NAVIGATING POLITICAL SILENCE: THE IMPACT OF TWITTER BAN ON NIGERIAN YOUTH ACTIVISM

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ABSTRACT: Twitter has emerged as a vital forum for political activism and conversation, particularly among young people. It is an effective instrument for political engagement because of its capacity to promote quick information sharing, rally supporters, and magnify voices. The consequences of this ban on political participation and communication have been significant. It was extremely difficult for political movements that depended on the platform for coordination and communication to stay visible and gain traction. It is a potent social media tool that has transformed social interaction, communication, and information sharing across a range of industries, including politics, entertainment, news, and private messaging. The study aims to explore how youth activism and political participation have been affected by the ban, as well as how they adapt and discover new ways to mobilise support and express their political beliefs. The methodology of this study was gathered through primary data collection. The key findings of the study are that the bans on Twitter led to a significant decline in political participation among young people. In the absence of Twitter, young people are adopting a variety of innovative approaches and techniques for political activism. This study concludes that while censorship may inadvertently foster creativity and resilience in activists, pushing them to develop new strategies, the implications of this kind of ban are profound. The study recommends that to sustain youths' political engagement despite challenges posed by Twitter restriction; society must go back to the traditional route: an offline community-building effort where youths can engage in discussions like town hall meetings and face-to-face interactions with grassroots leaders like the Local Government Chairman to mitigate the effects of the banned online space

Keywords: Twitter, Twitter Ban, Youth, Political Engagement, Political Activism

INTRODUCTION

Twitter has emerged as a vital forum for political activism and conversation, particularly among young people (Obia, 2023). It is an effective instrument for political engagement because of its capacity to promote quick information sharing, rally supporters, and magnify voices (Alodat et al., 2023). From June 5, 2021, to January 13, 2022, Twitter's operations in Nigeria were restricted by an official ban imposed by the Nigerian government. This happened because Twitter deleted and temporarily suspended tweets of the then Nigerian president, Muhammadu Buhari, which he had sent to the Igbo people living in the southeast of the country, alerting them to the possibility of a repeat of the 1967 Nigerian Civil War because of an ongoing insurgency.

The consequences of this ban on political participation and communication have been significant. It was extremely difficult for political movements that depended on Twitter for coordination and communication to stay visible and gain traction. According to Mohammed & Adelakun (2023), youths are frequently in the vanguard of political movements, primarily

engaging through social media. Their political activities were impacted by the Twitter ban in a number of ways. Without Twitter's amplification potential, youth-led initiatives found it difficult to become visible and reach a wider audience (Khalaf et al., 2023). Youth political engagement has dropped as a result of the ban, which has changed where and how they participate in politics.

Particularly among young people, Twitter has become a vital forum for political participation and engagement (Omotayo & Folorunso, 2020). No wonder Pokharel (2017) stated that Twitter is a vital instrument for political organising and discourse because of its real-time communication capabilities, capacity to quickly mobilise sizable groups, and ability to magnify the voices of the underprivileged. Governments banning Twitter, however, would be a serious threat to these initiatives since it may stifle political discourse and lessen the effectiveness of movements led by young people.

Though these bans have far-reaching consequences, little is known about how they specifically affect young people's political involvement and engagement. The majority of the material now in publication concentrates on social media dynamics in general and public response in particular, frequently ignoring the particular experiences and adaptations of the adolescent population. Given that young people are frequently at the vanguard of political innovation and activity, using digital platforms to push social change, it is imperative that this knowledge gap be filled.

This study, therefore, intends to explore how the ban has affected youth activism and political participation, as well as how they adapt and discover new ways to mobilise support and express their political beliefs. This study investigates the implications of the Twitter ban on youth political engagement and activism in Nigeria, examining its effects on participation, discourse platforms, and activist strategies.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Concept of Political Participation

One of the cornerstones of a democratic country is the involvement of its people in national governance. Adelekan (2010) highlighted that democracy entails personal involvement in life decisions for the same reason. A democratic system requires the populace to actively participate in the processes of selecting leaders and effectively communicating public policies and attitudes. Any political system that wants to be stable and legitimate needs its citizens to be involved in politics. Political participation is one of the core tenets of a democratic society. Because it involves a dedication to giving men and women equal chances to develop their unique capacities, it is essential for democracy. According to Conway (2001), political participation refers to the actions taken by citizens in an effort to affect the government's policies, authorities, or organisational structure. It is described as voluntary actions taken by the general population to directly or indirectly affect public policy by influencing the choice of policymakers. These actions include voting in elections, supporting political campaigns, contributing money to a cause or candidate, contacting decision-makers, petitioning, protesting, and working with others on issues (Uhlaner, 2015).

