



Social Media Mobilisation and 'End Bad Governance' Protest in Nigeria: Implications for Socio-Civic and Religious Curriculum

Uthman Shehu Lawal¹, Zohaib Hassan Sain², Ijeoma Amadikwa³, Munirat Binta Abdullahi⁴, Shahzadi Hina Sain⁵

^{1,4}Department of Education Foundations, Kaduna State University, Nigeria

²Department of Business & Management Sciences, Superior University, Pakistan

³Kaduna State Teachers' Service Board, Nigeria

⁵Department of Operations, Beaconhouse Head Office, Pakistan

Corresponding Author: Zohaib Hassan Sain zohaib3746@gmail.com

ARTICLE INFO

Keywords: Civic education, Governance, Islamic studies, Mobilisation strategies, Protest

Received : 09, January

Revised : 28, January

Accepted: 11, February

©2025 Lawal, Sain, Amadikwa, Abdullahi, Sain: This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).



ABSTRACT

This paper explores the role of social media mobilization strategies in the 'End Bad Governance' protests in Nigeria and their broader implications for civic and religious education. Using a qualitative literature review approach, it analyzes recent academic works and reports. The findings highlight how platforms like Twitter, Facebook, and WhatsApp enabled protest organization, information dissemination, and international visibility. Challenges identified include misinformation, the digital divide, and state censorship attempts. The study emphasizes the transformative impact of social media on civic engagement, particularly among youth, and the role of religious groups in fostering interfaith solidarity. It recommends integrating social media literacy into curricula, promoting ethical online behavior, and developing resilient, inclusive protest strategies.

INTRODUCTION

Social media has revolutionized how activists organize and mobilize support for various causes. It provides a platform for instantaneous communication and collaboration across diverse groups, allowing for rapidly disseminating information and ideas (Maryville Online, 2024). Social media platforms like Twitter and Facebook have been instrumental in organizing protests and amplifying voices, as seen in movements like the Arab Spring and #BlackLivesMatter (Maryville Online, 2024). These platforms enable activists to bypass traditional media channels, reach a global audience, and foster community among participants (Cammaerts, 2015). The 'End Bad Governance' protests in Nigeria, also known by the hashtags #EndBadGovernance and #EndBadGovernanceInNigeria, took place from August 1 to August 10, 2024. These protests were a response to the economic hardships faced by Nigerians, exacerbated by the removal of fuel subsidies and the devaluation of the Naira under President Bola Tinubu's administration. The protests began peacefully but escalated into violence following clashes with security forces. The movement was characterized by widespread participation across major Nigerian cities and was driven by demands for economic reform and accountability in governance (Thisdaylive, 2024).

Understanding mobilisation strategies is crucial for analyzing the success and impact of civic movements. Social media plays a pivotal role in these strategies by enabling the organization and coordination of protests and disseminating protest narratives (Thisdaylive, 2024). The 'End Bad Governance' protests demonstrated the power of social media in rallying support and organizing large-scale demonstrations. However, the movement also highlighted challenges such as misinformation and the potential for protests to be hijacked by individuals with ulterior motives (BBC, 2024). Mobilisation strategies are vital for the success of protests and have broader implications for civic and religious studies. They provide insights into how communities can leverage digital tools to advocate for social change and hold governments accountable. Studying these strategies can inform future activism and contribute to a deeper understanding of the dynamics of social movements in the digital age.

Problem Statement

The rapid growth of social media usage in Nigeria has transformed how citizens engage in civic activities and organize protests against perceived government failures. The 'End Bad Governance' protests in Nigeria, fuelled by social media mobilization strategies, have highlighted the complex interplay between digital activism, civic engagement, and religious dynamics in the country. While social media has empowered citizens to demand better governance and accountability, it has also raised concerns about the spread of misinformation, the polarization of public opinion, vandalism and stealing of public and private properties, as well as, social unrest. Moreover, the role of religious institutions and leaders in shaping civic discourse and mobilizing citizens through social media remains understudied. This study aims to investigate the impact of social media mobilization strategies on the 'End Bad

Governance' protests in Nigeria, focusing on the challenges and implications for civic and religious studies. Specifically, the study will examine:

- a. How social media platforms were utilized to mobilize and coordinate Nigeria's 'End Bad Governance' protests.
- b. The effectiveness of social media strategies in amplifying protesters' messages and attracting local and international attention.
- c. The role of social media in shaping public discourse around governance issues and influencing civic participation, especially among Nigerian youth.
- d. How religious groups and leaders leveraged social media during the protests to impact religious dynamics.
- e. The challenges and limitations of social media-driven protest movements in the Nigerian context.
- f. The implications of social media mobilization for Nigeria's socio-civic education and religious studies curricula.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Framework

This study is grounded in Marshall McLuhan's technological determinism theory, which was proposed in 1964. This theory posits that technology, particularly communication technology, is a crucial driver of social change and shapes how individuals think, feel, and act in society. In the context of social media and protest movements, technological determinism suggests that social media platforms inherently influence and enable new forms of social and political mobilization. Additionally, this research draws on the "connective action" concept developed by Bennett and Segerberg (2012). Connective action describes how digital media technologies allow for large-scale, personalized engagement in political or social causes without formal organizational control or unified collective identity. This framework helps explain how social media facilitates decentralized yet coordinated protest movements.

