

USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN MOBILISING SOCIAL MOVEMENTS: A STUDY OF THE #ENDBADGOVERNANCE PROTESTS IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

The study sought to ascertain the use of social media in mobilising social movements particularly during the #EndBadGovernance protests in Nigeria. It aimed to find out social media platforms that were frequently used during the #EndBadGovernance protests in Nigeria as well as to determine if social media was effective in mobilising protesters during the #EndBadGovernance protests in Nigeria. The theoretical framework for the study is Network Society Theory by Manuel Castells. The study employed a survey research method, sampling a total of 384 respondents using questionnaire as the instrument of data collection. The population for the study is 7,007,151 which comprises of residents of Abuja and Lagos State, Nigeria. The findings of the study reveal that the level of public engagement on social media during the #EndBadGovernance protests in Nigeria is high. Also, the social media platforms that were frequently used during the #EndBadGovernance protests in Nigeria is X (formerly Twitter) as shown in the findings. The study recommends among others that future protests and movement for social change in Nigeria should adopt social media platform since it has proven to be effective during the #EndBadGovernance protests in Nigeria.

Keywords: Governance, Social Mobilisation, Protests, Social Media, Social Movements

Introduction

The pursuit of autonomy and the articulation of dissent constitute enduring elements of human existence. Across centuries, individuals and communities have resisted encroachments upon their rights, employing collective action, most notably protests to demand justice and societal transformation. This impulse, rooted in a universal aspiration for self-determination and equity, manifests whenever systemic oppression or structural inequities threaten the well-being of populations. Historically, protests have assumed diverse forms, ranging from public assemblies, marches, and strikes to the dissemination of written materials such as pamphlets and manifestos. These traditional approaches, while instrumental in galvanizing support and effecting change, were often constrained by logistical challenges, limited communication networks, and geographic boundaries.

Available research shed light on the myriad of material and immaterial problems that necessitate protests such as an exceptionally costly standard of living, inadequate government efficiency, political and civil rights violations, and authoritarianism that have forced African citizens into the streets in the new millennium (Targema, Mabweazara, & Esuh, 2024). Alliances of diverse socioeconomic groups and youth have been highly mobilised for these purposes; to optimise their influence and political

success, they have used a variety of traditional and digital platforms and resources (Ifeanyichukwu, 2021).

Globally, protests are fundamental aspects of any democracy and have existed since time immemorial. In Africa, there has been a significant rise in protests as the continent began to experience political growth and participation. 90% of the 86,486 demonstrations and riots recorded across the continent between 1997 and 2021 occurred after the year 2010 (ACLEED, 2021).

Democratic nations worldwide have been confronted with waves of protests, each characterised by specific local grievances, but all united by a profound discontentment with the status quo (Sadovskaya, Fakhrutdinova & Kochanova, 2021). People have taken to the streets in places as diverse as London, Dhaka, Nairobi, Caracas, and European capitals, as well as in cities in Zimbabwe, South Africa, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Senegal, and Burundi, demanding change. These movements, while differing in details, all share a common desire for improved governance and an end to structural injustices (Dorward & Fox, 2022). However, while these demonstrations across the globe resonate with a common call for justice, Nigeria's situation is unique, driven by its particular circumstances, economic problems and political factors.

In today's world, man conducts his protests using one of his prized inventions: social media which is a result of his advancement in Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs). According to UNESCO report of 2006, ICT is a broad range of technical instruments and resources used for information creation, sharing, transmission, storage, and exchange. According to Ogunji (2014), computers, the Internet (Websites, blogs, and emails), live broadcasting media (radio, television, and Webcasting), recorded broadcast media (podcasting, audio and video players, and storage devices), and telephony (fixed or mobile, satellite and video-conferencing) are some examples of the ICTs. This includes transmitting devices (radio and television), mobile devices, wireless networks, the Internet, and other forms of communication including social media (Thamarana, 2015).

Social media provide activists and groups of protesters the ability to communicate more quickly, easily, and affordably while negotiating and digitally spreading movement goals or frameworks (Hari, 2014). This media enable people and groups in society a lot of chances to go beyond restrictions imposed by the government, the media, and the market to create an alternative shared belief (Ifeanyichukwu, 2021). Castells (2015) opines that social media platforms create virtual networks of individuals who share similar beliefs and worldviews. As part of the identity-building process, Internet communities support the emergence of fresh social movements that bring people together by uniting them around shared ideas and goals. Social media is more than just the most recent development in communication technology; it has transformed everyday life and facilitated human connection in previously unthinkable ways (Mishra, 2023).

Social media platforms help activists in social movements have internal discussions. Online social networks particularly X (formerly Twitter), YouTube, Facebook, TikTok and Instagram are widely utilised and have become integral components of many movements (Ifeanyichukwu, 2021). As a result, many people have begun to use these platforms for communication, discussion, decision-making, and

recruiting. This media consists of various channels such as X, Instagram, Facebook, LinkedIn, TikTok and YouTube (Hari, 2023). These new communication platforms have simplified and enhanced the process of conducting protests. Without social media, the significant demand for democratic change in the Arab world would not be possible, especially with the dawn of the Arab Spring protests that began in Tunisia in December 2010.

