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Addressing Gerontocracy and Power Inequality through Hashtag Activism: A Social Network Analysis of #NotTooYoungToRun Movement in Nigeria

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Abstract

This study is designed to evaluate the role of social media in facilitating contemporary online social movements in Nigeria, with particular focus on the activities of #NTYTR protest movement on Twitter. The objectives of the study were: to determine the key influencers of the movements on Twitter, the core themes in their messages and the purposes for which they deployed Twitter during the protest. Application Programming Interface (API)-based method was deployed for collecting the data for the study. A total of 9,678 tweets were collected for the study, and analyzed using a Computer-Assisted Data Collection and Analysis tool known as NodeXL Pro. Findings from the study revealed that Yiaga Africa and a few top Nigerian government officials were the key influencers in the #NTYTR movement. It was also discovered that the hashtag #NotTooYoungToRun was the dominant theme in the messages of participants in the network. Findings from the study also indicated that participants in the #NotTooYounToRun movement deployed Twitter for seven (7) major purposes which included: for reporting the impacts of the movement's initiatives; to communicate details of events and programs; to mobilise support for the Not Too Young To Run Bill; to evaluate the impact of the movement's programs; to highlight the challenges facing young Nigerians aspiring for political offices; to mobilise support and campaign for youths who contested for elective positions in then 2019 and 2023 general elections; and to provide training, technical support and mentorship for youth candidates who won in the 2019 and 2023 elections**.** Based on these findings, it is recommended among other things that Nigerian government should put in place concrete measures in terms of policies and

action plans to permanently address the age-long culture of gerontocracy and other challenges hindering Nigerian youths from fulfilling their full potentials.

Keywords: Gerontocracy, Hashtag Activism, #NotTooYoungToRun, Social Network Analysis, Power Inequality

Introduction

Since 2011, when movements occupying public squares started in the Arab world and swiftly spread around the world, there has been a particularly strong wave of demonstrations, partly propelled by social media and microblogging networking sites like Facebook and Twitter (Altman, Demirhisar, Mati & Jacob, 2017).

While it is widely acknowledged that protest movements have historically relied heavily on the mass media to propagate their message, frame and amplify it, and broadcast their goals to their intended audiences (Gamson & Wolfsfeld, 1993), the current wave of global social movements in the era of globalization has transcended traditional reliance on media outlets to amplify their messages. Instead, these movements have established a significant online presence, leveraging social media platforms, microblogging sites like Twitter, and dedicated hashtags to mobilize global support for their causes.

This study was therefore designed to explore how Nigerian youth deployed Twitter in their attempt at addressing the age-long culture of gerontocracy and generational power imbalance via the #NotTooYoungTooRun campaign on Twitter.

Statement of the Problem

Since the return to democracy in Nigeria in 1999, after long years of military rule, Nigerian youths have suffered multi-dimensional neglect and continued to experience systemic exclusion from political participation in the affairs of their country. These problems are further compounded by the fact that these youths do not have access to traditional communicative spaces such as radio, television and newspaper to express their concerns and to seek redress about their prolonged marginalisation. This pent-up anger and lack of opportunity to vent it, may be partly responsible for the current wave of youth-led and internet-enabled protests springing up frequently within the Nigerian civic space (Watts, 2007).

The established political elite class, particularly those in control of the federal and state governments, had historically held majority of the communicative power in Nigeria prior to the widespread use of social media and the internet. They used state-owned media outlets to sway, manipulate, and occasionally stifle public opinion. In recent times however, the widespread use of social media and the internet has introduced Nigerian youths to international patterns for planning nonviolent protests. Motivated by the huge success of Arab springs and various Occupy movements in Europe and America, Nigerian youths seem to be leveraging the unrestricted access and communicative freedom provided by social media spaces such as Twitter to challenge the status-quo which had hitherto limited them and favoured

the older political class.

In support of this claim, Akor (2017) posited that the Arab Spring and Occupy Wall Street protests in the United States, which led to the overthrow of a few autocratic regimes in the Middle East, might have given Nigerian youths hope that they could also change policies in their own nation and encouraged them to use social media for mobilisation. The extent to which Nigerian youths have been able to do this still remains a subject of research inquiry. This study therefore investigated how Nigerian youths deployed Twitter in facilitating #NotTooYoungToRun online protest movement.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The overarching aim of this study was to evaluate how the organisers and participants in the #NotTooYoungToRun movement deployed hashtags to campaign for greater opportunity for youth participation in politics during the Not Too Young To Run Protests on Twitter. The study however sets out to achieve the following specific objectives:

1. To identify the major actors and key influencers of the #NotTooYoungToRun online protest movements on Twitter
2. To identify the core themes in the messages of #NotTooYoungToRun online protest movements on Twitter
3. To uncover the purposes for which the participants of #NotTooYoungToRun online protest movements utilized Twitter during the protests

LITERATURE REVIEW

Gerontocracy, Social Media and Youth Participation in Politics

Previous studies (Benedicto, 2008; Farthing, 2010; Henn, Weinstein, & Wring, 2002; Kovacheva, 2005; Pruitt, 2017; Valenzuela, 2013) have attempted to explain why young people are generally indifferent to politics. Recent research, however, suggests that this trend is changing as academics become more aware of how young people use social media to express their political views (Castells, 2015; Collins, 2015; Harris, 2008; Kelly, Campbell, Harrison & Hickey 2018). The prevalence of online petitions and boycotts are clear examples of this.

One of the main causes of Nigerian youths' seeming disconnection from and indifference to political engagement may be attributed to marginalisation. The concept of marginalization is pertinent to the discourse on gerontocracy and youth involvement in politics in Africa because, as Mengistu (2017) points out, one of the problems young people face in politics (in Africa) is that there are not many spaces for their voices to be heard, which limits their ability to influence their own destinies. He posits further that institutionalised issues including inadequate ability, low competence, and lack of finance have prevented young people from participating fully in the political system in Africa.

According to Causadias and Umana-Taylor (2018), marginalisation is a multidimensional framework of systemic power imbalance that has an impact on particular groups within society. The marginalised group(s) are kept in this imbalance by intentionally or unintentionally denying them access to political, economic, social, and even health resources, which puts them at risk of underdevelopment (Hall & Carlson, 2016).

More broadly, marginalisation always impacts youth and adolescence, women, and smaller ethnic communities. According to Sloam (2011), youth marginalisation might influence their political conduct by motivating them to take part in other political activities that are typical of a networked society. Also, Kamau (2017) asserts that there are evidences from research that people who feel left out of formal political structure find new ways to participate by using social media. This is further supported by the fact that the majority of young people with internet access have made social media use a habit (Edwards, 2015).

