

Influence of social media on political corruption in Nigeria, 2015-2019

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ABSTRACT

This paper examined the influence of social media on political corruption in Nigeria. The study was anchored on two theories: Democratic Participant and Social Capital. Survey research design was adopted with questionnaires as instruments for data collection. The study found that Facebook, Twitter (X), YouTube, Instagram, Tik Tok, Blogs, SMS campaigns, Snapchat, WhatsApp, Goggle+, and LinkedIn were the most common platforms used. The platforms exposed corrupt practices in government circles and called for actions for a change; they helped in the formation of social media groups, value re-orientation and moral teaching; advocated for adequate funding of anti-graft agencies, demanded that public officers should be more transparent in their duties and organized crusades that demanded for the withdrawal of the immunity of political office holders. The study concluded that social media platforms have been effectively used in the fight against political corruption in Nigeria. However, there were concerns about the possibility of abusing the potential of social media use in the fight against political corruption in Nigeria and thus a recommendation was made for the government and other policy makers to checkmate them as given their anonymous nature, they may have some credibility issues that could hinder their effective use in the anti-corruption fight and could as well pose the risk of malicious slander of one's character.

KEY WORDS:

Political-Corruption,
Social Media, Social
Networking, Evaluation

Introduction

Corruption retards growth in all sectors of a nation's life and has caused untold hardships to many citizens of nations across the globe. Corruption is therefore an issue of great concern, most especially, in developing nations. Medani (2014) submits that corruption is often considered a chronic disease that affects many developing countries. It can hinder economic growth, exacerbate poverty, and undermine the overall development of these nations. Corroborating the submission of Medanni, Bamgboye (2018), says some of the negative impacts of corruption in Nigeria are: the distortion of developmental policies, and the hampering of economic policies on the economy, as economic resources that would have stimulated the economy are sabotaged or undermined due to corruption

In Benue State, during the administration of Governor Samuel Ortom, he could not pay salaries of civil workers for many months, pensioners were dying in droves but over 300 exotic cars were carted away from a hideout after his tenure. Government institutions went dysfunctional just because attention was not given

to them but the ex-state governor went about buying landed assets in the state and building private companies. Shortly after he handed over, EFCC came after him as Itsibor (2023) revealed:

Ortom served as the Governor of Benue State, Nigeria, from 2015 to 2023. During his tenure, he faced various allegations of corruption and mismanagement of public funds. These allegations included financial impropriety, embezzlement, and money laundering. Ortom's administration was accused of diverting state funds meant for developmental projects into personal accounts and using them for personal gains. Additionally, there were claims of inflated contracts and fraudulent practices within the government procurement process.

In a report of [Ejekwonyilo](#) (2024), in Kogi State, the former State Governor, Yahaya Bello, was arrested by the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission and evidences against him showed that he pre-paid the school fees of his children and relations to the amount of USD 720,000. He had also been charged with money laundering to the tune of 80 Billion Naira.

The above examples are a tip of an iceberg on the issue of political corruption our leaders engage in which has contributed to ruining the future of many a Nigerian. The research paper, Evaluating the impact of the social media in combating political corruption in Nigeria, 2015-2019, is an attempt to proffer a solution to the endemic corruption that for a long time has served as a cog in the wheel of progress in Nigeria.

The study is aimed at proffering solutions on how to fight political corruption in Nigeria so that leaders will provide good governance and thus improve the welfare of Nigerians as it is 'generally agreed globally that the primary purpose of governance is the security and welfare of the people' (Okenwa, 2021). Against this background the researcher assessed how the social media could be used as a tool to fight against political corruption. The research is significant in various ways – it will increase scholarly material in respect of fighting corruption in the country, it will be useful to students making research in the area of fighting political corruption, and social media influencers, politicians, the academia and anti-graft agencies will find it useful.

The research took a critical look at the causes of political corruption, the negative effects of political corruption and the intervention of the liberation technology – social media- in the fight against the ill. The study was guided by three general goals, the survey design method was used which hinged on two theoretical frameworks – the democratic participant theory as well as the social capital theory.

Statement of the Problem

The present global system is confronted with a multiplicity of challenges which threaten the survival of many nation states. One of these challenges is corruption. The viral nature of this phenomenon is such that combating it is consistently proving difficult. The menace is present in varying degrees in different countries.

