

**PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES' SOCIAL MEDIA ENGAGEMENT IN  
THE 2023 GENERAL ELECTIONS IN NIGERIA: THE CASE OF X  
(FORMERLY TWITTER)**

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**SEPTEMBER, 2024**

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**BY**

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**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF  
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SOCIAL SCIENCES, COVENANT UNIVERSITY, OTA, OGUN STATE,  
NIGERIA.**

**SEPTEMBER, 2024**

## **ACCEPTANCE**

This is to attest that this dissertation is accepted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree of the Master of Science (M.Sc.) in Mass Communication in the Department of Mass Communication, College of Management and Social Sciences, Covenant University, Ota.

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## **DECLARATION**

I, **OLUWABIYI, TEMITOPE EZRA (22PBE02450)** declares that this research was carried out by me under the supervision of Dr. Tunji Oyedepo of the Department of Mass Communication, College of Management and Social Sciences, Covenant University, Ota, Nigeria. I attest that the dissertation has not been presented wholly or partially for the award of any degree elsewhere. All sources of data and scholarly information used in this dissertation are duly acknowledged

**OLUWABIYI, TEMITOPE EZRA**

**Signature and Date**

## **CERTIFICATION**

This is to certify that this dissertation titled “**PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES' SOCIAL MEDIA ENGAGEMENT IN THE 2023 GENERAL ELECTIONS IN NIGERIA: THE CASE OF X (FORMERLY TWITTER)**” is an original research work carried out by **OLUWABIYI TEMITOPE EZRA (22PBE02450)** of the Department of Mass Communication, College of Management and Social Sciences, Covenant University, Ota, Ogun State, Nigeria under the supervision of Dr. Tunji Oyedepo. The work has been examined and found to be acceptable as part of the requirements for the award of a Master of Science (M.Sc.) degree in Mass Communication.

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## **DEDICATION**

This dissertation is dedicated to God Almighty, who has sustained me thus far. Also, special appreciation to my parents, Dr. & Mrs. Oluwabiya and siblings for their love and support,

God Bless You.

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## ABSTRACT

*This study examines the social media engagement techniques employed by presidential candidates during Nigeria's 2023 general elections, with a particular focus on the use of X (formerly Twitter) by Bola Ahmed Tinubu of the All-Progressives Congress (APC) and Atiku Abubakar of the People's Democratic Party (PDP). Given the increasing influence of social media on political campaigns, this study examines how both candidates leveraged X to convey their messages, engage voters, and shape the political discourse. The study uses a mixed-methods approach, combining content analysis of 464 tweets and thematic analysis of interviews with media advisers and political experts. This study is anchored on the Public Sphere Theory and Uses and Gratifications Theory, providing a lens through which social media's role as a medium for voter engagement and interaction is understood. The findings indicate that, although Atiku Abubakar tweeted more frequently (335) tweets in comparison to Tinubu's (129) tweets, Tinubu's tweets generated a higher average level of engagement. Tinubu's tweets received an average of (6132) likes, (1403) retweets, and (1339) replies, whereas Atiku's tweets garnered (2810) likes, (709) retweets, and (292) replies on average, suggesting that Tinubu's content resonated more with users. Further, analysis reveals that (69%) of Tinubu's tweets were focused on political themes, compared to (36.4%) of Atiku's, with Atiku addressing a wide range of topics, including social issues (10.7%) and personality (3.9%). The study recommends that future political campaigns should develop engaging and well-managed digital content tailored to voter preferences. Additionally, it suggests the need for implementing regulatory measures to combat misinformation and create a more transparent and trustworthy digital space for political discourse.*

***Keywords: social media, Political Advertising, X (Twitter), Presidential Candidates***