Murphy (2012) appears to corroborate this idea when she suggested that Arab teenagers were driven to use social media to construct their own forms of activism and protest because to their exclusion from existing politically relevant institutions. Increasing political involvement online through alternate means of information gathering is one of these new forms. This is significant since political behaviour, political awareness, and political knowledge are all interrelated (Anderson & GoodyearGrant, 2010; Hobolt, 2005).

In this context, using online resources to obtain information is contextually defined as online political involvement (Kenski & Stroud, 2006; Pontes, Henn, Griffiths, & Pontes, 2017; Vitak, Zube, Smock, Carl, Ellison & Lampe, 2011; Wojcieszak, 2009). Therefore, there are evidences to suggest that using the internet encourages political participation, especially among young people (Pontes, Henn, Griffiths, & Pontes, 2017). Keating and Melis (2017) note that social media gives marginalised people the voice and means to demand change.

Empirical Review

Emerging digital technologies have a significant influence on all areas of human effort and on all societal demographic groups, especially on young people in today's world. Social media has been compared to the new messiah, a means of rekindling aspirations for marginalised communities to resume political engagement, since studies are now demonstrating that social media may incite acts that will result in social transformation. In environments governed by the elite-oriented media business, where media access and the capacity to pay are positively connected, social media have been found to have worked well as liberation media (Akpan & Targema, 2022; Uji, 2015).

Alternative media platforms, like Twitter, are growing in this type of media environment and providing media access to the general public (Akpan & Targema, 2022). It has also been established that social media platforms are more than just instruments and means of communication. Rather, because of their widespread appeal, especially among young people, they are viewed as popular culture. Apart from serving as regular sources of pleasure, the youth also utilise these platforms as forums to voice opinions on societal issues that are relevant to them (Dauda, Abubakar & Lawan, 2017).

Numerous studies have demonstrated the substantial influence of utilising Facebook and Twitter for political activities. Additionally, it has been discovered that those who use social media but have no interest in politics are more likely to intentionally seek political content on the platform. In this manner, more political literacy may be attained, which may encourage political engagement. One factor that determines political involvement in the larger election context is the usage of social media for political objectives, especially when it comes to voting and mobilisation. Research has also demonstrated a direct link between the level of political

use of Facebook and the political engagement of college students, as the platform helps them develop their political intelligence, which in turn can lead to increased civic engagement (Okafor & Oko, 2020; Vitak, Zube, Smock, Carl, Ellison & Lampe, 2011).

The rate at which Nigerians are becoming citizen journalists has been found to be significantly influenced by the usage of social media to increase election effectiveness. By 2015, the mainstream news was gradually incorporating observations from citizen journalists as media organisations allowed their audience members to report on online platforms. The growing use of hashtags as a focal point for political lobbying and discussion was also one unique feature. It was reported that about fifty (50) hashtags were trending the day before the 2015 presidential election in Nigeria, with Nigerians discussing the chances and expected outcomes of their preferred candidate (Uji, 2015).

It has been suggested recently that Twitter is arguably the most effective social media channel for political participation. This is predicated on the observation that political discourse is often influenced by Twitter interactions (Smith et al., 2014; Weinhardt, 2021). Furthermore, Olson (2016) contends that conventional media outlets are influenced by Twitter trends as they occasionally centre their agendas on these concerns. Social media has the potential to "disrupt oppressive governments and repressive policies worldwide as people have used social media to bypass traditional media to organise in-person protests and rallies", despite the doubts of critics regarding its ability to have a meaningful impact on political engagement (Olson, 2016, p.777).

In summary, a lot of 'digital democracy' watchers have quite conservative views about the implications of this development. They do not think it will fundamentally alter democracy in a favourable or bad manner. They contend that even if these new ICTs (Information and Communication Technologies) are available to both political insiders and outsiders, the current political system and power dynamics are unlikely to change. According to research, those who participate in politics online were already 'political junkies' in real life (Johnson and Kaye 2000; Norris 2002).

However, van Aest and Walgrave (2004) contend that the use of ICTs has made political engagement easier as emerging technologies make political activity simpler, quicker, and more accessible. They also noted that ICTs greatly reduce the expenses and barriers associated with planning collective action. Also supporting this line of argument, Bimber (1998) assert that people beyond the purview of conventional political or public institutions will benefit most from the deployment of ICTs. He is of the opinion that these new, citizen-based organisations, which do not rely on official finance or backing, will gain comparatively more from the internet than, labour organisations or political parties.

Theoretical Framework

Logic of Connective Action Theory

Logic of Connective Action Theory is the theory applied in this study. According to Bennett and Segerberg (2012), the logic of connective action acknowledges social media as an organising platform where involved individuals are self-motivated to openly express opinions and others are free to share the same. Connective action is distinguished from collective action by its absence of formal or organised structure, which is seen as a crucial feature of traditional

protest movements (which were based on collective action). The individuals' own experiences also serve as a driving force behind these movements. In other words, individuals' vested interests drive the actions that are performed in connective action (Bennett & Segerberg, 2012).

Bennett and Segerberg (2012) provided an in-depth conceptualization of collective action, proposing that unstructured, leaderless groups that use online and offline channels to coordinate their activities define networked actions, pushing more formal groups like labour unions and political parties to the background. However, Bennett and Segerberg contend that technology-driven movements are not displacing traditional forms of activism. Digitally networked movements, on the other hand, are more customised, significantly larger, and capable of identifying the different political issues and players to lobby (Bennett & Segerberg, 2012; Trott, 2018). Bennett and Segerberg (2012) distinguished two main logics behind divisive politics and demonstrations in their research of social movements. Numerous studies have been based on these two groups.

The first is the conventional logic of collective action, which entails planned demonstrations by well-established activist groups, and the second is the highly decentralised digital logic of connective action. The second logic, according to Bennett and Segerberg (2012), "does not require strong organisational control or the symbolic 'we' factor that is evident in traditional collective action," whereas the first logic involves central organisations negotiating, brokering, and controlling movement aims. Ganesh and Stohl (2013, p. 430 & 756) offer a three-part taxonomy that identifies three main behavioural patterns seen in digitally enabled social movements, which are: "self-organizing, organizationally enabled, and organizationally brokered networks." If this taxonomy proposed by Gansh and Stohl (2013) is applied to this study, we can therefore infer, from evidence gathered in the course of the study, that the #NotTooYoungToRun movement is more of an organizationally enabled and brokered network, having been coordinated by YIAGA Africa.