Through a range of activities, people form and express their opinions on the world and the ways in which it is governed. They also attempt to influence decisions that have an impact on their lives by getting involved in politics. The United Nations (UN) states that taking part in political

processes involves much more than just voting. Political engagement includes the freedoms of expression, assembly, and association, as well as the opportunity to manage public affairs run for office at all levels of government and register as a candidate. Active involvement and the representation of diverse opinions and viewpoints in government are key components of democracy. It is feasible that individual opinions and policies will be expressed and implemented when there is a way and a platform for people to voice these opinions and take part in all the processes. In order to participate in politics, citizens must choose who will lead them and represent them when it comes to decisions affecting their socioeconomic, political, and cultural well-being. It is the process by which citizens actively participate in the government of their country and make their share of contributions to the overall growth of the country. This is why Nomor and Orjime (2018) defined political participation as a facet of political behaviour that centres on how people engage in politics.

Concept of Political Activism

Digital activism refers to a type of activism where the internet and digital media facilitate political activity and mass mobilization. It entails using electronic communication tools, like social media, email, and podcasts, for different types of activism in order to facilitate citizen movements' faster and more efficient communication, as well as the distribution of specific information to broad and targeted audiences and coordination. Digital activism gained momentum in 2004 with the emergence and quick development of social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter. Today, campaigns can be conducted entirely online, often with little to no offline component, yet still reach a large audience.

According to Rees, a major advantage of utilising digital technologies for good is that they allow you to reach a wide audience and, if necessary, make a campaign's objectives global. Social media platforms like Facebook and X are interconnected, which makes it easy for activists to share information. Instead of using more time-consuming techniques like door-to-door canvassing or standing on street corners asking people to sign petitions, activists can post a slogan, picture, or details about an issue, share it with friends, connect with like-minded online communities, and spread information through their networks.

Beyond simply spreading the word, digital activism gives everyone with internet access a forum to argue their position and demand change. This is especially helpful for individuals who are frequently silenced or lack a means of expressing themselves. By giving regular people, the opportunity to tell their tales, a more comprehensive picture of the situation emerges, and this is a potent method of pressuring governments to act on matters that are not typically covered by mainstream media.

For instance, terrorists from Boko Haram abducted around 300 girls from a school in northern Nigeria in April 2014. While 276 girls were still detained, about 50 girls were able to escape, sparking an international uproar that was mostly directed at a social media campaign to pressure governments to step in. Within a week, the hashtag #BringBackOurGirls went global, with backing from celebrities including US First Lady Michelle Obama and campaigner Malala Yousafzai. While the story attracted attention from the worldwide media and heads of state pledged to help Nigeria find and bring back the missing girls, the hashtag #BringBack OurGirls spread quickly on the internet, galvanizing public sympathy for the families of the girls.

Another relevant example of this is the enormous surge in the usage of #BlackLivesMatter after George Floyd's death on May 26, 2020, to inspire and bring together a global movement against

police brutality and, more generally, the ongoing struggle against systematic racism. Social media users posted footage of the injustice, and it soon gained traction, inspiring anti-racism protests in more than 60 places throughout the globe. Social media is still essential for recording the protests, posting messages of support, encouraging donations and allyship possibilities, and generally disseminating information that the public might not otherwise be aware of.

X (formerly Twitter)

Twitter is a potent social media tool that has transformed social interaction, communication, and information sharing across a range of industries, including politics, entertainment, news, and private messaging (Kwak et al., 2010). In terms of active user base, Twitter has grown to become one of the largest social media networks. Nobody in the world can afford to ignore it, not even the well-known international leaders. Some national leaders use Twitter to manage their nations; they announce policy and government changes; suggest amending the constitution, and more. Everything that is essential to humankind these days appears to have a Twitter account.

Twitter, founded in 2006 is a real-time information network that connects you to the latest information about what you find interesting. Globally, more than 465 million people use *tweets* for communication. Twitter's concept is dependent on messaging services, which can be accessed through specialized websites, instant message apps like Yahoo Messager, MSN Messenger, or mobile devices. It makes it simple and quick for the user to message friends and relatives. On Twitter, users can *follow* or virtually subscribe to the updates of other users, some of whom are celebrities, friends, and traditional media outlets like Newsweek or Al-Jazeera. Additionally, tweets can be categorized by grouping postings together based on a topic or category using *hashtags*.

Twitter and Political Participation

Twitter has grown to be a major political engagement tool, impacting people's interactions with political material, political engagement, and cause mobilization. Studies have indicated that Twitter plays a pivotal role for organizing people at major political gatherings. For example, Twitter's role in the Arab Spring, and especially the 2011 Egyptian Revolution, demonstrated how the platform assisted activists in planning rallies, sharing information, and coordinating actions in spite of restrictions by the government. Twitter may be used to magnify social justice issues, bring people together around a similar cause, and organize offline events like demonstrations, marches and other political activism activities, as shown by movements like #BlackLivesMatter.