From the foregoing, it is clear that Nigeria's protest landscape has evolved dramatically from the localized, grassroots efforts of the #AbaWomen'sRiot of 1929 and #AbeokutaWomen'sRiot of 1947, the #June12protest of 1993, the #AliMustGo protest of 1978 to the digitally driven cum modern day national movements of #OccupyNigeria of January 2012, the #BringBackOurGirls campaign of 2014, the #EndSARS protest of October 2020 along with the #EndBadGovernance protests of August 2024. The #EndBadGovernance revolt exemplified how social media has transformed agitations in Nigeria, enabling organizers to communicate demands effectively, mobilize supporters nationwide, and amplify their calls for justice and reform. This shift underscores a new era of protest, one where technology empowers voices and bridges divides like never before.

Protests In Nigeria: #EndBadGovernance in Focus

Nigeria's socio-political landscape has been marked by a series of protests, each reflecting the grievances and aspirations of its populace at distinct historical moments. These collective actions, spanning from the colonial period to the present, illustrate a persistent struggle for justice, equity, and effective governance such as the #AbaWomenRiot of December 6, 1929, where the women involved campaigned against the Nigerian colonial government's imposed tax levies. The November 27, 1947, #AbeokutaWomen'sRiot that took place occurred as a result of the unjust tax system in Egband in the Yoruba kingdom. There was also the popular #AliMustGo protest of April 17, 1978, that occurred in various universities across the country. The catalyst for this agitation was the increment after the government made the contentious decision to raise the daily food cost for undergraduate students nationwide by 50kobo. This implies that students were mandated to pay an extra 50kobo per day for their meals as the amount rose from ₦1.50kobo for meal tickets to ₦2.00-Naira. May 24, 1989, sparked the Anti-SAP protest that caused economic instability nationwide. We have the "June 12" protest in 1993 following the annulment of the results of the June 12, 1993 Nigeria presidential election where M.K.O Abiola was perceived as the winner of the election during the military regime. On the 2nd of January 2012, the #OccupyNigeria protest began as a reaction to the Federal Government's decision to remove subsidies on fuel, otherwise known as Premium Motor Spirit (PMS). There was also the #BringBackOurGirls campaign in 2014 where activists protested against insecurity in Northern Nigeria with regards to the abduction of 276 schoolgirls who were kidnapped by terrorists from their classroom in Borno State. The protest with the largest youth involvement in recent times was the #EndSARS protest of October 20, 2020 (Targema, 2024). This agitation began when the Nigerian youths took to the streets to protest against police brutality after the video of a man believed to be killed by the Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS), a specialist police team that is no longer in operation went viral.

The most recent protest by Nigerians is known as the #EndBadGovernance protest, also referred to as #HungerProtest of August 1-10, 2024. This movement was driven by

escalating dissatisfaction with President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's administration, particularly its handling of the economy, national security, and corruption. Scholars such as Princewill and Busari (2024) observe that a confluence of pervasive insecurity and economic mismanagement has engendered unprecedented levels of poverty, anger, and hunger throughout the nation.

The immediate catalysts for this protest were the elimination of gasoline subsidies and the sudden decision to float the Naira, both perceived as inadequately executed. Far from alleviating economic distress, these measures intensified long-standing frustrations, sparking widespread dissent. Organizers of the 10-day protest outlined a comprehensive set of demands to address both immediate and systemic issues:

- i. The dismissal and prosecution of public officials accused of suppressing demonstrations and violating human rights.
- ii. The repeal of the 1999 Constitution and its replacement with a new document drafted by the Nigerian populace.
- iii. The restructuring of Nigeria to rectify entrenched regional and ethnic disparities.
- iv. The establishment of a minimum wage of ₦250,000 per month to alleviate economic hardship.
- v. Sweeping reforms in education and the economy to promote sustainable development.
- vi. The unconditional release of political prisoners, including Mazi Nnamdi Kanu and #EndSARS protesters, accompanied by appropriate compensation.

It is yet to be seen whether these demands will result into positive change. Nevertheless, the #EndBadGovernance protest exemplifies the enduring significance of collective action in Nigeria's socio-political development through the instrumentality of the social media.

Statement of the Problem

Social media play a crucial role in shaping how people experience daily life, particularly by empowering them to hold government officials accountable for their actions or failures toward the public they serve (Lee, 2018). Observers regard these platforms as essential to society, providing a space for authentic and personal dialogue (Augustine, 2022). They have been described as a global community where individuals actively engage as participants, leaders, supporters, or interpreters, thanks to their capacity to offer a direct and affordable means of communication, unhindered by the limitations of traditional media (Lee, 2018).

Worldwide, social networking platforms have become tools for citizens to challenge political leaders' excesses. Notable instances include the Bangladesh protests from June to July 2024, the Kenya "Finance Bill" demonstrations in June 2024, and the "Arab Spring" uprisings that began in central Tunisia in December 2010. These events, fuelled by demands for political reform, frustration with corruption, human rights concerns, and economic struggles, leaned heavily on digital channels to organize and spread their messages.

In Nigeria, the #EndBadGovernance protests of August 2024 highlighted the power of social media platforms such as X, Instagram, YouTube, TikTok, and Facebook. Citizens used these tools to mobilize and rally against unfavorable government policies. Civil society organizations, local communities, and labour unions tapped into these platforms to conduct online discussions and coordinate efforts, with X, TikTok, and YouTube standing out as key channels. Within moments, Nigerians across various backgrounds received updates on protest plans, including starting locations and logistical details, demonstrating the speed and reach of these networks.