When this theory (logic of connective action) is applied to this study, we can infer firstly, that most of the participants in the movement, comprise mainly of youths, most of whom have been directly affected by the two issues the movement set out to address – youth marginalisation and gerontocracy. Hence, their participation is largely driven by their personal experiences or the shared experiences of people close to them. Secondly, the #NTYTR movement can be said to have a partially formal and organised structure, having being coordinated by an identifiable organization known as YIAGA Africa. Thirdly, the #NTYTR movement fits perfectly into Bennet and Segerberg's hybrid model of organising protests as it effectively combined both online and physical activities.

Methodology

Research Design

This study adopted a Mixed-Method research design known as Concurrent Mixed-Methods Design. This research design combines quantitative and qualitative methods simultaneously, allowing for a more comprehensive understanding of the research problem. (Creswell, 2014; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010). The Concurrent Mixed Method Design was chosen for this study because the computer application deployed for data

collection and analysis (NodeXL Pro) has the capacity to collect analyse and visualize both quantitative and qualitative data simultaneously.

Study Population

A total of 9,678 tweets formed the population for this study. These tweets were all collected from two hashtags #NTYTR and #NotTooYoungToRun on Twitter. The tweets captured in the NTYTR network in this study were tweeted over a 3,392-day, 6-hour, 34-minute period from Thursday, 16 April 2015 at 5:32 PM Nigerian time to Tuesday, 30 July 2024 at 1:06 AM.

Sample size

All the 9,678 tweets collected from two hashtags #NTYTR and #NotTooYoungToRun on Twitter were included in the sample size for this study.

Sampling Technique

This study adopted the Census Sampling Technique. This method is also known complete enumeration. It is a sampling method in which every member of the population is included in the study. This sampling technique is generally believed to have high accuracy because it includes the entire population. Also, the possibility of sampling bias by the researcher is completely eliminated, since every member of the population is included (Lohr, 2010; Scheaffer & Mendenhall, 2012).

Method of Data Collection

This study made use of Application Programming Interface (API)-based method for collecting the data that provided the basis for answering the research questions proposed in this study. A third-party API, known as NodeXL Pro was deployed to mine (collect) data from Twitter and the tweets mined from Twitter were imported into the NodeXL software for analysis and visualization.

Method of Data Analysis

Both qualitative and quantitative data sets collected in this study were simultaneously analysed using a Computer-Assisted Data Analysis Software (CADAS) known an NodeXL Pro, designed by the Social Media Research Foundation, USA. After data were successfully imported from Twitter, the researcher ran an automated analysis using the automation feature on NodeXL Pro, which automatically generate an insight report which consists of both quantitative and qualitative data sets. The data sets generated for the quantitative data were interpreted using influence analysis, thematic analysis, word cloud mapping, sentiment analysis, time series analysis and several other analyses feature on the NodeXL application from which the researcher selected the data sets (analyses) that are relevant to the research objectives the study sets out to achieve.

Data Presentation

The data generated in this study are presented below in line with the research objectives earlier stated.

Research objective 1: To identify the major actors and key influencers of the #NotTooYoungToRun online protest movements on Twitter

To identify the top actors and key influencers in the #NTYTR Social Network on Twitter, the researcher relied on three (3) different datasets from the NodeXL Pro Insights Report generated after running the network analysis. These data sets include: Top Active Users (i.e., users with the highest number of tweets in the network); Top influencers (measured by users' degree betweenness, in-degree and out-degree centrality); and Top Mentioned Users in the network. But of these three data sets, the set of users that emerged with the highest degree of betweenness centrality are considered to be the key influencers within any social network.

