

EXAMINING THE IMPACT OF TWITTER / X ON ABUJA AND LAGOS RESIDENTS IN MOBILISING THE 2020 #ENDSARS PROTEST

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Abstract

The advent of social media is in no doubt disrupting the narrative in the media industry and the society at large. Owing to the multifarious potentials of the social media, they are being deployed in different aspects of human endeavour to meet one need or the other. Among the various social media platforms, X formerly known as Twitter portends to be a veritable tool for mass mobilization the world over. This study therefore, examined the impact of X on Abuja and Lagos Residents' in the 2020 #Endsars Protest in Nigeria. The study sought to assess the use of X during the 2020 #EndSARS protest in Abuja and Lagos. Descriptive survey was used as research design where 385 online copies of questionnaire were administered as instrument for data collection. Findings from the study revealed that twitter was effective in mobilising residents in Abuja and Lagos to protest. The result also shows that respondents used X to share information, mobilise resources and communicate freely during the protest. Be that as it may, there were cases of misinformation on X platform which however did not undermine the impact of the platform on the campaign. The study concludes that if Twitter/X and other social media platforms are properly harnessed, the concomitant challenges they portend cannot undermine the potency of the platform for mass mobilisation and social change as evidenced in the study. The study therefore recommended that, there is the need for citizens to utilize constructive approach in harnessing social media platforms like Twitter to express their views and opinions, especially on issues that affect them.

Keywords: Communication, Mobilisation, Social Media, Protest, Nigeria

Introduction

Over the last few years, a continuous tide of popular uprisings and protests has shaken many parts of the world. In the wake of the Arab spring, researchers credited social media as a catalyst for change (Fahaz, 2014). The arrival of social media cum Web 2.0 has transformed the media and political landscape as well as media-politics in a way that is supplying the citizens with more powers to air their voices. By limiting the gatekeeping of information common to the mainstream media, the social media generally offer platforms for stimulating mass participation through their information dissemination and networking power (Lambe, Victor and Maryam, 2016). Following the 'Arab Spring', citizens of

many countries also organized and held month-long protests against their governments. A common underlying pattern in these mobilizations was the use of social media to communicate, organize, and coordinate protest activities among decentralized national and international individuals, groups, and associations.

Since the innovative emergence of ICT or digitalisation in the modern world, the use of social media as channels of communication has found expressions in political, economic, social, and business aspects of human dealings and engagements (Dickson, Tinuade, Margaret., 2021). The rapid rise of Internet technologies over the last two decades in Africa has conversely led to an increase of digital and public protests

relating to a plethora of issues affecting its citizens (Wasserman, Chuma and Bosch, 2018 and Nyabola 2018). The use of mobile phones and Internet-enabled gadgets has contributed to social media becoming an integral part of the social and political transformation in Africa (Kaigwa 2017 and Omanga 2015). The importance of social media for contemporary protest movements have been theorized from different perspectives. Overall, emphasis has been given to the functionality of social networking sites as a means of information sharing and a tool for organizing protests (Bimber, Flanagin and Stohl, 2012). Social media platforms are a means for online socialization, as well as the ease of communication, and self-expression particularly between individuals who are physically apart. In bridging potential physical gaps, these digital spaces allow individuals to come together virtually to share information and discuss ideas. The primary requirement for participation in these spaces, such as Facebook, X, WhatsApp and Instagram among others is Internet access via a computer or smartphone.

X is a micro-blogging social media platform which enables users to express small blurbs of information to their followers. It is a broad social media platform that allows participants to share messages within an online community. Its primary function is to allow users to express thoughts and ideas within an online community through a limited statement, known as a 'tweet.' Tweets are also often characterized by what is known as a 'hashtag.' This is a key word or phrase that allows a particular tweet to be part of a larger conversation on the platform and easily accessed by users, while also influencing its content. In order to use a hashtag, a user must tweet a certain word or phrase un-spaced and precede this with a number symbol ("#"). Individuals may use

hashtags to join a conversation or to simply emphasize a message (Everett, 2018).