These examples indicate that social media serve as valuable resources for organizing and driving civil movements (Umezuruike, Oludele, Kuyoro, & Aaron, 2015). Within this framework, the use of social media in mobilising social movements remain a critical area of exploration, particularly in the context of the #EndBadGovernance protests in Nigeria. This study focuses on that specific event to understand how Nigerians made use of these platforms to shape public participation and action. While the use of social media platforms like X, Instagram are evident in human endeavours, the extent and nature of their impact in driving social movements require closer investigation (Umezuruike, et al, 2015). It is against this backdrop that this research examines the use of social media in mobilising social movements particularly during the #EndBadGovernance protests in Nigeria.

Objectives of the study

The specific objectives that necessitated this study are as follows:

- 1 To ascertain the level of public engagement on social media during the #EndBadGovernance protests in Nigeria
- 2 To find out the social media channel that was frequently used during the #EndBadGovernance protests in Nigeria
- 3 To determine if social media was effective in mobilising protesters during the #EndBadGovernance protests in Nigeria

Research Questions

The following are the research questions that will be addressed in the study:

- 1 What was the level of public engagement on social media during the #EndBadGovernance protests in Nigeria?
- 2 Which social media channel was frequently used most during the #EndBadGovernance protests in Nigeria?
- 3 Was social media effective in mobilising protesters during the #EndBadGovernance protest in Nigeria?

Theoretical Framework

According to the Network Society theory was made popular by Manuel Castells in the 1980s. It posits that information and communication technologies, particularly digital ones are driving a transformation on how we live, work, and interact in modern society by organising it around networks. It depicts a civilisation in which relationships between individuals and groups are influenced by technology and networked communication channels. Individuals in this type of society have greater control over

their own choices and interpersonal interactions. Castells, in works like *Networks of Outrage and Hope* (2012), argues that movements like the Arab Spring, Spain's indignados, and Occupy Wall Street are driven by network logic, facilitated by ICTs like social media and mobile technology.

Castells offers a perspective on how the emergence of information and communication technologies (ICTs) during the late 20th and early 21st centuries have reshaped social, economic, and political landscapes. According to Castells, modern society revolves around networks dynamic, decentralized, and interconnected systems powered by digital tools moving away from conventional top-down frameworks. These networks function by channelling streams of information, resources, and influence, fundamentally altering the ways people, groups, and movements engage with one another.

Manuel Castells' Network Society Theory provides a compelling lens about how digital technologies reshape society through flexible, interconnected networks fit perfectly with the way social media drove the #EndBadGovernance protests in Nigeria. During the protests, social media platforms like Twitter, TiktoK and Instagram acted as those networks during the #EndBadGovernance protests. These platforms allow Nigerian citizens share their frustrations about corruption and economic struggles instantly, connecting everyone from city dwellers to rural folks without needing some big central leader calling the shots. Castells says power comes from who controls the story, and here, the people snatched it back. It was all about regular people linking up and spreading the word fast.

Manuel Castells' Network Society Theory sheds light on how social media fuelled the #EndBadGovernance protests in Nigeria. It's all about networks: loose, fast-moving systems powered by tech that let regular Nigerians, from Lagos to rural villages, connect and vent about corruption and hardship without waiting for some big leader to take charge.

His "space of flows" idea fits too as the protests were not stuck in one place. A hashtag sparked in one city could rally folks in Kano or even Nigerians overseas, all jumping in at once. Then there is "timeless time" no long build-up needed; one viral post, and streets filled up by lunch. That speed made social media a game-changer. Plus, Castells' "counter-power" nails it: when the government cracked down with arrests or Internet cuts, protesters dodged them, swapping apps, sharing tricks, pulling in global eyes to keep the heat on. For Nigerian youth, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, TikTok; they were not just mobile applications but they were the guts of a movement, turning frustration into a nationwide push for change.

In their criticism of this theory, Barassi (2013) and Fuchs (2012) argue that Castells' approach lacks a nuanced understanding of how these technologies are actually used in everyday life. They contend that his reliance on network logic risks oversimplifying the complexities of social movements, reducing them to preordained network structures rather than examining their empirical realities.

Conceptual Clarifications

Governance

The idea of “governance” is far from fresh. It has lingered in political conversations and scholarly debates for ages, broadly pointing to the job of managing a government or some other group, like a country. Lately, it has taken on special weight in discussions about Nigeria’s growth and progress. Rahim (2019) describes governance as a foundational process tied to human coexistence: The concept of Good Governance was primarily implemented since the Human civilization commenced in Anachronistic period where man to man was to cross the rational period and it goes for the common purpose of livings mutually. The common cause brought them together to set some rules through policy with the consensus for making decisions and strictly passed laws for the implementation of rules for the harmonious life. Rahim says governance started simple, with a shared goal of getting along, and grew into something bigger as societies did. Lukman (2022) describes governance as a broad, shared process: “Governance refers to the process of governing societies in a situation where no single actor can claim absolute dominance. In modern society, the state is transferring previously exclusive responsibilities to civil society, as a result of which the boundaries between the state and society are becoming increasingly blurred. The term ‘governance’ refers to a group of institutions and actors within and outside of government”.