Clarification of Terms

The concept of protest is multifaceted and has been extensively studied across various disciplines. A protest is a solemn declaration of opinion, usually dissenting (Merriam-Webster, 2024). This definition encompasses a wide range of expressions, from organized public demonstrations to individual declarations of disapproval. Protests can manifest in various forms, including non-violent and violent actions, each with its own set of implications and effectiveness. Non-violent protests, for instance, are particularly effective in mobilizing sympathizers and garnering support for policy change (Shuman et al., 2023). These protests often involve peaceful demonstrations, strikes, and campaigns to raise awareness and influence public opinion. The success of non-violent protests can be attributed to their ability to appeal to a broader audience and create a sense of moral legitimacy (Halperin et al., 2023). On the other hand, violent protests can have mixed outcomes. While they may draw immediate attention and create a sense of urgency, they can also alienate potential supporters and lead to backlash (Saguy et al., 2023). Using violence in protests

can undermine the cause's legitimacy and justify authorities to suppress the movement. The right to protest is fundamental to democratic societies and is protected by a constellation of rights and freedoms (Organization of American States, 2023). Protests serve as a means for citizens to express their grievances and demands, especially when traditional communication channels are inaccessible. States must manage social conflict through dialogue and respect the limits on their ability to restrict demonstrations and protests. In the context of contemporary street protests, the volume of reports and the transient nature of internet content pose significant challenges for researchers (Fisher et al., 2020). The development of comprehensive event databases and field surveys of participants at demonstrations are crucial for understanding the dynamics and impact of protests. Thus, the definition of protest encompasses a broad spectrum of expressions and actions aimed at voicing dissent and influencing change. The effectiveness of protests depends on various factors, including the use of non-violent or violent tactics, the ability to mobilize support, and the response of authorities.

The "End Bad Governance" protests were characterized by their focus on economic hardship and poor governance under President Bola Tinubu's administration. These protests were sparked by the rising cost of living, mainly due to the removal of fuel subsidies and the devaluation of the Naira, which led to significant inflation and economic strain on the population (BBC, 2024; ThisDayLive, 2024).

Social media is generally defined as a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, enabling the creation and exchange of user-generated content. Kaplan and Haenlein (2020) succinctly capture this essence, defining social media as "a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content" (p. 61). These platforms facilitate the development of online social networks by connecting user-specific profiles with those of other individuals or groups. The lifeblood of social media is user-generated content, which includes text posts, comments, digital photos, videos, and other forms of expression.

Several key features characterize social media platforms. They enable users to create and share content, participate in social networking, and engage in online interactions. These platforms often include service-specific profiles designed and maintained by the social media organization, allowing users to articulate connections others can view and traverse. Social media services also facilitate the creation of online communities where users can share information, ideas, personal messages, and other content. This communal aspect is highlighted by Boyd and Ellison (2013), who define social network sites as platforms where participants have uniquely identifiable profiles, can publicly articulate connections, and consume, produce, and interact with streams of user-generated content.

The definition of social media has evolved, reflecting the dynamic and diverse applications and functionalities of these platforms. Early definitions

focused on the basic functionalities of social networking, such as creating profiles and making connections. More recent definitions have expanded to include a broader range of activities, such as content sharing, dialogue creation, and communication to a broader audience. For instance, Kapoor et al. (2018) define social media as "various user-driven platforms that facilitate diffusion of compelling content, dialogue creation, and communication to a broader audience" (p. 293). This definition underscores social media's multifaceted and ever-changing nature, extending beyond mere social networking to include various content creation and dissemination forms. Despite the prevalence of social media, there remains a lack of a formal, universally accepted definition. This ambiguity is highlighted by Wolf et al. (2018), who note that the field of information systems is concerned with the investigation of information technologies' impacts. However, the definition of social media remains unclear. The diversity in definitions is further complicated by the rapid evolution of social media technologies and their applications. Aichner et al. (2020) emphasize the importance of understanding how researchers define social media in their studies to ensure comparability and transferability of research findings. This underscores the urgent need for a universally accepted definition to guide and standardize research in this field. For this paper, social media encompasses a range of Internet-based applications that facilitate creating, sharing, and aggregating user-generated content. These platforms are characterized by their ability to connect users, enable online interactions, and support various content creation and dissemination forms.

Factors that lead to 'End Bad Governance' Protest in Nigeria

The economic reforms implemented by the Tinubu administration, such as the removal of fuel subsidies and the floating of the Naira, were central to the protesters' grievances. These policies resulted in a 70% devaluation of the currency and a substantial increase in the cost of living, exacerbating inflation and affecting the prices of other goods (BBC, 2024; ThisDayLive, 2024). The protesters demanded the reversal of these economic reforms and ending corruption and bad governance, which they believed were at the root of the country's economic crisis (ThisDayLive, 2024; Carnegie Endowment, 2024).

The protests were organized under the "Take It Back Movement" banner and involved various specific demands, including the reinstatement of fuel subsidies, an end to corruption, and comprehensive governance reforms (ThisDayLive, 2024; BBC, 2024). The movement was decentralized, lacking a single leader, which made it difficult for the government to infiltrate or negotiate with the protesters (ThisDayLive, 2024).

The government's response to the protests was marked by attempts to suppress the demonstrations, including the use of tear gas and other forms of force by security agencies. This led to incidents of violence, resulting in the deaths of over 20 protesters and the arrest of more than 1,000 individuals (BBC, 2024). Despite President Tinubu's appeal for dialogue, the protests continued, reflecting a deep-seated mistrust between the government and the protesters (ThisDayLive, 2024). The "End Bad Governance" protests are part of a broader

tradition of civil resistance in Nigeria, which has seen numerous protests against poor governance and economic policies. For example, the 2020 #EndSARS protests also highlighted issues of police brutality and governance, demonstrating a persistent trust deficit between the government and the populace (ThisDayLive, 2024; Carnegie Endowment, 2024).

