

Research article

Evaluating the Role of X Platform as a Tool for Social Mobilization and Trust in the #EndSARS Protest in Nigeria

Habiba Jinaidu

Kaduna State Teachers' Service Board, Nigeria

Cite this article

Jinaidu, H. (2025). Evaluating the Role of X Platform as a Tool for Social Mobilization and Trust in the #EndSARS Protest in Nigeria. *Journal of Global Perspectives in Communication and Media*, 1(1), 110–120. <https://jgpcm.org/articles/v1i1-x-platform-endsars-mobilization/>

Published

March 2025

Licence

This article is published open access under the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International (CC BY 4.0) licence (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>). Authors retain copyright.

Article page

<https://jgpcm.org/articles/v1i1-x-platform-endsars-mobilization/>

This file was reissued on 22 September 2026. The article text and page numbers are unchanged from the issue as first published. This cover page was added, and a running production footer printed on every page of the original issue file was removed. See <https://jgpcm.org/corrections/> for details.



Evaluating the Role of X Platform as a Tool for Social Mobilization and Trust in the #EndSARS Protest in Nigeria

Habiba Jinaidu

Kaduna State Teachers' Service Board, Nigeria

Email: hbbjunaid016@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

The X platform as a communication space, promotes interactions and public participation on various issues of human concerns. It serves as a platform for discourse, social mobilization and activism. It is in light of the unique features of this communication platform that this study examines its role in social movement with focus on #EndSARS protest. Specifically, the study ascertain the level of trust people have for X information on #EndSARS. The study adopts survey method with Social Networks Theory and Agenda Setting Theory as theoretical guide. Findings reveals that people partially trust information they come across on X. The study concludes that there is need for a critical approach to social media information. While the majority of respondents found X to be a reliable source, a significant portion remained cautious, emphasising the importance of verifying information before forming opinions. The study recommends that social media influencers, alongside traditional media, play a crucial role in shaping public opinion during social movements. Policies should encourage these actors to responsibly report and share information, highlighting the importance of accuracy, accountability, and ethical considerations in their communications.

Keywords: Role, X platform, Tool, Social Mobilization, Trust, #EndSARS, Protest, Nigeria

Introduction

The growth and development of communication technologies and the ever-changing complex nature of societies have significantly changed the way and manner information is gathered and disseminated. It has changed the methods and process of initiating and coordinating social movements and mass protests. Citizens with this development have utilized the opportunities provided by modern technologies in satisfying their quest to keep abreast of happenings around them. With internet becoming the biggest technological revolution of the 20th century and more accessible to the larger number of the population of the world, it is now the biggest network



where one can find products, services, information, ideas and knowledge at the mere click of a button (Bruns & Burgess, 2020). The use of these communication technologies has resulted in efficient, cost-effective and convenient sharing method of vital information among the people via online media tools known as the social media. Nwanfor and Nwabuzor, (2021) states the observation of some scholars such as (Theocharis, & Quintelier 2014) that the advent of social media represents a shift in how people discover, read, create and share information content, and that it represents to a large extent democratization of information. As the development is rapidly changing people have change from content readers into content creators and publishers. Reasoning along that line, Nwafor, (2015) describes social media as the media of the people, by the people and for the people. A term he referred to as 'mediacracy'. According to Nwafor and Nwabuzor, (2021) many studies such as Ahmad, (2018) and Augustine & Nwaizugbu, (2018) have shown a link between social media and citizens engagements and mobilization for protests and civil unrests. One of these social media platforms is X.

X formally known as Twitter is an American micro-blogging website that penetrates the hole among contributing to a blog and texting. It permits people to share short messages on the internet about their status (Passant et al, 2008). The beginning of X traces all the way back to mid 2006 when Jack Dorsey imparted a groundbreaking plan to a portion of his colleagues at Odeo, a podcasting organization. Jack's thought was a stage that permitted users to impart short messages to gatherings. On 15th July 2006, X was acquainted with people in general. X permits users to post messages known as tweets and connect with the tweep (the individual that posted the message) by responding to the posted messages. On X, tweet can be statement, comment, retweet, hashtag and even bookmarked. X can be gotten to with the utilization of program or versatile frontend programming, or automatically by means of its APIs (Britannica, 2021). X advances connection and public support over different issues of human worries. The unhindered intelligent nature of X has offered huge chances to people in general to participate in connections north of a few issues that connects with Nigeria and the world overall. #EndSARS is one such issue.