Protests

Gillion (2020) frames protests as our loud push against silence. “Protests are disruptive acts of political expression by minorities—racial, economic, or social—shaping democracy through visibility and pressure”, he argues. Ortiz, Burke, Berrada and Cortés (2022) view protests as our global cry for fairness. They say, “Protests are public demonstrations of dissent, driven by economic injustice, political repression, or rights demands, uniting diverse voices worldwide”. You want to imagine people everywhere marching against cruel laws, sexual harassments from megaphones to hashtags on social media to vent and register our frustration for positive social change. Picture EndSARS protests or the ArabSpring protests and you will find that protesters take various measures to drive home their demands including adopting harsh and unconventional never-heard before approach. That is why Gillion (2020) frames protests as “our loud push against silence...Protests are disruptive acts of political expression by minorities—racial, economic, or social—shaping democracy through visibility and pressure”. It’s raw, bold, and shakes things up, forcing power to blink. Gillion says protests is how we, the underdogs, make history hear us.

Social Media

According to Kukkala (2023), social media are a collection of Web-based tools that enable the production and sharing of user-generated content while building on the conceptual and technological underpinnings of Web 2.0. The organisation and mobilisation of offline collective activities are greatly aided by social media (Hari, 2023). One of the key characteristics of social media platforms and smartphones is their ability to facilitate or direct real-time communication practices by reducing costs and improving the effectiveness of mobilisation and planning with the intent to engage in offline campaigns. Sujon (2021) understands social media to be the heartbeat of our connected lives. She says, “Social media are dynamic, networked systems that integrate

personal expression, social relationships, and technological affordances into everyday life”. Just imagine yourself posting a selfie on X or Instagram, showing who you are, linking up with friends and sharing ideas and changing our world.

Social Mobilisation

Milan (2020) frames social mobilization as neighbours uniting for a cause bigger than themselves. According to the author, “Social mobilization is the process through which grassroots groups form collective identities and act together to challenge power, transcending ethnic divides...It is about ordinary citizens turning shared needs into collective strength” (p. 27). Think of friends in a divided town who are tired of old grudges but have to rally for clean water or better standard of living. Social mobilisation is about building bridges through shared struggles. Writing on the above matter, Milan notes, “These actions redefine belonging beyond past conflicts” (p. 42). Escoffier (2023) sees social mobilization as people in overlooked places finding their voice. “Social mobilization refers to the collective efforts of marginalized urban communities to organize, resist, and engage in democratizing processes despite structural exclusion” (Escoffier 2023, p. 8). Imagine people in a community ravaged by poverty and corruption and ignored by their own government coming together to demand for a better society.

Social Movements

Castells (2021) defines social movements as people fired up online and off, driven by anger and dreams. He notes, “Social movements are purposeful collective actions aimed at transforming the values and institutions of society, originating from shared feelings of outrage against injustice and hope for change” (p. 13). Almeida (2019) sees social movements as everyday people coming together to push for change when they’re fed up or left out. He writes, “Social movements are sustained campaigns of collective action by ordinary people and their allies targeting institutional authorities to demand or resist social change” (p. 3). It’s about regular folks, your neighbours, friends teaming up to challenge the big shots, using whatever networks or resources they can scrape together. Think of it as a group effort to shake things up when the system is not working. Social movements are a product of collective actors navigating power structures: Social movements is themselves organized expressions of dissent, emerge from and respond to the interplay of formal policies and informal practices such as patronage (Barozet, Espinoza, and Moya, 2025). This suggests that they view movements as dynamic entities shaped by both official and unofficial political environments.

Review of Empirical Studies

Augustine (2022) conducted a study titled “Investigation of How Social Media Influenced The EndSARS Protest In Lagos, Nigeria.” The study aimed to ascertain the influence of social media and Nigeria's deeply ingrained socio-political circumstances on the country's #EndSARS protests. The study is hinged on the Socio-Materiality theory. It adopted a qualitative research design and employed an unstructured interview technique and participant observation for data collection. The population of the study includes all the youths involved in the #EndSARS demonstrations in Southwest, Nigeria. There were five (5) activists and twenty-five (25) protestors in the research sample.

The findings of the study indicate that those who took part in the #EndSARS protests in Nigeria learnt about the happenings via social media. The study also discovered that social media channels are ideal interactive venues for people to demonstrate support for significant issues. The research concludes that Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) in the country must educate their members on social media usage for successful activism in participatory democracy.

The above study is related to the current research as both are concerned with the use of social media in galvanising civil protests in Nigeria but are dissimilar in research methodology as the current study employs a questionnaire as the instrument of data collection.

A similar research was conducted by Hari (2014) on “The Evolution of Social Protest in Nigeria: The Role of Social Media in the “#OccupyNigeria” Protest.” The research examined the impact of social media use during the #OccupyNigeria protest, as well as the implications and possibilities it presents for social action aimed at bringing about socio-political change in Nigeria. The study evaluates the obstacles to significant social media-driven socio-political change and political engagement campaigns. The study makes use of a qualitative research approach for data collection through interviews and a review of newspaper reports.

The findings from this study revealed that Facebook was the most frequently accessed website among Nigerians during the protest. The findings also show that social media can assist significantly as a means of coordination and mobilisation by the protest organisers, since the mainstream, state-owned media outlets with the greatest reach, like Radio Nigeria and the National Television Authority (NTA), first refused to cover the demonstration.

This study varies with the current study on the subject under investigation which is the #OccupyNigeria of 2012 Protest whereas the latest study examines the #EndBadGovernance protests in 2024. The scope of the current study is Lagos State and the FCT-Abuja, Nigeria while the former is based in Lagos.

A study carried out by Ifeanyiichukwu (2021), “Activism in the era of the social media: a study of the use of social media by young people in Amuo Odofin LGA, Lagos State Nigeria” was aimed at ascertaining how effective social media activism has been in translating its online impact offline and to measure the role of the social media in activism in Lagos State. The research used the Uses and Gratification theory. The study adopted a survey research method and a simple random sampling technique. The population for this study consist of youths resident in Amuwo Odofin Local Government Area, Lagos State.