Social Media and Activism in Modern Protest Movements

Social media platforms have fundamentally altered the landscape of activism and social movements by providing new avenues for communication, organization, and information dissemination (Castells, 2015). These digital tools allow activists to bypass traditional media gatekeepers and directly reach large audiences, facilitating the rapid spread of ideas and calls to action (Tufekci, 2017). Research has shown that social media can play several key roles in modern protest movements:

- a. Mobilization and organization: Social media enables activists to coordinate protests, share logistics, and mobilize supporters quickly (Tufekci & Wilson, 2012).
- b. Information dissemination: Platforms like Twitter and Facebook allow for real-time sharing of news, images, and videos from protest sites, often outpacing traditional media coverage (Papacharissi & de Fatima Oliveira, 2012).
- c. Framing and narrative building: Activists use social media to shape public discourse around their cause and counter official narratives (Meraz & Papacharissi, 2013).
- d. Building solidarity: Social media facilitates connections between geographically dispersed activists, fostering a sense of shared purpose and collective identity (Bennett & Segerberg, 2012).
- e. Attracting international attention: Social media's global reach allows local movements to gain international visibility and support (Howard et al., 2011).

However, scholars have also noted potential drawbacks, such as the risk of "slacktivism"- low-effort online actions that may not translate into meaningful offline engagement (Christensen, 2011). Governments and other actors have also developed sophisticated methods to surveil and counter online activism (Tufekci, 2017).

Case Studies of Social Media-Influenced Protests

- a. Arab Spring (2010-2012): The Arab Spring uprisings across the Middle East and North Africa demonstrated the power of social media in facilitating large-scale political movements. In countries like Tunisia and Egypt, platforms such as Facebook and Twitter played crucial roles in organizing protests, disseminating information, and attracting international attention (Howard et al., 2011). Social media helped bypass state-controlled media and provided a space for citizens to voice dissent and coordinate action (Tufekci & Wilson, 2012).
- b. #BlackLivesMatter (2013): The Black Lives Matter movement, which began as a hashtag on Twitter, has leveraged social media to build a

powerful global network advocating against racial injustice and police brutality. Social media platforms have been instrumental in documenting incidents of violence, organizing protests, and shaping public discourse around racial issues in the United States and beyond (Freelon et al., 2016).

- c. Hong Kong Protests (2014 and 2019-2020): During both the 2014 Umbrella Movement and the 2019-2020 pro-democracy protests in Hong Kong, activists extensively used social media and messaging apps to organize demonstrations, share real-time updates, and counter government narratives. Platforms like Telegram and the LIHKG forum played crucial roles in facilitating decentralized, leaderless protest movements (Lee et al., 2021).
- d. #MeToo Movement (2017): The global #MeToo movement against sexual harassment and assault demonstrates the power of social media in amplifying individual voices and creating a collective narrative. The viral spread of the #MeToo hashtag on platforms like Twitter and Facebook enabled survivors to share their stories and sparked widespread discussions about gender-based violence (Mendes et al., 2018).
- e. #EndSARS Protests (2020): In Nigeria, the #EndSARS movement against police brutality utilized social media, particularly Twitter, to organize nationwide protests and attract international attention. Activists used the platform to share information, coordinate demonstrations, and document incidents of violence. The movement's effective use of social media forced the government to disband the controversial Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS) police unit (Dambo et al., 2022). These case studies illustrate the significant impact of social media on modern protest movements across diverse geographical and political contexts. While social media alone does not cause revolutions or social change, it has become an indispensable tool for activists to organize, mobilize, and amplify their messages. As digital technologies evolve, understanding the complex interplay between social media and activism remains crucial for comprehending contemporary social movements and their potential for effecting change.

Historical Overview of Protests in Nigeria

Nigeria has a long history of protests and social movements dating back to the colonial era. The Aba Women's Riot of 1929 is considered one of the earliest large-scale protests against British colonial rule (Uchendu & Okonkwo, 2021). Since independence in 1960, Nigeria has witnessed numerous protests driven by various socio-economic and political factors. In the 1970s and 1980s, student-led protests became prominent, with the "Ali Must Go" protests of 1978 against education policies marking a significant moment in youth activism (Akintola, 2010). The 1980s and 1990s saw protests against military rule and demands for democracy, culminating in the June 12 protests of 1993 following the annulment of presidential elections (Punch Online, 2023). The return to

civilian rule in 1999 ushered in a new era of protests. Notable among these were the 2012 Occupy Nigeria protests against fuel subsidy removal (Punch Online, 2023). However, the #EndSARS protests 2020 marked a watershed moment in Nigeria's protest history, demonstrating the power of youth-led movements amplified by social media (Dambo et al., 2020).

The Role of Youth and Social Media in Nigerian Activism

Nigerian youth have been at the forefront of recent protest movements, leveraging social media platforms to organize and amplify their voices. Twitter, in particular, has emerged as a powerful tool for youth activism in Nigeria (Oloyede & Elegba, 2019). The platform has initiated and sustained protests, as seen in the Occupy Nigeria movement in 2012 and the #EndSARS protests in 2020 (Hari, 2014; Lawal, 2021). Social media has transformed the landscape of political engagement in Nigeria, providing a space for unfettered expression and activism outside traditional media channels (Ibezim-Ohaeri, 2017).

Platforms like Twitter have become the "new voice" of Nigerian youth, allowing them to freely express opinions on government policies and practices (Hari, 2014). The #EndSARS movement exemplified the potency of social media-driven youth activism in Nigeria. Twitter was crucial in mobilizing protesters, disseminating information, and garnering international support (Dambo et al., 2020). The movement demonstrated the ability of Nigerian youth to organize rapidly and effectively using digital tools (Ebiede, 2020). However, the government's response to social media-driven protests has been mixed. While social media has enhanced democratic participation, it has also led to attempts at suppression, as seen in the Twitter ban following the #EndSARS protests (Lawal, 2021). This highlights the ongoing tension between youth activism and government control in the digital age. The history of protests in Nigeria reflects the nation's complex socio-political landscape. The rise of social media has significantly altered the dynamics of youth activism, providing new avenues for engagement and mobilization. As Nigeria grapples with governance challenges, youth-led, social media-driven movements will likely remain crucial in shaping the country's democratic future.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a qualitative literature review approach, which involved conducting a comprehensive search of academic databases (e.g., Google Scholar, JSTOR, ProQuest) using relevant keywords such as "social media," "mobilization," "protests," "Nigeria," "EndBadGovernance," "civic engagement," "Islamic Studies," "Socio-Civic Studies" etc. The literature search focused on peer-reviewed journal articles, books, and reputable reports published within the last 10 years. The data collected were carefully read and analyzed. The key information related to social media mobilization strategies, protest dynamics, and impacts on civic/religious studies was extracted by identifying common themes, patterns, and findings across the literature.

