Social Media as a Mobilization Tool of the Obidient Movement in Nigeria

Bejide, Oluwatoyin Abiola & Fatukasi Olasunkami

Department of Mass Communication, Rufus Giwa Polytechnic, Owo, Ondo State, Nigeria
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Abstract: This study analyzed selected social media platforms as mobilization tools of the Obidient Movement in Nigeria. It aimed to investigate how social media has bridged the communication gap left by conventional media in political engagement. The content analysis method was employed, with a coding sheet used for data collection. Data were analyzed using simple percentage calculations. Findings revealed that Twitter and Facebook served as platforms for disseminating information about the Obidient Movement, although the coverage received relatively low prominence. Nevertheless, the items analyzed were largely favorable and presented within a political framing. The study recommends that the Nigerian electorate be encouraged to leverage the growing opportunities offered by social media in monitoring and reporting electoral processes and political developments. This approach to information management, if effectively integrated into the political system, has the potential to significantly reduce electoral fraud and other forms of malpractice in Nigeria.

Keywords: Mobilization, Movement, Social Media, Political Communication, Obidient.

INTRODUCTION

No political campaign is entirely devoid of propaganda, which is often characterized by the deliberate and strategic manipulation of untruths and the spread of hateful rhetoric, including name-calling and character defamation (Malaolu, 2012). While many Nigerian politicians may not fully understand the workings of social media, they increasingly recognize its indispensability. In the lead-up to the 2023 national elections, aspiring parliamentarians, governors, and presidential candidates turned to social media entrepreneurs to disseminate campaign messages and discredit opponents via platforms such as Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, and Twitter.

Yau (2020, p. 17) noted a dramatic surge in WhatsApp usage since 2015, attributing this trend to the rising availability of affordable Chinese smartphones and the platform's data efficiency. As the social media audience expanded, so did the influence of political content creators. These digital influencers emerged as central figures in campaign strategies, with some commanding Twitter and Facebook followings exceeding 80,000 and managing over 600 WhatsApp groups.

Despite the heavy use of propaganda and smear campaigns during the 2019 elections, President Muhammadu Buhari secured a second term. However, Yau (2020) contends that online campaigns targeting Buhari significantly diminished his support in urban regions.

This highlights social media's growing relevance as a critical platform for shaping political participation and engagement in Nigeria. The 2023 general election brought renewed attention to this trend, particularly with the rise of Peter Obi, the Labour Party's presidential candidate. As the leading online figure in Nigeria's political landscape, Obi's social media campaign was both extensive and strategic. This study seeks to examine how his popularity was shaped and amplified through social media. Specifically, it investigates whether platforms like Twitter and Facebook served as effective tools for marketing his political ambition.

Statement of the Problem

In recent years, the rise of new media has significantly transformed the communication strategies employed in Nigerian political campaigns. The 2011 general

elections marked a turning point, featuring increased use of platforms such as Facebook for political advertising and voter engagement (Hamilton & Daramola, 2011; Omenugha, Ukwueze, & Malizu, 2011, p. 2).

Globally, the 2008 U.S. presidential election, which brought Barack Obama to power, is widely regarded as a landmark event in digital political communication. Obama's campaign harnessed new media platforms—particularly Facebook and Twitter—under slogans like *"Change is Possible,"* and was driven by grassroots online supporters often referred to as the "Friends of Obama." Scholars have dubbed his victory the "Twitter Election," "a triumph of new media in politics," and even "the election decided by Facebook" (Alex-Budak, 2008).

In Nigeria, President Goodluck Jonathan followed a similar trajectory in 2011, becoming the first Nigerian presidential candidate to embrace Facebook as a central campaign tool. His use of social media marked a significant evolution in Nigeria's electoral process and digital political communication (Ezebuenyi & Ejezieh, 2012).

Building on this digital transformation, the present study focuses on Twitter and Facebook as key platforms for promoting the Obidient Movement. It seeks to assess how these platforms were used to mobilize support for Peter Obi and to evaluate the extent to which social media served as a viable tool for political marketing during the 2023 general elections.