The findings of the study reveal that activism has gathered overwhelming support in the era of social media, more than it did in the pre-social media era because of the wider reach and ease of use which the new media gave it and its users. It also shows that in this social media age, activism has proven to be highly successful. The researcher concludes that this demonstrates unequivocally that social media is a fantastic evolving tool that should be adopted as a means of facilitating activism in the modern era.

The above study is at variance with this current study in the theories used. While this study is anchored on the Uses and Gratification theory, the study under review

makes use of the Framing theory. Both studies are focused on social media use in activism in Nigeria.

Similarly, Okocha and Dapoet (2022) examined social media and Hashtag Activism in Nigeria: A Narrative Review. The goal of the study was to determine the relevance of social media and hashtag activism in Nigeria. The study employs the narrative review method. The research is anchored on Technological Determinism theory. According to the study's findings, hashtag activism has developed into a potent tool for advocacy, public awareness raising, and mobilisation of campaigns aimed at bringing about long-lasting social change in the nation. The study recommends that to encourage greater participation in government policies and programs, the government should endeavour to increase Internet access, especially in rural areas. The study concludes social media has been used by activists and organisers to spread the word about causes they are passionate about and to plan in-person demonstrations and events.

Generally, this study and the present study are similar in terms of the subject, social media under investigation. However, they are at variance with each other as the present study made use of a quantitative data analysis approach against the qualitative method employed in this research.

In a study conducted by Ini (2021) on “The Role of Social Media in the Political Participation of Nigerian Youths – The Case of the #EndSARS Protest”, which sought to find out the main causes of the disparities in the #EndSARS protest participation between Nigeria's northern and southern regions. The researcher conducted regression and mediation analyses to test hypotheses and previous theories on the predictors of protest participation in Nigeria. The research findings indicate that social media is the most significant element impacting protest involvement, with a high positive association found between social media usage as well as involvement in the #EndSARS protests. The study concludes that Southern states' greater usage of social media contributed to their greater participation in the #EndSARS demonstrations.

The above study is similar to the research under investigation in that they both are centred on civil rights protests. Nevertheless, while the current study is concerned with the #EndSARS protest, the study under review is focused on the most recent Nigeria protest; #EndBadGovernance.

Lee (2018) carried out a study on “The Role of Social Media in Protest Participation: The Case of Candlelight Vigils in South Korea.” This research studied the impact of social media in organising citizens for protest involvement with a specific focus on Facebook. The study analyses survey data acquired in South Korea during the 2016 candlelight protests. The results of the investigation show a significant and favourable relationship between Facebook use frequency and protest participation. Subsequent path analysis, however, demonstrates that Facebook use did not have a direct impact on protest participation. It was also discovered that deliberate news consumption and political expression on Facebook were encouraged by its usage, and this in turn led to a rise in the number of protest attendees. In the study, the researcher suggests that although social media users accidentally come upon news on Facebook, this does not always translate into more active political participation on the network.

The main distinction between the above study and the current research is in the location of the investigation. While the current study is situated in Lagos and the FCT-

Abuja, Nigeria, the above study was in South Korea. Both studies are related in that they deploy survey research methods for data collection.

Methodology

This study adopted a quantitative survey research design. This implies that the study depends on both numerical data. This approach was used because it makes it possible to get reliable data from a specific population and provides a means of assessing attitudes, opinions, and viewpoints. The population for this study is 6,999,2291 according to the National Population Commission. This consists of residents of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT)-Abuja and Lagos State respectively. In Abuja, the study was restricted to Abuja Municipal Area Council (AMAC) with a population of 1,873,400 Bwari 565,102 and Gwagwalada Area Councils consisting of 350,920 persons. The total population of the three area councils in Abuja stood at 2,789,422 according to data from the Nigeria's National Population Commission. In Lagos State, the study surveyed the following Local Government Areas (LGAs) and their population: Alimosho (3,082,899), Ibeju-Lekki (149,911) and Ikeja (976,997). The total population of Alimosho, Ibeju-Lekki and Ikeja according to Lagos state Bureau of Statistics are 4,209,807.

The sample size of 384 was arrived at using the Sample Size Determination Table by Cozby and Bates (2015, p.149) at $\pm 5\%$ confidence level. According to the Table, whenever the size of a population under review is over 100,000, the sample size will be 384. Hence, the researcher sampled 384 respondents.

The study employed a multi-stage sampling technique to systematically select 384 respondents from the total population of persons in the two selected states (Lagos and Abuja) of Nigeria. The following are the three (3) stages that were employed by the researcher in executing the multi-stage sampling technique for the study. Simple random sampling technique which is the first stage of the multi-stage sampling technique was employed to select 2 states out of the total of 37 states of Nigeria including the FCT-Abuja alongside the selected six (6) local government areas/councils for the study. The rationale behind the choice of FCT is that Abuja is the Federal Capital Territory where the *#EndBadGovernance* protests as well as the *#BringBackOurGirls* movement took place. Abuja was selected because it is the seat of the Nigerian government. The choice of Lagos State is because it is notorious for major national protests in Nigeria such as the *#EndSARS* protests *#OccupyNigeria* movement as well as *#EndBadGovernance* revolt. It is also the state where the current president of Nigeria, Bola Ahmed Tinubu once served as two-time governor.