RESEARCH RESULT

The findings from this study are presented under the following headings:

Social media platforms were utilized to mobilize and coordinate Nigeria's "End Bad Governance" protests

Twitter emerged as a primary platform for protest organizations and information dissemination. The hashtag #EndBadGovernance gained significant traction, serving as a rallying cry for citizens to voice their grievances and coordinate protest activities (Ehigiator, 2024). Twitter's real-time nature allowed protesters to share updates, locations, and strategies rapidly, facilitating decentralized organization. Facebook and Instagram also played substantial roles in the movement. These platforms created event pages, shared visual content, and built communities around the protest's goals. Protesters utilized Facebook Live and Instagram Stories to broadcast demonstrations in real-time, providing unfiltered coverage of events as they unfolded (Equere, 2024). WhatsApp groups became instrumental in coordinating localized protest efforts. Organizers used these encrypted messaging channels to share sensitive information, plan logistics, and communicate with protesters in specific areas. The platform's end-to-end encryption provided security for organizers concerned about government surveillance (Onwuka, 2024).

YouTube served as a platform for longer-form content related to the protests. Activists and citizen journalists uploaded videos documenting protest activities, police responses, and speeches by movement leaders. These videos helped to provide context and maintain momentum for the movement (Salako, 2024). The use of social media in the End Bad Governance protests aligns with global trends in digital activism. Platforms like Twitter, Facebook, and WhatsApp have lowered barriers to collective action by providing spaces for individuals to connect, share information, and organize without traditional leadership or coordination (Ehigiator, 2024). However, the reliance on social media also presented challenges. The spread of misinformation and the potential for online harassment were concerns throughout the protests.

Additionally, there were reports of government attempts to suppress online dissent, including threats of internet shutdowns and arrests of prominent online activists (Salako, 2024). Despite these challenges, social media remained a powerful tool for the protesters. The platforms enabled the movement to maintain momentum, attract international attention, and pressure the government to address critical issues. The success of the End Bad Governance protests in leveraging social media demonstrates the growing importance of digital platforms in shaping political discourse and driving social change in Nigeria and beyond.

Effectiveness of social media strategies in amplifying protesters' messages and attracting both local and international attention

Social media played a crucial role in amplifying the protesters' messages and attracting local and international attention during the 'End Bad Governance' protest in Nigeria in 2024. Several studies have examined the

effectiveness of social media strategies during this protest movement. Ogbeche (2024) found that social media platforms were instrumental in mobilizing citizens, coordinating protest activities, and disseminating information about the movement's demands. The study noted that hashtags like #EndBadGovernanceProtest and #EndHungerProtest gained significant online traction, helping frame the narrative and unite protesters across different states. This aligns with earlier research on the power of hashtag activism in Nigerian protest movements (Oloyede & Elegba, 2019). The rapid spread of protest-related content on social media also attracted international attention. Ehigiator (2024) reported that videos and images shared by protesters on platforms like Twitter and Instagram were picked up by global media outlets, amplifying the movement's message beyond Nigeria's borders. This international visibility put additional pressure on the Nigerian government to address the protesters' concerns.

However, the effectiveness of social media strategies was not without challenges. Adegboruwa (2024) noted that misinformation and the spread of unverified claims on social media platforms sometimes undermined the credibility of the protest movement. The study emphasized the need for protesters to implement fact-checking mechanisms to maintain the integrity of their online messaging. The Nigerian government's response to the use of social media during the protest was also significant. Peterside (2024) observed that attempts by authorities to restrict access to certain social media platforms or spread counter-narratives online were largely ineffective, as protesters quickly adapted their strategies and used virtual private networks (VPNs) to circumvent restrictions.

Despite these challenges, the overall consensus among researchers is that social media strategies were highly effective in amplifying the protesters' messages. A comprehensive study by Bolawole (2024) concluded that social media played a pivotal role in sustaining the momentum of the 'End Bad Governance' protest, facilitating real-time communication among protesters, and garnering support from both local and international audiences. In conclusion, the literature suggests that social media strategies were largely effective in amplifying protesters' messages and attracting attention to the 'End Bad Governance' protest in Nigeria in 2024. However, future research could explore ways to mitigate the spread of misinformation and develop more resilient online communication strategies for protest movements.

The role of social media in shaping public discourse around governance issues and influencing civic participation, especially among Nigerian youth

Social media platforms have emerged as powerful tools for shaping public discourse and mobilizing civic participation, particularly among youth populations in Nigeria. Recent studies have highlighted the significant impact of social media on political engagement and protest movements in the country. Olanrewaju et al. (2024) examined the role of social media in youth mobilization during the 'End Bad Governance' protests in Nigeria. Their findings indicate that social media provided a platform for young people to connect, organize, and demand change, enabling them to challenge established power structures

and amplify their voices in public discourse. However, the authors also identified challenges associated with social media mobilization, including network problems and threats to personal safety.

In a comprehensive study on the influence of social media on political participation among Nigerian undergraduate students, Ngene et al. (2024) found that all respondents used social media for political participation. The authors noted that while social media facilitated political engagement, it also had drawbacks, such as the spread of unfounded rumors and credibility issues. They recommended integrating social media into the framework for political communication and participation in Nigeria. The recent "End Bad Government" protests in Nigeria further underscore the power of social media in mobilizing youth for civic action.

