian broadcast media, the objective of the study was to find out whether the broadcast media have critically and effectively carried out their role in educating the electorate on election related matters during the build up to the 2015 general elections. The researcher employed the

content analysis research method to analyse broadcast programmes in three designated stations in Port Harcourt metropolis. Findings from the study indicated that the studied broadcast stations did not significantly devote their programmes to effectively educate and inform the citizens on the need to participate in voter registration exercise and mobilisation towards the election. The study further revealed that most content of the broadcast stations did not create a platform for discourse analysis as powered by issues driven politics. In view of this discovery, the study recommended that there should be an increased capacity of broadcast stations in Nigeria to devote more airtime to democracy education geared towards strengthening each citizen's participation in the deliberations that govern the socio-political affairs of the society.

In corroboration of Okon's study, Galadima (2019) assessed newspaper coverage of the 2018 voter's registration exercise in Nigeria. The study sampled two national newspapers namely Daily Trust and Punch newspapers to gauge the level of prominence the newspapers accorded to the voter registration exercise. The researcher used content analysis method to execute the study. The findings of the study revealed a low coverage of the voter registration exercise by the selected newspapers. Consequent upon the dismal performance of the Nigerian press during the exercise the study recommends that INEC embarks on massive and strategic campaign on voter registration in future elections.

Abdulai, Ibrahim & Mashoud (2020) discussed the role of radio in setting agenda for the electorate during elections in the Northern Region of Ghana. The researchers adopted qualitative research method to execute the study. The rationale for the study was to establish the role of radio in setting the agenda for the electorate during elections in Ghana. The respondents for the study were made up of fifteen research participants. The participants were made up of reporters, editors and radio presenters. The finding of the study shows that radio plays a very pivotal role in setting the agenda for the electorate before, during, and after elections in Ghana. The findings also revealed that radio was used to disseminate messages of peace, tolerance and peaceful electoral process among various segments of the people in the country. The study claimed that because of the important role played by the media in Ghana, the last election conducted in the country was not marred by post - election violence. As a result of this finding, the study recommended that media practitioners and journalists should continue to undergo continuous training on how to report election proceedings during electioneering campaigns.

In the same vein, Ejue & Etika (2018) investigated the effectiveness of radio as a tool for sensitising the public on the implications of vote buying and selling in Nigeria elections. The researchers observed with

consternation the height with which the phenomenon of vote buying had been promoted and ascended the pinnacle of Nigeria political arena in recent times. Their study attributed the problem of vote buying to the introduction of electronic voting system in 2015, which barricaded politician's former gimmicks of rigging and ballots box snatching. The study underscored the important place of the media in sensitising the electorate not to allow their votes and conscience to be bought over by desperate politicians who want to possess power by all means. The study noted that despite the enlightenment campaigns embarked upon by the media during the 2015 and 2019 general elections there were reported cases of vote buying across the country. It is in recognition to this that Iredia (2007) cited in Ikpegbu & Ihejirika (2020) advocate that the electorate must be assisted by the mass media to premise their choices of rationality and vote wisely during elections. He further notes that the people must have all information that is needed to elect the right candidates who can ensure good governance.

It is worthy to note that where such public awareness and enlightenment is grossly lacking, the media must accept a share of the blame of failed electoral process in the country. In view of this worrisome discovery, the study recommended that INEC should sanction and punish political candidates and parties that perpetrate this electoral fraud. The researchers equally reiterate the need for civil society organisations and the mass media not to relent in their efforts in educating the citizens on the need to shun dubious electoral malpractices capable of adversely affecting Nigerian democracy.

A study conducted by Paul (2019) explored the utilisation of social media in voter education by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) in preparation to the 2019 general elections in Nigeria. Findings from the study showed that social media had become a prominent and a powerful forum for voter enlightenment, political activism and the fastest means of information dissemination. However, Paul's findings indicated that INEC did not have pronounced presence in the social media space during the build to the election. The study found that prominent politicians and popular celebrities beat INEC in popularity and presence in the social media space. In view of this worrisome development, The study recommends that INEC should integrate and deploy the social media aggressively in order to improve their presence in the social media space as well as engage the electorate more adequately for effective information dissemination and voter education in subsequent elections.