Hashtag activism, or the use of a hashtag for some form of activism, has become increasingly common on social media platforms. The use of a hashtag to raise awareness of and combat various social issues has been particularly prevalent on Twitter such as #OccupyNigeria, #BringBackOurGirls, #BlackLivesMatter amongst others. Such digital campaigns are typically centered on a specific hashtag that is indicative of a particular social issue and communicates the campaign's primary message. Users who may have experience with the issue are able to easily join the conversation simply by characterizing their own tweets with the hashtag. The hashtag, '#EndSARs', first appeared on Twitter in 2017. After that, the hashtag gradually and famously became a social movement in Nigeria. However, the social movement took momentum when a video went viral of SARs officials shooting a young man in a white SUV and stealing his car, leaving him dead on the road (Abbo, Njidda, and Baba, 2020)

The #EndSARS protest gained the attention of the national and international communities in the year 2020 and was massively promoted with maximum deployment of the social media by Nigerians. #EndSARS was a decentralised protest against police cruelty in Nigeria. The social movement agitated for an end to the existence of the Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS) which was categorised as a vicious unit of the Nigerian Police over its record of abuses. The unit was established to confront violent crimes like robbery, kidnapping and other related activities etc. (Amnesty International, 2016). However, there have been widespread claims of abuse and extrajudicial killings by members of the unit particularly targeted at the youth in Nigeria. The outrage that emerged from these claims led to the ENDSARS campaign and since Twitter

served as coordinating place for the protests. The protest started with a spotlight on police cruelty, but later got to some other aspects such as bribery, brutality and human rights violations in the country (George, 2020).

Statement of the Problem

The social media have revolutionised the manner people interact and communicate. In Nigeria, people, who have higher levels of affinity with social media, are using it to achieve different needs. It holds lots of potential for information, mobilization, interaction and expression. The use of the social media as instruments of social mobilization was recorded across the length and breadth of Nigeria as people, especially youths mobilize against police brutality and financial extortion (Akpan and Targema, 2023).

The 2020 #EndSARS protest in Nigeria was a clear testimony to how people mobilize to fight against nefarious practices within the national administrative system. Much of the information about the #EndSARS was spread on social media platforms. A number of studies have indicated that social media information can also set people against the government (Conor, 2019; Eze, 2020). The happenings during the 2020 #EndSARS protest in Abuja and Lekki, Lagos indicated the same thing in Nigeria. This may not be unconnected to the fact that misinformation was also spread through the social media. Discourses on protests against the unruly use of government power in different quarters have shown that the social media can be used to spread unreliable, unverified and unconfirmed information. While this claim may be true in certain conditions, it is yet to be known if the same condition obtained during the #EndSARS protest in Nigeria. It is against this background that this study assesses Abuja and Lagos Residents' Perception of

the use of X in the 2020 #Endsars Protest in Nigeria.

Research Objectives

The overall objective of the study is to assess Abuja and Lagos Residents' Perception of the use of X in the 2020 #Endsars Protest in Nigeria. However, the specific objectives are to;

1. Examine the impact of X for mobilization in the 2020 #ENDSARS protest in Abuja and Lekki, Lagos.
2. Identify the challenges of utilising X for mobilization in the 2020 #ENDSARS protest in Abuja and Lekki, Lagos.

Literature Review

This section presents a review of related literature to provide rudimentary base for the study in light of relevant extant literature.

The Concept of Mobilization

Today, people do not only rely on political parties and the electoral process to express their preferences, but also on demonstrations, protests, campaigns, petitions, marches, and organizations which can help them achieve their social change goals (Johnston, 2011). A Protest can be described as an expression of discontent over an issue or event. A protest can be seen as an expression in different ways, like strike actions, hunger, public demonstrations and so on. Kymlicka(2002) describes protest as "a political expressible, collective gathering in a public place." Protest usually occurs due to discontent; when people are not satisfied on issues, they gather up to tackle it in many different ways.