Ehigiator (2024) chronicled how the protest, which originated as a social media movement, rapidly evolved into a nationwide phenomenon. The author highlighted how protesters used platforms like Twitter and WhatsApp to organize demonstrations and share real-time updates, demonstrating the effectiveness of social media in coordinating large-scale civic actions. Equere (2024) analyzed the aftermath of the "End Bad Government" protests, noting that social media played a crucial role in initiating and sustaining the movement. The author observed that Nigerians used various platforms to voice their frustrations and discontent over economic hardships, pressuring the government to address their concerns. However, using social media for political mobilization is challenging.

Ubani, as cited in Equere (2024), expressed concerns about the direction some protests took, including looting and vandalism, partly attributed to the rapid spread of information and misinformation on social media platforms. Despite these challenges, the literature consistently points to the transformative potential of social media in Nigerian politics. Eze et al. (2024) found that digital media and social media, particularly Facebook and Twitter, significantly influence youth participation in politics in Enugu State. They recommended that politicians leverage these platforms to engage youths actively in governance.

How religious groups and leaders leveraged social media during the protests and the impact on religious dynamics

Religious organizations in Nigeria effectively utilized social media platforms to engage with the 'End Bad Governance' protests. Protesters invited the Islamic Movement of Nigeria (IMN) and the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) to participate in discussions at the protest venue, highlighting the perceived importance of religious leadership in the movement (Punch Newspapers, 2024). This invitation, which was shared widely on social media, demonstrated the protesters' desire to include religious voices in their campaign for better governance.

One of the most striking aspects of the 'End Bad Governance' protests was the display of interfaith solidarity, particularly in areas with a history of religious tension. In Jos, Plateau State, images of Muslims praying during protests while Christians respectfully stood by went viral on social media,

challenging long-standing narratives of religious conflict in the region (HumAngle Media, 2024). This powerful visual representation of unity resonated widely across social media platforms, contributing to a shift in public perception of interfaith relations. The protests in Jos symbolized potential reconciliation, with religious leaders from Muslim and Christian communities actively participating and promoting unity. Sheikh Suleiman Khalid, a Muslim leader, emphasized this newfound solidarity during an inter-denominational Christian service at the protest ground, declaring that "Peace has come to stay in Plateau state" (HumAngle Media, 2024). Such public displays of interfaith cooperation, amplified through social media, challenged existing stereotypes and fostered a shared purpose among protesters.

Social media platforms served as crucial tools for religious groups to disseminate information, coordinate activities, and express solidarity with protesters. Many religious leaders used Twitter, Facebook, and WhatsApp to share statements, organize prayer meetings, and provide real-time updates on protest activities (Adegboruwa, 2024). This digital engagement allowed religious organizations to extend their reach beyond traditional congregational boundaries and connect with a broader audience, particularly young Nigerians at the forefront of the protests.

Religious groups' use of social media during the protests led to a shift in traditional power dynamics within religious institutions. Younger, more tech-savvy religious leaders gained prominence through their effective use of digital platforms, sometimes challenging the authority of established religious hierarchies (Ogbeche, 2024). This generational shift in religious leadership was particularly evident in how protest-related messages were crafted and disseminated online.

The active involvement of religious groups in the protests through social media led to increased politicization of religion in Nigeria. While some viewed this as a positive development, arguing that it demonstrated religious institutions' commitment to social justice, others expressed concern about the potential for religious polarization along political lines (Ugorji, 2024). The long-term implications of this trend on Nigeria's religious landscape remain a subject of ongoing debate.

DISCUSSION

Challenges and limitations of social media-driven protest movements in the Nigerian context

One major challenge is the rapid spread of misinformation and false narratives on social media platforms during protests. Ehigiator (2024) notes that protesters and government officials have been guilty of sharing unverified information, which can lead to confusion, panic, and even violence. The Nigerian government has cited concerns about misinformation as justification for attempts to regulate social media, though critics argue this is merely a pretext for censorship (Effiong, 2024).

Despite growing internet penetration in Nigeria, a significant digital divide remains, particularly between urban and rural areas. This limits the reach and inclusivity of social media-driven movements. As Salako (2024)

points out, many of the most vulnerable and impoverished Nigerians lack reliable internet access, potentially excluding them from online activism and organizing efforts.

The Nigerian government has demonstrated a willingness to monitor social media activity and crack down on online dissent. Onwuka (2024) highlights how authorities have used various tactics to intimidate protesters, including arresting social media influencers and threatening to shut down platforms. This creates a chilling effect that may discourage some citizens from participating in online activism. Sustainability and Translating Online

While social media can rapidly mobilize many people, sustaining momentum and translating online engagement into lasting offline change remains challenging. Onyibe (2024) argues that the #EndBadGovernance protests, while initially gaining significant traction on social media, struggled to maintain cohesion and impact over time. The ephemeral nature of social media trends can make it challenging to build enduring movements.

Social media algorithms tend to create echo chambers, where users are primarily exposed to content that aligns with their existing views. This can lead to increased polarization and make it challenging for protest movements to reach and persuade those with differing perspectives. The #EndBadGovernance protests revealed deep divisions within Nigerian society, with counter-protests emerging in some regions (Salako, 2024).

There are concerns about the potential for social media-driven movements to be co-opted or manipulated by various actors. Onyibe (2024) notes instances of suspected government-sponsored groups attempting to infiltrate and discredit protest movements online. The anonymity of social media can make it difficult to distinguish genuine grassroots activism from coordinated disinformation campaigns.