Objectives of the Study

1. To find out the frequency of Obidient reports on Twitter and Facebook.

2. To examine the level of prominence given to the Obidient campaign on Twitter and Facebook.

3. To ascertain the dominant slant of Obidient reports on Twitter and Facebook.

4. To determine the frame of reportage of the Obidient Movement on Twitter and Facebook.

Research Questions

1. What is the frequency of reports on Twitter and Facebook?

2. What level of prominence is given to the Obidient Movement on Twitter and Facebook?

3. What is the dominant slant of Obidient reports on Twitter and Facebook?

4. What are the frames used in reporting the Obidient Movement on Twitter and Facebook?

Literature Review

In recent years, there has been a growing recognition and utilization of social media by Nigerian political leaders and opinion shapers. This marks a shift from earlier election cycles—such as in 2011—when traditional media (radio, television, newspapers) dominated the political communication landscape. Although traditional media still holds influence, the emergence of *new media* platforms is steadily eroding its centrality in political campaigns.

The 2008 presidential election campaign of Barack Obama in the United States marked a turning point in global political marketing, demonstrating the power of social networking sites like Facebook and Twitter. These platforms allowed for direct voter engagement, mobilization, and message dissemination, contrasting sharply with the one-way communication approach of conventional media. As Arhewe (2011) observed, social media not only connects politicians with voters but also helps promote transparency in political manifestoes and campaign promises.

Mobilization and Political Marketing via Social Media

Social media serves a dual role: it mobilizes political support and functions as a low-cost, high-reach platform for engaging diverse electorates. Through platforms like Facebook and Twitter, politicians can directly communicate with voters, explain their agendas, and frame opponents unfavorably. Arhewe (2011) notes that new media enables effective campaign integration—ranging from rally coordination to consistent message delivery.

Yau (2020) emphasizes that platforms such as WhatsApp have grown rapidly in political significance due to low data requirements and increased smartphone penetration. Many political influencers in Nigeria now control massive followings and WhatsApp groups, effectively becoming campaign drivers.

Political Participation and Citizen Journalism

The participatory nature of social media has also fueled the growth of *citizen journalism*, wherein individuals document, report, and share political developments in real-time. Eledan (2011) highlights that platforms like YouTube, blogs, Facebook, and Twitter have become tools not just for politicians, but also for ordinary citizens, observers, and electoral bodies like INEC.

The line between media producers and consumers has become increasingly blurred. Flew (2008) refers to this shift as a

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transformation from "media" to "wedia"—a participatory form of media that enables widespread interaction and feedback from all users.

The Nigerian Context: Presidential Campaigns and Online Engagement

In Nigeria, former President Goodluck Jonathan set a precedent by launching an interactive Facebook page during the 2011 election season. His digital outreach allowed him to bypass bureaucratic communication barriers and engage directly with the public. Similarly, other political figures—such as former Lagos State Governor Babatunde Fashola and presidential candidate Nuhu Ribadu—leveraged social media to varying degrees of success.

With Nigeria's population exceeding 150 million and over 60 million active young voters, coupled with more than 43 million internet users and nearly 80 million mobile connections (Eledan, 2011), political campaigns have turned increasingly to new media for speed, reach, cost-effectiveness, and impact.

Limitations and Abuses of Social Media in Campaigns

While the merits of social media in political campaigns are evident, its use has not been without flaws. The 2011 elections revealed significant challenges including misinformation, hate speech, and unethical campaign strategies. Candidates often ignored voter questions on social platforms, and the freedom granted by digital media led to abuses such as unsolicited SMS messages, deceptive content, and disinformation.

For instance, text messages misattributing endorsements or targeting voters across geographic boundaries illustrated the potential for manipulation. One such message read:

"Dear Lagos Voter, 6.1 million Lagosians will vote to end Tinubu's oppression. Vote Labour Party for Senate, House of Reps, and House of Assembly. Labour supports Fashola for Governor." (April 6, 2011, 03:11 AM).

These practices reveal how digital tools, while powerful, also pose ethical and regulatory challenges during election seasons.

Social Media and Political Communication in Nigeria

The increasing integration of social media into Nigeria's political communication landscape marks a sharp departure from previous election cycles—especially 2011—where traditional media dominated. While conventional platforms such as radio, newspapers, and TV remain relevant, the emergence of social media has introduced a more participatory, real-time, and cost-effective form of political communication. The success of Barack Obama's 2008 campaign highlighted the transformational potential of new media, shifting political marketing strategies from one-way messaging to interactive engagement (Arhewe, 2011).