A protest cannot take place if the people are not mobilized to contribute to it. For a protest to succeed, someone among the protesters must live up to the task of passing information around the potential participants in order to give reasons for the protest, the time and the specific venue.

Mobilisation is much similar to coordination, as all parties need to be convinced before carrying out such a protest, and social media is a vital platform for achieving this. Social media communication channels are formed to work through social interaction using highly accessible and scalable methods. Social media make use of web-based technologies to broadcast media monologues into social media conversation. They facilitate the democratization of both knowledge and information thereby, turning people from content consumer to content producer. Social media are quite different from traditional mass media, which are owned by government and private individuals. They are quite inexpensive compared to conventional media and they enable anyone to have access to information.

Review of Related Literature

Twitter as a potent tool for Mass mobilization in the Digital Era

Twitter was created in March 2006 by Jack Dorsey and launched that same year in July. It is a microblogging service where people are able to post and exchange text messages limited to 140 characters, either through personal computers or mobile devices. The interactive mechanism allows users to interact to follow and be followed by other registered on the platform, enabling them to comment or post opinions, propagate news and exchange information related to their interest. Various research findings have shown that Twitter is becoming an important communication tool that enhances the characterization of electoral processes, and group online political protest (Borondo, Morales, Losada, and Benito, 2012; Livne, Simmons, Adar, & Adamic, L.A., 2011; Maurice and Hermans, 2014).

A simple Tweet can reach a large audience, which then enables citizens to engage with the political scene from various

cultural contexts which was why it was largely deployed make the #ENDSARS a success through hash tagging and making it viral on twitter. Often, twitter is considered for making hashtags viral for other social media platforms. If #EndSARS has been tweeted on twitter, it will be promoted to numerous followers at the same time. The various tweeting methods used for this kind of situation are essential for promoting events on a large scale. Hence, twitter should be used as a method of effective marketing strategy for promotion of #EndSARS. The best part of twitter is that it enables everyone to have a clear view on each perspective of #EndSARS. Twitter also helps with promotion in an innovative way since it has a tendency of getting re tweeted for viral hashtags. Hence, the various methods adopted by twitter to track other users or following them make it essential part of social movement using social media. Lastly, twitter has the ability to create a trending topic and hence can be used by #EndSARS as a powerful way for making it a trending topic.

Review of Empirical Studies

Oloyede and Elegu (2019) did a study on exploring hashtag activism in Nigeria: a case of #endsars campaign. The study explores the #Endsars; a hashtag used to create awareness on police brutality such as extortion, rape, physical and verbal assault, extra-judicial killings, wanton arrest and other forms of intimidation tactics against young innocent Nigerians. The research is quite similar with this thesis as both focused on the #EndSARS Campaign even though their aims differ. The dissimilarities also extend to the theories on which the studies were framed, the paper being reviewed based their study on the Agenda Setting Theory. As to findings, the study concludes that hashtag activism is instrumental for social transformation as such, social media impacts, dictates and

influence what the traditional media think and show as important to the public.

Akpan and Targema (2023) explored the potential of social media for effective mass mobilization and community engagement to attain national development in Nigeria. This study was done against the backdrop of the technological determinism theory that provides the framework for investigating the indispensable role which technology plays in the advancement of a nation's socioeconomic development. The secondary research approach was adopted to carry out the study and studied the 2020 #EndSARS protest (SARS refers to Special Anti-Robbery Squad), a youth uprising that aimed to put an end to all forms of police brutality and systemic injustices in the country. This study examined the nature of digital activism that social media facilitated during the protest and how that translated into real-life activism, thereby galvanizing the youth to actively execute the protest. By considering the challenges of the platforms in this regard such as the possibility of being hijacked and negatively deployed in a counterproductive manner, the study concludes that proper mainstreaming of social media into the community engagement and national development struggle would help engage meaningfully with the citizens and mobilize them to attain socioeconomic development in the country.