Many countries in the developing world are scourged by it differently. Fraudulent activities, economic mismanagement, lack of accountability and transparency have been the bane of the economy. The phenomenon consequently brings about economic backwardness, political instability, social insecurity, infrastructural decay, lack of accountability, negation of the principle of the rule of law and inefficiency in the public sector which Nigeria is not an exception (Boluwaji, 2008).

The rich human and natural resources the country has, instead of being used for the development of infrastructure and the provision of essential services for the wellbeing of the citizens, are used for the benefit of an inconsequential few who appropriate those resources for themselves through corrupt practices. This scenario has made the nation a laughing stock in the comity of nations.

Despite the fact that successive governments have initiated various anti-corruption agencies like Economic and Financial Crime Commission and Independent Corrupt Practices Commission to fight it, corruption has continued to pose more threat to the development of the nation. Unfortunately, even the press which is supposed to serve as the watchdog of the society is influenced by the ownership factor – that is, trying to protect the interest of the owner. Against this backdrop, government owned media institutions do not make a critique of the government as they should do. Similarly, the private media organizations do not perform the watchdog role of the media effectively in fighting corruption because of conflict of interest or the owners been party to the government.

However, the emergence of liberation technology such as the internet, mobile phones and social media has facilitated communication and mobilization on social issues, and the strengthening of an emergent civil society's effort in the campaign against the developmental hindrance called corruption. The social media have provided a platform for the citizenry to interact in the public sphere to demand for accountability. It provides higher levels of participation for citizens who had not been very active and vocal with a voice to demand for accountability. The social media afford the citizens the opportunity to fight corruption by pointing out loopholes in the public sector and reporting corrupt practices by posting them on social network sites. This study sought to assess the use of social media in the fight against political corruption by providing answers to the following questions: What are the common social media platforms used by Nigerians in the campaign against political corruption in Nigeria? What is the extent to which the social media platforms are used to campaign against political corruption in Nigeria? How effective is the use of social media in the fight against political corruption?

Objectives of the Study

The study, generally, assessed the use of social media in the campaign against political corruption in Nigeria. Specifically, it sought to:

- i. Identify the common social media platforms used by Nigerians in the campaign against political corruption in Nigeria.
- ii. Examine the extent to which the social media platforms are used to

- campaign against political corruption in Nigeria.
- iii. Examine the effectiveness of social media in the fight against political corruption.

Literature Review

Concept of Corruption and Political Corruption

Corruption has become a global virus threatening the stability of the international political economy. Its unwholesome effect on human development has precipitated organized efforts to curb its expansion. Therefore, it becomes imperative to define it for proper comprehension.

Scholars and human rights activists have defined corruption in different ways. Lawal (2007:p3) opines that corruption can be described as 'the conscious attempt or deliberate diversion of resources from the satisfaction of the general interest to that of self (personal) interest'. According to him, corruption enables the beneficiaries to get what they do not deserve from public funds. Thus, in a society where corruption thrives, the entire public space becomes unjust, tyrannical, and discriminatory. Parochial and selfish interests determine decisions and actions of leaders and the led. Where corruption is not checked it exacerbates poverty, as funds meant for developmental projects line the pockets of individuals who are likely to channel such stolen funds into non-productive use.

The World Bank (2014) defines corruption as the “abuse of public office for private gain” while Transparency International (TI) (2011) views corruption as “the abuse of entrusted power for private gain.” Both definitions highlight individual behavior, but there are also differences in their understandings of corruption. The World Bank emphasizes the public sector's role while TI's definition, though broadened to include the private sector, assumes power is typically entrusted to leaders, seemingly excluding those who grab it by force, as is typically the case in authoritarian settings (Williams & Le Billon, 2017).

According to Olushola (2014), the word corruption simply means deviation from what is right, ideal or correct. Similarly, corruption is a misuse of public power for private benefit or efforts to secure wealth or power through illegal means at the public expense (Dike, 2005). According to Salisu (2000), the simplest definition of corruption is that it is the misapplication of public resources to private ends.