Social Media as a Tool for Political Mobilization and Messaging

Social media has become central to modern electoral campaigns, particularly in Nigeria's 2015 and 2023 general elections. Politicians leverage platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and WhatsApp to connect with voters, push manifestoes, and discredit opposition. With millions of followers and hundreds of WhatsApp groups under their control, social media influencers now shape public discourse (Yau, 2020). However, political campaigns have also resorted to unethical practices—spreading hate speech and misleading messages. For instance, anonymous and partisan text messages during the 2011 elections targeted key figures such as Governors Peter Obi and Babatunde Fashola, with claims that bordered on character assassination.

Citizen Journalism and Participatory Politics

The rise of citizen journalism in Nigeria has further disrupted the conventional media landscape. Platforms like Twitter, Facebook, blogs, and YouTube have enabled everyday users to monitor, report, and analyze political developments. Flew (2008) describes this phenomenon as a shift from "media" to "wedia," where user-generated content reshapes political narratives. INEC, election observers, and citizens now depend on social media for real-time updates, fraud detection, and mobilization.

Case Studies: Jonathan, Fashola, and the 2011 Digital Campaigns

President Goodluck Jonathan's 2011 campaign marked a turning point in Nigeria's digital political history. He launched a Facebook page and interactive website to engage Nigerians directly, bypassing bureaucratic communication. Similarly, Governor Raji Fashola utilized Facebook to highlight governance achievements and solicit citizen feedback. These early adopters paved the way for broader social media use among Nigerian politicians (Ezebuenyi & Ejezieh, 2012).

Ethical Challenges and Digital Manipulation

Despite its potential, social media has also facilitated propaganda, misinformation, and digital manipulation. Incidents of hate messaging, voter deception, and politically motivated text spam were rampant during elections. Examples include messages falsely claiming endorsements or spreading fear—highlighting the need for regulation and ethical campaign practices (Lawal, 2010).

The Power of Social Media in Political Movements: Global Insights

Globally, platforms like Facebook played key roles in the Arab Spring and movements such as Egypt's April 6th Youth Movement. Despite lacking formal leadership, this Facebook group mobilized over 80,000 users and catalyzed offline action. Alexandra Dunn's research (Saharan Reporters, 2011) demonstrated that small clusters of users could guide mass participation, even in the absence of hierarchy.

Social Media and Democratic Consolidation in Nigeria

Social media's role in democratic consolidation is becoming increasingly significant in Nigeria. It fosters citizen engagement, transparency, and mass political participation. Researchers argue that democratic consolidation requires citizens to adopt democratic values, and social media helps reinforce these through open dialogue and accountability (Bratton & Gyimah-Boadi, 2005; Mattes & Bratton, 2007). Tools like Facebook and Twitter allow for political expression, feedback, and mass mobilization, particularly among Nigeria's large youth population.

Civic Tech and Grassroots Engagement: The "Enough is Enough" Campaign

One of the most prominent examples of civic engagement through social media in Nigeria is the "Enough is Enough" (EiE) movement. Founded in 2010, EiE mobilized young voters using platforms like Twitter and Facebook. Their 2011 "RSVP" campaign (Register, Select, Vote, Protect) used digital tools to educate, monitor, and secure elections. The Social Media Tracking Center (SMTC) was also created to oversee online election conversations and detect irregularities (Asuni & Farris, 2011).

Social Media as a Watchdog and Catalyst for Democratic Consolidation

Prompt reporting of election-related incidents via camera-enabled phones and platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube has solidified social media's role as a vital tool in consolidating democracy in Nigeria. During the 2011 general elections, social media was instrumental in exposing electoral irregularities. A notable example involved a National Youth Service Corps member, serving as a polling officer, who reported being coerced into registering underage voters. The officer sent photographic evidence to the Social Media Tracking Centre (SMTC). A related Facebook post read:

"Na wao! This CPC supporters would have killed me yesterday, no see threat oooo. Even after forcing under-aged voters on me they wanted me to give them the remaining ballot paper to

thumb print. Thank God for the police and am happy I could stand for God and my nation…" (Kolawole, 2011, p.10).