Adegbilero-iwari, Fasae and Subair(2022) conducted a study on social media for social change: a review of the Nigerian anti-police protests through the lens of the #endsars movement. As a disruptive innovation, social media is imbued with enormous capacity to cause social change. This paper examined the role played by social media networks, Twitter in particular, in the #EndSARS protests that rocked Nigeria in recent past, most especially the October 2020 episode. It established the link between social change and social media, having highlighted

the significant role, through review and report of observations, that social media played in the EndSARS protests which, significantly, has led to unfolding changes in the manner the Nigerian Police is organized, remunerated and operated – the disbanding of the SARS unit, and government efforts to address the demands of the youths.

Adeniyi, Kehinde, Gbolahan and Ahmadu (2018) carried out a study on Twitter as a tool for the Mobilisation of the #Bringbackourgirls# Campaign among Undergraduates. The study examined the role twitter played in mobilising youths to join the #bringbackourgirls# campaign. Survey method #was employed and questionnaire was used as instrument of data collection. The population was University of Lagos students. A sample size of 500 respondents was drawn from the population out of which 473 responded effectively to the questions. The finding revealed that 90% of the respondents have a twitter account and they access them regularly. About 70% of the respondents stated that social media were their main sources of information on the campaign. Furthermore, 57% believed that twitter is an effective tool for sourcing information and mobilisation. Recommendations were made among others that efforts should also be made to institute a form of regulatory framework for social media as unscrupulous elements can use the platform to mobilize people to cause disorderliness in the nation.

Akerele-Popoola, Azeez and Adeniyi (2022) conducted a study on Twitter, civil activisms and #EndSARS protest in Nigeria as a developing democracy. The study examined how Twitter was used to organize the #EndSARS protest in Nigeria. It also investigated the extent to which Twitter has promoted or degraded democracy in Nigeria through its support for enhancing freedom of expression and being a driver of social protests. The study adopted a qualitative

approach using in-depth interview. Twenty Nigerian youths were purposely selected across the South-western states of Nigeria through snow balling technique. The study found that Twitter is effective for social protests as witnessed in the #EndSARS protest because it is a magnificent and functional tool that is powerful in creating a strong tie and thick engagement during and after the protest. However, the effect of Twitter is temporal as the ties it can create get weak by the day. The study concluded that Twitter can either enhance or degrade democracy depending on how its users, who are the core driver of change, use it in democratic process.

Ibezim-Ohari (2017) did a study on *Confronting Closing Civic Spaces in Nigeria*. The growing restrictions on free speech, association and assembly rights, including the tide of restrictive legislation, have engendered a climate of fear in Nigeria, shrinking the spaces for civic engagement. Despite this persistent and growing official intimidation, a web of actors, comprising active citizens, informal and organised groups from civil society are trudging on under great difficulties, deploying a variety of strategies to reclaim civic space and demanding greater respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. Have these local responses and initiatives been effective? What strategies have worked for local activists and organisations? This article discusses the ways local responses can inform future strategies by human rights activists and other actors operating in the regional and international spheres.

Theoretical Framework

The researcher adopted technology acceptance model as theoretical framework due to its relevance to the current study.

Technology Acceptance Model

Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) is an explanatory theory to explicate the adoption

of ICTs in mass mobilization, activism as well as other human endeavours and how its acceptance, application, and use can bring about positive development, change, and outcome. TAM is a model that has been developed to explain how individuals accept and subsequently utilize a particular technological device or innovation (1985, p.13 cited in Mugo, Njagi, Chemwei and Motanya, 2017)

The model is used by researchers in various academic fields to explain the application of information and communication technologies to the perceived benefits of those technologies, and the ease of use that they offer users. For instance, Mugo, Njagi, Chemwei, and Motanya (2017) investigate the applicability of TAM to the adoption of teaching IT in Kenya.

