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Social Media Activism versus Offline Mobilization`: A Study of Hashtag Movements in Nigeria (2025–2026) – Does Online Engagement Predict Real-World Protest Participation or Generate "Slacktivism" Fatigue?

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ABSTRACT

The rapid expansion of social media has transformed political communication and collective action in Nigeria. Hashtags can rapidly disseminate grievances, mobilise supporters, coordinate collective action and attract national and international attention. At the same time, concerns have emerged that online participation may encourage low-cost forms of political engagement that do not translate into physical participation, producing what is commonly described as "slacktivism." This study examines the relationship between social media activism and offline protest participation among Nigerian social media users, with particular attention to hashtag-based movements between 2025 and 2026. The study adopts a quantitative correlational survey design. A structured questionnaire, the Social Media Activism and Offline Mobilization Questionnaire (SMAOMQ), was used for data collection from social media users aged 18 years and above who have encountered or participated in Nigerian hashtag-based political or civic campaigns. The study conceptualises online engagement through hashtag participation, content sharing, political expression, information seeking and mobilisation activities, while offline mobilisation is measured through attendance at protests, meetings, community actions, donations, volunteering and direct contact with campaign organisations. A further construct, slacktivism fatigue, measures declining motivation resulting from repetitive online campaigns, low perceived impact and excessive exposure to political content. Multiple regression and mediation analysis are proposed. The results show that meaningful forms of online engagement will positively predict offline protest participation, although low-effort engagement alone will have a weaker relationship with offline action. Slacktivism fatigue is to weaken the relationship between online engagement and offline mobilisation. The study contributes to debates on whether digital activism substitutes for or complements conventional political participation in Nigeria.

Keywords: social media activism, hashtag activism, offline mobilisation, protest participation, slacktivism, Nigeria, digital activism, political participation.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

Social media has become an important arena for political expression, civic engagement and collective mobilisation. Platforms such as X, Facebook, Instagram, TikTok and WhatsApp allow individuals to discuss political issues, share information, document events and coordinate collective action with considerably lower communication costs than conventional forms of mobilisation. The emergence of hashtag activism has further strengthened this process by allowing dispersed users to participate in a common conversation around a political or social issue.

A hashtag can perform several functions simultaneously. It can identify an issue, create a shared political identity, make individual posts searchable, amplify particular grievances and provide a symbolic label around which collective action develops. Consequently, social media activism should not be understood simply as posting or liking content. It may involve information seeking, political expression, content production, fundraising, networking, recruitment and coordination of offline activities.

The relationship between online and offline participation, however, remains contested. One perspective argues that social media lowers the costs of political participation and can therefore bring previously inactive individuals into civic life. Another perspective suggests that easy online actions may substitute for more demanding activities such as attending demonstrations, volunteering or organizing community meetings. This latter argument is associated with the concept of slacktivism, generally used to describe low-cost online political activities that create the appearance of participation without necessarily producing substantial political consequences.

The empirical literature does not provide a simple answer. A review of research on online activism concludes that social media can facilitate community building, documentation of experiences, norm formation and shared understandings, while evidence for a purely negative “slacktivism” effect remains mixed. Similarly, research examining social-media use and offline civic participation reports positive relationships between digital political activity and offline participation, although the magnitude of these relationships varies across studies.

More recent evidence also cautions against assuming that correlation automatically means that social media causes offline participation. A 2026 study using a random-intercept cross-lagged panel model found positive associations between social-media use, political expression and offline participation at the between-person level, but did not find corresponding within-person cross-lagged effects. The authors therefore argue that some previously observed relationships may reflect stable differences between people rather than changes produced by social-media use itself.

This distinction is particularly important in Nigeria, where social media has become an important component of political and civic communication. Nigerian activists, journalists, civil-society organisations and ordinary citizens increasingly use digital platforms to publicise grievances and coordinate collective responses. The country's experience with hashtag activism has demonstrated that online networks can sometimes extend beyond digital spaces into physical mobilisation.

The period 2025–2026 provides an especially relevant context for examining this relationship. During this period, Nigeria experienced continuing political and social mobilisation around issues including governance, insecurity, economic conditions, human rights and separatist politics. For example, Reuters reported physical protests in Abuja in October 2025 over the continued detention of Nnamdi Kanu, with security forces deployed to prevent demonstrations. Such events demonstrate that contemporary political mobilisation continues to involve physical collective action even within an increasingly digital communication environment.