Corruption commonly reduces public trust in governments. It diverts funds from goods and services supposed to benefit citizens, and it weakens the functioning of public institutions and the rule of law (Chêne, 2014). It is also likely to hinder economic growth (Aidt, 2011) by discouraging investment (Mauro, 1995), creating economic inefficiencies and contributing to income inequality (Gupta, Davoodi & Alonso-Terme, 2002)

Mancini et al., (2017) posit that the most acceptable definition of corruption is that of the Transparency International (2009) which defines it as the abuse of entrusted power for private gain. For Mancini et al, despite some variations (Gounev& Ruggiero 2012), this seems to be the definition that is

accepted by most corruption scholars and most international organizations. It is this definition that has been adopted for use in this work. The abuse of entrusted power could be manifested in all spheres of human life – be it political, religious, economic, educational or social. However, the abuse of entrusted power in the political arena has the greatest potential of destroying a country. Political corruption is a dimension of corruption that has been very destructive to the growth of any society. This is due to the fact that politics is concerned with the welfare of a country in all ramifications. It is therefore pertinent to define what political corruption is.

Political Corruption

Heywood (2013) defines it in a broader sense to mean the activity through which people make, preserve and amend the general rules under which they live. Politics has been understood differently by different thinkers and within different traditions. Politics has been viewed as the art of government or as 'what concerns the state'; as the conduct and management of public affairs; as the resolution of conflict through debate and compromise; and as the production, distribution and use of resources in the course of social existence (Modebadze, 2010)

According to Yagbayaju (2005, p.72) political corruption is 'any act perpetrated by the political class, civilian or military, or a highly placed public official aimed at changing the moral or lawful course of events, especially when the perpetrator uses such a position of authority for the purpose of personal or group interest (such as acquiring wealth, status or power) at the expense of public interest'.

The colonial roots of political corruption in Nigeria

The Europeans who came and colonized Nigeria did so for their selfish interest – the exploitation of the natural resources of the country of which they used for the development of their nation. It is thus observed that a major cause of political corruption in Nigeria has a base in the colonization of Nigeria by Britain. The colonisers could not give account to the citizens of the resources they explored, thus left a legacy of not accounting for one's actions, which has been inherited by leaders of the country. Unfortunately, instead of developing the nation with the resources as the Europeans did, Nigerians leaders have been exploiting the national resources for their private interests.

Boenner (2019) has observed that analysis of political corruption often neglects to explore the role played by imperialism. Boenner considers the causal connection between colonialism and political corruption, before offering an ethics-based form of governance as a potential solution. By applying a self-developed criteria catalogue he identifies spaces, which in all stages of history, show lack of accountability and transparency. In these spaces, members of political and economic elites interact without being held accountable.

Boenner takes a closer examination of the history of corrupt countries, focusing on the colonial past of politically corrupt nations. Rather than examining nations in isolation, he believes that historical context should be

examined, focusing on imperialism, including analysis of the colonising country and the colonised country. It is observed that the work can be regarded as a special case of international relations, as it deals with the interplay between foreign companies, the Nigerian state, and its colonial predecessors

Despite being independent for many decades, the current state of Nigeria cannot be separated from its history as part of the British Empire. Boenner argues that Nigeria's present political corruption is rooted in the permissive legislation for joint-stock companies during the mid-19th century Manchester Liberalism. These corporations, settling in the Niger Delta in the 1880s, represent the forerunners of the Nigerian state, laying the foundation of political corruption. Political corruption is the product of a continuous interplay between the state of Nigeria, its colonial precursors, and foreign companies operating on Nigerian territory.

Corruption and a colonial past

The research reveals that of the 50 most politically corrupt countries, 25 are within the African continent. Except for a few countries, many were formerly part of European empires, leading Boenner to question whether there may be a causal link. Could the corruption that exists in Nigeria today have been exported there by the British?.

Much political research focuses on Nigeria as it exists from independence in 1960 until today and ignores the historical context that contributes to the functioning of present-day institutions. Boenner examines more than 120 years of Nigerian history to discover whether the seeds of corruption were sown during the colonial years. He identifies a gap in research regarding the perception of political corruption as a cross-cultural and cross-continental historical phenomenon that is not dealt with systematically. Therefore, the analysis does not begin in the present, nor in Africa, but in Europe before imperialist expansion. In essence, Boenner attempts to find a causal link between imperialism and corruption. Nigeria's significant governance deficits were initiated in the former colonial motherland of Great Britain.