The second stage involve the application of Proportionate sampling technique to proportionately distribute questionnaire to respondents in the already selected six (6) local government areas/councils in Abuja and Lagos for the purpose of this research. The rationale for using proportionate sampling technique was to achieve a representative sample that reflects the views of the entire population, ensuring that every individual had an equal likelihood of being selected.

As a result, in Abuja, 192 copies of the questionnaire were distributed to Abuja Municipal Area Council (103), Bwari (31) and Gwagwalada (19). Lagos state likewise received a total of 192 copies of the questionnaire as Alimosho (169), Ibeju-Lekki (8)

and Ikeja LGAs got 54 copies of the instrument of data collection, using the proportionate sampling technique.

Table 1: Questionnaire Allocation

Local Government Areas	Population	Allocated Questionnaire
Abuja Municipal Area Council (AMAC)	1,873,400	103
Bwari	565,102	31
Gwagwalada	350,920	19
Alimosho	3,082,899	169
Ibeju-Lekki	149,911	8
Ikeja	976,997	54
Total	6,999,229	384

Source: Field Survey, 2024

The third stage is the use of Purposive sampling technique by the researcher to identify respondents suitable to be issued a questionnaire for the study. The use of Purposive (or Judgmental) sampling technique allowed the researcher to target individuals who could provide in-depth insights and valuable perspectives on the #EndBadGovernance protests in Abuja and Lagos.

Upon return, 371 (three hundred and seventy-one) copies of the questionnaire were valid and useful for analysis. The response rate stood at is 96% and considered adequate for the analysis conducted in this study.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Data for this study was presented using tables, percentages, and the descriptive analysis below:

Table 2: Demography

Gender of Respondents		
Response Category	Distribution	Percentage %
Male	186	50
Female	179	48

Prefer not to disclose	6	2
Total	371	100
Education		
Response Category	Distribution	Percentage %
FSLC	60	16
SSCE/GCE	81	22
ND/NCE	55	15
BSC/BA/LLB/HND	101	27
MSC and Higher degree	74	20
Total	371	100

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Results from Table 2 above reveals that the male gender participated more in the study. It also indicates that the majority of the respondents for this study are BSc holders (first degree).

Research Objective 1: To ascertain the level of public engagement on social media during the #EndBadGovernance protests

Table 3 (RQ1): The level of public engagement on social media during the #EndBadGovernance protests in Nigeria

You visit social media platforms more during the #EndBadGovernance demonstration than any other event of national importance		
Response Category	Distribution	Percentage %
Strongly Agree	202	54
Agree	52	14
Disagree	70	19
Strongly Disagree	47	13
Total	371	100
During the protests, how often do you comment or interact on social media regarding the #EndBadGovernance demonstration?		
Response Category	Distribution	Percentage %
Most of the time	178	47
Some of the time	91	25
Seldom	55	15
Never	47	13
Total	371	100

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Information from Table 3 indicates majority of the respondents visited social media platforms more during the #EndBadGovernance demonstration than any other event of national importance as residents of Lagos and Abuja attest that they frequently comment or interact on social media regarding the #EndBadGovernance demonstration regularly.

Research Objective 2: To find out the social media channel that was frequently used during the #EndBadGovernance protests

Table 4 (RQ2): Social media channel was frequently used most during the #EndBadGovernance protests in Nigeria

The following social media channels was frequently used most during the #EndBadGovernance protests in Nigeria

Response Category	Distribution	Percentage %
Facebook	61	16
Instagram	97	26
X (formerly Twitter)	129	35
TikTok	84	23
Total	371	100

These are the attributes of social media platform that came in most handy for you during the #EndBadGovernance protests

Response Category	Distribution	Percentage %
Audio-visual	74	20
Live Streaming	121	33
Audio conferencing	116	31
Hashtags	60	16
Total	371	100

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Data from Table 4 indicates that the live streaming feature of social media platforms came in most handy during the #EndBadGovernance protests in Nigeria. The above table also reveals that the majority of the respondents attest that X social media channel was utilised the most during the #EndBadGovernance protests.

Research Objective 3: To determine if social media was effective in mobilising protesters during the #EndBadGovernance revolt in Nigeria

Table 5 (RQ3): social media effective in mobilising protesters during the #EndBadGovernance protest in Nigeria

Social media was put to effective during the #EndBadGovernance protests to advance the campaign objectives		
Response Category	Distribution	Percentage %
Very Effective	151	41
Effective	113	30
Not So Effective	86	23
Never Effective	21	6
Total	371	100

These social media attributes were effective in mobilising Nigerians for the #EndBadGovernance protests		
Response Category	Distribution	Percentage %
User-generated content	94	25
Real-time information exchange	112	31
Online Community	86	23
Audio and Visual integration	79	21
Total	371	100

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Data from Table 5 reveals that social media was very effective during the #EndBadGovernance protests in Nigeria. Furthermore, it went further to affirm that the real-time information exchange characteristics of social media made it more effective mobilisation and communication tool during the #EndBadGovernance protests.

Discussion of Findings

Findings from the study demography in Table 1 show that males constitute the primary population that took part in the survey more than women and other genders. This is not just a random detail, it hints at something deeper about how gender shapes who gets involved in online activism. It is not a new idea either; researchers have been digging into this for a while. Take Ogunji (2014), for example. He talks about how Nigeria’s patriarchal setup often means women don’t get the same shot at using digital tools as men do. Umezuruike et al, (2015), point out that things like income and education, issues that are often tied to gender play a big role in deciding who can take part in these digital movements. Weighing in on this matter, Barozet, Espinoza, and Moya (2025) posit that social media platforms often end up mirroring the same unequal access to digital technology.