Although the lack of prosecution of offenders exposed online remains a concern, the impact of social media as a **citizen-led accountability tool** is undeniable. Its real-time, expository nature empowers citizens to monitor elections, report fraud, and pressure authorities, thus enhancing transparency in the democratic process.

Globally, social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter have played similar roles, including during the Arab Spring, which led to significant political change in Tunisia and Egypt. As Chikero (2014) puts it:

"What a corrupt nation needs is just a powerful platform where citizens can uninterruptedly communicate their common experiences, share ideas on the way out…" (p.4).

Social Media, Information Flow, and Political Stability

Another key strength of social media lies in its ability to defuse electoral tension and reduce post-election violence through the **prompt release of election results** and incident updates. This swift and widespread access to information fosters transparency and can help prevent misinformation that incites unrest (Bettina, 2009). Platforms like Facebook allow mass messaging and sharing of multimedia content, while Twitter delivers succinct real-time updates, and YouTube hosts campaign visuals—all enabling more **engaged and informed electorates** (Omenugha, Ukwueze & Malizu, 2011).

The participatory nature of these platforms encourages active citizen involvement in the political discourse. Odoemelam and Chibuwe (2012) note that this inclusion promotes **public sphere journalism**, wherein voters can openly debate, assess candidates, and contribute to governance transparency. Through this lens, social media serves as both a debate arena and a campaign tool.

Mobilization, Sensitization, and Political Engagement

Social media is also indispensable in voter sensitization and political mobilization. The challenge of voter apathy witnessed in previous elections can be mitigated by leveraging these platforms to disseminate targeted political messages. Political actors and government agencies can directly engage citizens via their mobile devices to encourage voter turnout. According to Abubakar (2011), social media constitutes a new form of **political capital** that stimulates political dialogue and action among the populace.

Moreover, Kweon and Kim (2010) argue that social media enables personal orientation, anonymity, and community

building—features that enhance its utility for political engagement. The platforms' open, connected, and multimedia-friendly environment makes them highly attractive, especially to **young voters**. Social media not only facilitates message consumption but also enables users to become message creators, thereby deepening democratic participation.

Challenges in the Use of Social Media as a Political Platform in Nigeria

Despite the numerous advantages social media offers in fostering political participation, democratic engagement, and good governance in Nigeria, its use as a political tool is not without significant challenges. One of the major issues is the **dissemination of unverified information**, hate speech, and inflammatory rumours that threaten democratic consolidation. As Ekwe (2011, cited in Ajayi & Adesote, 2015) observes, the increasing reliance on social media platforms has introduced greater complexities in privacy, regulation, and monitoring.

A prominent concern is the **viral spread of scandalous or manipulated content**. For instance, explicit videos or digitally altered images can severely damage political reputations, sometimes irreversibly. The **anonymity** social media affords makes it difficult to identify and prosecute offenders, rendering it a vulnerable platform for fraud, piracy, and intellectual property violations.

Moreover, the **digital manipulation of content** blurs the lines between truth and fiction. Photos, videos, and even quotes can be distorted to serve malicious political purposes. This raises serious concerns about credibility, especially in a politically polarized environment.

Social media also contributes to **information and social network overload**, potentially harming users' mental well-being and work-life balance. Its addictive nature can lead to reduced productivity and an unhealthy dependency on virtual validation.

Kidafa, Odoemelam, and Elechi (2011) note that regulating traditional media was already a challenge due to issues such as obscenity and privacy rights. However, the **emergence of social media has exponentially amplified these regulatory difficulties**. Governments now face the dilemma of imposing necessary checks without infringing on fundamental rights like freedom of expression—a challenge that becomes even more complex in fragile democracies.

Furthermore, while much emphasis is placed on the positive applications of ICTs, it is equally vital to recognize their **misuse to undermine democratic values**. Social media can be exploited for cyberbullying, "digital monstering," and spreading violent or criminal content (locally referred to as "419").