Social Media

Social media are web-based applications that provide corporate and individual users with the opportunity of creating, editing, and sharing content with the intention of getting feedback, comments, and contributions from consumers on issues of concern to the user as well as issues of public interest.

Characteristics of the social media

Hausman (2012) has made a tabulation of the characteristics of the social media

Table 1: Characteristics of social media.

S/N	Characteristics of Social Media
1.	Two-way conversation
2.	Open system
3.	Transparent
4.	One-on-one marketing
5.	About you
6.	Brand and user-generated content
7.	Authentic content
8.	Free platform
9.	Metric: engagement
10.	Actors: Users/Influencers
11.	Community decision-making
12.	Unstructured communication
13.	Real time creation
14.	Bottom-up strategy
15.	Informal language
16.	Active involvement

Source: Angela Hausman's 16 differences between social media and traditional media, 2012.

Social networking

Building on the background that social media use web-based and mobile technology to turn communication into an interactive dialogue; social networking is a social structure with people who are joined by a common interest. Examined from another point of view, social media provide the platform for people to create and share ideas; on the other hand, social networking refers to groups that share information that is of interest to them; there are groups that share information about health, others about agriculture, music, photography, gardening, travelling, politics, good governance etc., and all of these create networks through which they can build community that participate in the topic of interest.

Table 2: Types of Social Networks and their Uses

S/N	Type	Use
1	Social networks also called relationship networks.	They help people and organizations to connect online to share ideas and information. They started as relatively simple services, for example, Twitter was a place to answer the question 'what are you doing?' and Facebook was where you might check the relationship status of a friend or classmate. Now they could be used for sharing news to sharing vacation photos to finding new job. Examples of social networks or relationships networks are Facebook, twitter and LinkedIn.

- 2 **Media sharing networks.** They are used to find and share photos, video, live video and other media online. Examples are Instagram, Snapchat and YouTube. The lines between media sharing networks and social networks are blurring these days as social relationships networks like Facebook and Twitter add live video, augmented reality and other multi-media services to their platforms. However, what distinguishes media sharing networks is that the sharing of media is their defining and primary purpose. While the majority of posts on relationship networks contain text, posts on networks like Instagram and Snapchat start with an image or video, to which users may decide to add content like captions, mentions of other users, or filters. Similarly, on sites such as YouTube and Vimeo, video is the primary mode of communication.

- 3 **Discussion Forums.** They are used to find, discuss and share news, information, and opinions. Examples of such forums are Reddit, Quora and Digg. Discussion forums are one of the oldest types of social media. The wide reach and massive user numbers on forums such as Reddit, Quora and Digg shows that the public's thirst for collective knowledge and wisdom is unquenchable. They are sites where people go to find out what everyone is talking about and weigh in on it, and users are not shy about expressing their opinions. While social relationships networks are increasingly implementing measures to reduce anonymity and create a safe space online, discussion forums generally allow users to remain anonymous.

- 4 **Bookmarking and Content Curation Networks.** People use them to discover, save, share, and discuss new and trending content and media. Examples are Pinterest and Flipboard. They are a hotbed of creativity and inspiration for people seeking information and ideas. Content curation networks like Flipboard are similar to bookmarking networks, but with a focus on finding and sharing articles and other text content.

- 5 **Consumer review networks.** They are used to find, review and share information about brands, products, and services, as well as restaurants, travel destinations, and more. Examples are Yelp, Zomato, TripAdvisor.

- 6 **Blogging and publishing networks.** People use these networks to publish, discover, and comment on content online. Examples of the networks are WordPress, Tumblr, and Medium.

- 7 **Social Shopping Networks** People use social shopping networks to spot brands, share great finds and to make purchases. Examples are Polyvore, Etsy and Fancy. Etsy allows small businesses and individual crafters to sell their products without an existing brick-and-mortar location. Polyvore aggregate products from different retailers in a single online marketplace.