In a bid to solve the frequent cases of void vote experienced in most elections in Nigeria, Chris, Obiorah & Chiamogu (2014) examined the imperative of voter education as a panacea to reduce the problem of void

vote in Nigeria elections. The scholars noted that the repeated occurrence of this syndrome may pose a threat to Nigerian democracy in the future if not addressed headlong. Their study noted that the problem of void votes syndrome in Nigeria is occasioned by voter illiteracy and ignorance on the country's fledgling democracy.

In summary, it is evident that the media play an indispensable role in the proper functioning of a democracy. Discussion of the media's functions within electoral contexts often focuses on their "watchdog" role: by unfettered scrutiny and discussion of the successes and failures of candidates, governments, and electoral management bodies. Yet the media also have other roles in enabling full public participation in elections. These roles according to the Electoral Knowledge Network (2020) include the following:

- i. Educating voters on how to exercise their democratic rights.
- ii. Reporting on the development of an election campaign.
- iii. Providing a platform for the political parties and candidates to communicate their message to the electorate.
- iv. Providing a platform for the public to communicate their concerns, opinions, and needs, to the parties/candidates, the EMB, the government, and to other voters, and to interact on these issues.
- v. Allowing the parties and candidates to debate with each other.
- vi. Reporting results and monitoring vote counting.
- vii. Scrutinising the electoral process itself, including electoral management, in order to evaluate the fairness of the process, its efficiency and its probity.
- viii. Providing information that, as far as possible, avoids inflammatory language, helping to prevent election-related violence.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on the Agenda Setting Theory and Social Judgment Theory.

The Agenda Setting Theory

The agenda setting theory evolved from the research work of Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw in 1972. The authors specially examined the correlation between the media reports of the 1968 election campaign in Chapel Hill and the issues the members of the public discussed about the elections. The Agenda setting theory as is known today resulted from the analysis of the effects of the mass media on voters' attitudes and interests towards political parties and their candidates in the election (Oboh, 2014). In other words, the theory is founded on electoral matters and actions of the media at influencing the electorate to vote along a specific line of interest.

McQuail (2005) submits that the core idea in agenda setting is that news media indicate to the public what the main issues of the day are and this is reflected in what the public perceives as the main issues. Therefore, the news media indirectly determine what issues are important in society through the prominence they accord to the different issues that make up the editorial content of the newspaper. Likewise, important news stories on radio, internet and television are contained in the opening paragraph of news broadcast.

The agenda setting function is the process the mass media use to predetermine the value a target audience would attach to a story based on the prominence the news media accorded to the story in their reports (Oboh, 2014). The agenda setting function of the media implies that people constantly look up to the mass media for cues to issues of significance.

Therefore, the success of any election is a function of the degree of public involvement in the conduct of the elections. Correspondingly, the value the public attaches to any election is a function of the prominence the media accorded to the election activities in their reportage.

According to Abdulai, Ibrahim & Mashoud (2020) citing Shaw & Martin (1992), the agenda setting theory is made up of three interconnected aspects - media agenda, public agenda and policy agenda. According to them, media agenda are the issues discussed or covered by media reportage, and public agenda are issues audience members consider salient. The media agenda largely influences matters on the public agenda because they attach prominence to issues on the public agenda. The three are interrelated, and when an agenda setting process is initiated, they interact and influence each other. Media agenda and public agenda settings are common in the communication research, but policy agenda is usually researched by scholars in the field of political science and sociology (Zhou *et al* 2016 cited in Abdulai, Ibrahim & Mashoud, 2020).

Furthermore, agenda setting theory operates at three levels: The first level, second level and third level agenda setting (Miller 2005, cited in Abdulai, Ibrahim & Mashoud, 2020). The first level agenda setting espouses on how people's views about matters are considered salient in a given nation, and determined by the prominence and space of such issues in media coverage. The second level agenda setting shades light on how media lay emphasis on particular attributes while covering stories, hence directing the focus of audience members towards those features in news reportage in particular tone or affective feelings -negative, positive or neutral of the subject. So, by attaching salience's and emphasising certain characteristics of the issues in their coverage, the media affects what people regards as importance to form an opinion. The third level agenda

setting posits that media is not only able to inform what we think about and how we think about issues, but informs us what and how to associate, with salience of interrelationships among issues and attributes that can move between agendas simultaneously (Vu Guo & McCombs 2014; McCombs *et al* 2014, as cited in Abdulai, Ibrahim & Mashoud, 2020).