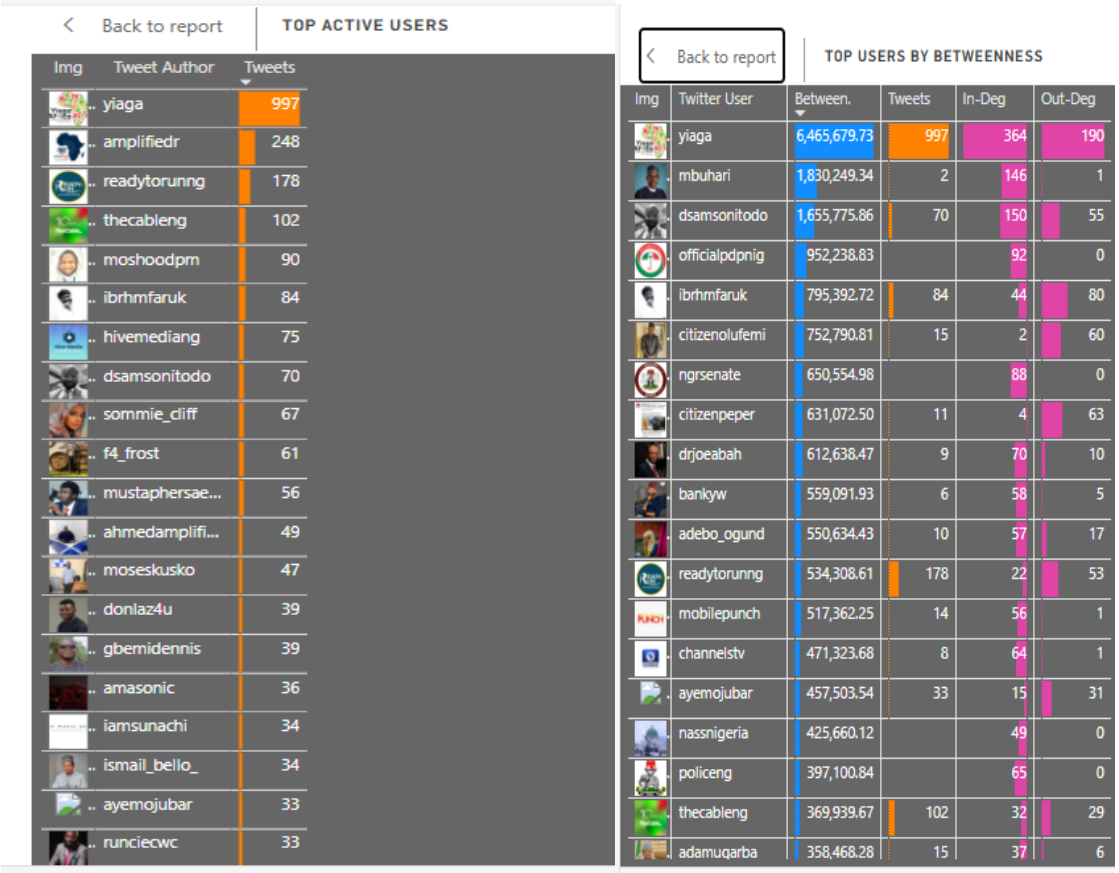


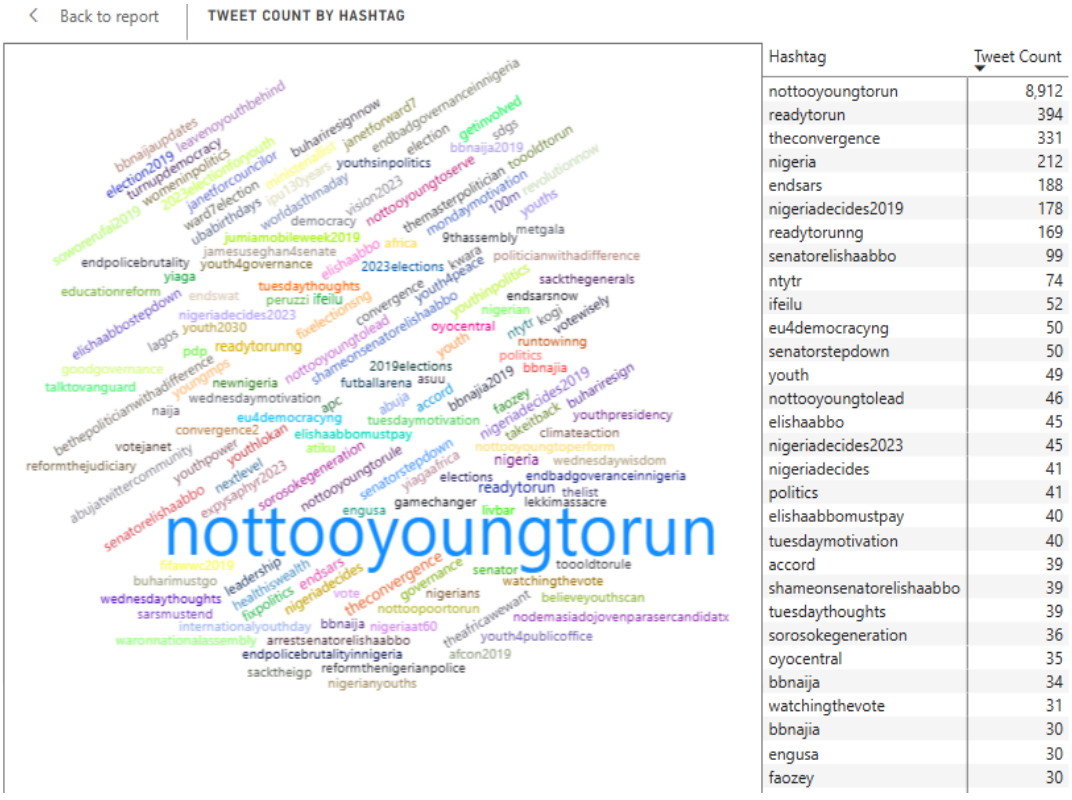
Figure 1: Key Actors and Influencers in the #NTYTR Network on Twitter

The list of top twenty (20) influencers that emerged in the dataset as indicated in the table above was largely dominated by persons and institutions connected to Yiaga Africa, the organisation responsible for organising the movement. Notable among these individuals are: Mr. Samson Itodo, who is the Executive Director of Yiaga Africa; Mr. Ibrahim Faruk, a Senior Programs Officer (Youth) at Yiaga Africa and Moshoodpm, a Media Officer at Yiaga Africa; Amplified Radio, an online radio arm of Yiaga; and ReadyToRunNg, which is also an arm of Yiaga Africa set up to support young political aspirants vying for public offices in Nigeria.

The top influencers' list also includes a mix of elected political office holders such as President Muhammadu Buhari and Dr. Joe Abah, the Director-General of the Bureau of Public Service Reforms in the Nigerian Presidency between 2013 and 2017; key government agencies, such as the Nigerian Senate, National Assembly; political parties such the Peoples Democratic Party; media organisations, notably The Punch Newspaper, Channels Television, and The Cable. The key influencers of #NTYTR protest movement on Twitter also include young political aspirants such as Bankole Wellington (Banky W), Adamu Garba and Adebo Ogundoyin, who leveraged on the platform provided by the #NTYTR movement on Twitter to emerge as the speaker of the Oyo State House of Assembly after the 2019 general elections at the age of 32 years.

Research Objective 2: To identify the core themes in the messages of #NotTooYoungToRun online protest movements on Twitter

To identify the major themes in the messages of #NTYTR protesters on Twitter, the semantic analysis feature of the NodeXL Pro application was deployed to generate data sets that helped the researcher to carry out thematic analysis of the key words in the messages of the #EndSARS protesters on Twitter. In carrying out the thematic analysis, NodeXL automatically groups words used by the protesters together by hashtags to form dominant themes (as seen in the below).



Hashtag	Tweet Count
nottooyoungtorun	8,912
readytorun	394
theconvergence	331
nigeria	212
endsars	188
nigeriadecides2019	178
readytorunng	169
senatorelishaabbo	99
ntytr	74
ifeilu	52
eu4democracyng	50
senatorstepdown	50
youth	49
nottooyoungtolead	46
elishaabbo	45
nigeriadecides2023	45
nigeriadecides	41
politics	41
elishaabbomustpay	40
tuesdaymotivation	40
accord	39
shameonsenatorelishaabbo	39
tuesdaythoughts	39
sorosokegeneration	36
oyocentral	35
bbnaija	34
watchingthevote	31
bbnajia	30
engusa	30
faozey	30

Figure 2: Top Themes Captured in the #NTYTR Protest Movement Social Network Analysis on Twitter

The data in the table above speaks to the key issues and events that characterised the communication activities of the #NTYTR movement on Twitter, and how the participants and how the protesters were reacting to these issues through their tweets. The dominant theme in the messages of the #NTYTR protesters on Twitter as seen in table 3 is **'nottooyoungtorun'** with 8,912 hits. This is consistent with the central theme of the protest, which was meant to compel the federal government of Nigeria to institute a law that will reduce the statutory age for contesting elections in Nigeria, so as to give opportunity for more youths to participate in the governance process. The overwhelming dominance of the nottooyoungtorun, which represents over 80 percent of all the themes captured in the data set indicates the level of coordination and focus of the organisers of the movement to drive home that singular message using Twitter.

Other major themes that emerged from the data set are: **'readytorun'** with 394 hits, and **'theconvergence'** with 394 hits and **'nottooyoungtorule'**. The emergence of these themes speaks to the dissatisfaction of the protesters with the age-long culture of exclusion of Nigerian youths from political leadership and their readiness to organise themselves and take action to wrestle power from the older generation of politicians who have consistently recycled themselves in power over the years.