- 8 **Interest-based networks.** The networks are used by people to connect with others around a shared interest or hobby. Examples are Goodreads, Houzz and Last.fm. They take a more targeted approach than the big social networks do by focusing solely on a single subject, such as books, music, or home design

		While there are groups and forums on other networks that are devoted to these interests, focusing solely on a single area of interest allows these networks to deliver an experience tailor-made for the wants and needs of the people and communities who share that interest. For example, on Houzz, home designers can browse the work of other designers; create a collection of their own work, and connect with people looking for their services. Last.fm is for musicians and music lovers while Goodreads is for authors and avid readers.
9	Sharing economy networks, also called collaborative economy networks.	People use them to advertise, find, share, buy, sell and trade products and services between peers. Examples of these networks include Airbnb, Uber and Task rabbit.
10	Anonymous social networks.	People use them to gossip, vent, snoop and sometimes bully. Examples are whisper, Ask.fm and After School. While major social networks are making increasing efforts to hold users accountable for their social activity, these sites go the other way and allow users to post content anonymously.

Source: The table was created by the researcher from available information gathered from Google

Use of the social media in the fight against political corruption

In democracies, mass media is an important instrument for monitoring the behavior of public officials, limiting corruption, and reducing political rents of incumbents (Strömberg, 2004; Besley & Prat, 2006; Ferraz & Finnan, 2008; Snyder & Strömberg, 2010). In Mexico, since 2002, several federal and local regulations have been approved to give citizens some rights when requiring public information. Along with regulations, public administrations have developed electronic portals allowing tracking of government expenses (Bertot, Jaeger & Grimes, 2010). Andersen (2009) report that social networks are more effective than institutional portals because they spread information faster; people consult them constantly, not just by computer but through mobile devices.

Garcia-Murillo (2010) stressed that with the use of social media in expressing opinions, citizens can examine evidence about public budget and expenditures in a manner that would be just unimaginable in the past. By now, people and journalists can collect and reproduce news and data about misconduct, nepotism, bribery and corruption acts in general. Thanks to social networks, free flow of information has served to treat these felonies and, in many cases, the government employer has paid for his fault. Under these premises, Internet has a direct influence in discouraging corruption especially when some acts are exposed on Facebook or YouTube. If we think about an illegal act uncovered in the middle of a political campaign, or in a video depicting bribery posted on YouTube and shared by thousands on Facebook, those scenarios scare politicians and force them to be more cautious about their behavior (Garcia-Murillo, 2010).

DiRienzo, Das, Cort & Burbridge, (2007) report a strong relation between ICT and public accountability, so the greater availability of public information, the lesser cases involving corruption. This assumption gets stronger if we consider the increasing levels of connectivity, mainly the mobile one around the

world as more people have access to social networks and others digital. Arpit (2012) confirm that in Mexico, it is becoming more common to share on Facebook or Twitter (X) information about particular cases of corruption, many of them about nepotism. Social networks give an alternative voice to citizens.

According to Arpit (2012) virtual social networks like Facebook or Twitter (X) have become useful tools not only for expanding sociability but also for promoting commerce, political participation and government accountability. These sites replace traditional forms of government and citizen communication.

García (2013) stressed that the emerging new media has to a great extent become an alternative source of independent information for citizens and agent of political change in nondemocratic regimes. Gavazza, A., Nardotto, M., & Valletti, T (2019) found out that citizens use social media for sharing information about wrongdoings by politicians or public officials and this helps in reducing corruption. This information can change the way both people and public officials behave by encouraging more transparency and improving accountability. Gentzkow, Matthew & Jesse (2006) report that the low entry barrier that allows anyone to easily create content on Twitter (X) or Facebook makes the citizen involved in efforts to report and condemn corruption in many countries.

Ways social media are used in the fight against political corruption

The social media easily presents itself as a formidable platform for fighting against political corruption chiefly due to its democratization impact on the society. Ogbondah (1994) observes that corruption thrives most where there is absence of democracy, where the people lack a voice and the press is gagged. Thus, corruption has remained a prominent feature of dictatorial governments all over the world. Hence, the relevance of the social media in the Nigeria's quest to end political corruption becomes clear. Discussing this rare democratizing impact of the social media.

The following are various ways through which social media tools could be deployed to help the fight against political corruption in Nigeria.