Applying the agenda setting theory to this study would mean that the media are expected to set public agenda for the electorate in relations to voter registration exercise and the entire electoral process. To this end, the media of communication are vested with the sole responsibility to disseminate information and messages that would bring about education and enlightenment of the electorate on all the various stages of the electioneering process. It, therefore, behooves on the mass media to engage in aggressive public sensitisation for citizens to participate in the process of choosing their elected representatives. If the media fails in this aspect, then the ripple effect will certainly affect the outcome of voter participation in the election. In this regard, the study is located within the second level agenda setting to explore how the mass media lays emphasis on the issue of voter education and mobilisation and thereby setting the agenda for the electorate to participate in the electioneering process that will lead 2023 general elections.

Social Judgment Theory

Social Judgment Theory suggests that exposure to political campaigns encourage people to “assimilate” or equate their feelings about related target attitudes. According to Iyengar and Prior (2019), negative or positive reactions to political campaigns is coloured by the attitudinal disposition of the target audience at the point of exposure.

The theory is of the view that Nigerian voters as rational stakeholders should make necessary judgment on how to perceive or react to these messages depending on how it conforms to their pre-existing attitudes on their expectations from politics. Social media messages targeted at ensuring democracy, eradicating poverty, providing of employment and guaranteeing security which are the basic expectation of the in the present day Nigeria stand a chance of being accepted by them and get influenced thereafter. Likewise messages emphasizing some lapses of the government in power may trigger negative reactions from the electorate. This theory is therefore apt in explaining some of the messages emanating from political sources and the accompanying feedback in different media interactions during the 2015 and 2019 elections in Nigeria. This also informed their level of use of the media especially social media at that point in time.

Research Design

The study employed survey research method; descriptive design was chosen as the appropriate research design. A descriptive design can help to provide information that could answer research questions. It outlines the variables involved in order to achieve desired objectives. In descriptive design data are collected in order to test hypotheses and answer research questions raised in the study. The descriptive design also helps the researchers to make comparisons and systematic evaluations. It also helps the researchers to identify problems under study.

Population of the Study

The population of the study comprises of 146,695 OF the despondence in Nkanu-West Local government area of Enugu. The researchers concentrated on Ozalla, Obe, Umueze, Agbani and Amurri community for easy access to information and data for the study on the influence of Peter Obi's media engagement on 2022 voter's registration among the youths of Nkanu West LGA of Enugu State.

Sample Size

To determine the sample size of the study, the researchers used a scientific formula of Taro Yamane. The formula is stated below as follows:

The Taro's Yamane formula is given by: 399

Sampling Technique

The researchers use the cluster sampling technique to select the sample for the study. The cluster sampling technique is a technique of sampling in which the researchers stratifies the population according to administrative units (Obikeze 2020). Nkanu West was stratified into six (6) communities; Ozalla, Obe, Umueze, Agbani, Amuri, Akpugo, and forty five (45) respondents randomly selected from each communities to make up the sample size of three hundred and ninety nine (399) respondents.

Data Presentation and Analysis

In this chapter, the data collected from both primary and secondary sources were presented and analysed. A total of 399 questionnaires were distributed out of these 360 were returned. 39 were wrongly completed and so discarded, only 360 were used for the researchers' analytical purpose.

Analysis of Research Question

1. Research Question 1. To what extent does youths in Nkanu West L.G.A exposed to Peter Obi's media engagement?

Table 4.5: The extent youths in Nkanu West L.G.A exposed to Peter Obi's media engagement

Item	Frequency	Percentage (%)
To a very high extent	135	37
To a high extent	75	21
Low extent	81	23
To a very low extent	69	19
Total	360	100

Table 4.5 shows that the responses of the respondent. 37% being the majority of the respondents were on the view that the youths of Nkanu west LGA, has to a very high extent exposed to Peter Obi media engagement. While 21% of the respondents were on a high extent, 23% option on a low extent and 19% option on a very low extent.

Research Question 2. To what extent does Peter Obi's media engagement influence the knowledge level of youths on the voter's registration?

Table 4.6: The extent Peter Obi's media engagement influence the knowledge level of youths on the voters' registration

Item	Frequency	Percentage (%)
To a very high extent	125	35
To a high extent	98	27
Low extent	79	22
To a very low extent	58	16
Total	360	100

Table 4.6 shows that 35% of the respondents option that Peter Obi's media engagement influence the knowledge level of youths on the voter's registration to a very great extent. While 27% of the respondent option to an extent, 22% of the respondent option on a low extent and 16% of the respondent option on a very low extent.