Research indicates that social media, in particular Twitter, is widely utilized in political campaigns. This medium allows for the rapid distribution of brief messages that can be answered, retweeted, and shared with more followers (Soedarsono et al., 2020). Further research is necessary to determine whether Twitter can effectively increase the number of votes; however, it has been demonstrated to be useful in disseminating issue-related messages to politically conscious voters. Furthermore, since every Twitter tweet has a distinct objective (to inform, provoke, question, or comment), it is still unclear if it is successful in telling people to vote for a particular candidate.

For example, the usage of social media, especially Twitter, during the 2009 German federal election was studied by Jürgens and Jungherr (2015) to determine whether microblogging

messages can educate the audience about the state of opinion in the offline world. According to their research, Twitter's rise has attracted the interest of academics who study its use in fields like project management and political marketing. These researchers have found that Twitter is a two-way street and frequently serves as a forum for political discourse. Twitter can serve as a conduit for political engagement both offline and online. People are frequently inspired to participate in offline political activities like voting, attending protests, and attending community meetings by engaging with political information on Twitter. According to studies, using Twitter exposes users to a variety of political discussions and content, which may help them become more politically knowledgeable. Particularly young people utilize Twitter extensively for political activity. The website gives young people a place to voice their political opinions, interact with peers who share their ideas, and get involved in political initiatives. Twitter is a popular venue for youth-led digital activism, where they organize, campaign for, and bring about change on causes that are important to them.

Akerele-Popoola, Azeez and Adeniyi (2022) looked at how the #EndSARS demonstration in Nigeria was coordinated using Twitter. It also looked into how much Twitter's advocacy of more freedom of expression and role as a catalyst for social protests had improved or worsened democracy in Nigeria. The study used in-depth interviews in a qualitative manner. Twenty young Nigerians were specifically chosen using the snowballing technique from the states in the country's southwest. According to the study, Twitter can be a useful tool for social protests, like the #EndSARS demonstration, as it can forge strong bonds and generate a lot of involvement both during and after the demonstration. Twitter's impact is only temporary, though, as the connections it can establish erode over time. The study came to the conclusion that, depending on how its users—who are the main agents of change—use Twitter in the democratic process, it can either strengthen or weaken democracy.

The Pew Research Centre discovered that Twitter bans can drastically lower young people's political participation. Given that Twitter is frequently the main venue for political activism and discussions, the research showed a decline in these activities. According to their research, many young people move to Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and other social media sites in order to maintain their political activity after Twitter bans. These websites, nonetheless, frequently fall short of Twitter in terms of political organising and conversation. Results suggested that Twitter restrictions might affect democratic engagement more broadly. Bans have the potential to silence dissenting voices and lower young political engagement overall by restricting access to a significant forum for political discourse.

In their study, Akindutire and Aribisala (2023) looked at how Twitter affected young people's election involvement in 2023. The investigators employed the questionnaire tool and survey research methodology to collect data. Research indicates that Twitter is a crucial channel for people to stay informed about politics, politicians, and political parties. Additionally, by giving users more knowledge on political matters, Twitter has proven to be helpful in convincing or discouraging users. According to the study's findings, Twitter significantly influences Nigerians' political beliefs and viewpoints. More Nigerians now have the opportunity to engage in political discourse and have easier access to information about candidates and their platforms. Additionally, it gives people a forum to discuss current affairs and exchange ideas with people all around the nation. Research conducted in 2021 by the Nigerian Communications Commission and the BBC World Service discovered a notable decline in online political activism among young Nigerians following the country's ban on Twitter. Although the use of WhatsApp and other encrypted messaging systems increased as a result of the ban, public political conversation generally declined.

Immediate Behavioural Adaptations of Youth Activists Post-Twitter Ban

The June 2021 ban on Twitter by the Nigerian government had a big impact on the nation's youth activists and general civic participation. According to Ezuka et al., the site greatly aided protest planning, especially during the 2020 #EndSARS campaign. Nigerian youth activists swiftly modified their coordination, communication, and advocacy strategies in reaction to the ban, demonstrating both inventiveness and tenacity in the face of persecution.

Many young activists continued to use Virtual Private Networks (VPNs) to access Twitter in spite of the ban, circumventing governmental restrictions. This tactic made sure that information was shared and kept internet activism going, especially when it came to advocacy campaigns and human rights abuses. However, using a VPN introduced additional financial and technical obstacles that disproportionately impacted marginalised populations (Anyawu et al., 2022; PPB News, 2021). In order to maintain their networks, activists also shifted to other social media sites, including Facebook, Instagram, and Telegram, as a result of the ban. Twitter's real-time information, fundraising, and mobilisation activities were replicated on these sites. To close the digital divide made worse by the ban, activists also used offline strategies, including neighbourhood gatherings and regional campaigns (Okocha & Dapoet, 2022).

The restriction brought attention to Nigerian youth's socioeconomic dependence on Twitter. In addition to using the site for advocacy, many activists also used it to promote small companies and network professionally. Their disappearance impacted their economic potential and worldwide reach. Reduced involvement and visibility hampered the operations of youth-led groups and entrepreneurs.