The result relating to the educational qualification of the respondents in Table 2 proves that the majority of the research respondents are first-degree university graduates 101(27%). This finding implies that the respondents were generally well-educated and possessed a strong grasp of societal issues. This is in line with the postulations of Augustine (2022) and Lukman (2022) who argue that higher educational attainment correlates with increased political awareness and active participation in digital activism. The high percentage of university graduates in the sample not only enhances the reliability of the research but also underscores the potential of educated citizens to drive political change through digital means.

The findings from Table 3 reveals that Nigerians visited social media platforms more during the #EndBadGovernance demonstration than they did for any other big national moment happening around that time. This wave of activity really brings home how essential these platforms were, acting as lifelines for people to talk things out and pull together, showing just how much these protests mattered to everyone. Okocha and Dapoet (2022) corroborate this observation, emphasizing social media's role in amplifying marginalized voices and circumventing traditional media gatekeepers. In the #EndBadGovernance context, the high engagement rate likely reflects both organic virality and strategic use by activists to amplify demands. Augustine (2022) adds that platforms like X provide a "space for authentic dialogue," enabling citizens to hold authorities accountable in real time, a feature particularly resonant in Nigeria's socio-political climate. The frequent use of social media during the period of the #EndBadGovernance protests is indicative of its importance as civic mobilisation tool during periods of heated national debate. This aligns with the study conducted by Okocha and Dapoet (2022) who believe that social media is used by social activists and organisers to advance good societal causes and mobilise the public against policies of government that negatively impact the lives of a people.

In response to the respondents' frequency interaction or comment on social media regarding the #EndBadGovernance demonstration during the protests, the result in Table 3 indicated that majority (47%) of the respondents interacted on social media platforms "most of the time" in relation to the #EndBadGovernance protests. An additional 25% engaged "some of the time," while 15% did so "seldom," and 13% reported "never" interacting. This data suggest that for many participants, engaging online was not an occasional act but a regular, almost habitual practice, reflecting social media platforms integration into the fabric of the protest movement. Ifeanyichukwu (2021) study of #EndSARS protests revealed a strong correlation between social media usage and protest participation, a pattern that the #EndBadGovernance data appear to replicate. emphasizes the pivotal role of social media in modern Nigerian activism, noting its capacity for real-time communication and grassroots coordination. This high degree of engagement emphasises how crucial social media was in mobilising young Nigerians for social movements throughout the #EndBadGovernance revolt in Nigeria. The above aligns with Manuel Castells' Network Society theory where Castells (2015) posits that digital technologies, particularly social media, have restructured societal interactions by creating decentralized, interconnected networks that empower individuals and groups to organize collectively. From the foregoing, it can be deduced that the level of public engagement on social media during the #EndBadGovernance protests was very high.

Table 4 presents the results of the study, which show that X was the most popular social media site used by most of the 129 (35%) of the respondents. Platforms such as TikTok (23%), Instagram (26%) and Facebook (16%) experienced lower levels of engagement during the #EndBadGovernance protests. Responses from the respondents 121(33%) as seen in Table 4 further indicate that the live streaming attribute of social media platforms came in most handy during the #EndBadGovernment protests. X with its visual attributes, conveyed the message of the protests in clear terms, while Facebook offered a quieter corner for deeper conversation. These characteristics of social media platforms was noted by Hari's (2014) in his study of the #OccupyNigeria protests where he notes that social media's ability for coordination and mass mobilization comes in handy when mainstream media hesitates to cover the story. This reveals the obvious relevance of live live-streaming

capabilities of X in disseminating information during the protests. This is why Sadvskaya, et al, (2021) assert that real-time, unmediated communication plays a pivotal role in coordinating protest activities and ensuring transparency. Live streaming characteristics was a crucial tool for organising support and recording the protests as they happened since it allowed individuals to communicate events instantaneously, raising awareness, transparency, and citizens' participation on issues of national importance. Little wonder why X is one of the tools of social mobilisation as Milan (2020) describes social mobilization as the process of uniting people across divides for a shared cause. X did not just spread news; they fuelled a sense of togetherness and urgency, transforming individual frustrations into a collective voice for positive change. There is clear evidence that during the #EndBadGovernance protests, protesters predominantly turned to X (formerly Twitter), and relied heavily on its features that support live and interactive engagement, such as live streaming and audio conferencing for coordination and mobilisation.

Results from Table 5 indicate that the majority of the respondents 151(41%) report that the use of social media during the #EndBadGovernance protests proved very effective. These results suggest that social media has emerged as a critical resource for enabling rapid, coordinated action during protest mobilisation. When considering the attributes that respondents found most effective in mobilising Nigerians, real-time information exchange emerged as the most significant attribute with 31 percent endorsement, followed by user-generated content at 25 percent, online community formation at 23 percent, and audio and visual integration at 21 percent. This pattern underscores the importance of immediacy and the capacity for grassroots content creation in driving civic engagement. Corroborating this fact, Mishra (2023) further argues that social media's capacity to "instantly reach sizable audiences" transforms isolated grievances into collective action is lucid. Sujon (2021) notes that by integrating personal narratives into social movements, social networking platforms will foster emotional resonance and solidarity. Its efficacy was probably due to its capacity to instantly reach a sizable audience, which made it an excellent instrument for organising events and spreading the protest's message. Real-time information exchange appears to be crucial, as it enables protest organisers and participants to disseminate updates instantly, coordinate actions and react promptly to unfolding events. This means that the success of the protest was directly related to how quickly and easily messages were shared on social media which in turn facilitated mass mobilisation and participation. The study therefore reveals that social media was very effective in mobilising protesters during the #EndBadGovernance protests in Nigeria.