The central question is therefore not whether Nigerians use social media for activism, but whether different forms of online engagement actually translate into offline political participation. It is also necessary to consider whether repeated exposure to hashtags, online arguments, political misinformation, failed campaigns and limited visible outcomes can produce what may be termed slacktivism fatigue.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Social media has significantly reduced the cost of participating in political conversations. A Nigerian citizen can express support for a campaign, share a hashtag, repost information or sign an online petition within seconds. These activities can create substantial visibility for social movements and allow geographically dispersed individuals to participate.

However, the ease of online participation creates an important empirical problem. High levels of online engagement do not necessarily mean that individuals will participate in physical protests or other demanding forms of collective action. A person may repeatedly post political hashtags while never attending a protest, volunteering for a campaign or participating in community organizing.

This phenomenon raises concerns about whether hashtag activism represents meaningful mobilisation or merely symbolic participation. Previous research has produced contradictory findings. Some studies show that online participation predicts offline political action, while others suggest that the relationship may be weak or explained by pre-existing political orientations.

A second problem concerns fatigue. Political hashtags may emerge rapidly and disappear equally quickly. Users can encounter numerous campaigns within a short period, sometimes involving conflicting demands or repeated calls for action. When users perceive that online mobilisation produces little tangible change, they may become discouraged and reduce their participation.

The problem addressed by this study is therefore the absence of sufficient empirical evidence concerning how online engagement in Nigerian hashtag movements translates into offline mobilisation and whether activism fatigue weakens that relationship during 2025–2026.

1.3 Objectives the study

1. To examine the level of social media engagement in Nigerian hashtag movements;
2. To determine whether hashtag participation predicts offline protest participation;
3. To assess the influence of political expression on offline mobilisation;
4. To determine whether information-seeking behaviour predicts offline participation;
5. To examine whether online mobilisation activities influence real-world collective action;
6. To assess the prevalence of slacktivism fatigue among social media users; and
7. To determine whether slacktivism fatigue moderates the relationship between online activism and offline mobilisation.

1.4 Research Questions

1. What is the level of social media activism associated with Nigerian hashtag movements?
2. Does hashtag engagement predict offline protest participation?
3. Does political expression on social media influence offline mobilisation?
4. Does online political information seeking predict offline participation?
5. Do online mobilisation activities influence real-world collective action?
6. To what extent do social media users experience slacktivism fatigue?
7. Does slacktivism fatigue weaken the relationship between online activism and offline mobilisation?

1.5 Research Hypotheses

H01: Hashtag engagement has no significant influence on offline protest participation.

H02: Online political expression has no significant influence on offline mobilisation.

H03: Online political information seeking has no significant influence on offline mobilisation.

H04: Online mobilisation activities have no significant influence on offline collective action.

H05: Slacktivism fatigue has no significant influence on offline mobilisation.

H06: Slacktivism fatigue does not significantly moderate the relationship between social media activism and offline mobilisation.

1.7 Significance of the Study

The study will contribute to scholarship on digital political communication, social movements and political participation in Nigeria. It will provide empirical evidence on whether online activism should be regarded primarily as symbolic engagement or as part of a broader process of collective mobilisation.

For civil-society organisations and campaign groups, the findings may help distinguish between online activities that merely generate visibility and those that are more likely to encourage concrete participation. The findings may also assist campaign organisers in designing online-to-offline mobilisation strategies.

The study will also be useful to researchers examining youth political participation, digital activism and protest movements in Africa.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Concept of Social Media Activism

Social media activism refers to the use of digital platforms to communicate, organise, advocate, mobilise and participate in collective action around political or social issues. It can include posting political messages, sharing campaign materials, using hashtags, signing petitions, donating to causes, communicating with activists and coordinating physical activities.

Social media differs from traditional mass media because users can simultaneously function as audiences, content producers and distributors. A single post can be redistributed across networks, potentially reaching audiences far beyond the original author's immediate social connections.

This characteristic makes social media particularly useful for movements with limited financial resources. Research on online activism has shown that digital platforms can support community formation, shared identity and collective interpretation of events.

2.2 Hashtag Activism

Hashtag activism refers to the use of hashtags to aggregate and amplify discussions around a particular social or political cause. The hashtag creates a searchable symbolic space in which individuals can contribute their own messages while connecting them to a broader movement.

Hashtag activism can perform four major functions:

- agenda setting, by drawing attention to an issue;
- framing, by defining how an issue should be interpreted;
- networking, by connecting participants;
- mobilisation, by communicating opportunities for collective action.