Surprisingly, the theme of '**EndSARS'**, with 188 hits and **'sorosokegeneraion'** were also captured among the top five themes in the messages of the #NTYTR protesters, suggesting the possibility of a weak link between the participants of the #EndSARS protest movement and those of the #NTYTR movement on Twitter.

Research Objective 3: To uncover the purposes for which the participants of #NotTooYoungToRun online protest movements utilized Twitter during the protests

To address this research objective, the researchers utilized NodeXL Pro's 'drill through' feature to extract raw tweets from the #EndSARS network. The extracted tweets were then systematically analyzed, sorted, and used as primary data to investigate the purposes for which protesters employed Twitter during the protests.

After carefully reading through the raw tweets, the following seven (7) major purposes to which the protesters deployed twitter emerged: 1. to report success stories and promote the impacts of yiaga's #nottooyoungtorun and #readtorun initiatives: 2. to campaign and mobilise support for the enactment of the age reduction law; 3. to communicate the details of the events and programs organised by the conveners of the movement; 4. to evaluate the impact of Yiaga's NTYTR and ReadyToRun interventions; 5 to highlight the challenges facing young Nigerians aspiring for political offices; 6. to mobilise support and campaign for youths who contested for elective positions in then 2019 and 2023 general elections; 7. and to provide training, technical support and mentorship for youth candidates who won in the 2019 and 2023 elections.

To Report Success Stories and Promote the Impacts of Yiaga's #NotTooYoungToRun and #ReadyToRun Initiatives

Some samples of tweets in this category are captured in table 3 below.

Table 1: Sample Tweets of #NTYTR Protesters Reporting Success Stories of Yiaga's #NotTooYoungToRun and #ReadToRun Initiatives

Author	Relationship	Mentioned	Tweet Text	Faves	RTs	Tweet Date & Time
Yiaga	Mentions in Reply to	euinnigeria	***@NDI @ndiafrica @ndielections @inecnigeria @USAIDNigeria @UKaid @DFIDNigeria @gndemexchanges @nassnigeria @EUinNigeria @HouseNGR Increasing the number of young political office holders from 60 to 103 out of 1,558 elective positions, as a result of #NotTooYoungToRun and @ReadyToRunNG interventions, remains a historic milestone in the history of Nigeria that we celebrate.***	2	4	12/31/2019 4:51:08 PM
yiaga	Replies to	yiaga	***Cheering news from #NotTooYoungToRun Youth Candidacy Report shows increase from 18% in the 2015 elections to 27% in the 2019 for the @HouseNGR***	2	7	2/6/2019 10:47:10 AM
Yiaga	Mentions	nassnigeria	***In total 1,515 Youth Candidates representing 23% of all the candidates Contesting for seats in the @nassnigeria #NotTooYoungToRun***	13	8	2/6/2019 10:21:15 AM
Yiaga	Replies to	yiaga	***10 candidates representing just 14% of Presidential candidates are aged between 35-40 years according #NotTooYoungToRun Youth Candidacy Report for the 2019 General Elections***	9	8	2/6/2019 10:35:29 AM
yiaga	Replies to	yiaga	***Official data shows increase in Youth Candidates when comparing the 2015 and 2019 General Elections Thanks to the #NotTooYoungToRun and #ReadyToRun movement #EU4DemocracyNG***	3	5	1/21/2019 2:09:42 PM
Gboyesuccess	**Self-Tweets**		***#NotTooYoungToRun movement has made history. It is noteworthy to mention that Oyo state joined many others to fulfill the requirements for a constitutional amendment by saying YES to the Bill. I am proud of the work that we did, and proud of the outcome we achieved. @YIAGA***	23	9	5/3/2019 2:02:43 PM

To Campaign and mobilise support for the Enactment of the Age Reduction Law

Some of the tweets analysed showed the organisers of the movement on twitter calling for support for the passage of the bill into from various segments of the society as seen in the table below.

Table 2: Sample Tweets of #NTYTR Protesters Campaigning for the Enactment of the Age Reduction Law on Twitter

Author	Relationship	Mentioned	Tweet Text	Faves	RTs	Tweet Date & Time
Yiaga	Replies to	vanguardngrnews	***@vanguardngrnews The Movement will keep advocating for youth participation. The #NotTooYoungToRun will remain a non-partisan citizen led movement and will not be transiting into a political party. We will keep supporting young men and women running for office. #TalkToVanguard #ReadyToRun***	13	12	1/6/2019 3:49:40 PM
Yiaga	Self-Tweets	yiaga	***On this day in 2018, members of the #NotTooYoungToRun movement met with the Vice President Prof Yemi Osinbajo to engage him on the potential of young people to hold political office and the need for President Muhammadu Buhari to Assent to the Age Reduction Bill.***	27	7	4/19/2020 11:24:41 AM
Yiaga	Replies to	vanguardngrnews	***@vanguardngrnews There was a gap in the participation of youth as candidates in our electoral process, in the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. This is one of the reasons why we started the #NotTooYoungToRun Campaign. #TalkToVanguard #ReadyToRun***	12	15	1/6/2019 3:10:40 PM
volker_turk	Self-Tweets	volker_turk	***Old enough to vote should mean old enough to run for office. Yet age barriers often deny young people their right to participate in public affairs & influence policy-making. It's time Governments align the age to run with the age to vote. #DemocracyDay #NotTooYoungToRun***	113	42	9/15/2023 2:02:28 PM
Yiaga	Replies to	vanguardngrnews	***@vanguardngrnews The age limitation for running for office in the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria was the major gap for young people aspiring to run for elective offices #TalkToVanguard #ReadyToRun #NotTooYoungToRun***	14	12	1/6/2019 3:17:40 PM
Yiaga	Mentions	ngrsenate	***Throw back to when Nigerian Youths came out in their thousands to demand passage of the #NotTooYoungToRun bill by @NGRSenate and @HouseNGR Now the Struggle has paid-off and we are set to host 300 Young elected lawmakers at the Convergence 2.0. LEADERSHIP, POWER, POLITICS!***	17	9	5/3/2019 11:47:08 AM
Yiaga	Mentions	inecnigeria	***The figures of registered voters released by the @inecnigeria show that if youths and women can unite, they can take over political offices #ReadyToRun #NotTooYoungToRun***	12	15	1/9/2019 5:51:38 PM
Yiaga	Self-Tweets	yiaga	***Youths sue for participation in governance A gathering of 100 most influential Nigerian young leaders has called for more active youth participation in politics. #NotTooYoungToRun #ReadyToRun***	6	4	5/26/2019 9:30:39 AM

To Communicate Details of the Events and Programs Organised by the Conveners of the Movement

Results from the tweets analysed also revealed that one major purpose to which the participants in the #EndSARS movement on Twitter (who were majorly Yiaga staff and associates) deployed Twitter was to communicate the details and outcomes of their programs and activities to their target stakeholders as indicated by the sample tweets in the table below.