The study describes how the TAM has been used in predicting the acceptance and utilization of various technologies in health facilities. The study demonstrates how TAM can be adopted in the development and utilization of the most recent technological innovations for the health sector such as mobile technologies and establishes that despite attitudinal and technical challenges, mobile technologies are receiving acceptance as useful resources for all health practices.

The advantages of adopting, implementing, and use of information and communication technology for mass mobilisation can never be over-emphasized however stated. More so, ICTs and new media technologies like social media platforms most particularly X have become part of people's daily living in those interactions, relationships, transactions, connections, and networking now happens online. They are also the means through which society shares ideas, ideologies, experiences and information (Jibril, Babale and Vakkai, 2017). During the #EndSARS protest, X played a prominent role in

mobilizing large population of people across different states in Nigeria in such a way that has never happened before. This clearly shows how instrumental social media can be in mobilizing the populace for any social cause in the 21st century.

Methodology

Research Design

Quantitative research method was employed in this study. For the purpose of gathering adequate data for investigating the problem, survey research method was used where online forms were administered to the respondents. This method is found to be appropriate in cognizance of the nature of the problem surveys design is commonly used by behavioural scientists to describe people's opinion and attitudes (Adekoye, 2001).

A study of this nature has a finite group of population and have sample to specific element of group. For the purpose of this study, respondents will be drawn from online tweeter users in Lagos and Abuja. Therefore, the population of this study is 775,000.000. Using Survey Monkey Online

Calculator, the sample size of this study is 385 with the confidence level of 95% and Margin Error of 5%. Therefore 385 respondents from Lagos and Abuja Twitter Community form the sample size of this study.

The Purposive sampling was adopted for this study because of the characteristics of the population, which involves tweeter users in Abuja and Lagos. Therefore, this technique was used in selecting the samples of the population for both Lagos and Abuja and thereafter, convenience sampling which selects samples because they are accessible to the researcher in selecting samples from the available twitter user after the purposive sampling is carried out and also to get to the residents in the environs.

The total sample size for the study is 385, but the researcher was able to retrieve 347 copies. Therefore, 347 serves as the base line for the data presented and analysed. The simple percentage and frequency distribution tables are the statistical instrument adopted for logical manipulation of generated figures for further analysis and discussion.

Table 1: Effectiveness of Twitter/X in mobilizing Nigerians to protest

Level of effectiveness	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	185	53%
Agree	103	30%
Neutral	40	12%
Disagree	15	4%
Strongly disagree	4	1%
Total	347	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Table 1 implies that majority of the respondents strongly agreed with n= 185 (53%) that Twitter was effective in mobilizing Nigerians to protest as evident in the findings of the study. Apparently, this is possibly due to Twitter/X's ease of access and connectivity it provides online. Also, this was due to the fact that majority of the people who partook in the protest were on Twitter, thus they could easily get access to information about the EndSARS protest. Indubitably, the finding shows that social media is a powerful tool for mass mobilisation.

Table 2: Twitter as a borderless means of mobilising Nigeria’s protesters during the ENDSARS movement

Twitter borderless	Frequency	Percentage
Very True	237	58%
True	85	24%
Neutral	17	5%
Untrue	8	2%
Very Untrue	4	1%
Total	347	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Table 2 indicates that majority of the respondents with n= 237 (58%) respondents opined that it is true that Twitter was a borderless means of mobilising Nigerian protesters during the ENDSARS movement. This could be due to the fact that the unrestrained access enjoyed by users on social media in Nigeria provided the breeding ground for mass mobilisation. Also this was due to the fact that Twitter could be accessed anywhere with just a mobile phone or system once there is network connectivity. Hence Twitter being accessed anywhere making it borderless.

Table 3: Suspension of X account during the ENDSARS protest frustrated the movement.

