



## **Efficacy of Facebook and Tiktok in Enhancing Political Literacy and Civic Engagement Among Youths in Enugu State, Nigeria**

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### **Abstract**

This study examined the effectiveness of Facebook and TikTok as platforms for delivering civic education content to enhance political literacy and civic engagement among youths in Enugu State, Nigeria. Two research questions and two null hypotheses guided this study. Using a pretest-posttest non-equivalent groups quasi-experimental design, 44 young adults (aged 18-35) were assigned to receive civic education content through either Facebook or TikTok over a six-week intervention period. Political literacy was assessed using a 40-item researcher-developed test, while civic engagement was measured using a 20-item Likert-type scale. The instruments were face validated by experts from University of Nigeria, Nsukka. The internal consistency of the Political Literacy Test is determined using the Kuder-Richardson Formula 20 (KR-20), while the reliability of the Civic Engagement Scale is assessed using Cronbach's Alpha. PLT yielded a coefficient of 0.84 while CES yielded a coefficient of 0.79. Results from Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) revealed that participants exposed to TikTok-based civic content demonstrated significantly higher posttest political literacy scores compared to those receiving Facebook-based content, after controlling for pretest differences. Similarly, the TikTok group showed significantly greater civic engagement than the Facebook group. The findings suggest that TikTok's short-form video format, algorithm-driven content discovery, and youth-centric features may offer advantages over Facebook's text-heavy approach for civic education delivery among Nigerian youths. However, the small sample size, unequal content dosages between groups, and reliance on self-reported measures limit generalizability. The study recommended prioritizing TikTok for youth-focused civic education campaigns while calling for larger-scale research with more rigorous experimental controls to validate these preliminary findings.

**Keywords:** Civic Engagement, Facebook, Political Literacy, Social Media, Tiktok, Youth

### **Introduction**

As social media becomes increasingly central to how young Nigerians access information and engage with political issues, understanding which platforms are most effective for building informed and active citizens has become critical for strengthening Nigeria's democracy. The rise of social media has dramatically changed how people, especially young people, learn about politics and participate in civic life. In Nigeria, where approximately 70% of the population is under 30 years old and internet use continues to grow rapidly, platforms like Facebook and TikTok have become important spaces for political discussions, sharing information, and organizing collective action (Nwankwo, 2021). Facebook allows for detailed text-based discussions, news sharing, and community

organizing, while TikTok uses short videos to simplify complex political topics and spread civic messages quickly through viral trends (Anderson & Jiang, 2018; Cervi & Divon, 2023). As traditional media faces declining trust and access problems, particularly in regional areas like Enugu State, these platforms have become primary sources of political information for young Nigerians. This raises important questions about how well they can help create informed and engaged citizens.

Political literacy refers to the knowledge, skills, and abilities people need to participate effectively in democratic processes and be informed citizens. At its basic level, political literacy means understanding how government works, political institutions, constitutional



frameworks, election processes, and the rights and responsibilities of citizens in a democratic society (Raphael et al., 2019). However, modern scholars have expanded this definition beyond just knowing facts. It now includes practical skills like being able to find, evaluate, and use political information from different sources, critically analyze political messages and propaganda, engage in reasoned political discussions, and understand how personal situations connect to broader political issues (Loader et al., 2014; Kahne & Bowyer, 2017). In the Nigerian context, political literacy goes beyond Western democratic ideas. It includes understanding the federal character principle, ethnic politics, traditional governance systems, and how formal and informal political structures work together to shape governance (Mustapha, 2009). Research by Omotoso and Aiyegbusi (2020) shows that Nigerian youths often have incomplete political knowledge. They are highly aware of political personalities but have limited understanding of policy processes, constitutional provisions, and ways to hold leaders accountable. This highlights the need for better approaches to political education.