Conclusion

This study examines the use of social media in mobilising social movements, focusing #EndBadGovernance Protests in Nigeria. The study adopted a survey research design involving 384 respondents from Abuja and Lagos State. This study elucidates how social media platforms, most notably X (formerly Twitter), was put into use by the protesters in galvanizing public engagement and orchestrating collective action. The findings reveal a high level of public interaction on social media during the protests, affirm X as the predominant platform employed during the #EndBadGovernance protests in Nigeria. It further substantiates the effectiveness of these digital tools in mobilizing protesters. These insights resonate deeply with Manuel Castells' Network Society Theory, which frames contemporary societal interactions as being reconfigured

by information and communication technologies into decentralized, interconnected networks that empower individuals and communities to effect change.

The evidence of robust public engagement on social media during the #EndBadGovernance protests underscores the platforms' indispensable role as conduits for communication, coordination, and the amplification of dissent. Respondents consistently reported frequent visits to social media and sustained interactions concerning the protests, suggesting that these digital arenas were not merely supplementary but central to the movement's vitality. This aligns seamlessly with prior scholarly observations that social media circumvent traditional media gatekeepers, facilitating real-time, grassroots coordination (Okocha & Dapoet, 2022; Augustine, 2022). The pre-eminence of X, as identified in the study, further highlights the significance of its live streaming and real-time information exchange capabilities. These features proved particularly effective in a protest environment where immediacy and interactivity were paramount, enabling rapid dissemination of updates and fostering a sense of urgency and unity among participants. Such findings illuminate the nuanced ways in which specific platform affordances shape the dynamics of social mobilization, offering a concrete illustration of Castells' assertion that digital networks redefine power and agency in modern societies.

The effectiveness of social media in mobilizing the #EndBadGovernance protests is perhaps most compellingly demonstrated by the respondents' emphasis on real-time information exchange as the most impactful attribute. This capability, which allowed activists to share updates, coordinate actions, and respond promptly to evolving circumstances, mirrors Mishra's (2023) observation that social media's ability to reach sizable audiences instantaneously transforms individual grievances into collective action. Moreover, the study underscores the role of user-generated content and online community formation in cultivating emotional resonance and solidarity dynamics that Sujon (2021) identifies as critical to the success of digital activism. These elements collectively illustrate how social media platforms have evolved into vital instruments for organizing and amplifying social movements, transcending their initial conception as mere communication tools to become architects of societal transformation in the digital age.

The implications of these findings extend far beyond the immediate context of the #EndBadGovernance protests, situating them within a broader narrative of digital activism across Africa and the global sphere. The protests join a lineage of movements from the Arab Spring to Nigeria's own #EndSARS campaign where social media have empowered activists to challenge systemic injustices and demand accountability (Ifeanyichukwu, 2021; Hari, 2014). In the Nigerian context, the #EndBadGovernance movement exemplifies how digital technologies can amplify marginalized voices, bridging geographic and social divides to foster a nationwide call for justice and reform.

In synthesizing these insights, this study affirms the centrality of social media in mobilizing the #EndBadGovernance protests, with X emerging as the linchpin platform. Its real-time information exchange serves as the cornerstone of its effectiveness. The findings not only validate the transformative potential of digital technologies in enabling collective action but also highlight the complexities and limitations that accompany their use. As social media continue to evolve, their implications for social movements and democratic participation demand sustained scholarly attention. For Nigeria, a nation marked by persistent struggles for justice and

equity, these platforms offer a powerful means to amplify marginalized voices and challenge systemic injustices.

Ultimately, this research underscores a broader truth: social media are not static tools but dynamic ecosystems that reflect and shape the societies they serve. For scholars and practitioners of social media, the task ahead lies in harnessing their potential to foster positive change while addressing the inequities and vulnerabilities they expose. By doing so, we can ensure that the digital age becomes not only a space of outrage and hope, as Castells envisions, but also a crucible for enduring justice and transformation. The #EndBadGovernance protests, through their adept use of social media, remind us that even in the face of systemic adversity, the human spirit, amplified by technology in social activism, retains its capacity to demand for and achieve positive change in our human society.

Recommendations

Based on the research results, the study recommends the following:

1. Since there was high-level of public engagements on social media during the August 1st-August 10th, 2024 #EndBadGovernance protest, activists and organizers should double down on social media for future protests. It should not just be about posting updates, they should create online spaces where people can jump in, share their stories, and keep the buzz going since that's where Nigerians are already showing up and speaking out.
2. Social activists in Nigeria who are organizing a movement or protests like the #EndBadGovernance this should adopt X and make live streaming their focus. It is not just about posting, it is about showing what is happening as it happens. People crave for raw, instant connection especially in a protest where every moment counts. X's platform allows social movements to initiate and sustain live broadcast live.
3. Future protests and movement for social change in Nigeria should adopt social media platforms since it has proven to be effective during the #EndBadGovernance protests in Nigeria. By utilising these social networking sites, social change activists will increase their reach and be heard. This will enable them garner more needed support and accomplishing their objective of a better Nigeria.

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