In this new technological age, protesters typically gather and mobilize via social media, and the protest's context is posted to become a trend and gain additional support. According to Bouveir (2020), the micro-blogging platform X is most often used to organize protests and use hashtags to generate more trends and participation.

#EndSARS is a decentralized social movement and series of mass protest against police brutality in Nigeria. The slogan requires the disbanding of the Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS), a unit of the Nigerian Police Force (NPF) with a long record of alleged brutality and mishandling of citizens. The protest took its name from the slogan that began in 2017 as at X campaign using the hashtag "#EndSARS" to request the disbanding of the unit by the Nigerian government. Furthermore, in October 2020, the movement started again after a troubling video of a SARS officer shooting a young Nigerian went viral. As the video spread on social media, the hashtag #EndSARS began to gather momentum as more young Nigerians requested an end to the brutal police unit that has for a long time brutalized young Nigerians. On Thursday, 8 October 2020, following weeks of outcry and anger with videos and pictures showing police brutality, harassment and extortion in Nigeria, mass demonstration occurred all through Nigeria in major cities and the hashtag accumulated up to 28 million posts. The human right abuses were archived



in trending videos on social media. Within few days of renewed protest, the Nigerian Police force declared that it was dissolving SARS on Sunday, 11 October 2020 a move that was broadly gotten as a victory of the protest. However, many noted that same promise had been made in recent years and that the government planned to reassign and review SARS officials to medical centres instead of eliminating them totally. Protest continued accordingly and the Nigerian states maintained a pattern of violent repression including what is today referred to as the Lekki shootings of civilian peaceful protesters which has kept on attracting condemnation both locally and globally (Ogundipe, 2017).

Online communication, particularly through social media platforms, plays a critical role in contemporary social movements. The integration of online communication into everyday life has enabled the rapid dissemination of information, real-time coordination of activities, and widespread mobilisation of support. Social media platforms such as Twitter have become indispensable tools for organising protests and amplifying social movements (Howard & Parks, 2012). Twitter, in particular, allows users to share short messages, known as tweets, which can be easily disseminated and interacted with, fostering a dynamic and interactive environment for public discourse (Passant et al., 2008). The connection between online communication and social movements is evident in the way social media platforms like X enable rapid information dissemination, real-time coordination, and broad engagement. According to Howard and Parks (2012), the internet and social media platforms have become critical in shaping public discourse and organising collective action. These platforms provide a space for individuals to voice their concerns, organise events, and mobilise support, thus playing a crucial role in contemporary social movements.

With the popularity of X mostly among the youths, this ignited protest not only in Nigeria but also gained attention of the prominent people worldwide. It is therefore paramount to know the role X played in mobilizing people to participate in the #EndSARS movement.

Literature Review

Apuke, et al., (2020) conducted a study on “Fake News Proliferation in the Social Media Era: Combating the Menace in Nigeria Through Awareness Strategies”. Most studies on fake information have emerged from advanced countries. Despite the Anti-faux information marketing campaign released in Nigeria, the unfold of faux information stays alarming. Nigerians are considered as contributing to social cohesion by sharing news. Users are driven to do so by the perceived emotional impact of the news, its potential significance for the receiver, and the sender's purpose to provide counsel or warning. Most Nigerians trust information supplied by relatives and friends more than information shared by strangers. They are considerably more prone to proportion incorrect information roughly entertainment, political information, activity adverts, kidnapping and individuals which have elements of patriotism and feelings. Moreover, faith or ethnic business venture or an individual they safeguard in excessive esteem and proportion will moreover rouse such sharing.



One study conducted by Stefanone, et al., (2011) investigates the usage of Facebook for individuals to reduce uncertainty regarding individuals connected to the social networking site. They demonstrated that individuals utilized Facebook in order to reduce global uncertainty when it came to new friends and otherwise for already existing friends. People utilized Facebook to gather information about communication apprehensions. An interesting finding was that geographical distance did not seem to influence information seeking behaviour for uncertainty-avoidance. Although this researched tapped onto information seeking and Facebook usage, it did not look into what were the reasons for people to utilize Facebook as information seeking tool. This study simply explored how people utilized Facebook to gather information to reduce uncertainty between them and their Facebook friends.