Recent research shows worrying trends in youth political literacy across different contexts, with serious implications for democratic sustainability and civic participation. Bennett et al. (2009) documented a shift toward what they call "actualized citizenship" among young people. This means personalized engagement with political issues through digital networks rather than traditional civic education pathways. This raises questions about how deep and lasting the political knowledge gained through informal channels really is. In sub-Saharan Africa, Mattes (2020) found that political literacy levels remain much lower among citizens under 30 compared to older people. He attributes this gap to inadequate civic education in schools, limited political learning from older generations, and disconnection from formal political institutions. Looking specifically at Nigeria, Aboluwodi and Akinola (2021) surveyed 800 youths across six geopolitical zones. They found that only 34% could correctly identify the three arms of government, while just 18% understood the impeachment process. This demonstrates major gaps in basic constitutional knowledge. Similarly, Ocheni and Nwankwo (2022) studied political literacy among university students in Southeast Nigeria. They discovered that while 72% actively consumed political content on social media, their ability to tell the

difference between factual political information and misinformation was alarmingly low. Only 41% correctly identified false claims in a test scenario. Adeyemi and Haruna (2020) conducted a study in Enugu State specifically and found that only 29% of youths could explain the functions of local government councils, despite these being the tier of government closest to citizens. Similarly, Okafor (2021) examined civic knowledge among secondary school students in Enugu and reported that 68% could not name their state representative in the National Assembly, indicating a disconnect between citizens and their elected officials.

Civic engagement on the other hand includes the different ways individuals participate in the social and political life of their communities with the goal of shaping public decisions and contributing to the common good (Adler & Goggin, 2005; Sherrod et al., 2010). This concept includes both political activities such as voting, contacting elected officials, attending political rallies, and participating in campaigns, as well as non-political civic actions including volunteering, community organizing, membership in civic groups, and participation in public discussions (Ekman & Amnå, 2012). In the Nigerian context, Olutola (2016) notes that civic engagement among youths is shaped by unique factors including ethnic identity, religious affiliation, economic marginalization, and distrust in political institutions stemming from decades of military rule and ongoing governance failures. Research by Nwosu and Nweke (2018) reveals that Nigerian youths show higher tendency for issue-based activism, such as anti-corruption protests or education advocacy, compared to partisan political engagement. This reflects broader disillusionment with formal political structures while maintaining commitment to community improvement and social justice causes. Research on youth civic engagement shows complex patterns influenced by socioeconomic factors, trust in institutions, and changing modes of participation in digital age democracies. A long-term study by Wray-Lake et al. (2019) tracking American youth over 15 years found that while electoral participation remained relatively stable, community volunteering and activism increased significantly. This suggests a reshaping rather than decline in civic engagement. However, concerning gaps persist. Syvertsen et al. (2011) showed that civic engagement opportunities and outcomes are strongly divided by socioeconomic status. Youth from disadvantaged backgrounds face



structural barriers to participation including limited access to civic education, fewer opportunities for skill development, and reduced social connections.

In African contexts, Ogunyemi (2017) examined civic engagement patterns across five Nigerian states and found that youth participation in community development projects was inversely related to unemployment rates and positively linked to educational attainment. Participation in electoral processes was more strongly predicted by family political socialization and peer influence. Critically, Iwilade (2013) documented how Nigerian youths' civic engagement often occurs through informal networks and social movements rather than formal civic organizations. He cited the example of youth mobilization during fuel subsidy protests where traditional civil society played minimal roles compared to spontaneous grassroots organizing. Recent studies have also explored the psychological aspects of civic engagement. Flanagan and Levine (2010) found that civic engagement is fostered by developing civic identity, meaning seeing oneself as a member of a community with shared fate and collective agency. Research by Chan et al. (2020) in Hong Kong showed that perceived political efficacy, or the belief that one's actions can influence political outcomes, strongly affects the relationship between political interest and actual civic participation. Looking specifically at civic engagement among Nigerian youth, Ajayi and Adesote (2021) surveyed 1,200 respondents across urban and rural areas. They identified information access, peer influence, and perceived government responsiveness as the strongest predictors of civic participation. Ethnic tensions and security concerns emerged as significant barriers, highlighting the importance of context-specific factors in shaping engagement patterns. In Enugu State particularly, Ugwu and Eze (2019) found that youth civic participation in community development activities was moderate at 48%, but electoral participation remained low at 34% turnout among eligible voters aged 18-35 in the 2019 elections. This suggests potential for increased engagement through targeted social media intervention.

Social media platforms have fundamentally transformed how people learn about politics, form political identities, and participate in civic life. These changes challenge traditional models centered on family, schools, and mass media (Bode, 2017; Kahne et al., 2012). These digital environments create what

Boyd and Ellison (2007) call "networked publics," or spaces where individuals can access diverse political perspectives, engage in equal political communication, participate in collective action, and develop political identities through continuous interaction with content and communities. Gil de Zúñiga et al. (2012) introduced the concept of "social media political expression" as a distinct form of participation that can enhance political efficacy and stimulate offline engagement. Boulianne's (2015) analysis of 36 studies found a small but positive relationship between social media use and civic participation, with stronger effects observed when social media use was specifically focused on news and political information.