Table 3: Sample Tweets of #NTYTR Organisers Communicating Details of the Events and Programs Organised by the Conveners of the Movement

Author	Relationship	Mentioned	Tweet Text	Faves	RTs	Tweet Date & Time
yiaga	Mentions	ukinnigeria	***Next week we will launch a report on the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) of youth candidates running in the March 9 elections. Thanks to @UKinNigeria @DFIDNigeria for supporting the study #NotTooYoungToRun #NigeriaDecides2019***	22	18	3/1/2019 2:19:56 PM
yiaga	Mentions	inecnigeria	***Earlier today we received .@inecnigeria National Commissioner, Festus Okoye at the #WatchingTheVote Parallel Vote Tabulation Data Center We will be deploying 3030 accredited Polling Unit Observers and 822 roving observers for the Presidential elections #NigeriaDecides2019***	23	13	2/13/2019 2:44:09 PM
yiaga	Self -Tweets	yiaga	***Breaking: We are set to release a report of our analysis of Strengths, Weaknesses, Threats and Opportunities (SWOT) of young candidates running for office in #NigeriaDecides2019 Event is scheduled to hold on February 11. Details shortly #NotTooYoungToRun #ReadyToRun***	52	17	2/7/2019 4:56:01 PM
yiaga	Self-Tweets	yiaga	***During the Pre-election YIAGA AFRICA's #WatchingTheVote Pre-election Press Conference calls on all Nigerian citizens to resist efforts to purchase their votes while calling on party executives to sanction members indulging in vote buying***	7	5	2/14/2019 3:18:58 PM
yiaga	Mentions	yakubdogara	***CONFIRMED! Honorable @YakubDogara, Speaker @HouseNGR is the key note speaker at the largest gathering of young elected lawmakers in Nigeria. The Convergence 2.0! LEADERSHIP, POWER, POLITICS! #NotTooYoungToRun***	16	20	5/4/2019 10:33:41 AM
Yiaga	Mentions	ukaid	***Welcome to Convergence 2.0! The largest gathering of young elected lawmakers in Nigeria! This conference is organised by YIAGA AFRICA and #NotTooYoungToRun movement with support from @UKaid to expose young legislators to resources required for excellent public leadership.***	20	13	5/6/2019 5:10:14 PM

To Evaluate the Impact Yiaga's NotTooYoungToRun and ReadyToRun Interventions

Another notable purpose to which the participants in the #NTYTR movement on Twitter was to evaluate the impact of Yiaga's twin-initiatives of 'Not Too Young To Run' and 'Ready To

Run' being promoted by the organisation. This purpose is subtly or directly reflected in the sample tweets in the table below.

Table 4: Sample Tweets of #NTYTR Participants Evaluating the Impact of the #NTYTR and #ReadyToRun Interventions

Author	Relationship	Mentioned	Tweet Text	Faves	RTs	Tweet Date & Time
Yiaga	Self-Tweets	yiaga	***With over 300 young elected lawmakers set to be sworn in as members of state house of assemblies, how do you think #NotTooYoungToRun has impacted on the 2019 Elections? Join the discussion let's Talk Leadership, Power and Politics!***	52	43	5/2/2019 6:02:49 AM
victor_mbidi	Self-Tweets	victor_mbidi	***How many of the youths that contested the @NGRSenate and @HouseNGR came out successful? This is a data representation of those who ran for office compiled by @YIAGA***	111	49	3/1/2019 7:09:50 AM
Dsamsonitodo	Self-Tweets	Dsamsonitodo	***Earlier Today, I Was On @ITVAbuja ITV To Discuss "Youth Participation In Politics: Assessing Progress And Impact Of The #NotTooYoungToRun Bill". I Highlighted Challenges & Also Gave My Opinion On The Way Forward. We Are Not Where We Want To Be But We Are Sure Heading There.***	76	45	11/14/2019 7:17:17 PM
Amplifiedr	Replies to	amplifiedr	***Our observation of the party primaries revealed that the process was not favourable for young and female aspirants. There were issues of substitution of candidates~ .@DCynthiaM #NotTooYoungToRun***	0	1	2/6/2019 10:34:21 AM
Amplifiedr	Self-Tweets	amplifiedr	***The dominant political parties are still the challenge in terms of internal party playing ground hindering youth participation. #NotTooYoungToRun***	0	1	2/6/2019 10:37:41 AM
Yiaga	Self-Tweets	yiaga	***#NotTooYoungToRun Fruits by Tony Ademiluyi It was with joy that the bill that was barely signed a year ago has started yielding fruits as young speakers are emerging in State Houses of Assembly.***	8	3	6/25/2019 6:57:50 AM
Yiaga	Self Tweets	yiaga	***Even though the #NotTooYoungToRun campaign has succeeded in reducing the age of running for office. Political parties now have to ensure that they remove barriers that still impede young people's active participation in politics~ Benard Ajewole #WatchingTheVote #KogiDecides 2019***	1	1	10/10/2019 11:02:09 AM
Amplifiedr	Replies to	amplifiedr	***There has been an over 50% increase in female youth candidacy from 2015 to 2019. #NotTooYoungToRun***	0	1	2/6/2019 10:30:27 AM

To Highlight Challenges Facing Young Nigerians Aspiring for Political Offices

There are also evidences from the tweets analysed which suggests that the participants of the #NTYTR movement also deployed Twitter for the purpose highlighting the challenges young Nigerians are facing in their quest to participate fully in politics in general, and in their attempt to contest for elections in particular as can be seen in the sampled tweets in Table 7 below.