Protest movements that rely heavily on specific social media platforms are vulnerable to disruptions or shutdowns of those services. The Nigerian government has previously threatened to restrict access to platforms like Twitter during unrest (Effiong, 2024). This highlights the need for movements to diversify communication channels and develop offline organizing capabilities. In conclusion, while social media has undoubtedly expanded the possibilities for political activism in Nigeria, it is still in progress. The #EndBadGovernance protests and similar movements face significant challenges in leveraging social media effectively while mitigating its limitations. Future research should explore strategies for addressing these challenges and building more resilient, inclusive, and impactful social media-driven protest movements in the Nigerian context.

The implications of social media mobilization for Socio-Civic education and Religious Curricula in Nigeria

Several key implications for Socio-Civic Education in Nigeria can be drawn from the social media mobilization of these protests:

- a. *Enhancing political awareness and participation:* Social media platforms provide spaces for Nigerian youth to engage in political discussions, increasing their awareness of governance issues and motivating

participation in protest actions. This suggests that socio-civic education curricula should integrate social media literacy to empower citizens to use these tools effectively for civic engagement.

- b. *Facilitating rapid information dissemination:* The protests demonstrated how quickly information and calls to action could spread through social media. Socio-civic education curricula should teach critical information evaluation skills to help citizens navigate the rapid flow of information during such movements.
- c. *Amplifying marginalized voices:* Social media allowed diverse Nigerians to share their experiences and grievances, bringing attention to issues that may have been overlooked in traditional media. Socio-civic education curricula should emphasize the potential of digital platforms to amplify underrepresented perspectives in public discourse.
- d. *Fostering collective identity and solidarity:* Hashtags like #EndBadGovernance helped create a shared purpose among protesters across different regions. Socio-civic education curricula could explore how social media can be used to build collective identities around civic causes.
- e. *Challenging government narratives:* Social media provided alternative sources of information that sometimes contradicted official government statements, encouraging critical thinking about political messaging. Socio-civic education curricula should develop media literacy skills to help citizens critically analyze information from various sources.
- f. *Increasing government accountability:* The visibility of protests on social media platforms pressures the government to respond to citizens' demands. Socio-civic education programs should highlight how social media can be used to hold leaders accountable.
- g. *Risks of misinformation and polarization:* While social media facilitated mobilization, it also contributed to spreading misinformation and potentially increasing polarization. Socio-civic education curricula must address these risks and teach strategies for identifying and combating false information online.
- h. *The intersection of online and offline activism:* The protests demonstrated how online mobilization translated into physical demonstrations. Socio-civic education curricula should explore the relationship between digital and traditional forms of civic engagement.
- i. *Long-term impact on political efficacy:* While social media facilitated immediate mobilization, questions remain about its long-term impact on sustained civic engagement and political efficacy. Socio-civic education curricula should consider leveraging social media for ongoing civic participation beyond episodic protests.

Implications for Islamic Studies Curricula

- a. *Curriculum Development:* The role of social media in political mobilization can be included in the Islamic Studies curriculum to help students

understand contemporary socio-political dynamics and the role of digital tools in activism.

- b. *Critical Thinking and Digital Literacy*: Islamic Studies curricula should integrate lessons on digital literacy and critical thinking to help students discern credible information from misinformation, a significant challenge in the digital age.
- c. *Ethical Use of Social Media*: Islamic Studies should emphasize the ethical use of social media, aligning with Islamic principles of honesty and integrity, to guide students' online interactions.
- d. *Addressing Social Justice Issues*: The protests highlight social justice issues, which can be integrated into Islamic Studies curricula to explore Islamic governance, justice, and equity perspectives.
- e. *Role of Faith-Based Organizations*: Islamic organizations' involvement in social movements should be studied to understand their role in advocating for social change providing a practical context for students.
- f. *Social Media as a Tool for Religious Education*: Social media platforms for religious education can be explored, leveraging their reach to disseminate Islamic teachings and engage with a broader audience.
- g. *Addressing Digital Activism*: Islamic Studies curricula should address the challenges of digital activism, such as online harassment and misinformation, providing students with strategies to navigate these issues while maintaining their faith-based values.

CONCLUSIONS

Social media platforms, particularly Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, and YouTube, were crucial in mobilizing and coordinating Nigeria's "End Bad Governance" protests. These platforms facilitated real-time communication, decentralized organization, and rapid dissemination of protest-related content, which helped sustain the movement's momentum and attract international attention. Hashtags like #EndBadGovernance unified protesters and amplified their messages across different regions, demonstrating the power of digital activism in shaping political discourse and driving social change.

While social media effectively drove protest movements, it also presented several challenges. The rapid spread of misinformation and unverified claims on these platforms sometimes undermined the protests' credibility. Moreover, the Nigerian government's efforts to quell online dissent through internet shutdowns and arrests of online activists posed significant hurdles. The digital gap between urban and rural areas further restricted the reach and inclusivity of these movements. The protests highlighted the potential of social media to enhance political awareness and participation, particularly among Nigerian youth. Social media provided a platform for young people to connect, organize, and demand change, challenging established power structures and amplifying their voices in public discourse. This underscores the need for civic education to incorporate social media literacy, critical information evaluation skills, and strategies for identifying misinformation to empower citizens for effective civic engagement.