Affording the citizenry opportunity to preempt corruption by pointing out loopholes in the system

Social media tools afford citizens the opportunity to act proactively against corruption by serving as a platform through which citizens can publicly identify loopholes that exist in the system. Corruption does not occur in a vacuum; it arises from certain conditions that are inherent in the system. Akasike (2009) points out that corruption occurs more when the system has certain "institutional loopholes" that makes corruption always probable in the country. The loopholes include: Delay in the judicial system; weaknesses in the crime fighting institutions such as the police; absence of press freedom and weak culture of checks and balances in government

Given their capacity for integrating all members of the society in the process of public discourse, social media tools stand out as formidable platforms on which the citizenry can point out and deliberate on these loopholes, thereby proactively engaging corruption in the country (Uzochukwu, Ekwugha & Ukwueze, 2014).

Affording the citizenry opportunity to scrutinise the activities of leaders

Social media, much more than the traditional media, offer the citizenry the opportunity to freely scrutinise the activities of their leaders. Access to the traditional media is so much restricted and their use so much censored that such freedom of expression may hardly be obtained from them. Contrarily, the social media is a unique platform that affords a voice to all; rich and poor, powerful and weak, low and mighty, etc, for everyone to air their views with little or no restriction. Nwahunnya, (1996, p.19) argues that “In Nigeria, particular people engage in corrupt practices simply because the citizenry take it for granted that no one can hold public office without corruptly abusing it directly or indirectly”.

It Serve as a platform for the citizenry to report corruption with little fear of victimization

One of the key factors that sustains corruption in Nigeria is poor culture of reporting corrupt activities. Many Nigerians fail to report corrupt acts simply for two reasons, according to Okachie (2012); firstly, the fear that they may end up becoming the victim themselves given the belief that corrupt security agencies could be bribed by suspects to turn the table against a person that brought up the report. Secondly, because of the belief that it would amount to sheer waste of time as the suspects would ultimately go free either as a result of their influence or inefficiency in the judicial system.

However, with the social media, the above two concerns of the citizenry, who otherwise could have reported corrupt practices, would be substantially addressed. Social media tools provide cover for the citizens against official victimisation whenever they have any corrupt act to report. Secondly, the fear that such reports could be swept under the carpet could be addressed by citizens themselves by using social media platforms.

It Serve as a platform for the citizenry to report corrupt practices by posting them on social network sites

Several cases of extortion by Nigerian law enforcement agents who were not aware that they were being captured on video had gone viral on social networking sites; this had afforded the populace both within Nigeria and outside the country the opportunity to view the brazen act of corruption by the people who are supposed to maintain the law of the country (Famakin-Johnson, 2022). The ordinary citizens now generate content for the media instead of consuming content from the media. The implication is that the citizens who are linked to the social networking sites where these pictures and videos are posted get first-hand information of the corrupt practices perpetuated by the people who should maintain law and order in the society. This could act as a deterrent for other people in public offices who may want to perpetuate acts of corruption in their respective positions.

The effectiveness of social media in the fight against political corruption

The critical role social media play in Nigeria has led to awareness, engagement and reaching out to the global community on issues that have destroyed Nigeria and project the country to the world in a bad light (Ugochukwu, 2021). From HASHTAG like #EndSARS and various campaigns

against corruption and other ills going on in Nigeria, social media has brought the attention of government and the whole world to issues of political corruption in Nigeria.

Social media platforms in Nigeria, like Facebook and Whatsapp, have given institutions, groups and associations the opportunity of owning a webpage and members of the various platforms utilize these platforms to share stories, report events and expose the political corruption that has damaged the Nigerian society. This indicates that social media effects change in the Nigerian society by beaming its searchlight on institutions and government authorities (Uzochukwu, Ekwugha & Ukwueze, 2014). The social media easily presents itself as a formidable platform for fighting against political corruption in Nigeria. This is chiefly due to its democratisation impact on the society. Hence, the relevance of the social media in the Nigeria's quest to end political corruption becomes clear (Ugochukwu, 2021).

The effectiveness of social media in supporting anti-corruption movement is largely dependent on the effectiveness of information distribution to the society. The dissemination of information on political corruption over social media platforms will increase citizens' awareness on the true extent of corruption in the country. Upon realizing the true damages from corrupt acts (e.g., substandard public facilities) and how they may have affected their wellbeing, citizens will be motivated to voice their concerns and to condemn the offenders (Salad & Hassan, 2019).