Another structural challenge is the **digital divide**. Despite Nigeria's growing internet presence, **access to social media remains largely urban and elitist**. Osuala (as cited in Adibe & Odoemelam, 2011) highlights that Africa, with 13% of the world's population, has only 2% of global telephone lines and 1% of internet connectivity. This stark imbalance means that many Nigerians—especially those in rural or underdeveloped regions—are excluded from digital political engagement.

In response, the Nigerian government has initiated several digital governance strategies. Through the Ministry of Communication Technology, projects like the **Government Service Portal (GSP)** and the **Government Contact Centre (GCC)** were established to promote e-governance and ICT-driven civic engagement (Aginam, 2014). These initiatives aim to:

1. Create a single point of access to federal government services.

2. Improve public service delivery through mobile and digital engagement tools such as Facebook, Twitter, blogs, and wikis.

3. Enhance efficiency in public administration.

4. Increase productivity by integrating various government service platforms.

5. Enable more responsive governance through six GCCs located across Nigeria's geopolitical zones.

As of 2014, several government processes particularly in ministries like Education, Health, Agriculture, and Industry have been automated. Online registration and payments via the Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC) have also improved service accessibility (Aginam, 2014). Furthermore, top government officials, including the President, now maintain social media accounts to directly engage with citizens.

These concerted efforts have begun to bear fruit. Notably, Nigeria improved its UN e-Government ranking from **162 in 2012 to 141 in 2014** out of 193 countries, reflecting modest but measurable progress in digital governance (Aginam, 2014).

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Technological Determinism Theory and Social Judgment Theory.

Technological Determinism Theory

This study is anchored on the **Technological Determinism Theory**, originally propounded by **Marshall McLuhan** in 1964. McLuhan, a renowned Canadian communication theorist, predicted that the rapid development of new media technologies would significantly alter

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communication patterns and inevitably lead to broad **social, cultural, economic, and political changes**. He famously described this evolving interconnectedness as the transformation of the world into a **"global village."**

At the core of technological determinism is the idea that **technology is the principal driver of societal transformation**. McLuhan argued that the development and diffusion of new communication technologies do not simply aid human interaction but actively **shape how individuals think**, **how society is structured**, and **what kind of culture emerges**. Thus, in the context of this study, the emergence of the **Internet and social media platforms** such as Twitter and Facebook has revolutionized the way political campaigns are organized, how electorates engage with politics, and how political participation is mobilized—especially among younger demographics.

According to Chandler (1995), **technological determinists** view communication technologies not as passive tools but as **active forces that mold the direction of society.** They assert that societal evolution—past, present, and future—is fundamentally driven by technological innovation. In this view, social media is not just a communication tool but a force capable of reshaping democratic processes, including election campaigns and political mobilization.

However, there exists a **counter-perspective within technological determinism**. Scholars such as **Baran (2004, p. 22)** argue that technology itself is **neutral**, and its impact is determined by **how individuals and societies choose to use it**. This view acknowledges that while machines and digital tools may influence historical, political, and cultural changes, these influences are not automatic or unidirectional. Instead, they are **mediated by human agency**, social context, and cultural interpretation. Thus, technological tools like social media only become politically potent when they are strategically adopted and utilized by people—such as political candidates, campaign teams, and online influencers.

This dual perspective leads to a crucial theoretical question: **Are societies at the mercy of technology, or do they shape technology's influence?** The former view suggests that cultural change is inevitable and beyond our control, whereas the latter asserts that humans can **consciously steer the use of digital tools** to shape desired cultural and political outcomes.

In the context of this study, which examines the use of **Twitter and Facebook in promoting the Obidient Movement and Peter Obi's political campaign**, the second perspective is more applicable. The study recognizes that **social media technologies alone do not create political influence or electoral success**. Rather, it is the strategic use of these platforms by political actors, supporters, and influencers that

determines their effectiveness in mobilization, framing, and message dissemination.

Therefore, this theoretical framework provides a suitable lens for analyzing how **technologically mediated communication** especially through social media **interacts with human agency** to shape contemporary political participation and campaign dynamics in Nigeria.