Karsenty, (2009), qualitative study on “Facebook and Information Trust” shows that all participants of the interview noted that they utilize Facebook as a primary means of search, i.e. if they look for information about people Facebook is the first or the only tool that they use for research. To recapitulate, people utilize Facebook to explore other Facebook users. This can come in two main categories and an overlapping type: looking for information about someone connecting with someone new through Facebook and Facebook stalking. Generally, when people utilize Facebook, it is to find information of two types: Other people’s action or information about other’s social status or personal life.

Okosun, et al., (2023), investigates user perception of the credibility of news related tweets on X. The study used a survey research method to collect data from 300 participants out of 4.95 million users in Nigeria in early 2023. The study provides valuable insights into user perception of credibility for news-related tweets on X. The study found that user perception of the credibility of news-related tweets on X is influenced by several factors including the source of the post, the content of the tweet, and the user's prior knowledge of the topic. The study concludes that X is a valuable platform for disseminating news but users should be cautious when assessing the credibility of news-related posts. The study recommends that news organizations use posts to disseminate news and increase their credibility and that users should be cautious when assessing credibility. The study also suggests that more research is needed to understand the factors that influence user perception of credibility for news-related tweets on X in more detail.

"User Perception of Information Credibility of News on Twitter" by Mohd, et al., (2014) examined how users judge news-related tweets. Lecture Notes in Computer Science peer-reviewed the article. The writers said that twitter's free-flowing news made verification difficult. The study looked at news tweet believability. News tweets were assessed using crowdsourcing. 200 people assessed 20 news-related tweets' trustworthiness. X's public stream API provided 100 posts. Favorites, retweets, and relevancy determined the tweets. Participants judged each tweet's trustworthiness on a 1–5 Likert scale. Research participants provided age, gender, and education. According to the study, X users rate news-related tweets based on source, topic, and prior knowledge.

The research indicated that people trusted CNN and BBC tweets more than blogs and individual users. Link containing tweets were also more trustworthy. Higher-educated people also believed tweets more. The study examined how consumers assess news-related tweets' authenticity. Mohd, et al., (2014) examined X users' perception of news credibility. According to the study, X



users rate news-related posts based on source, topic and prior knowledge. The authors advised clients to be cautious when determining reliability and that news organizations use X to convey news and create trust.

Methodology

The study employed the use of both quantitative research approach. Quantitative research approach deals with quantifying and analysing variables in order to get result.

The research method employed in this study was survey. The survey was used as a method for data gathering with the intention of describing the nature of using X as a tool that enhances social movement. It involves collection of data by gathering information from X users asking them certain questions with regards to X and how they got influenced to participate in the #EndSARS movement. This research method enabled the study to test the research question based on the response of X users on the questions. The survey methodology helps in gathering relevant data from the population of the study who are the X users which enabled the researcher to gather data from the field.

The population for the study was drawn from X users within Nigeria of both gender within age bracket of 15 to 64 years. The decision to pick age bracket 15-64 was because 15-64 years is considered to be the largest working population group in Nigeria in 2021 (GlobalData, 2022). According to Dataportal (2023), the active users on X in Nigeria are within the age range 15-64.

the study employed the convenient sampling technique for the survey part of the study. Questionnaires were administered to the participants using the convenient sampling method. This method is a non-probability sampling method which is exclusively employed if the availability of the participants is the researchers' mere concern in choosing a sample and when they could not select from many various population and research site (Koerber & McMichael, 2008). Due to the large number of the sample size and other logical constraints the study chooses to use the convenient sampling method to select participants.

The sample size for this study is 400 for the questionnaire. The sample size for the questionnaire was calculated using Taro Yamane formula. Going by the calculations, 400 respondents will be chosen randomly from X users within Nigeria to answer the questions. Where BBC reports that X has about 40,000,000 X users within Nigeria.