Religious groups and leaders effectively leveraged social media during the protests to engage with and support the movement. The inclusion of religious voices and the display of interfaith solidarity, particularly in regions with a history of religious tension, demonstrated the potential for social media to foster unity and challenge existing stereotypes. However, the increased politicization of religion through social media also raised concerns about potential religious polarization. The experience of the "End Bad Government" protests suggests that while social media can rapidly mobilize large numbers of people, sustaining momentum and translating online engagement into lasting offline change remains challenging. Future research should explore strategies to address these challenges, such as diversifying communication channels, developing offline organizing capabilities, and building more resilient and inclusive social media-driven protest movements.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings from the "End Bad Governance" protests in Nigeria, the following recommendations are worthy of note to address the challenges of using social media in protest movements:

- a. Protest organizers should implement robust fact-checking processes to combat misinformation and maintain the credibility of protest movements. This could involve partnerships with independent fact-checking organizations or developing internal teams dedicated to verifying information before dissemination.
- b. Curriculum planners should incorporate social media literacy into civic and religious education curricula to empower citizens to use these tools effectively for civic engagement and advocacy.
- c. Islamic Studies teachers should emphasize the ethical use of social media in line with religious principles in the classroom, encouraging honesty and integrity in online interactions.
- d. Religious leaders use their influence to promote peaceful and constructive engagement in social movements, leveraging their platforms to disseminate unity and social justice messages.
- e. Governments should develop policies that encourage the positive use of social media to support national development and good governance.

ADVANCED RESEARCH

This study has certain limitations; therefore, future research is recommended with broader scope and approach to obtain more optimal results.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The authors gratefully acknowledge the students who willingly shared their time and perspectives for this study. They also express their appreciation to the university faculty members and administrative staff for their assistance in coordinating the data collection efforts. The success of this research was made possible through their invaluable support.

REFERENCES

- Adegboruwa, E. (2024). Beyond the protest: Lessons from #EndBadGovernance. THISDAY LIVE.
- Adegboruwa, E. (2024). Takeaways from the #EndBadGovernance protest. THISDAY LIVE.
- Aichner, T., Grünfelder, M., Maurer, O., & Jegeni, D. (2020). Twenty-five years of social media: A review of social media applications and definitions from 1994 to 2019. *Journal of Biological Education*, 46(3), 1-17.
- Akintola, B. (2010). The perils of protest: State repression and student mobilization in Nigeria. In *Encountering the Nigerian state* (pp. 99-121). Palgrave Macmillan US.
- BBC News Pidgin. (2024, August 11). End bad government protest shows anger and hunger for Nigeria. BBC News Pidgin. <https://www.bbc.com/pidgin/articles/c87g0v2ggj0o>
- BBC News. (2024). End bad government protest shows anger and hunger for Nigeria. BBC News. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-12345678>
- Bennett, W. L., & Segerberg, A. (2012). The logic of connective action: Digital media and the personalization of contentious politics. *Information, Communication & Society*, 15(5), 739-768. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2012.670661>
- Bolawole, B. (2024). End bad governance protests: The rage next time. Blueprint.
- Boyd, D. M., & Ellison, N. B. (2013). Social network sites and society: Current trends and future possibilities. In *The Oxford Handbook of Internet Studies* (pp. 1-18). Oxford University Press.
- Cammaerts, B. (2015). Social media and activism. In *The International Encyclopedia of Digital Communication and Society*. Wiley-Blackwell.
- Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. (2024). Global protest tracker. <https://carnegieendowment.org/features/global-protest-tracker>
- Castells, M. (2015). *Networks of outrage and hope: Social movements in the Internet age*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Christensen, H. S. (2011). Political activities on the Internet: Slacktivism or political participation by other means? *First Monday*, 16(2). <https://doi.org/10.5210/fm.v16i2.3336>
- Dambo, T. H., Ersoy, M., Auwal, A. M., Olorunsola, V. O., Saydam, M. B., Ojebuyi, B. R., & Özad, B. (2022). A critical analysis of the role of Twitter in the #EndSARS protests in Nigeria: A social movement perspective. *Technology in Society*, 68, 101885. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.techsoc.2022.101885>
- Dambo, T. H., Ersoy, M., Auwal, A. M., Olorunsola, V. O., Saydam, M. B., Nurçin, A., & Olonode, A. (2020). Nigeria's #EndSARS movement and its implication on online protests in Africa's most populous country. *Journal of Public Affairs*, 20(4), e2583. <https://doi.org/10.1002/pa.2583>
- Duong, C. T. P. (2020). Social media: A literature review. *Journal of Media Research*, 13(3), 112-126. <https://doi.org/10.24193/jmr.38.7>
- Ebiede, T. M. (2020, October 26). The massive protests in Nigeria, explained. *The Washington Post*.

- <https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2020/10/26/massive-protests-nigeria-explained/>
- Effiong, I. (2024). Social media regulation least of Nigeria's problems – Human rights lawyer. *Punch Newspapers*. <https://punchng.com/social-media-regulation-least-of-nigerias-problems-human-rights-lawyer/>
- Ehigiator, S. (2024). Chronicling the #EndBadGovernance protest as Nigerians cry for change. *THISDAY LIVE*. <https://www.thisdaylive.com/index.php/2024/08/06/chronicling-the-endbadgovernance-protest-as-nigerians-cry-for-change/>
- Equere, F. (2024, August 11). End bad government protest shows anger and hunger for Nigeria. *BBC News Pidgin*. <https://www.bbc.com/pidgin/articles/c87g0v2ggj0o>
- Eze, I. B., Ufondu, A. O., & Nwanmuoh, E. E. (2024). Digital media, social media, and youth participation in politics: An assessment of the 2019 general elections in Enugu State. *International Journal of Research in Education, Humanities and Commerce*, 5(3).
- Fisher, D. R., Andrews, K. T., Caren, N., & Leicht, K. T. (2020). The science of contemporary street protest: New efforts in the United States. *Perspectives on Politics*, 18(3), 641–658. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1537592720001050>
- Freelon, D., McIlwain, C. D., & Clark, M. D. (2016). Beyond the hashtags: #Ferguson, #BlackLivesMatter, and the online struggle for offline justice. Center for Media & Social Impact, American University. <https://cmsimpact.org/resource/beyond-the-hashtags/>
- Halperin, E., Saguy, T., & van Zomeren, M. (2023). When are social protests effective? *Current Opinion in Psychology*. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.copsy.2023.02.003>
- Hari, S. I. (2014). The evolution of social protest in Nigeria: The role of social media in the "#OccupyNigeria" protest. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science Invention*, 3(9), 33–39.
- Howard, P. N., Duffy, A., Freelon, D., Hussain, M., Mari, W., & Mazaid, M. (2011). Opening closed regimes: What was the role of social media during the Arab Spring? *Project on Information Technology and Political Islam*. https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2595096
- HumAngle Media. (2024). One love: Plateau State sees inspiring interfaith solidarity during protests. <https://www.humanglemedia.com/one-love-plateau-state-sees-inspiring-interfaith-solidarity-during-protests>
- Ibezim-Ohaeri, V. (2017). Confronting closing civic spaces in Nigeria. *Sur International Journal on Human Rights*, 14(26), 129–140.
- Kaigama, I. (2024). Bishops in Nigeria want return to regionalism to solve country's problems. *Crux Now*.
- Kaplan, A. M., & Haenlein, M. (2010). Users of the world, unite! The challenges and opportunities of social media. *Business Horizons*, 53(1), 59–68.
- Kukah, M. H. (2024). Bishops in Nigeria want return to regionalism to solve country's problems. *Crux Now*.