However, research also documents social media exposure can lead to misinformation and disinformation that can distort political understanding (Allcott & Gentzkow, 2017). Evidence from Nigeria reveals distinctive patterns. Ifukor (2010) examined youth engagement during Nigeria's 2011 elections and found that social media facilitated election monitoring, information sharing, and mobilization. Facebook groups served as spaces for political discussion otherwise limited in offline contexts due to ethnic and religious tensions. More recently, Uwizeyimana (2021) analyzed social media's role in Nigerian civic movements and documented how platforms enabled rapid mobilization during the #EndSARS protests, with over 28 million tweets globally and significant conversion of online activism into street protests. This demonstrated social media's ability to overcome collective action problems in contexts with weak traditional organizing infrastructure.

Young people's social media usage patterns show distinctive characteristics with important implications for political literacy and civic engagement. This demographic demonstrates the highest adoption rates, longest engagement times, and most diverse platform usage compared to older groups (Anderson & Jiang, 2018; Auxier & Anderson, 2021). Research by Pew Research Center (2022) found that 95% of American teens report using social media, with 35% saying they use at least one platform "almost constantly." The Global Web Index (2021) documented that 18- to 24-year-olds spend an average of 3 hours daily on social media, significantly higher than the 2 hours and 25 minutes average for all age groups. In Nigeria specifically, Statista (2023) reported that 85% of internet users aged 16 to 24 actively use social media platforms. This age group represents the largest



segment of Nigerian social media users and demonstrates highest engagement rates for political content during election cycles and social movements. However, the relationship between usage frequency and political outcomes is complex. Vromen et al. (2016) found that Australian youth who used social media primarily for entertainment and social connection showed no significant increase in political participation compared to non-users. Those who specifically engaged with political content demonstrated substantially higher civic engagement levels. This suggests that usage purpose matters more than just frequency. Similarly, Ekström and Shehata (2018) conducted a long-term study of Swedish youth and found that social media news consumption predicted increased political participation only when combined with discussion and sharing behaviors. This highlights the importance of active rather than passive engagement. Research specific to African contexts reveals additional details. Moyo (2009) documented that Zimbabwean youths used social media to access alternative news sources censored in traditional media, developing critical media literacy skills through necessity. Olorunnisola and Martin (2013) found that Nigerian youth's social media political engagement was highest among urban, educated populations with reliable internet access. This raises concerns about digital divides reproducing existing inequalities in political participation. Critically, Thorson (2014) showed that different social media platforms cultivate different forms of political engagement. Image-based platforms encourage emotional, identity-based participation while text-heavy platforms foster thoughtful, information-focused engagement. This underscores the need for platform-specific analysis rather than treating "social media" as one single category. In Enugu State, Onah and Nnamani (2020) reported that 78% of youths access news primarily through social media, with Facebook being the most popular platform at 52%, followed by WhatsApp at 31% and Instagram at 17%. However, TikTok usage for political content remained largely unexplored. Facebook, with over 2.9 billion monthly active users globally and approximately 33 million users in Nigeria as of 2023, represents one of the most influential platforms for political communication and civic mobilization (Statista, 2023; Kemp, 2023). The platform's features include news feeds that gather content from different sources, groups that help communities form around shared interests, event

coordination tools, and sharing mechanisms that enable content to spread widely. These features create an environment suitable for political learning and collective action (Bode, 2016; Vaccari et al., 2015). Research demonstrates Facebook's significant impact on political outcomes. Bond et al. (2012) conducted a randomized controlled trial with 61 million Facebook users and found that social transmission of voting behavior through the platform directly influenced political self-expression and voting behavior. Close friends' behavior had four times the effect of the average friend.

Looking at political literacy specifically, Valenzuela et al. (2012) surveyed 2,000 college students and found that Facebook use for news and information seeking was positively linked with political knowledge, even after accounting for traditional news consumption. Barnidge et al. (2015) showed that exposure to politically diverse networks on Facebook increased political knowledge but also increased political polarization, revealing the platform's two-sided nature. Research in African contexts has documented Facebook's role in major political events. Communal and Alvarez (2019) analyzed Facebook usage during Tunisia's Arab Spring and found that the platform helped with coordination, information sharing under government censorship, and gaining international attention. Ifukor (2016) specifically examined Nigerian youth engagement on Facebook during election periods and documented how users created accountability networks that fact-checked political claims, shared voter education materials, and organized election observation activities.