Suspension of twitter account	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	33	10%
Agree	19	5%
Neutral	71	20%
Disagree	78	22%
Strongly Disagree	148	43%
Total	347	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Table 3 indicates that majority of the respondents with n= 148 (43%) strongly disagreed that the suspension of Twitter accounts during the ENDSARS protest frustrated the movement. This implies that the suspension of X during the protest came late and was unable to deter the already mobilised youth. Moreso, other accounts and new accounts created by the protest leaders were used to issue out directives on events during the protest.

Table 4: Audience awareness of disinformation or misinformation being spread on Twitter during the protest.

Misinformation spread	Frequency	Percentage
Not at all	137	39%
Somewhat aware	39	11%
Moderately aware	121	35%
Extremely aware	50	15%
Total	347	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Table 4 indicates that majority of the respondents had different levels of awareness on the use of disinformation/misinformation on Twitter during the protest. The respondents’, who were aware,

were able to spot the fake news and disinformation spread during the protest while other respondents who were passive, were not able to detect disinformation. This implies that in spite of the information overload that users were inundated with during the protest, there were still able to detect the misinformation that followed.

Discussion of Findings

Impact of X on the 2020 #EndSARS protest in Abuja and Lekki, Lagos

This objective focused on examining the impact of Twitter on the 2020 #EndSARS protest in Abuja and Lekki, Lagos. Findings from the study indicated that an overwhelming percentage (83%) of the respondents averred that Twitter/X was effective in mobilizing Nigerians to participate in the #EndSARS protest. In addition, the study also revealed that the borderless cum unrestricted nature of Twitter was a major factor for its instrumentality in serving as an appropriate platform for mobilising Nigerians to protest during the ENDSARS movement.

This is in tandem with Popoola, Azeez and Adeniyi (2022) who opined that Twitter, has therefore, now become the “new voice” of Nigerians through which they freely express their opinions and feelings about government corrupt practices and ways of governance; hence, gaining increased awareness and recognition globally. The use of social media for social activism has of course, been a preminent political phenomenon in Nigeria’ political sphere since the Arab spring revolution where Nigerians had taken a cue on how effective social media can be used to engage their government over misrule and bad policies. In the same vein, Adeniyi et al(2018) also stated that Twitter/X is a potent tool for mass mobilization and initiation of social change as evident in #BringBackOurGirls campaign among other social activism movements that twitter/X was used to fuel the audience engagement and participation.

In Nigeria, the use and instigation of social protests through Twitter was, for the first time, introduced with the success of the nationwide protest tagged the “Occupy Nigeria” in 2014 when citizens took to the street to protest against the removal subsidy from the Premium Motor Spirit (PMS) by the Federal Government. Since then, it has been from one social protest to another, which were coordinated and amplified through Twitter.

Ibezim-Ohaeri (2017), also affirmed that Twitter like other new media is now becoming an emerging political platform through which national and sub-national governments are being held accountable, responsive and responsible. Thus, Twitter, like few other new media, has been transforming democratic process in Africa in the twenty-first century (Mustapha, 2012 cited in Akerele-Popoola, 2022). For instance, there is evidence to suggest that online media played a very crucial role as alternative media through which Zimbabweans, both home and abroad, tackled the Mugabe government; thus, fostering political participation among the marginalised group such as the youths. This is now to say that while political activism and citizens’ engagements with political office holders have come under threats in the mainstream media following excessive state legislations and criminalisation of dissident voices, the arrival of social networking sites including Facebook and Twitter has allowed unfettered and strong political activism through protests. This is, of course, because social media permit political messages to travel across several distances with unimaginable immediacy (Ibezim-Ohaeri, 2017).