The effectiveness of a hashtag, however, should not be measured only by the number of posts it generates. High visibility may produce awareness without necessarily producing behavioural change.

2.3 Online Political Engagement

Online political engagement includes activities such as commenting on political issues, sharing political information, following activists, participating in digital discussions, creating political content and joining online campaign groups.

Online engagement can be conceptualised according to its level of effort. Low-effort activities include liking, reposting or using a hashtag. Higher-effort activities may involve producing original content, communicating directly with campaign organisers, fundraising, organising events or recruiting participants.

This distinction is important because different forms of engagement may have different relationships with offline participation.

2.4 Offline Mobilisation

Offline mobilisation refers to participation in political or civic activities that occur beyond digital platforms. It includes attending demonstrations, public meetings and town-hall sessions, volunteering for campaigns, joining community organisations, distributing campaign materials, donating resources, contacting public officials and participating in coordinated collective action. These activities provide opportunities for citizens to express political preferences through direct involvement and collective behaviour. Research suggests that online political engagement can sometimes complement such offline participation by facilitating information sharing, networking and mobilisation (Greijdanus et al., 2020; Jung et al., 2023).

However, offline participation generally involves greater personal and material costs than online engagement. Individuals may need to invest time, transportation expenses, physical effort, social commitments or personal safety to participate in demonstrations and other collective activities.

Consequently, moving from online expression to offline mobilisation represents a more demanding form of political participation (Leyva, 2017; Matthes & Nanz, 2026).

2.5 Slacktivism

Slacktivism Fatigue

Slacktivism fatigue refers to the feeling of exhaustion, frustration or reduced motivation that may develop when individuals repeatedly engage in low-cost online political activities without perceiving meaningful social or political outcomes. Such activities may include liking, sharing, commenting on political content, signing online petitions or using hashtags without progressing to more demanding forms of participation. Although online activism can facilitate awareness, networking and collective identity, repeated digital engagement does not always translate into offline action, and evidence on the relationship between online activism and meaningful participation remains mixed (Greijdanus et al., 2020; Leyva, 2017).

In the Nigerian context, slacktivism fatigue may occur when individuals encounter large volumes of political content but perceive limited changes resulting from their online efforts. Continued exposure to hashtags, online debates and mobilisation campaigns may therefore reduce enthusiasm for further participation, particularly when online engagement becomes repetitive or disconnected from tangible outcomes. Recent research suggests that social media participation can support offline civic involvement, but the strength of this relationship varies across individuals and contexts (Jung et al., 2023; Matthes & Nanz, 2026).

2.6 Slacktivism Fatigue

Slacktivism fatigue is proposed in this study as a condition in which repeated exposure to online activism produces declining enthusiasm, reduced participation or a perception that digital political activity is ineffective.

It may be expressed through statements such as:

- "I am tired of seeing political hashtags."
- "Online campaigns rarely produce meaningful change."
- "I increasingly ignore calls to share political content."
- "I feel that social-media activism is repetitive."
- "I participate less because previous online campaigns produced little visible change."

This construct extends the conventional slacktivism debate by considering not only whether online engagement is ineffective, but whether repeated exposure to apparently low-impact activism can reduce future engagement and offline mobilisation.

2.7 Theoretical Framework

Resource Mobilization Theory

Resource Mobilization Theory provides one useful theoretical foundation for this study. The theory argues that collective action depends not only on grievances but also on the availability and mobilisation of resources.

Social media can reduce the cost of mobilisation by facilitating communication, information distribution, recruitment and coordination. From this perspective, social media does not automatically generate protest; rather, it provides resources that movements can use to organise collective action.

Connective Action Theory

The study also draws on the idea of connective action, which emphasises digitally mediated forms of personalised collective participation. Social media can enable individuals to participate without necessarily becoming members of formal organisations.

This perspective is particularly relevant to hashtag movements because individuals can contribute to a campaign through personalised expressions while remaining loosely connected to formal movement structures.

2.8 Empirical Review

Research on online and offline political participation provides mixed but increasingly nuanced evidence.

Leyva (2017), examining UK millennials, found that social-network use and exposure to political content had a positive but weak association with offline formal and activist participation, while the relationship with online "slacktivism" was considerably stronger.

Research on environmental activism has found that online participation can be a strong predictor of offline political action.

Similarly, Foster (2019) provided counter-evidence to the idea that online activism is necessarily ineffective, suggesting that social-media activism can contribute to collective action under appropriate conditions.