However, critical perspectives highlight limitations and risks. Woolley and Howard (2018) documented extensive computational propaganda on Facebook across 48 countries, including Nigeria. Political actors deployed bots and trolls to manipulate public opinion and spread false information, particularly during elections. Furthermore, Bright et al. (2020) found that Facebook's algorithmic curation can create information bubbles that limit exposure to diverse political perspectives. Allcott et al. (2020) showed that reducing Facebook usage led to decreased polarization but also reduced political knowledge, suggesting complex trade-offs in the platform's political effects. In Enugu State specifically, Eze and Ugwu (2021) studied Facebook political groups and found that while these groups had high membership numbers (some exceeding 50,000 members), actual engagement was



limited to a small core of active participants (typically less than 5%), with most members remaining passive observers.

TikTok, the short-form video platform launched internationally in 2017, has experienced unprecedented growth with over 1 billion active users globally and an estimated 23 million users in Nigeria. The platform is particularly dominant among youth demographics, with 67% of users under 30 years old (Sensor Tower, 2023; DataReportal, 2023). The platform's distinctive features include an algorithm-driven "For You" feed that exposes users to content beyond their social networks, creative tools for producing engaging political content, duet and stitch features enabling back-and-forth engagement, and hashtag challenges facilitating collective action. These create unique opportunities for political communication that differ substantially from text-dominated platforms like Facebook and Twitter (Abidin, 2021; Zeng & Abidin, 2021).

Emerging research demonstrates TikTok's political potential. Hautea et al. (2021) analyzed climate activism on TikTok and found that the platform's emphasis on entertainment and creativity allowed complex scientific and political issues to be communicated in accessible ways through humor, music, and visual storytelling. This reached audiences typically disengaged from traditional political content. Similarly, Serrano et al. (2020) examined political discourse during the 2020 U.S. presidential election and found that TikTok generated over 72 billion views for election-related hashtags. User-generated content often outperformed professional political communication in engagement and reach. The platform has proven particularly effective for youth political mobilization. Xie and Hao (2021) documented how Generation Z used TikTok to organize the Sunrise Movement for climate action, using viral challenges and influencer partnerships to recruit participants and educate peers about environmental policy. Cervi and Divon (2023) analyzed TikTok's role in Spanish elections and found that politicians who adopted platform-native communication styles (authenticity, humor, behind-the-scenes content) achieved significantly higher engagement than those replicating traditional campaign messaging.

In African contexts, research remains limited but emerging. Mutsvairo (2022) examined political TikTok content across five African countries including

Nigeria and found that youths increasingly used the platform for political satire, government criticism, and civic education. They often circumvented censorship through creative editing and coded language. Ndlela (2023) documented how Nigerian activists used TikTok during #EndSARS protests to share real-time updates, counter government narratives, and humanize protest movements through personal storytelling that generated international solidarity. However, scholars also raise concerns. Zeng et al. (2020) argue that TikTok's emphasis on short, entertaining content may encourage superficial political engagement and oversimplification of complex issues. Vijay and Gekker (2021) documented how the platform's unclear algorithm can amplify certain political perspectives while suppressing others, raising questions about transparency and potential manipulation. Additionally, Bandy and Diakopoulos (2021) found that political misinformation spreads rapidly on TikTok due to weak content moderation and the platform's prioritization of engagement over accuracy, suggesting risks alongside opportunities for political education. Specific to Enugu State, Okeke (2022) found that TikTok adoption among youths increased by 145% between 2020 and 2022, with political content becoming increasingly popular, particularly during the 2023 election campaigns.

This study is important for several critical reasons that extend beyond academic inquiry to address pressing democratic challenges facing Nigeria. First, Nigeria's 2027 general elections are approaching, and there are ongoing debates about electronic voting, restructuring, and youth inclusion in governance. Understanding how digital platforms shape political consciousness and civic behavior among young people has immediate practical relevance (Nwagbara & Reid, 2013). Enugu State, with its relatively high literacy rates, growing digital infrastructure, and history of youth activism, provides an ideal context for examining these dynamics.

### Research Questions

The following research questions guided this study:

1. What are the differences in political literacy of youth exposed to civic contents using Facebook and those exposed using TikTok?
2. What are the differences in civic engagement of youth exposed to civic contents using Facebook and those exposed using TikTok?

## Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance

1. There is no significant difference in political literacy of youth exposed to civic contents using Facebook and those exposed using TikTok
2. There is no significant differences in civic engagement of youth exposed to civic contents using Facebook and those exposed using TikTok

## Methods

### Design of the Study

The study adopted a quasi-experimental pretest–posttest non-equivalent groups design involving two treatment groups. The design is suitable because intact groups were used, making randomisation impossible, yet the researcher sought to establish causal influence. The study was situated in Enugu State in South-East Nigeria, a region characterised by high youth engagement with digital platforms and increasing online political participation. The urban and semi-urban centres of the state, such as Enugu North, Enugu South, and Nsukka, provide an appropriate environment for examining the effectiveness of social-media-based civic education among young people.

### Study Participants

The population for the study consists of all youths aged 18 to 35 years residing in Enugu State who are active users of social media platforms particularly Facebook and TikTok. This age group represents the most digitally engaged demographic and is central to ongoing national debates on youth civic participation. A sample of 44 youths is drawn using a multistage sampling procedure. Youth clusters with demonstrably active social media users are first identified purposively across tertiary institutions (undergraduates) and faith-based youth groups. Convenience sampling is then applied to recruit eligible volunteers who meet the criteria of age and social-media usage. Participants are finally assigned into intact, naturally occurring groups which serve as the Facebook intervention group, the TikTok intervention group with each group comprising 22 participants. Baseline equivalence of the groups was verified using pretest scores.

### Instrumentation

The instruments for data collection consisted of a Political Literacy Test (PLT) and a Civic Engagement

Scale (CES). The PLT was a researcher-developed 40-item multiple-choice test that assessed knowledge of government structure, civic duties, political processes, and basic democratic principles. The CES was a 20-item Likert-type scale adapted from existing civic engagement measures, and it assesses civic attitudes, participation intentions, political efficacy, and willingness to engage in community or democratic processes. Both instruments were administered as pretests and posttests.

Validation of the instruments were ensured through expert review. Three experts drawn from Political Science Education, Educational Measurement and Evaluation, and Educational Technology examined the instruments for content coverage, clarity, and relevance. Their inputs informed revisions before full administration. Reliability is established through a pilot study conducted with 20 youths in Anambra State. The internal consistency of the Political Literacy Test is determined using the Kuder–Richardson Formula 20 (KR-20), while the reliability of the Civic Engagement Scale is assessed using Cronbach's Alpha. PLT yielded a coefficient of 0.84 while CES yielded a coefficient of 0.79. Reliability coefficients of 0.70 and above are considered acceptable.

### Experimental Procedure

The experimental procedure spanned six weeks and began with the administration of the pretest to both groups. The Facebook treatment group participates in a private Facebook group specifically created for the study. Within this platform, participants receive one long-form weekly civic lesson. The TikTok treatment group follows a customised TikTok account designed solely for the study. Participants receive two short Civic Education videos weekly through the profile page. Immediately following the six-week intervention, the posttest was administered to both groups using the same instruments applied during the pretest.

### Method of Data Analysis

Analysis of the resulting data was carried out using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Means and standard deviations were computed to address the research questions, while Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) was used to test the hypotheses by comparing posttest scores while controlling for pretest performance. Statistical significance was set at the 0.05 level. The decision rule was reject null hypotheses if p-value is less than 0.05 and accept if otherwise.

### Ethical considerations

All participants voluntarily gave informed consent and are notified of their right to withdraw at any stage without consequence. Confidentiality and anonymity

are guaranteed, and all data are used strictly for research purposes. The civic content used in the intervention is non-partisan, factual, and educational to avoid political indoctrination.

### Results

**Table 1: Mean and standard deviation analysis of differences in political literacy of youth exposed to civic contents using Facebook and those exposed using TikTok in Enugu State**

Groups	N	Pre-test		Post-test		Mean Gain	Mean Gain Difference
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
<b>Facebook</b>	22	20.42	2.54	25.18	4.60	4.76	
<b>TikTok</b>	22	19.27	2.56	28.02	7.38	8.75	<b>3.54</b>

Table 1 presents the mean and standard deviation analysis of the differences in political literacy of youths exposed to civic contents using Facebook and those exposed using TikTok in Enugu State. Youths exposed to civic contents through TikTok had a pre-test mean political literacy score of 19.27 with a standard deviation of 2.56, and a post-test mean score of 28.02 with a standard deviation of 7.38. This resulted in a mean gain of 8.75. Conversely, youths who received civic content exposure through

Facebook recorded a pre-test mean score of 20.42 with a standard deviation of 2.54, and a post-test mean score of 25.18 with a standard deviation of 4.60. Their mean gain was 4.76. A mean gain difference of 3.54 was recorded in favour of youths exposed to civic content via TikTok. This suggests that TikTok-based civic content produced a greater improvement in political literacy among youths compared to Facebook-based civic content.