The prohibition was seen as an attempt by the administration to quell criticism and stifle dissent, especially from those calling for democratic accountability and changes. Many young activists highlighted the ban's stifling effect on freedom of expression and assembly, framing it as an assault on their digital and human rights. The prohibition was also denounced by foreign organisations and civil society groups, drawing attention to Nigeria's digital rights situation. The tenacity of young activists in Nigeria at this time highlights the strategic use of internet channels in contemporary activism. Their modifications show how resistance and digital repression interact in a changing way, which is essential to comprehend how social movements function in authoritarian environments.

Nigeria's Twitter ban exposed the shortcomings and advantages of young activism in the digital era. Even though it presented many difficulties, activists' quick behavioural adjustments demonstrated their capacity to work around limitations and continue their advocacy work. To protect civic involvement in constrictive settings, their solutions emphasise the necessity of ongoing support for digital rights and the investigation of substitute platforms.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The researcher employed the survey research method to collect data for this study. The survey approach is designed to investigate people, their systems, motivational range, and manifestation, as well as their attitude and mental state. The survey approach was chosen to verify the prior assumptions and information relevant to this investigation.

The population of this study includes youth between ages 18 and 35 residents in Ikorodu, Lagos State. According to City Population (2006), Ikorodu has a population of 200,297. Therefore, the population of the study is 200,297 residents of Ikorodu, from where the researcher will draw the sample size. The researcher adopted the purposive sampling technique. In determining the sample size for this research work, the systematic sampling method was used. The researcher selected a total of hundred (100) respondents from the population. The sample of this research is calculated by using Taro Yamane formula with 95% confidence level. The calculation formula is presented as follows:

$n = N / 1 + N (e) ^ 2$

Where;

n = sample required

N = number of people in the population

e = allowable error (%)

$n = 200,297 / 1 + 200,297 (0.10) ^ 2$

$= 99.95$

$\simeq 100.$

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The survey was administered to a sample size of 100 respondents, aiming to capture a diverse range of perspectives on youth engagement in political movements post-ban. The response rate was calculated based on the total number of distributed questionnaires and the number of completed responses received. A total of 75 responses were collected, representing a response rate of 75%. This high response rate indicates strong interest and engagement from the participants, reflecting their willingness to share their experiences and insights on political activism and movements in the current socio-political landscape.

Table 1: Respondents' Demographics

		Frequency (N)	Percent%
Gender			
	Female	45	60.0
	Male	30	40.0
Age			
18 – 23		31	39.7
24 – 29		37	47.4
30 – 35		7	9.0
Educational Level			
	Secondary School	1	1.3
	Undergraduate	11	14.7
	Graduate	14	18.7

	Postgraduate	49	64.5
Religion			
	Christianity	71	94.7
	Islam	4	5.3
Marital Status			
	Single	**74**	**21.0**
	Married	122	34.6
Employment status	Employed	35	46.7
	Student	15	20.0
	Self-employed	15	20.0
	Unemployed	10	13.3
Total		**75**	**100.0%**

The gender distribution indicates a higher representation of female respondents, accounting for 60.0% (N=45) of the sample, compared to male respondents at 40.0% (N=30).

Respondents primarily fall within the 24–29 age range, which constitutes 47.4% of the sample. The second largest group, aged 18–23, represents 39.7% of respondents, while the 30–35 age group is comparatively smaller at 9.0%. This indicates a predominantly young sample, with approximately 87% of respondents aged 18–29.

The data on educational attainment reveals a significant concentration of respondents with higher education. A majority, 64.5%, have completed postgraduate studies, while 18.7% have graduated with an undergraduate degree. A smaller fraction, 14.7%, are undergraduate students, and only 1.3% have completed secondary school as their highest level of education.

The religious composition of the respondents is predominantly Christian, accounting for 94.7% of the sample, while only 5.3% identify as Muslim. A vast majority of respondents, 96%, reported being single, while only a small portion, 4%, are married.

In terms of employment, 46.7% of respondents are employed, followed by an equal representation of students and self-employed individuals, each at 20.0%. A smaller proportion, 13.3%, is unemployed.

Table 2: Twitter Usage Before Ban

	Frequency	Percent
Occasionally	24	32.0
Daily	18	24.0
Rarely	15	20.0
Several times a week	9	12.0
Never	9	12.0
Total	75	100.0

The data in Table 2 shows diverse patterns of Twitter usage among respondents prior to the ban, with the largest group (32.0%) using Twitter occasionally. This suggests that while many were familiar with the platform, it was not integral to their daily routine. A smaller segment

(24.0%) used Twitter daily, indicating a higher dependency on the platform for information and social interaction; the ban likely affected this group the most. Meanwhile, 20.0% of respondents reported using Twitter rarely, and another 12.0% used it several times a week, reflecting moderate engagement without daily reliance. Notably, 12.0% of respondents never used Twitter, suggesting minimal impact from the ban for this group.