Table 5: Sample Tweets of #NTYTR Participants Highlighting Challenges Facing Young Nigerians Aspiring for Political Offices

Author	Relationship	Mentioned	Tweet Text	Faves	RTs	Tweet Date & Time
Yiaga	Mentions in Reply to	bimbo_otun	***@vanguardngrnews @Bimbo_Otun Some of the major challenges facing young politicians is the ability to use their social capital to organize their constituencies, access to media and effective campaign strategies. #TalkToVanguard #ReadyToRun #NotTooYoungToRun***	12	9	1/6/2019 3:44:13 PM
Yiaga	Mentions	nwagwuezenwa	***There has been low Youth Candidacy in all the five general elections conducted since return to democracy due to constitutional restrictions on young people - @NwagwuEzenwa #NotTooYoungToRun***	3	2	2/6/2019 10:11:40 AM
Yiaga	Self-Tweets	yiaga	***Nigeria's politics is an old men's club - US diplomat Thomas-Greenfield declares. The United States diplomat, also predicted that the 2023 election will be challenging because of a gentleman's agreement that has to be honoured. #NEDEvents***	8	5	10/23/2019 3:59:52 PM
official_nyp1	Self-Tweets	official_nyp1	***Nomination forms: Nigerian Youth Parliament writes APC, Buhari to grant youths 50% reduction • Says high fees killing #NotTooYoungToRun Act Nigerian***	32	22	4/7/2022 4:47:55 PM
Cappafrica			***Join us on Twitter Space as we discuss "Cost of political party nomination forms in Nigeria: Challenges and prospects for the #NotTooYoungToRun". It promises to be engaging. Date: 11th May, 2022 Time: 1:00 PM***	27	16	5/7/2022 5:42:27 PM
Yiaga	Replies to	Vanguardngrnews	***@vanguardngrnews Nigerian youth have shown competence & capacity in all other spheres of society. This is missing from the political space. We need to open the space to increase youth participation (especially as candidates) in our political & electoral process. #TalkToVanguard #NotTooYoungToRun***	26	17	1/6/2019 3:32:14 PM
Yiaga	Self-Tweets	yiaga	***Women & Youth Remain Politically Underrepresented in Africa's Most Populous Nation. Currently, Nigeria has the lowest rate of female representation in parliaments across the continent. #NotTooYoungToRun #ReadyToRun***	8	10	5/23/2019 11:31:24 AM

To Mobilise Support and Campaign for Youths who Contested for Elective Positions in the 2019 and 2023 General Elections

Some of the participants in the #NTYTR Movements deployed Twitter for political campaign and to mobilise support for other youths who contested for elective offices during the 2019 and 2023 elections. Sampled tweets from the Social network Analysis conducted revealed that some of the participant used the #NTYTR platform to solicit for votes from other youths on the platform, recommending other young aspirants and for sharing election campaign posters as captured in the sampled tweets in the table below.

Table 6: Sample Tweets of #NTYTR Participants Campaigning and supporting Youth Aspirants

Author	Relationship	Mentioned	Tweet Text	Faves	RTs	Tweet Date & Time
yiaga	Self-Tweets	yiaga	***Are you a young male or female African running for public office in the next election in your country? Watch this space because we are rolling out exciting programs for you soon #NotTooYoungToRun #ReadyToRun***	93	47	10/12/2019 9:10:14 AM
makomboreroh	Self-Tweets	makomboreroh	***Dear AfriCAN youths in Nigeria, please support @official_YmS & @Elfarrooq in their campaigns & votes. They are the face of hope for better future & represent the young generation in both Nigeria & Africa. From Zimbabwe with solidarity! #NotTooYoungToRun #PeterObiForPresident2023***	118	48	11/25/2022 3:04:21 PM
jideainaa	Sef-Tweets	jideainaa	***My people from Owode/Onire Constituency pls vote @Rukayatshittu06 as your representative at the kwara state house of assembly. She's the youngest of all candidates all over the federation, she's also a vibrant, intelligent & progressive minded young lady #NotTooYoungToRun #APC***	112	32	3/9/2023 11:15:31 PM
meetthedynamo	Self-Tweets	meetthedynamo	***Hey OBIdients, Let's do this on Wednesday for one of us, Barr. Juliet... She is the youngest lady contesting for an elective position in this forthcoming election and she's indeed a capable, smart and sweet soul. Let's show her some love come 15th February, 2023 Be there!!!***	55	25	2/13/2023 10:36:32 PM
arkazaure	Self-Tweets	arkazaure	***I'm 38, youngest cabinet level appointee in the Buhari Administration, degrees in Engineering/Economics, 15 years at General Electric working in 20 countries and I'm vying to be the next Governor of Jigawa (APC). This is for all young people that will be encouraged to participate***	3024	746	5/10/2022 8:18:07 AM
bankyw	Self-Tweets	bankyw	***We must engage with Nigeria where it is, not where we prefer for it to be. In 2019, we planted the seed. In 2023, by the grace of God, and with your support, we will win the seat. The time for just talking is over. It's time to #TalkAndDo. I hope I can count on you. We move.***	17485	5638	4/1/2022 5:24:26 PM
omojadey		omojadey	***Party Primaries tommorrow 9 Aspirants 8 Male 1 Female Pray for me guys! 🙏 #NotTooYoungToRun #WomenInPolitics***	1026	440	3/3/2021 6:43:58 PM
nglabour	Self-Tweets	nglabour	***Vote, Feyijimi Benjamin Ayomide, 25 years old candidate of the Labour Party for Oyo state House of Assembly representing Ido constituency A New Nigeria Is Possible! #WeShallReclaimOurMandate***	32905	8367	3/6/2023 11:36:37 AM
morris_monye	Self-Tweets	morris_monye	***My man went hard on them here. His name is Gbadebo Rhodes-Vivour and he is running for Governor of Lagos under LP Papa, Mama, Pikin.***	12427	5782	3/10/2023 7:04:18 PM
omojadey	Self-Tweets	omojadey	***Today I picked up my CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE at the PDP Party secretariat to contest in forthcoming Local Government Primaries in Oyo state scheduled for Thursday March 4 2021 I am a Woman and I choose to Challenge! #NotTooYoungToRun #WomenInPolitics Obinrin LOKAN 🇳🇬***	8521	3184	3/1/2021 9:23:45 PM
sidireport	Self-Tweets	sidireport	***Insha Allah, I will be running for Senate in Niger State come #2023.... If Gowon could be head of State at Age 30!!! Why can't I represent my people in the chambers at above 30. #NigerianYouth are ready to serve***	3026	925	10/16/2020 9:53:58 PM
nigeriastories	Self-Tweets	nigeriastories	***Meet 38 year old Khadijah Okunnu-Lamidi who has announced her decision to seek the office of President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 🇳🇬 in the 2023 general elections***	500	92	1/29/2022 6:36:48 AM

To Provide Training, Technical Support and Mentorship for Youth Candidates who won in the 2019 and 2023 elections

In-depts analysis of the raw tweets collected in the course of this study also revealed that some participants within the #NTYTR network (Particularly, Yiaga and its affiliate organisations) deployed Twitter for providing trainings, technical support and mentorship for youth candidates who won elective positions during the 2019 and 2023 general elections in Nigeria. Tweets sampled in table 9 below revealed testimonials from beneficiaries of such training and supports, political mentorship tips from experienced politicians, as well as well as reports of such training interventions by Yiaga and its affiliate and partner-organisations.