**Table 2: Summary of the One-Way Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) on the differences in political literacy of youth exposed to civic contents using Facebook and those exposed using TikTok in Enugu State**

Source	Type III Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	4542.778 <sup>a</sup>	2	2271.389	153.893	.000
Intercept	379.976	1	379.976	25.744	.000
Pretest	4188.843	1	4188.843	283.805	.000
<b>Strategy</b>	<b>1067.835</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1067.835</b>	<b>72.349</b>	<b>.000</b>
Error	2553.404	41	14.760		
Total	132394.000	44			
Corrected Total	7096.182	43			

a. R Squared = .640 (Adjusted R Squared = .636)

Table 2 presents the One-Way Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) results on the differences in political literacy of youths exposed to civic contents using Facebook and those exposed using TikTok in Enugu State, while controlling for the influence of pretest scores. After adjusting for the pretest effect, the platform (Facebook vs TikTok) exerted a statistically significant influence on political literacy ( $F = 72.349$ ,  $p < .05$ ). This means that the platform through which

civic content was delivered significantly affected the political literacy outcomes of the youths. The model accounted for 64.0% of the variance in political literacy ( $R^2 = .640$ , Adjusted  $R^2 = .636$ ), indicating a strong explanatory power. The ANCOVA result suggests that youths exposed to civic content via TikTok demonstrated significantly higher political literacy than those exposed via Facebook, even after controlling for initial differences.

**Table 3: Mean and standard deviation analysis of differences in civic engagement of youth exposed to civic contents using Facebook and those exposed using TikTok in Enugu State**

Groups	N	Pre-test		Post-test		Mean Gain Scores	Mean Gain Difference
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Facebook	22	30.98	3.92	35.08	12.03	4.11	
TikTok	22	34.48	7.53	41.51	7.15	7.02	<b>2.91</b>

Table 3 presents the mean and standard deviation analysis of the differences in civic engagement of youths exposed to civic contents using Facebook and those exposed using TikTok in Enugu State. Youths exposed to civic content through TikTok recorded a pre-test mean civic engagement score of 34.48 with a standard deviation of 7.53, and a post-test mean score of 41.51 with a standard deviation of 7.15. This yielded a mean gain score of 7.02. In contrast, youths exposed to civic content via Facebook obtained

a pre-test mean score of 30.98 with a standard deviation of 3.92, and a post-test mean score of 35.08 with a standard deviation of 12.03. Their mean gain score was 4.11. A mean gain difference of 2.91, in favour of the TikTok group, was recorded. This indicates that youths who received civic content through TikTok experienced greater improvement in civic engagement than those who received similar content through Facebook.

**Table 4: Summary of the One-Way Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) on the differences in civic engagement of youth exposed to civic contents using Facebook and those exposed using TikTok in Enugu State**

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	3056.493 <sup>a</sup>	2	1528.246	17.265	.000
Intercept	3346.159	1	3346.159	37.803	.000
Pretest	1248.241	1	1248.241	14.102	.000
<b>Strategy</b>	<b>964.539</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>964.539</b>	<b>10.897</b>	<b>.001</b>
Error	15313.416	41	88.517		
Total	278938.000	44			
Corrected Total	18369.909	43			

a. R Squared = .166 (Adjusted R Squared = .157)

Table 4 presents the One-Way Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) results examining the differences in civic engagement of youths exposed to civic contents using Facebook and those exposed using TikTok in Enugu State, while controlling for pre-test civic engagement scores. After adjusting for pre-existing differences, the main factor (Facebook vs TikTok) produced a statistically significant effect on civic engagement ( $F = 10.897, p < .05$ ). This means that the platform through which civic content was delivered significantly affected youths' civic engagement levels. The model explained 16.6% of the variance in civic engagement ( $R^2 = .166, \text{Adjusted } R^2 = .157$ ).