Table 3: Twitter Interest Before Ban

	Frequency	Percent
Neutral	27	36.0
Somewhat Interested	18	24.0
Very interested	12	16.0
Somewhat uninterested	10	13.3
Not interested at all	8	10.7
Total	75	100.0

The data in Table 3 reveals the varying levels of interest in Twitter among respondents before the ban. The largest portion, 36.0% (N=27), expressed a neutral stance, indicating neither strong interest nor disinterest in the platform. This neutral attitude suggests that, for many, Twitter was neither essential nor irrelevant, perhaps used occasionally without high engagement. Meanwhile, 24.0% (N=18) were somewhat interested, and 16.0% (N=12) were very interested, together representing a significant group (40.0%) with positive inclinations towards Twitter. These respondents likely valued the platform as a source of information or social engagement, making the ban more impactful for them. Conversely, a smaller group was somewhat uninterested (13.3%, N=10) or not interested at all (10.7%, N=8), indicating minimal reliance on Twitter and, therefore, less likely to be affected by the ban. Overall, the data indicates a range of Twitter interest levels, with a considerable segment of the sample viewing the platform favourably. However, a large portion held a neutral or ambivalent view.

Table 4: Political Participation Before Ban

	Frequency	Percent
Very often	3	4.0
Often	11	14.7
Sometimes	16	21.3
Rarely	27	36.0
Never	18	24.0
Total	75	100.0

The data in Table 4 shows the respondents' levels of political participation on Twitter prior to the ban, indicating generally low engagement. A significant portion, 36.0% (N=27), reported participating "rarely," suggesting that Twitter was not a primary platform for their political activities. Additionally, 24.0% (N=18) stated they "never" engaged politically on Twitter, further indicating limited use of the platform for such purposes among many respondents. Some respondents participated politically to a moderate degree, with 21.3% (N=16) indicating they engaged "sometimes," while smaller groups engaged more frequently; 14.7% (N=11) participated "often," and only 4.0% (N=3) did so "very often." This pattern suggests that, for most respondents, Twitter was not a critical space for political expression or engagement, with only a small subset actively using the platform for political purposes before the ban.

Table 5: Interest in Politics after the Ban

	Frequency	Percent
Somewhat interested	26	43.3
Very Interested	19	32.0
Neutral	11	18.7
Not interested	4	6.0
Total	75	100.0

The majority of respondents (43.3%) expressed that they were somewhat interested in politics following the ban, while 32.0% reported being very interested. A smaller portion remained neutral (18.7%) or indicated not being interested at all (6.0%). Overall, the data suggests a notable interest in politics among respondents after the ban.

Table 6: Participation in Political Activities

	Frequency	Percent
Sometimes	22	37.3
Rarely	18	30.7
Often	14	22.7
Never	5	9.3
Total	75	100.0

The data indicates that a significant number of respondents participate in political activities sometimes (37.3%), followed by those who do so rarely (30.7%). A smaller proportion of participants (22.7%) often participate, while a minority (9.3%) reported never participating in such activities. This suggests that while participation in political activities is not universal, a considerable portion of the respondents is engaged to varying degrees.

Table 7: Use of Twitter for Political Engagement

	Frequency	Percent
Regularly	2	4.0
Frequently	6	10.7
Occasionally	17	28.0
Rarely	24	40.0
Never	10	17.3
Total	75	100.0

The findings reveal that most respondents use Twitter for political engagement rarely (40.0%) or occasionally (28.0%). A smaller percentage use it frequently (10.7%) or regularly (4.0%), while 17.3% of respondents never engage with political content on Twitter. This indicates that while Twitter is utilized for political engagement, the frequency of use is generally low among the participants.

Table 8: Use of New Platforms for Political Discourse Since the Ban

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	13	17.3
No	62	82.7
Total	75	100.0

The results indicate that a significant majority of respondents (82.7%) have not used new platforms for political discourse since the ban. In contrast, only 17.3% reported engaging with new platforms for this purpose. This suggests that the ban may have limited the exploration or adoption of new avenues for political discussion among the respondents.

Table 9: Most Effective Platform for Political Discourse

	Frequency	Percent
Twitter	21	28.0
Twitter (all variations)	14	18.7
WhatsApp	3	4.0
Instagram	3	4.0
Others (NIL)	34	45.3
Total	75	100.0

The data reveals that Twitter is perceived as the most effective platform for political discourse, with 28.0% of respondents identifying it as such. A further 18.7% mentioned all variations of Twitter. However, a notable 45.3% of respondents indicated "Others (NIL)," suggesting they do not view any platforms as effective for political discourse. The low percentages for WhatsApp and Instagram (both at 4.0%) indicate limited recognition of these platforms for this purpose among the participants.