Considering the performance trajectory of using Twitter/X for mobilization and audience engagement, it is apposite to state that X has become a veritable platform for mass mobilization the world over and can be used as a spring board to champion any cause for social change and development in any given society. In the long run, X has had a great impact on #EndSARS movement just like other past social movements in Nigeria and the world over as contained in extant literature (Akerele-Popoola, 2022; Akpan and Targema, 2023; and Ibezim-Ohari et al, 2017).

Challenges of using X during the 2020 #EndSARS protest in Abuja and Lekki, Lagos

Findings from the study showed that in spite of the efforts that the government made to frustrate the movement via the suspension of Twitter a large percentage (65%) of the respondents stated that the suspension of Twitter account during the ENDSARS did protest not frustrate the movement as the protesters initiated an alternative through the use of VPNs by Twitter users to change IP addresses for the movement to continue. More so, the study also revealed that proliferation of fake news and misinformation on social media particularly X did not also undermine the protest as the protesters were able to detect those pieces of fake information online.

This is in line with Akpan and Targema (2023) who conducted research on social media, mass mobilization and national development in Nigeria: Lessons from the #EndSARS protest. The study explored the potential of social media for effective mass mobilization and community engagement to attain national development in Nigeria. By considering the challenges of the platforms in this regard such as the possibility of being hijacked and negatively deployed in a counterproductive manner, the study

concludes that proper mainstreaming of social media into the community engagement and national development struggle would help engage meaningfully with the citizens and mobilize them to attain socio-economic development in the country. This is to say that if Twitter/X and other social media platforms are properly harnessed, the concomitant challenges they portend cannot undermine the potency of the platform for mass mobilisation as evidenced in the study.

On the other hand, Abimbade, Olayoju and Herro (2022) stated that the use of twitter during the 2020 ENDSARS protest posed a serious challenge because opportunist took advantage of the situation thereby moving from activism to hacktivism. Hacktivism is defined to activism that uses hacking techniques against a target's internet site with the intent of disrupting normal operations but not causing serious damages. Several tweets reflected some hacktivism during the #EndSARS protests especially as some government sites like INEC, EFCC, CBN, NPF were reportedly attacked by a user with the identity 'Anonymous'. The tweets that captured this include: "The official website of the Central Bank of Nigeria has come under cyber-attack by Anonymous, a group of foreign Internet activists protesting police brutality in the country" (Julia, 2020). In spite of these challenges, Twitter/X, played a key role in mobilising the protesters to defy all odds in dissuading them from carrying on with the #EndSARS movement not until military might was enforced.

Conclusion

The EndSARS protest in Nigeria was a significant event that brought attention to police brutality and human rights abuses in the country. Social media, particularly Twitter, played a crucial role in mobilizing and organizing the protest movement. The research indicate that the use of social media during the protest was not without

challenges, including the spread of fake news and disinformation. However, social media also provided a platform for individuals to express themselves freely and share updates about the protest. This is to say that if Twitter/X and other social media platforms are properly harnessed, the concomitant challenges they portend cannot undermine the potency of the platform for mass mobilisation as evidenced in the study.

No doubt, the #EndSARS protest in Nigeria was a significant event that highlighted the power of Twitter in mobilizing and organising protests. While Twitter provided a platform for individuals to express themselves freely, it also presented challenges such as the spread of fake news and disinformation. Further studies are needed to explore the intersection of social media and the EndSARS protest in Nigeria and to identify ways to mitigate the potential harmful effects of online communication during protests.

Recommendations

Drawing from the findings of the study and conclusion reached, the following two recommendations are made:

- i. There is the need for citizens to utilize constructive approach in harnessing social media platforms like Twitter to express their views and opinions, especially on issues that affect them.
- ii. Twitter and other social media administrators should improve on their policies and online regulation to auto detect and delete spread hate speech, fake news, and/or inciting statements on the social media space.
- iii. The government should allow for constructive criticism of their policies without clamping down on innocent citizens.
- iv. Relevant international organizations and human rights activists should

intensify efforts in ensuring freedom of speech is not denied to citizens.

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