Social Judgment Theory

Social Judgment Theory (SJT), developed by **Muzafer Sherif and Carl Hovland**, provides a framework for understanding how individuals perceive and respond to persuasive messages based on their **pre-existing attitudes**. In the context of political communication, the theory suggests that people's reactions to campaign messages—whether through traditional media or social platforms—are largely influenced by **their existing beliefs, values, and expectations**.

According to **Iyengar and Prior (1999),** audience responses to political messaging are filtered through attitudinal predispositions. Thus, exposure to campaign content—whether positive or negative—is interpreted not in a vacuum, but through **a subjective lens** shaped by personal, social, and political identities. People are more likely to **accept and internalize messages** that align with their core beliefs ("latitude of acceptance"), and reject or misinterpret those that conflict with their views ("latitude of rejection"). Some messages may also fall into a "latitude of non-commitment," where the individual remains neutral or undecided.

Applying this to the Nigerian context, especially during the 2023 general elections, the **Obidient Movement** leveraged social media platforms particularly Twitter and Facebook to disseminate messages focused on themes such as **good governance, anti-corruption, youth empowerment, and national unity**. These messages resonated strongly with large segments of the Nigerian youth population, who are disillusioned with the status quo and yearning for transformative leadership. Because these themes **aligned with the existing frustrations and expectations** of many young voters, they were readily accepted and widely shared an outcome predicted by Social Judgment Theory.

Conversely, campaign messages from political opponents that **challenged these deeply held expectations** or reinforced negative perceptions about the political establishment were often **met with resistance, skepticism, or backlash**. This phenomenon reflects the theory's assertion that persuasive communication is most effective when it falls within the audience's **latitude of acceptance** and is carefully crafted to avoid triggering defensive reactions.

Social Judgment Theory also provides insight into the **differential use of social media** among Nigerian voters. Individuals who felt that the political messages circulating on social media aligned with their views were more likely to **actively engage—by liking, sharing, commenting, or creating related content**. On the other hand, users whose political attitudes were not reflected in the dominant narrative may have **withdrawn from active participation or responded critically.**

Therefore, the theory is particularly relevant in explaining both **the reception and impact** of social media-based political communication during the 2023 elections. It underscores the importance of aligning campaign messages with the **audience's attitudinal anchors**, and helps account for the **feedback patterns and levels of engagement** observed on platforms such as Facebook and Twitter during the peak of the Obidient campaign.

Research Design

Research design refers to the blueprint or plan used to conduct a study and solve an identified research problem. According to Obaze and Onosu (2009), research design is the structured framework employed to effectively address a research problem.

For this study, the **content analysis** method was employed. As defined by Obaze and Onosu (2009), content analysis is an objective, systematic, and quantitative analysis of the manifest content of communication. This design was considered most appropriate for the study because it enabled the researcher to analyze online content related to the Obidient Movement on social media platforms—specifically Twitter and Facebook.

Population of the Study

The population of this study comprised all video reports and posts related to the Obidient Movement on **Twitter and Facebook** between **April 1 and October 31, 2022**. Within this period, a total of **156 items** were identified **40 Facebook items** and **116 Twitter items**. These items were manually counted and selected based on their relevance and alignment with the research focus.

Sample Size and Sampling Procedure

Given the relatively manageable size of the population, the **census approach** was adopted. This means that

the **entire population** of 156 social media items was studied. The census method is suitable when the population is not excessively large and can be comprehensively examined, as is the case in this study.

Method of Data Collection

Data for this study were collected using **both primary and secondary sources.**

- **Secondary Data**: Secondary data were obtained through a review of existing literature—such as journals, newspapers, academic texts, and credible online sources. These materials provided background information, theoretical insights, and context for the study.

- **Primary Data**: Primary data were gathered through **a coding sheet**, designed specifically for this content analysis. Three trained coders participated in the data collection process. To ensure consistency and reliability in coding, intercoder reliability checks were conducted by comparing the results of the three coders. Discrepancies were discussed and resolved to maintain the objectivity of the analysis.

Techniques of Data Analysis and Presentation

Quantitative data obtained from the coding of social media content were analyzed using **descriptive statistics**, specifically:

- **Frequencies**
- **Percentages**

The results were presented in **tables** for ease of interpretation and understanding. The following formula was used to calculate the percentage:

$$\text{Percentage} = \frac{actual\ response}{total\ sample\ size} \times 100$$

This technique allowed for a straightforward and effective presentation of the content characteristics, such as frequency, prominence, slant, and framing of Obidient Movement-related content on Facebook and Twitter.