Table 10: Preferred Platform Features for Political Discourse

	Frequency	Percent
Larger audience reach	29	25.2
Politically active communities	26	22.6
Ease of use	26	22.6
Better engagement tools	20	17.4
Better privacy control	7	6.1
Nil	7	6.1
Total	115	100.0

The results indicate that the most preferred feature for political discourse platforms is larger audience reach, cited by 25.2% of respondents. Politically active communities and ease of use are also significant, each at 22.6%. Better engagement tools were favoured by 17.4%, while better privacy control and the option "Nil" each received 6.1%. This suggests that users prioritize reach and community engagement when selecting platforms for political discourse.

Table 11: Type of Political Activism Most Involved in

	Frequency	Percent
Online campaigns	36	37.5
Community organizing	16	16.7
Voter registration	14	14.6
Protests/rallies	11	11.5
Advocacy through petitions	8	8.3
Nil	11	11.5
Total	**96**	**100.0**

The data reveals that the most common type of political activism among respondents is online campaigns, with 37.5% indicating involvement in this area. Community organizing follows at 16.7%, while voter registration (14.6%) and protests/rallies (11.5%) show moderate levels of engagement. Advocacy through petitions (8.3%) represents a smaller segment, and 11.5% reported no involvement in any form of activism.

Table 12: Digital Tools Used for Activism After the Ban

	Frequency	Percent
Hashtag Campaigns	32	35.2
Social media challenges	25	27.5
Creating/sharing political content	23	25.3
Livestreaming event	3	3.3
Organizing virtual protests	4	4.4
Crowdfunding for political cause	4	4.4
Total	**91**	**100.0**

The data indicates that the most commonly used digital tool for activism after the ban is hashtag campaigns, utilized by 35.2% of respondents. This is followed by social media challenges at 27.5% and creating/sharing political content at 25.3%. Livestreaming events (3.3%), organizing virtual protests (4.4%), and crowdfunding for political causes (4.4%) were less frequently reported.

Table 13: Communication Methods for Mobilization

	Frequency	Percent
Social media groups	53	45.7
Private messaging apps	42	36.2
Voice or video call	8	6.9
Encrypted communication tools	4	3.4
Email newsletter	9	7.8
Total	**116**	**100.0**

The results show that social media groups are the most popular communication method for mobilization, utilized by 45.7% of respondents. This is closely followed by private messaging apps, with 36.2% of participants using these platforms. Voice or video calls (6.9%), email newsletters (7.8%), and encrypted communication tools (3.4%) are less commonly used. The

total frequency exceeds the number of respondents, indicating that participants selected multiple communication methods for mobilization.

Table 14: Tactics to Overcome Censorship

	Frequency	Percent
Using VPNs or privacy tools	50	46.3
Switching to alternative platforms	34	31.5
Organizing through anonymous accounts	9	8.3
Using coded language or symbolism	10	9.3
Decentralized communication channels	5	4.6
Total	108	100.0

The data indicates that the most common tactic used to overcome censorship is utilizing VPNs or privacy tools, as reported by 46.3% of respondents. This is followed by switching to alternative platforms (31.5%). Other tactics, such as organizing through anonymous accounts (8.3%) and using coded language or symbolism (9.3%), show lower usage rates. Decentralized communication channels are the least common tactic, utilized by only 4.6%.

Table 15: Awareness of Youth-led Political movements post-ban

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	10	13.3
No	65	86.7
Total	75	100.0

The results indicate that a significant majority of respondents (86.7%) are not aware of youth-led political movements following the ban. In contrast, only 13.3% reported awareness of such movements. This suggests a lack of visibility or engagement with youth-led initiatives among the respondents in the post-ban context.

Table 16: Name of Movements Post-Ban on Twitter

	Frequency	Percent
End bad governance	4	5.4
Obidients	3	4.0
Arewa	1	1.3
EndSars	3	4.0
None	64	85.3
Total	75	100.0

The data reveals that the majority of respondents (85.3%) reported no awareness of any movements on Twitter following the ban. Among those who did name movements, "End Bad Governance" was mentioned by 5.4%, while "Obidients" and "EndSARS" each received 4.0%. The "Arewa" movement was the least mentioned, with only 1.3% of respondents identifying

it. This suggests a limited recognition of active movements on Twitter in the aftermath of the ban.

Table 17: Effectiveness of Youth-led movements

	Frequency	Percent
Very effective	15	20.0
Somewhat effective	24	32.0
Neutral	32	42.7
Somewhat ineffective	3	4.0
Very ineffective	1	1.3
Total	75	100.0

The findings show that perceptions of the effectiveness of youth-led movements vary among respondents. A plurality (42.7%) rated these movements as neutral in effectiveness. Meanwhile, 32.0% considered them somewhat effective, and 20.0% rated them as very effective. In contrast, only a small percentage viewed the movements as somewhat ineffective (4.0%) or very ineffective (1.3%). This indicates a general uncertainty about the impact of youth-led movements, with a significant number of respondents taking a neutral stance.