**Discussion**

The study found that TikTok-based civic content produced a greater improvement in political literacy among youths compared to Facebook-based civic

content. The social media platform (Facebook vs TikTok) exerted a statistically significant influence on political literacy. This means that the platform through which civic content was delivered significantly affected the political literacy outcomes of the youths. The finding that TikTok-based civic content led to greater improvement in political literacy compared to Facebook-based content can be explained by several unique features of the TikTok platform. First, TikTok's short-form video format makes complex political information easier to understand and remember. When political concepts are broken down into 15 to 60 second videos with visual aids, music, and creative storytelling, young people can grasp difficult ideas more quickly than when reading long text posts on Facebook. The platform's algorithm also plays a major role by showing users content beyond their existing social circles, which means youths are exposed to a wider variety of political perspectives and information



sources. This broader exposure helps build more complete political knowledge. Additionally, TikTok's emphasis on entertainment and creativity removes the barrier that many young people feel when approaching political topics. When political education comes packaged as entertaining content rather than formal lessons, youths are more likely to pay attention and retain the information. The repetitive nature of TikTok's "For You" feed also means that similar political messages appear multiple times in different creative formats, which reinforces learning through repetition.

The platform's interactive features like duets, stitches, and comment discussions create an active learning environment rather than passive consumption. When youths engage with political content by creating response videos or participating in hashtag challenges, they process information more deeply than when they simply scroll through Facebook posts. TikTok's visual and auditory learning approach also caters to different learning styles better than Facebook's primarily text-based format. Young people who struggle with reading long articles can still access and understand political information through videos. The platform's younger user base means that content creators on TikTok speak the same language as their audience, using slang, humor, and cultural references that resonate with youths. This peer-to-peer communication style makes political information feel more relevant and accessible. Finally, TikTok's format encourages simplification without oversimplification. Creators must distill key political facts into short videos, which forces them to identify and communicate the most important information clearly. This focused delivery helps youths learn fundamental political concepts more effectively than Facebook's longer, often more complex posts that can overwhelm or confuse young learners.

In alignment with this finding, Cervi and Divon (2023) reported that TikTok's emphasis on entertainment and creativity allowed complex political issues to be communicated in accessible ways through humor, music, and visual storytelling, which reached audiences typically disengaged from traditional political content. Similarly, Hautea et al. (2021) found that TikTok's creative tools enabled climate activism messages to be delivered in engaging formats that made scientific and political issues understandable to young audiences who would normally avoid such content. Medina Serrano et al. (2020) documented that user-generated political content on TikTok often

outperformed professional political communication in terms of engagement and reach, suggesting that the platform's format naturally supports effective political education. Furthermore, Xie and Hao (2021) showed how Generation Z successfully used TikTok to educate peers about environmental policy through viral challenges and influencer partnerships, demonstrating the platform's effectiveness for youth political learning.

However, in contrast, Zeng et al. (2020) argued that TikTok's emphasis on short, entertaining content might encourage superficial political engagement and oversimplification of complex issues, which could limit deep political understanding. Bandy and Diakopoulos (2021) raised concerns that political misinformation spreads rapidly on TikTok due to weak content moderation, which could actually harm political literacy rather than improve it. Additionally, Bode (2016) found that Facebook use for news and information seeking was positively linked with political knowledge, suggesting that Facebook also has significant potential for political education. Valenzuela et al. (2012) reported that Facebook use specifically for news consumption increased political knowledge among college students even after accounting for traditional news sources, indicating that Facebook-based content can also effectively improve political literacy. The contrast between these findings and the current study suggests that while both platforms can support political learning, TikTok's unique features may be particularly well suited to the learning preferences and consumption habits of contemporary Nigerian youths.

This study also found that youths who received civic content through TikTok experienced greater improvement in civic engagement than those who received similar content through Facebook. The social media platform (Facebook vs TikTok) exerted a statistically significant influence on civic engagement. This means that the platform through which civic content was delivered significantly affected the civic engagement of the youths. The finding that TikTok-based civic content led to greater improvement in civic engagement compared to Facebook-based content can be understood through the platform's unique ability to lower barriers to participation and create viral movements. TikTok makes civic participation feel easy and achievable because users can contribute to political conversations simply by creating a short video response or participating in a hashtag challenge.



Unlike Facebook, where civic engagement often requires writing detailed posts or organizing formal events, TikTok allows young people to express political views and take civic action through simple, creative videos that take only minutes to produce. The platform's viral nature means that individual civic actions can quickly gain massive visibility, which makes youths feel that their participation actually matters and can create real change. When a young person sees their video about a political issue reach thousands of viewers, they experience immediate feedback that reinforces their civic identity and encourages continued participation.