Table 7: Sample Tweets of #NTYTR Participants supporting Young Elected Public Officials

Author	Relationship	Mentioned	Tweet Text	Faves	RTs	Tweet Date & Time
Yiaga	Self-Tweets	yiaga	***YIAGA AFRICA and the #NotTooYoungToRun movement provided technical support to the youth candidates and young elected representatives. We invested in preparing them for leadership through training and mentorship***	4	3	5/8/2019 10:28:46 AM
adebo_ogund	Self-Tweets	adebo_ogund	***The technical & legislative support received from @YIAGA the sponsors on #nottooyoungtorun bill has been tremendous. The meeting was centered around ensuring uncompromising & quality representation of youth in government. Thank you @YIAGA***	144	51	7/22/2019 8:33:11 PM
Yiaga	Mentions	nuhu_abok	***"Plateau Assembly to develop citizen-based legislative agenda-official." This is part of YIAGA's support to young elected legislators #NotTooYoungToRun @nuhu_abok @PLACNG***	6	8	11/6/2019 12:40:48 PM
Yiaga	Self-Tweets	yiaga	***Zamfara State House of Assembly with support from YIAGA AFRICA is collecting data on citizens needs and hosting a Citizens Town Hall Meeting today on the development on its legislative agenda #NotTooYoungToRun***	5	7	11/9/2019 10:19:23 AM
Yiaga	Self-Tweets	yiaga	***In continuation of the support to young elected representatives, the #NotTooYoungToRun Movement and YIAGA AFRICA Centre for Legislative Engagement met with Rt. Hon. Nasiru Magarya, Speaker, Zamfara State House of Assembly towards providing technical support to the House***	34	7	7/23/2019 5:28:03 PM
Amplified	Mentions	yiaga	***The Convergence 2.0 isn't just another conference. It aims to inspire, empower and expose elected young representatives to the resources and tools required for excellent public leadership and quality representation in the legislature. #NotTooYoungToRun .@YIAGA***	0	1	5/4/2019 9:55:39 AM
Yiaga	Self-Tweets	yiaga	***US Ambassador @AmbSymington will be speaking to about 300 young legislators today as Convergence 2.0 climaxes today. #NotTooYoungToRun***	8	2	5/8/2019 5:24:06 AM
Yiaga	Mentions	catrionalaing1	***I am extremely proud to be here looking at nearly 300 young political representatives, reflecting the wave of energy and exuberance that has entered the Nigerian political space - British Envoy, H.E @CatrionaLaing1 Speaking at the convergence earlier today. #NotTooYoungToRun***	29	10	5/7/2019 7:27:08 PM

Discussion of Findings

In the views of Bennett and Segerberg (2012), connective action draws from actions witnessed in collective actions and new actions now made possible with digital technologies. In connective action, there is little or no formal coordination and where there is evidence of formal organization, it varies from that of systems witnessed in collective actions. In the #NTYTR social media campaigns studied in this research, there is clear indication of the hybrid model suggested by Bennett & Segerberg.

In the NTYTR campaign, there was a central coordinating organization which is YIAGA that partnered with other organisations like the UNDP, OHCHR and EYF who worked in the background to provide support and resources to the campaign. Though personal frames were portrayed by youths who participated in the online campaign as is common practice in most networked protests, there was evidence of moderation by YIAGA through the Twitter interviews granted and press releases issued by the organization. By dominating and moderating conversations within the #NTYTR Network on Twitter, YIAGA ensured that the central goal of the movement did not get lost in the various personalized frames that were tweeted within the hashtag. Thus, YIAGA subtly maintained its influence over the movement by maintaining the already pre-determined narrative.

There was also evidence of strong organizational control within #NTYTR movement on Twitter as witnessed in collective actions. In this movement therefore, the hybrid pattern proposed in Bennett and Segerberg's logic of connective action theory comes to life. While the movement depended on the voluntary participation of Nigerian youth on Twitter and that participation was heightened by their ability to share personalize experiences that connect to others within the movement and the ability to frame these experiences in a way that is a relevant to the movement, there were still other events that occurred within the movement that showed the old forms of social movements. However, this is the advantage that social media offers contemporary social movements. Each movement can design/coordinate their activities to suit their intended audiences and meet their targets. For NTYTR, this argument is drawn from the fact that their core message –- the need to reduce the age requirement for elective positions in the country - could not have been achieved without some lobbying with key players and organisations. Thus, the support from UNDP, EYF and OHCHR as well as Nigerian lawmakers was necessary for the goal of the movement.

Conclusion

This study highlights a key issue in Nigeria's political structure, which is the exclusion of its youthful population from governance and political decision making. This isolation/exclusion is witnessed in the type of policies that are proposed which can be argued to stifle and not advance the progress of the youth. Like all problems, there are multiple paths to address such issues. Thus, NTYTR campaign approached the discourse by challenging the age limit required for contesting elective positions in the country by using Twitter to amplify their offline campaign activities.

The study therefore concludes that that the issue of gerontocracy addressed by the social movement examined in this study stem from age-long practice of marginalizing the youths who lack the resources or even the constitutional backing to legally address these restrictive situations. As revealed in data for the study, age limits along with financial limitations and corruption undermine the ability of the youth to access political, economic and social opportunities within the Nigerian state. In the data collected from the study, there are evidences of inter-generational disconnect between the older and younger citizens of the country thereby cementing the issue of marginalization as a major problem which is believed

to have triggered the campaign. Therefore, in #NTYTR campaign, there are calls to reform or make laws that would create the environment for the youths to thrive.

Recommendations

Consequent upon the findings from this study, the following are recommended:

1. The government put in place concrete measures in terms of policies and action plans to permanently address the challenges hindering Nigerian youths from fulfilling their full potential. This will serve as a panacea to mitigate frequent protests as the nation has been witnessing in recent times. This is also necessary to address the menace of 'japa' syndrome – that is, the migration of young Nigerians to other countries where they feel they have better opportunities and a more favourable environment to achieve their full potentials. In this regard, coming up with a comprehensive National Youth Policy or amending existing ones (if they already exist) would go a long way in addressing some of the issues identified in this study.
2. Nigerian political office holders and key government officials and agencies should cultivate the culture of leveraging the opportunity provided by Twitter and other social media platform for direct communication and constructive engagements with the citizens (particularly the youth), especially during crisis situations. As data from this study revealed, the level of engagement of key government officials and agencies with the protesters in the #NTYTR movement was very poor. For instance, all through the #NotTooYoungToRun campaign on Twitter, former president Muhammadu Buhari tweeted only 2 times on the subject matter while the Nigerian Senate and the National Assembly both had zero tweets against their official Twitter handles in relation to the subject matter.

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