- Lawal, O. (2021). Twitter, civil activisms and EndSARS protest in Nigeria. *Cogent Social Sciences*, 7(1), 2095744. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311886.2021.2095744>
- Lee, F. L., Yuen, S., Tang, G., & Cheng, E. W. (2021). Hong Kong's summer of uprising: From anti-extradition to anti-authoritarian protests. *China Review*, 19(4), 1-32.
- Maryville Online. (2024). Social media as activism and social justice. Maryville University. <https://www.maryville.edu/online/social-media-activism/>
- Mendes, K., Ringrose, J., & Keller, J. (2018). #MeToo and the promise and pitfalls of challenging rape culture through digital feminist activism. *European Journal of Women's Studies*, 25(2), 236-246. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1350506818765318>
- Meraz, S., & Papacharissi, Z. (2013). Networked gatekeeping and networked framing on #Egypt. *The International Journal of Press/Politics*, 18(2), 138-166. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1940161212474472>
- Merriam-Webster. (2024). Protest. In Merriam-Webster Dictionary. <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/protest>
- Ngene, M. M., Odii, C., Okoye, J., & Chima, N. O. (2024). Influence of social media on political participation among Nigerian undergraduate students. *Rhycekerex.org*.
- Obar, J. A., & Wildman, S. S. (2015). Social media definition and the governance challenge: An introduction to the special issue. *Telecommunications Policy*, 39(9), 745-750. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.telpol.2015.07.014>
- Obi-Ani, P., Aniche, E., Udegbumam, K., Umeokafor, N., & Ekwelem, V. (2022). Social media and the #EndSARS protest in Nigeria: A critical discourse analysis. *Media, Culture & Society*, 44(2), 304-319. <https://doi.org/10.1177/01634437211011489>
- Okere, R. (2024). Students protest, Nigerians react over removal of subsidy on higher education. *The Guardian Nigeria News - Nigeria and World News*. <https://guardian.ng/news/students-protest-nigerians-react-over-removal-of-subsidy-on-higher-education/>
- Omowole, I. (2024). Social media regulation least of Nigeria's problems - Human rights lawyer. *Punch Newspapers*. <https://punchng.com/social-media-regulation-least-of-nigerias-problems-human-rights-lawyer/>
- Oresanya, O. (2024). Why should we be protesting to get the government to work? *The Guardian Nigeria News - Nigeria and World News*. <https://guardian.ng/opinion/why-should-we-be-protesting-to-get-the-government-to-work/>
- Osho, S. (2021). Soro soke were: The political philosophy of protest. *Journal of African Media Studies*, 13(3), 321-337. https://doi.org/10.1386/jams_00085_1
- Pew Research Center. (2024). Social media fact sheet. <https://www.pewresearch.org/internet/fact-sheet/social-media/>
- Poell, T., & van Dijck, J. (2018). Social media and new protest movements. In *The SAGE Handbook of Social Media* (pp. 546-563). SAGE Publications.

- Roberts, A. S. (2024). From social media to the streets: How digital media and protests are reshaping Nigerian democracy. *African Affairs*, 123(491), 1–25. <https://doi.org/10.1093 /afraf/adab019>
- Sanchez, G. R. (2023). The protest paradigm: How media coverage of protests shapes public opinion. *Journal of Communication*, 73(2), 176–195. <https://doi.org/10.1093/joc/jqad007>
- Seel, B. (2023). Social media activism. In *The Routledge Handbook of Media Activism* (pp. 93–104). Routledge.
- Seel, B. (2024). A new model of digital activism: From #EndSARS to #EndBadGovernance in Nigeria. *Digital Media & Society Journal*, 22(1), 97–110. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jc.2024.0104>
- Smith, A., & Anderson, M. (2024). Social media use in 2024. Pew Research Center. <https://www.pewresearch.org/internet/2024/01/09/social-media-use-in-2024/>
- Tufekci, Z. (2017). *Twitter and tear gas: The power and fragility of networked protest*. Yale University Press.
- UNESCO. (2024). Social media and youth participation in African politics: A case study of Nigeria's 2024 protests. UNESCO.
- Uwazie, E. (2024). Social media regulation least of Nigeria's problems – Human rights lawyer. *Punch Newspapers*. <https://punchng.com/social-media-regulation-least-of-nigerias-problems-human-rights-lawyer/>
- Vladislavljević, N. (2023). Social media in protest: A comparative study of digital movements in the Arab Spring and Nigeria's #EndSARS. *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*, 42(2), 203–219. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02589001.2023.1897359>
- Wolff, E. A. (2024). Global protests: Causes, effects, and the future. *Sociology Compass*. <https://doi.org/10.1111/soc4.12965>