Research Question 3. How does Peter Obi's media engagement influence the attitude of youths perception on voter's registration?

Table 4.7: How Peter Obi's media engagement influence the attitude of youths perception on voter's registration

Item	Frequency	Percentage (%)
The drive to change the economy from production to consumption	71	20
His frequently engagement with the Nigeria youths on social media platforms	104	29
Every fact about his previous career and good image are verified to be true	86	24
His principle on public resources management and expenditure	99	27
Total	360	100

Table 4.7 shows that 20% of the respondents option that Peter Obi's media engagement influence the attitude of youths' perception on voter's registration through the drive to change the economy from production to consumption. While 29% of the respondent option to be his frequently engagement with the Nigeria youths on social media platforms, 24% of the respondent option that every fact about his previous career and good image are verified to be true and 27% of the respondent option were his principle on public resources management and expenditure.

Research Question 4. To what extent does Peter Obi's media engagement influence youths in Nkanu West to participate to voters' registration? :

Table 4.8 The extent Peter Obi media engagement influence youths in Nkanu West to participate to votes registration

Item	Frequency	Percentage (%)
To a very high extent	107	30
To an extent	98	27
Low extent	68	19
To a very low extent	87	24
Total	360	100

Table 4.8 shows that 30% of the respondents option that Peter Obi media engagement influence youths in Nkanu West to participate to vote's registration to a very great extent. 27% of the respondent option to an

extent, 19% of the respondent option to a low extent and 24% of the respondent option to a very low extent.

Testing of Hypothesis

H0: Peter Obi's media engagement has no significant influence on 2022 voter's registration among the youths of Nkanu West LGA of Enugu State.

H1: Peter Obi's media engagement has significant influence on 2022 voter's registration among the youths of Nkanu West LGA of Enugu State.

Table 15: Testing of Hypothesis

Chi-Square Calculator for Goodness of Fit

The data below should be self-explanatory. The only thing to note is that if you want to redo the calculation, you should press the "Restart Calculation" button (rather than using your browser back button).

The Chi² value is: 9.4

	<i>Observed</i>	<i>Expected</i>	<i>Difference</i>	<i>Difference Sq.</i>	<i>Diff. Sq. / Exp Fr.</i>
Very high extent	107	90	17.00	289.00	3.21
To an extent	98	90	8.00	64.00	0.71
Low extent	68	90	-22.00	484.00	5.38
Very low extent	87	90	-3.00	9.00	0.10
Total	360				
					9.400

The Chi² value is 9.4. The *p*-value is .02442. The result is significant at *p* < .05.

To get expected frequency total divided by the no of items = 360/4= 90
e= 90

Calculated value of (χ^2) is 9.4

Decision Rule: Since the calculated value (χ^2) 9.4 is greater than the *p*-value is .02442. The null hypothesis is rejected thus, accepting the alternative hypothesis which implies that Peter Obi's media engagement has significant influence on 2022 voter's registration among the youths of Nkanu West LGA of Enugu state.

Discussion of Findings

The analyses revealed that Peter Obi's media engagement has significant influence on 2022 voter's registration among the youths of Nkanu West LGA of Enugu state.

Research Question 1: To what extent does youths in Nkanu West L.G.A exposed to Peter Obi's media engagement?

Peter Obi media engagement has trigger many youths interest toward the 2023 election which the nation is witnessing the first real emergence of a people's movement that is focusing on Nigerians coming together to elect their government on the basis of the recognition that it is all about them and their future. Most influential, comedians, media station used various media channels most especially the social media of Peter Obi political commentary went viral which brought about the Obi-Datti Movement in 2023. The youths were well exposed to Peter Obi media chat, interviews and political analysis, coupled with various presentations he made on different functions he was invited.

Research Question 2: To what extent does Peter Obis media engagement influence youths in Nkanu West to participate to voters registration?

It was the media engagement of Peter Obi that brought about the movement called "OBIDIENTS" caused a shift in political organizing and engagement with support groups emerging daily to support the organic growth of what is now the Peter Obi phenomenon (Thisdaynews, 16th December, 2022). In a marked departure from political grandstanding, the face of the movement, Peter Obi media engagement consistently elevating political discourse, not tearing at others' throats but rather engaging in well-articulated national agenda based on a new approach to governance, an approach that underlies his perspective and future-forward positioning for the country. Thus the findings entails that media platforms provide an avenue for users to send and receive information (Kane, Alavi, Lubianica & Borgatti 2013).