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

This chapter presents and analyzes the data collected in line with the research questions formulated in Chapter One.

Table 1: Frequency of Reports of the Obidient Movement on Social Media

Variable	Facebook	Twitter	Total (%)
News Reports	6 (15%)	65 (56%)	71 (46%)
Opinions	14 (35%)		
Others	20 (50%)	37 (32%)	57 (36%)
Total	**40 (100%)**	**116 (100%)**	**156 (100%)**

Interpretation:

Table 1 shows that **news reports** dominated the Obidient Movement's representation on social media, constituting **46%** of all posts analyzed. **Opinions** made up **18%,** while **other forms** of content (e.g., memes, videos without commentary, general announcements) accounted for **36%.**

Table 2: Prominence of the Obidient Movement on Select Social Media

Video Duration (Prominence Level)	Facebook	Twitter	Total (%)
High Prominence (Above 6 minutes)	12 (30%)	40 (34%)	52 (33%)
Medium Prominence (3–6 minutes)	4 (10%)	38 (33%)	42 (27%)
Low Prominence (Less than 3 minutes)	24 (60%)	38 (33%)	62 (40%)
Total	**40 (100%)**	**116 (100%)**	**156 (100%)**

Interpretation:

Most Obidient Movement-related videos were **short (less than 3 minutes)**, accounting for **40%** of the total. This suggests that although social media was actively used, the prominence level of video reports was **generally low** during the study period.

Table 3: Social Media Slant Toward the Obidient Movement

Slant Category	Facebook	Twitter	Total (%)
Favourable	35 (87.5%)	64 (55%)	99 (63%)
Neutral	5 (12.5%)	32 (28%)	37 (24%)
Unfavourable	0 (0%)	20 (17%)	20 (13%)
Total	**40 (100%)**	**116 (100%)**	**156 (100%)**

Interpretation:

The data indicate that the **majority of posts (63%) were favourable** toward the Obidient Movement. This reflects a generally positive sentiment within the sampled social media content.

Table 4: Frame of the Obidient Movement on Select Social Media

Frame Category	Facebook	Twitter	Total (%)
Human Interest	0	23 (19.8%)	23 (14.7%)
Economic Interest	0	2 (1.7%)	2 (1.3%)
Ethnic Interest	0	5 (4.3%)	5 (3.2%)
Conflict-Related	10 (25%)	2 (1.7%)	12 (7.7%)
Selfish Interest	0	6 (5.2%)	6 (3.8%)
Politicization	23 (57.5%)	41 (35.3%)	64 (41.0%)
Resource Capacity	1 (2.5%)	6 (5.2%)	7 (4.5%)
Misinformation	2 (5%)	22 (19.0%)	24 (15.4%)
Fake News	4 (10%)	6 (5.2%)	10 (6.4%)
Total	**40 (100%)**	**116 (100%)**	**156 (100%)**

Interpretation

The framing of the Obidient Movement was **largely political in nature**, with **41%** of posts highlighting political themes. Other notable frames included **human interest (14.7%), misinformation (15.4%),** and **conflict-related content (7.7%).** This shows that the social media portrayal of the movement was diverse, but mostly revolved around political narratives.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This chapter discusses the major findings from the data analysis in relation to the research questions posed at the beginning of the study.

1. Frequency of Reports on Twitter and Facebook

The analysis in Table 1 revealed that *news reports* dominated the nature of content shared about the Obidient Movement on social media. Of the total items studied, **46%** were categorized as news reports. This high proportion reflects an emphasis on formal information dissemination strategies aimed at educating and informing the public about the movement's agenda, activities, and perspectives. The use of news-format content suggests deliberate efforts by actors within the movement to lend credibility and journalistic framing to their social media communication.

2. Prominence of Obidient Movement on Twitter and Facebook

As Table 2 indicated, the **majority of video content** shared on both platforms were **less than three minutes in length**, accounting for **40%** of all videos. This suggests that despite a relatively high frequency of content, the prominence of the movement in terms of content depth and viewer engagement remained low. Short videos are often more likely

to be scrolled past quickly and may not offer enough context or persuasive detail to mobilize users meaningfully. This trend reflects a missed opportunity for greater political storytelling, issue framing, and emotional engagement, which are crucial elements in digital political communication.