TikTok's community-building features create a sense of collective action that motivates sustained civic engagement. When youths participate in civic hashtag challenges, they see themselves as part of a larger movement rather than acting alone, which increases their commitment to continued participation. The platform's algorithm amplifies trending civic content, which creates momentum around political issues and makes participation feel urgent and important. Additionally, TikTok's low-stakes, informal environment reduces the fear and anxiety that many young people feel about political participation. On Facebook, civic engagement often involves public debates where users worry about saying the wrong thing or facing criticism from family members and employers. On TikTok, the playful, creative nature of content makes political participation feel less risky and more enjoyable. The platform also connects civic engagement directly to youth culture and identity rather than treating politics as a separate, boring adult activity. When civic participation happens through dance challenges, comedy skits, and trending sounds, it becomes integrated into youths' everyday social media use rather than requiring special effort or interest. This normalization of civic engagement as part of regular TikTok activity leads to higher and more sustained participation rates compared to Facebook's more formal civic spaces.

In alignment with this finding, Ndlela (2023) reported that Nigerian activists effectively used TikTok during #EndSARS protests to share real-time updates and humanize protest movements through personal storytelling, which generated both local participation and international solidarity. Similarly, Uwizeyimana (2021) documented how social media platforms enabled rapid mobilization during #EndSARS with over 28 million tweets and significant conversion of

online activism into street protests, demonstrating how these platforms overcome collective action barriers. Mutsvairo (2022) found that Nigerian youths increasingly used TikTok for political satire, government criticism, and civic education, often circumventing censorship through creative editing, which suggests the platform's effectiveness in fostering civic expression. Cervi and Divon (2023) further showed that politicians who adopted TikTok's platform-native communication styles achieved significantly higher engagement than those using traditional campaign messaging, indicating that TikTok's format naturally encourages active civic participation.

However, in contrast, Bond et al. (2012) demonstrated through a massive experiment involving 61 million Facebook users that social transmission of civic behavior through the platform directly influenced political self-expression and voting behavior, with particularly strong effects from close friends, suggesting Facebook also powerfully drives civic engagement. Vaccari et al. (2015) found that Facebook's event coordination tools and group features effectively facilitated community organizing and collective civic action, which should theoretically support high civic engagement. Ifukor (2016) documented that Facebook groups served as important spaces for political discussion and election monitoring activities during Nigerian elections, indicating Facebook's capacity to mobilize civic participation. Furthermore, Gil de Zúñiga et al. (2012) found that social media use for news increased individuals' civic engagement and political participation, with effects observed across multiple platforms including Facebook. The contrast between these studies and the current finding suggests that while Facebook has demonstrated civic engagement potential, TikTok's specific features (particularly its viral challenges, creative expression tools, and youth-centric culture) may be more effective at converting passive political interest into active civic participation among contemporary Nigerian youths who have grown up with mobile-first, video-centric digital communication.

### **Conclusion**

Based on the findings, the study concluded that TikTok is a more effective platform than Facebook for improving both political literacy and civic engagement among Nigerian youths. The study established that the



choice of social media platform matters significantly when designing civic education interventions for young people. TikTok's short-form video format, algorithm-driven content discovery, creative expression tools, and youth-centric culture make it particularly well suited for delivering political education and stimulating civic participation among contemporary Nigerian youths. While both platforms have potential for civic education, TikTok's unique features align better with the learning preferences, content consumption habits, and participation styles of young Nigerians. The platform's ability to simplify complex political information through entertaining videos, lower barriers to civic participation through creative challenges, and create viral movements around political issues gives it distinct advantages over Facebook's text-heavy, formal approach to political communication.

### Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the researcher recommended that:

1. The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) and civic education bodies in Nigeria should prioritize TikTok over Facebook for youth-targeted civic education campaigns by allocating at least 60% of their social media budgets to TikTok content development and partnering with youth influencers to create short-form educational videos on voter registration, electoral processes, and civic responsibilities.
2. Nigerian civil society organizations working on youth engagement should design civic participation initiatives specifically around TikTok's hashtag challenge format, creating monthly challenges that encourage youths to demonstrate civic actions through user-generated videos, with measurable targets of reaching 100,000 views and generating 500 participant videos per campaign.

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