Research Question 3: How does Peter Obi's media engagement influence the attitude of youths perception on voter's registration?

The 2023 Nigeria General Elections witnessed a high level of participation of youths through social media like never before. This is because social media allowed young Nigerians to contribute to discussions and events. The campaign period was dominated by robust, creative engagements of the youths of different ethnic group and apologists, political parties, 'faceless' (anonymous) social movements influencers whose roles shaped debates which questioned the integrity of aspiring politicians.

Questioning of record of performance in service and character were mainstreamed. The electoral period, did not only witness heated arguments on Facebook pages, blogs, Twitter handles, online newspaper comments sections, and propaganda messages as evidence of the awareness that the election generated amongst youths; but also demonstrated the involvement of youths in political participation through social media platforms. In many cases, social media accounts of prominent politicians or aspirants become space for youth's debate over topical issues or trends.

Research Question 4: To what extent does Peter Obi's media engagement influence youths in Nkanu West to participate to vote's registration? :

It was through the media that the youths were enlightened on the need to get their PVC. In the cause of the media engagement with Peter Obi, the youths were propelled and influenced on the importance of Voters card if they must win the 2023 election. Many influential and comedians like Young Elder, P-square, Flavor, Kenneth Okonkwo and the likes of them use their social media handle to tell the youths to all get their PVC if they must win the election and this caused a rush during the period that INEC has to extend the initial deadline for the continuous voter registration.

Summary of Findings

In summary, the following finding was identified;

1. The analyses revealed that Peter Obi's media engagement has significant influence on 2022 voter's registration among the youths of Nkanu West LGA of Enugu State. They pointed out that social media had been useful in information 2022 voters' registrations and election the media educate people on how to vote the candidate of their choice.
2. To a great extent Peter Obi's media engagement influence youths in Nkanu West LGA to participate to voters registration. Political participation was mentioned as another form of usage that they actively engaged in. They had served and still serving as vehicles for news, information, opinion sharing, entertainment, business development, and even cultural production.
3. To a great extent Peter Obi's media engagement influence youths in Nkanu West LGA to participate to votes registration. The 2023 Nigeria General Elections may witness a high level of participation of youths through social media like never before. The campaign period was dominated by robust, creative engagements of the youths of different ethnic group and apologists, political parties,

'faceless' (anonymous) social movements influencers whose roles shaped debates which questioned the integrity of aspiring politicians.

4. To a great extent Peter Obi's media engagement influence youths in Nkanu West LGA to participate to voters registration. The youths were enlightened on the need to get their PVC. Many influential and comedians used their social media handle to tell the youths to get their PVC in other to vote the candidate of their choice.

Conclusion

The study examined Peter Obi's media engagement influence on 2023 voter's registration among the youths of Nkanu West LGA of Enugu State. The study employed survey research method; descriptive design was chosen as the appropriate research design. The researchers used the cluster sampling technique to select the sample for the study. Sample size of three hundred and ninety nine (399) respondents was draw out. 399 questionnaires were administered to sampled respondents and were retrieved immediately. The collated data obtained was analyzed using frequency count and percentages to answer the earlier raised questions. The data collected from the respondents will be analyzed using simple percentages. Simple percentage was used to describe the events as they occurred. Chi-square test was used conducted on the research hypothesis. The study concluded that Peter Obi's media engagement has significant influence on 2022 voter's registration among the youths of Nkanu West LGA of Enugu State.

Recommendations

Based on the research findings, the following recommendations were made:

1. The media and Independent Electoral Commission (INEC) should sustained their public enlightenment and sensitisation programmes for the electorate to enhance their exposure on voter registration exercise, rather than only resorting to awareness campaign close to the build-up to elections.
2. The political candidate should embrace the media for successive political campaigns that grants the electorate the interactive opportunity with the political candidates.
3. The government should think of trying to regulate the operations of media. They should think out a way of verifying or regulating "who posts what" in these media urgently.
4. The media and INEC should introduce strategies that will enhance the effectiveness of the media in enlightening and sensitising the

electorate so as to positively change their perception of the influence of political candidate on voter registration exercise.

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