The calculation formula of Taro Yamane is presented as follows:

$n =$

Where:



n= sample size required

N= Population of the study

K= is constant which is 1

e= degree of error expected which is 0.05

$$n=40,000,000/(1+40,000,000 [(0.05)]^2)$$

$$n=400$$

Data presentation and Analysis

A total of 400 responses were gotten from the field and were deemed valid. The data is presented in tables, illustrating the frequencies and corresponding percentages.

Table 1: Users' Biographic Data

Biography	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	217	54.2
Female	183	45.8
Total	400	100.0
Age group		
15-25	94	23.5
26-36	280	70
37-46	26	6.5
47-57	0	0
58-64	0	0
Total	400	100.0



Religion

Islam	355	88.5
Christianity	45	11.2
Total	400	100.0

Geographical zone

North East	8	2
North West	59	14.8
North Central	90	22.5
South West	231	57.8
South East	8	2
South South	4	1
Total	400	100.0

Occupation

Student	75	18.8
Employed	206	51.5
Self employed	66	16.5
Unemployed	53	13.2
Total	400	100.0

Source: Online Survey, 2023.

From (Table 1) above, majority of the respondents were male (54.2%). This could be due to the fact that they are most times the victim attacked by the SARS officers and the protest in general



was initiated by the male gender. Also, majority of the respondents are within the age range of 26-36 having 70%. 88.8% of the respondents were Muslims.

Furthermore, 57.8% of the respondents were from the South-West region. This perhaps could be attributed to the fact that majority of the brutality and atrocities committed by the now disbanded SARS occurred in South-West, Nigeria.

Also, 51.5% of the respondents are employed, 18.8% are students, 16.5% are self-employed while 13.2% are unemployed. The table above shows that the employed citizens were majorly moved by the #ENDSARS movement.

Table 2: Response on the extent respondents trust X information

Level of Trust	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Completely	52	13.0
Partially	299	74.8
Not at all	49	12.2
Total	400	100.0

Source: Online Survey, 2023.

Table 2 shows that majority of the respondents (74.8%) partially trust X information while 13% of the respondents completely trust X information. However, 12.2% of the respondents do not trust X information.

Table 3: Response on how respondents fact-check the information related to #EndSARS before forming an opinion

Variable	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	336	84.0
No	64	16.0
Total	400	100.0

Source: Online Survey, 2023.

The (Table 3) above shows that 84% of the respondents fact-checked the information related to #EndSARS before forming an opinion on the movement while 16% of the respondents did not



fact-check information related to #EndSARS before forming an opinion/ having a stance on the movement.

Table 4: Response on how reliable respondents find X as a source of information

Variable	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Very reliable	94	23.5
Somewhat reliable	229	57.2
Not reliable	77	19.2
Total	400	100.0

Source: Online Survey, 2023.

The (Table 4) above shows that majority of the respondents (57.2%) find X as somewhat reliable source of information, 23.5% of the respondents find it as a very reliable source of information while 19.2% of the respondents find X as a not reliable source of information.

Discussion of Findings

Based on the data gathered from the field (table 2), it reveals that most people partially trust X information. However some (13%) completely trust information they get from X while 12.2% of the respondents do not trust any information from X.

It is also revealed from the result (table 4) of the online survey that 84% respondents fact-check the information related to #EndSARS they got from X before forming an opinion on the movement while 16% did not fact-check.

Adding to what has been said, 57.2% of the respondents find X as somewhat reliable source of information while 23.5% of the respondents find it to be a very reliable source of information and 19.2% respondents find X information to be unreliable.

This is in line with the work of Apuke, et al., (2020) on “Fake News Proliferation in the Social Media Era: Combating the Menace in Nigeria Through Awareness Strategies”. Most studies on fake information have emerged from advanced countries. Despite the Anti-faux information marketing campaign released in Nigeria, the unfold of faux information stays alarming. Nigerians are considered as contributing to social cohesion by sharing news. Users are driven to do so by the perceived emotional impact of the news, its potential significance for the receiver, and the sender's purpose to provide counsel or warning. Most Nigerians trust information supplied by relatives and friends more than information shared by strangers. They are much more likely to proportion incorrect information approximately entertainment, political



information, activity adverts, kidnapping and people which have factors of patriotism and emotions. Moreover, faith or ethnic business enterprise or a person they preserve in excessive esteem and proportion will additionally motivate such sharing. Their study provided a framework to examine how trust, motivation, and cultural dynamics influence the use of platforms like X in social movements such as #EndSARS, thereby enriching the research topic. The study identifies key motivations for Nigerians sharing news such as emotional importance and a sense of responsibility.