Methodology

The study adopted a survey research design. Its choice is hinged on the ground that it is one in which a group of people or items are studied by collecting and analyzing data from a few people or items considered to be representative of the entire group (Sayer, 1992). The population for the study was 185,356 undergraduates from 7 universities in North Central Nigeria (data was obtained from the Registrars' offices of the universities). The sample size for this study was 400 respondents. The sample size was statistically determined using Yamane (1967) formula for sample size determination. Because of the variation in the population of the students from the 7 selected universities in North Central Nigeria, even distribution of the sample size would result to an unfair representation; hence proportionate stratified random sampling technique was used in selecting the sample from the seven selected universities.

The researcher used a structured questionnaire for data collection. The questionnaire was divided into sections A and B. Section 'A' contained the bio-data of the respondents while section 'B' contained the general questions aimed at providing relevant information for data analysis. The use of structured questionnaire is justified because it is a useful option to consider when conducting a survey. They can be cheaper than personal interviewing and quicker if the sample is large and widely dispersed (Mathers, Fox & Hunn, 2009). The validity of the instruments was achieved by subjecting them to scrutiny by experts in the Department of Mass Communication, Benue State University, Makurdi. The essence was to ensure clarity and appropriateness of each item,

adequacy and structure of the instrument. The reliability of the instruments was ascertained using Cronbach's Alpha and the overall coefficients as 0.83. The study made use of simple percentages presented in tables to analyse and present results. These methods were adopted because they present data in a less complex and easily understandable manner.

Results

400 questionnaires were distributed for the study and 381 were retrieved.

Research Question One

What are the common social media platforms used by Nigerians in the campaign against political corruption in Nigeria?

Table 1: Social media site used in the fight against political corruption

Options	No of Respondents	Percentage
Facebook	53	13.9
Twitter	40	10.5
YouTube	60	15.7
Blog	33	8.7
Instagram	31	7.8
Tik Tok	21	5.5
Option a – f	144	37.8
Total	381	100

The table presents information on the common social media platforms used by Nigerians in the campaign against political corruption in Nigeria. It is obvious from the result of the study that all social media platforms are used by Nigerians to campaign against political corruption. This is because the result shows that majority of the respondents used all the social media sites in the fight against political corruption in Nigeria.

Research Question Two

What is the extent to which the social media platforms are used to campaign against political corruption in Nigeria?

Table 2: Extent to which social media sites have been used in the fight against political corruption

Options	No of Respondents	Percentage
Very high extent	13	3.4
High extent	182	47.8
Rarely	41	10.8
Low extent	136	35.7
Very low extent	9	2.4
Total	381	100

The table presents data on the extent social media sites have been used in the fight against corruption. Consequently, 13(3.4%) respondents opted for very high extent, 182(47.8%) respondents went for high extent, 41(10.8%) respondents went for rarely, 136(35.7%) respondents rated low extent and very low extent got 9(2.4%) of respondents' response. Most respondents representing 47.8% respondents opted for high extent as proof that social media has been

extensively used in the fight against political corruption in Nigeria. Closely, related to that is 35.7% of respondents who believed that social media has been used in the fight against political corruption in an unserious manner. This means even though majority believed that social media has been used seriously to fight against political corruption, a reasonable number of students still believed that it has not been fully utilized in the fight against political corruption in Nigeria.

Research Question Three

How effective are the social media platforms in the fight against political corruption in Nigeria?

Table 3: Effectiveness of social media in the fight against political corruption

Options	No of Respondents	Percentage
Very effective	121	31.8
Effective	193	50.7
Less effective	60	15.7
Not effective	7	1.8
Total	381	100

The table presents information on the level of effectiveness in the use of social media in the fight against corruption. As a result, 121(31.8%) respondents rated the use of social media in the fight against political corruption to be very effective, 193(50.7%) respondents rated the use of social media in the fight against political corruption to be effective, 60(15.7%) respondents rated the use of social media in the fight against political corruption to be less effective and 7(1.8%) respondents rated the use of social media in the fight against political corruption to be not effective. Majority of the respondents representing 82.5% either rated the use of social media in the fight against political corruption to be very effective or effective. This means that respondents believed social media has been effectively used in the fight against corruption in Nigeria.