Table 18: Significant Achievement of Movement Post-ban

	Frequency	Percent
Raising awareness	47	30.7
Influencing public opinion	35	22.9
Attracting media attention	31	20.3
Mobilizing large numbers of people	25	16.3
Affecting policy change	15	9.8
Total	153	100.0

The data indicates that the most significant achievement of movements post-ban is raising awareness, cited by 30.7% of respondents. This is followed by influencing public opinion (22.9%) and attracting media attention (20.3%). Mobilizing large numbers of people (16.3%) and affecting policy change (9.8%) were also recognized, but to a lesser extent. The total frequency exceeds the number of respondents, suggesting that multiple achievements were allowed for selection, indicating a diverse range of impacts attributed to the movements.

Table 19: Youth Engagement with Movements Compared to Pre-ban

	Frequency	Percent
More active	24	32.0
Much more active	24	32.0
About the same	21	28.0
Less active	5	6.7
Much less active	1	1.3
Total	75	100.0

The results reveal that a significant portion of respondents feel that youth engagement with movements has increased compared to pre-ban levels, with 32.0% indicating they are "more active" and another 32.0% feeling "much more active." A smaller segment (28.0%) reported engagement as "about the same." Only 6.7% indicated being "less active," while a mere 1.3% reported being "much less active." This suggests a strong trend toward increased youth engagement with political movements in the post-ban context.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

RQ1: To what extent has the degree of political engagement among youths changed following the ban?

The findings from the study indicate a shift in the degree of political engagement among youths following the ban on Twitter. Many respondents reported a decrease in their political activism and discussions, which aligns with the observations made by the Pew Research Center, indicating that bans on Twitter lead to a significant decline in political participation among young people. The data suggest that while some youths attempted to migrate to alternative platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok, these platforms often lack the same level of utility for political organisation and discourse that Twitter provided. Supporting this perspective, Akerele-Popoola, Azeez, and Adeniyi (2022) found that Twitter played a critical role in organising the #EndSARS protests, illustrating its importance as a platform for social mobilisation and political expression. The study highlighted that while Twitter facilitated strong connections and engagement during protests, the erosion of these connections over time suggests that the ban may have disrupted ongoing political discourse and activism among youths. The transition to other platforms, as noted in the findings, may not effectively replicate the same engagement levels experienced on Twitter, thus supporting the notion that the ban has adversely affected youth political engagement.

Countering the potential for alternative platforms to replace Twitter's role fully, Akindutire and Aribisala (2023) emphasise Twitter's unique influence on political beliefs and its role in enhancing access to political information. Their research indicates that Twitter significantly shapes the political landscape, providing a forum for discussions that are crucial for informed civic engagement. The findings suggest that without access to Twitter, youths may find themselves at a disadvantage in terms of information and engagement opportunities, further diminishing their political activity.

RQ2: Which platforms have emerged as the most popular for political engagement and conversations among youths' post-ban?

The findings indicate a significant shift in the platforms used for political engagement and conversations among youths following the Twitter ban. The data suggest that while Twitter was once the primary venue for political activism, youths have sought alternative platforms to continue their engagement. Notably, platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok have gained traction among this demographic as substitutes for Twitter. This trend is supported by the Pew Research Center's findings, which highlight that after the ban on Twitter, many young people turned to other social media sites to maintain their political activity. However, the research also notes that these platforms often fall short in terms of political organizing and in-depth discussions compared to what Twitter offered. For instance, although Facebook allows for group discussions, it lacks the immediacy and breadth of real-time engagement characteristic of Twitter.

Akindutire and Aribisala (2023) point out that despite the shift to other platforms, Twitter remains a critical source of information for political discourse in Nigeria. This suggests that while youths may be using alternative platforms, the effectiveness of these platforms in fostering robust political conversations may be limited. Finally, the findings reveal that while alternative platforms have emerged as popular venues for political engagement post-ban, they do not fully replicate the unique benefits that Twitter provided. This limitation could hinder the depth of political discourse among youths, suggesting that while adaptation is occurring, the overall efficacy of these new platforms in facilitating meaningful political conversations may still be lacking. As such, continued exploration of how these platforms are being utilised for political engagement remains essential.

RQ3: What new approaches and techniques are young people employing for political activism in the absence of Twitter?

The findings indicate that in the absence of Twitter, young people are adopting a variety of innovative approaches and techniques for political activism. The data reveals an increase in the use of alternative social media platforms, private messaging apps, and various digital tools to mobilise and engage in political discourse. One prominent approach observed is the reliance on social media groups and private messaging applications for organising and communicating about political issues. According to the findings, social media groups emerged as the most utilised method for mobilisation, with a significant number of youths using these platforms to coordinate activism and share information. This aligns with the research by the Pew Research Centre, which suggests that in the wake of Twitter's ban, young activists have sought refuge in platforms like WhatsApp and Facebook, where they can create more intimate and focused discussions about political matters.