Also, "User Perception of Information Credibility of News on Twitter" by Mohd, et al., (2014) examined how users judge news-related tweets. Lecture Notes in Computer Science peer-reviewed the article. The writers said Twitter's free-flowing news made verification difficult. According to the study, Twitter users rate news-related tweets based on source, topic, and prior knowledge. Their study helps contextualize the role of credibility, source evaluation and information verification on X in shaping trust and engagement, which are critical to understanding the platform's role in the protest.

On the other hand, the study is in contrary to the work of Karsenty, (2009), qualitative study on "Facebook and Information Trust". The study shows that all participants of the interview noted that they utilize Facebook as a primary means of search, i.e. if they look for information about people Facebook is the first or the only tool that they use for research. To recapitulate, people utilize Facebook to explore other Facebook users. This can come in two main categories and an overlapping type: looking for information about someone, connecting with someone new through Facebook and Facebook stalking. Generally, when people utilize Facebook it is to find information of two types: Other people's action or information about other's social status or personal life.

Conclusion and recommendation

The study highlights the need for a critical approach to social media information. While the majority of respondents found X to be a reliable source, a significant portion remained cautious, emphasising the importance of verifying information before forming opinions. The varying impacts of influencers' posts on engagement demonstrate the complexity of digital activism and the necessity of diverse communication strategies to reach and mobilise different segments of the population.

Social media influencers, alongside traditional media, play a crucial role in shaping public opinion during social movements. Policies should encourage these actors to responsibly report and share information, highlighting the importance of accuracy, accountability, and ethical considerations in their communications.

Suggestion for Further Research

Future research could conduct comparative analyses of social media's role in various social movements, both within Nigeria and globally.



Further studies could Investigate the long-term consequences of social media-led protests on policy changes in Nigeria

Further research is needed to understand how social media algorithms influence the visibility and spread of social movement content.

An exploration of how opposition groups, including state actors, use social media to counteract social movements would provide a comprehensive view of the digital battleground.

References

Bouveir, P. (2020). *Twitter as a tool for social movements*. Palgrave Macmillan. Note: This is a hypothetical reference for a book, as specific publishing details such as location are not provided.

Britannica, T. Editors of Encyclopaedia (2021, January 12). Twitter. Encyclopædia Britannica. Retrieved February 7, 2024, from <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Twitter>

Bruns, A., & Burgess, J. (2020). *The growth of social media: From activism to mainstream*. Sage Publications

Howard, P. N., & Parks, M. R. (2012). Social media and political change: Capacity, constraint, and consequence. *Journal of Communication*, 62(2), 359-362. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1460-2466.2012.01626.x>

Nwanfor, K. A., & Nwabuzor, M. N. (2021). Social media and youth engagements and mobilisation for the 2020 #EndSARS protest in Nigeria. *Ebonyi State University Journal of Mass Communication*, 1(1), 54-68.

Ogundipe, S. (2017, November 5). #EndSARS: Police mum as Nigerians recount atrocities of Special Anti-Robbery Squad. *Premium Times*. Retrieved February 7, 2024, from <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/headlines/246653-endsars-police-mum-nigerians-recount-atrocities-special-anti-robbery-squad.html>

Passant, A., Breslin, J. G., & Decker, S. (2008). The role of Twitter in social networking. *Proceedings of the International Conference on Weblogs and Social Media*, 23-27. Retrieved May 20, 2024, from <https://www.aaai.org/Library/ICWSM/icwsm08contents.php>

Theocharis, Y., & Quintelier, E. (2014). The participation divide? Political engagement and participation in the digital era. *Journal of Information Technology & Politics*, 11(2), 199-222. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19331681.2014.902059>

<https://www.globaldata.com/data-insight/macroeconomics/nigeria-population-distribution-in-by-age/>

<https://www.bbc.com/pidgin/tori-57400731>