Discussion of Findings

The broad objective of this study was to assess the use of social media in the campaign against political corruption in Nigeria. Going by the presentation and analysis of data, the study found that Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, Tik Tok, Blogs, SMS campaigns, Snapchat, WhatsApp, Goggle+, LinkedIn were the most common platforms used by Nigerians to campaign against corruption in Nigeria.

The implication of the above data to this study is that Nigerians can readily use the various social media platforms to fight political corruption. Larger access of the people to social media would mean a larger audience to organise a public rally or protest against the perpetrators of corruption in the society. Through Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, and so on, individual citizens could table some of these issues for all to air their views on them. This way, the attention of all is brought to them and the government would be possibly brought under pressure to remedy them.

The study also found that social media were used in sharing video clips

and write up about political corruption. Other ways social media platforms were used in the fight against corruption in Nigeria were through the formation of social media group, value re-orientation and moral teaching, advocating for adequate funding of anti-graft agencies, demanding that public officers should be more transparent in their duties and a crusade for the withdrawal of immunity of political office holders. The above findings resonate with the position held by Olasoji (2018). He (Olasoji) states that with the rapid development of social media (Facebook, Whatsapp, Twitter, Goggle+, LinkedIn etc.) networks across all countries of the world today, many people are now aware of the current situation of their countries, united on a huge platform to discuss contemporary social issues bothering their minds in all spheres of life, share information which may pose threats to them and reporting cases of corruption. The above finding also echoes the tenet of democratic-participant media theory. According to Folarin (2002), the thrust of democratic-participant media theory lies in its insistence that the existing bureaucracy as well as commercial and professional hegemony in the media systems be broken down. This is to guarantee easier media access for all potential users and consumers. The above finding is in line with the conclusion drawn by Elbahnasawy and Revier (2012). According to them, there are a number of ways in which social media and Facebook penetration can help reduce the cost of fighting corruption. First, a larger number of social media users would mean a larger audience for the victims of extortive corruption that wish to share a corruption related incident. Second, social media provides cheap and speedy means of sharing information and reaching a larger audience to organize public protests against the corrupt activities of government officials and politicians.

The study found that social media platforms have been effectively used in the fight against political corruption in Nigeria. Some of the examples that made the participants believe that social media platforms have been effective in the fight against corruption in Nigeria was because those platforms helped in exposing corrupt acts in the system, assisted educating and enlightening the citizenry and leaders on matters of corruption and public accountability, suggested ways of preventing crime in the society as well as publicising and praising heroic acts of public accountability by members of the society. The implication of the above finding to this study is that the nature of social media makes it an ideal platform in the fight against corruption. Similarly, Meyer (2014) found that apart from general communications, the social media generates higher traffic than any other form of communication. In addition, Andersen (2009) report that social networks are more effective than institutional portals because they spread information faster; and people consult them constantly.

Conclusion

Corruption has caused so much harm to the development of societies, most especially in Africa. The research traced the causes of corruption in Nigeria and its negative consequences. It tried to proffer a solution to the fight against political corruption, which affects all sectors of the economy and it was

discovered that the social media has the potential of fighting political corruption because of its capacity to mobilise the populace to stage protests against political corruption. Its anonymous nature also encourages users to use it as they do not have the fear of intimidation from perpetrators of corruption. However, it was also acknowledged that due to its anonymous nature, some social media users may use it wrongly to defame some members of the community so it was suggested that its usage should be monitored by the government and relevant agencies.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the study makes the following recommendations;

- i. All should join hands in fighting political corruption as the social media has empowered all users, and the fight against political corruption will be strengthened when more citizens are involved.
- ii. Although social media platforms have been found to be effective in the fight against corruption in Nigeria, there is the need for the government and policy makers to checkmate their use as given their anonymous nature, they may have some credibility issues that could hinder their effective use in the anti-corruption fight and could as well pose the risk of malicious slander of one's character. Our courts should address all litigations brought against the abusers of the social media.
- iii. The government should work on improving the performances of social networks and internet facilities to encourage subscribers to continue using the social media as check and balances against the arbitrary use of power of some public officials and political office holders.

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