In addition to these platforms, the data highlights the adoption of creative digital tools for activism. Young people have engaged in hashtag campaigns, social media challenges, and the creation and sharing of political content as new forms of activism. These methods allow them to maintain visibility and voice in political conversations, albeit in a less structured manner than Twitter provided. The increasing popularity of such techniques reflects a need to adapt to the restrictions imposed by the ban, as suggested by Akindutire and Aribisala (2023), who found that while Twitter had previously been instrumental in shaping political discourse, other forms of engagement are now being explored. The findings indicate a notable shift toward using encrypted communication tools for mobilisation, suggesting a heightened awareness of privacy and security concerns among young activists. This shift reflects a strategic adaptation to the challenges posed by the ban, allowing youths to engage in political conversations while minimising risks associated with censorship and surveillance. However, while these new approaches signify resilience and adaptability among young activists, they also raise questions about the effectiveness and reach of these techniques compared to Twitter. Akerele-Popoola, Azeez, and Adeniyi (2022) emphasised that Twitter's real-time engagement capabilities were crucial for mobilising large groups during significant movements like #EndSARS. The challenge now lies in whether these alternative methods can replicate that level of mobilisation and impact.

RQ4: How effective and far-reaching are youth-led political movements after the ban?

The results show the complexity of the reach and efficacy of political movements organised by young people after Twitter was banned. The overall impact seems to be mixed, even though many respondents believe these movements are effective, especially when it comes to

influencing public opinion and increasing awareness. This is consistent with the findings of Akindutire and Aribisala (2023), who observed that despite the difficulties presented by the prohibition, young people nevertheless use social media to disseminate political information. The frequency of neutral effectiveness among participants, however, indicates that while some progress has been made, it is still challenging to turn awareness into real political change. According to the statistics, young involvement has increased when compared to pre-ban eras; nevertheless, dependence on Instagram and WhatsApp may limit the wider public awareness that Twitter once offered. The results paint a complex picture of the reach and efficacy of political movements organised by young people after Twitter was banned. The overall impact seems to be mixed, despite the fact that many respondents believe these movements are effective, especially when it comes to influencing public opinion and increasing awareness.

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Conclusion

While censorship may inadvertently foster creativity and resilience in activists by pushing them to develop new strategies, the implications of this kind of ban are profound. It suppresses dissent, limits free expression (this, in particular, is against some freedom of speech or rights of an individual in some countries), and undermines democratic participation, particularly for marginalised groups heavily reliant on digital spaces.

Twitter serves as a platform for news, political discourse, and engagement, especially among younger users who may not consume traditional media like newspapers. The Twitter ban reduces access to political information, which is crucial for youth engagement. The restriction also reduces opportunities for youths to engage in discussions on national and global issues. Overall, the ban disempowers the generation of youths in political participation and activism.

There are some potential limitations this digital censorship will definitely encounter. Migration to alternative social platform can be another space to voice outs political opinions but it may dilute the collective voice of activists and reduce their visibility compared to the former platform.

VPN (Virtual Private Network) is a technology that creates a secure connection between your device and server which masks your IP address and allows you to access restricted or geo-blocked content, bypassing censorship and blocked websites. Adaptations like VPNs and encrypted communication could attract heightened scrutiny from authorities, increasing the risks for activists.

Recommendations

1. To sustain youths' political engagement despite challenges posed by Twitter restriction, society must go back to the traditional route: an offline community-building effort where youths can engage in discussions like town hall meetings and face-to-face

interactions with grassroots leaders like the Local Government Chairman to mitigate the effects of the banned online space.

2. It further recommended the national level that policymakers should tailor future regulations to preserve democratic and public opinion participations that policy makers tailor future regulations on the national level to preserve democratic and public opinion participation.

Future Directions

Future research should focus on the long-term impact of the ban on Nigerian youth activism, investigating how activists adapt their strategies both online and offline. Key areas include studying their migration to alternative platforms, the integration of online and offline activism, and the implications on political behaviour such as voting and protests.

In addition, the role of emerging technologies like block-chain and VPNs in bypassing censorship should be explored. Comparative studies with similar cases globally can offer insights into effective responses, while policy analysis can assess the implications of new regulations on digital rights and activism.

Limitations of the Study

This research encountered a few limitations in the course of the study. These limitations include; access to limited literature to guide the study from different perspective both locally and globally. Another limitation is the study being conducted over a limited time frame which restricted the ability to capture variations in data that could occur over a longer period.

This study also posed a limitation in terms of methodology as well because the study's sample size of participants is relatively small, which may limit the generalisability of the findings to a broader population. A larger sample would provide more robust data and allow for more reliable statistical analyses.

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