3. Dominant Slant of Obidient Reports on Twitter and Facebook

As revealed in Table 3, **63% of the posts analyzed were favourable** to the Obidient Movement. This strong positive sentiment indicates that the movement succeeded in building an online support base, particularly on platforms like Twitter, which have been historically utilized for social and political mobilization in Nigeria. Positive coverage plays a significant role in shaping public perception and in reinforcing group identity among followers of the movement. The neutrality and relatively low unfavourability of the remaining posts further suggest that negative framing did not dominate the discourse during the time studied.

4. Frames of Obidient Movement Reports on Twitter and Facebook

From Table 4, it was observed that the **dominant frame** through which the Obidient Movement was presented was **politicization**, accounting for over **41%** of all analyzed posts. This confirms that the movement was widely perceived and represented as a political movement focused on gaining or influencing power structures. Other frames such as human interest (14.7%), misinformation (15.4%), and conflict-related content (7.7%) also featured but were significantly less prevalent. The framing strategy adopted played a crucial role in how the public interpreted and reacted to the Obidient Movement's messages, aspirations, and relevance within Nigeria's political landscape.

Synthesis of Findings

Based on the analysis of the data, it is evident that **new media platforms particularly Twitter and Facebook have become indispensable tools** for political mobilization, awareness creation, and information dissemination in Nigeria. The Obidient Movement leveraged these platforms effectively to foster participation, build support, and engage the public in political discourse.

The study reinforces the notion that **the social media environment in Nigeria is rapidly evolving**, with increasing potential to influence political consciousness and democratic engagement. As observed, **short-form content,** while accessible and shareable, may need to be complemented with more in-depth messaging to foster meaningful engagement.

Furthermore, although social media offered significant opportunities for grassroots mobilization and public enlightenment, **its impact is not immune to limitations**. The presence of **countervailing forces** such as misinformation, digital divides (urban-rural), and content manipulation underscores the complexity of the media ecosystem in Nigeria's political context.

In line with the views of Nwabueze and Ezebuenyi (2012), the study confirms that **new media have restructured Nigeria's socio-political environment**, creating avenues for a more robust, responsive, and participatory political process. The digital public sphere, as seen in the Obidient Movement's campaign, provides a **powerful space to converge without physical contact of citizens and political actors**, bridging the gap between leaders and the electorates.

However, **the transformative potential of these tools is not automatic or unidirectional**. The outcome depends largely on **how technology is used,** the **regulatory and political environment**, and the **digital literacy** of users. Thus, the second perspective of Technological Determinism Theory which emphasizes human agency in shaping technological outcomes is more applicable in explaining the findings of this study.

Conclusion

This study concludes that select social media platforms gave the Obidient Movement generally positive coverage. Most of the content analyzed during the time frame under review demonstrated a clear political slant, indicating that the Obidient Movement is fundamentally a political movement. Social media served as a pivotal tool in mobilizing support, disseminating campaign messages, and fostering real-time engagement with the electorate. The findings underscore the growing influence of digital platforms in shaping political narratives and participation in Nigeria.

Recommendations

Based on the research findings, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. **Regulation of Social Media Content:**
The Nigerian government should consider developing mechanisms to regulate the use of social media without stifling freedom of expression. This includes establishing frameworks for verifying content creators and monitoring politically sensitive information to reduce the spread of misinformation and hate speech.

2. **Promotion of Social Media for Political Campaigns**
Political stakeholders should embrace social media as a legitimate and effective tool for political engagement. Platforms that allow real-time interaction between candidates and the electorate should be encouraged to foster transparency, accountability, and voter education.

3. **Oversight of Telecom and Internet Service Providers**:

The Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC) should enforce stringent penalties on telecom and internet service providers found culpable of unethical practices such as facilitating anonymous communications for political manipulation or unauthorized distribution of private user data. Legal and regulatory measures must be introduced to protect citizens' privacy and ensure the integrity of digital political communication.

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