Greijdanus et al. (2020) reviewed psychological research on online activism and concluded that social media can facilitate community building, documentation, norm formation and shared realities, while empirical evidence for a straightforward slacktivism effect remains mixed.

Jung et al. (2023) synthesised evidence concerning social-media algorithms and offline civic participation and reported meta-analytic evidence of positive associations between social-media use and offline civic participation. They also identified possible mechanisms including information curation, shared action goals and social capital.

However, Matthes and Nanz (2026) provide an important methodological caution. Their three-wave analysis found that relationships between social-media use, political expression and offline participation were evident at the between-person level but not at the within-person level. This suggests that individuals who are generally more politically engaged may simply be more active both online and offline. However, this disagreement provides a strong justification for the present study.

2.9 Research Gap

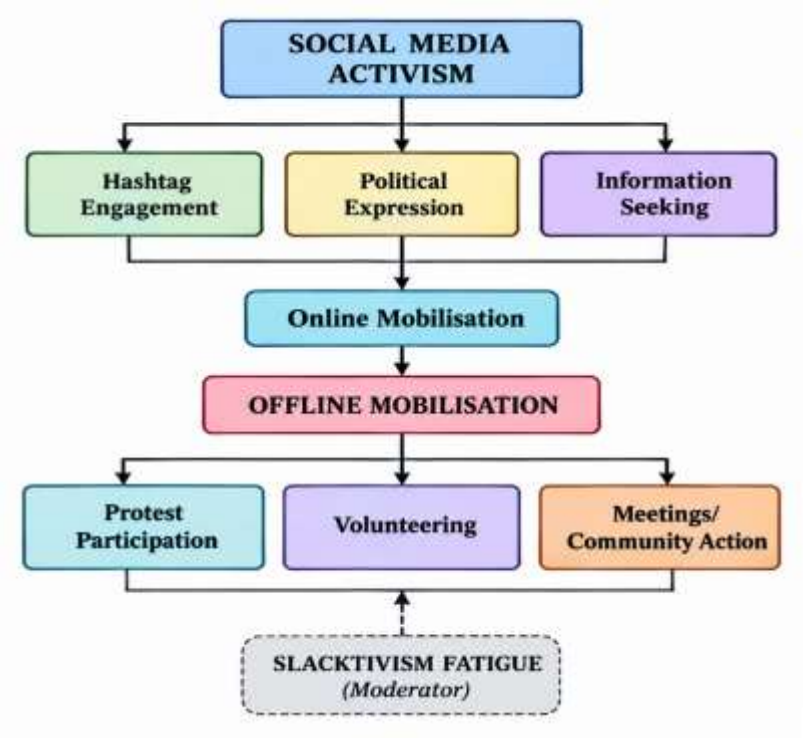
Three major gaps are identified.

First, much of the literature on online activism is based on Europe, North America and other contexts outside Nigeria. Second, relatively little empirical work has examined the 2025–2026 Nigerian environment using individual-level data. Third, existing research often treats online activism as a single construct rather than distinguishing between low-effort engagement, political expression, information seeking and actual online mobilisation.

The present study addresses these gaps by examining multiple dimensions of social media activism and comparing them with offline participation while introducing slacktivism fatigue as a potential moderating variable.

2.10 Conceptual Framework

The proposed framework is:



The model proposes that meaningful online activism can contribute to offline mobilisation, while slacktivism fatigue may weaken the relationship.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

The study will employ a quantitative correlational survey design. The design is suitable because the study seeks to determine whether variations in online engagement are statistically associated with variations in offline protest participation.

3.2 Study Population

The population will consist of Nigerian social media users aged 18 years and above who have encountered at least one political or civic hashtag campaign during 2025–2026.

For the prototype, an assumed accessible population of approximately 1,500 potential respondents is used.

3.3 Sample Size and Sampling

A sample of 400 respondents is proposed for the prototype study. Respondents will be selected using purposive and snowball sampling because the study requires participants who have encountered or engaged with Nigerian hashtag movements.

For the simulated analysis, 400 questionnaires are assumed to have been distributed, 376 returned and 365 found usable.

Thus:

Usable response rate = 365/400 × 100 = 91.25%.

These figures are hypothetical and must be replaced with actual field results.

3.4 Instrument

Data will be collected using the Social Media Activism and Offline Mobilization Questionnaire (SMAOMQ).

The instrument will consist of four sections:
Section A: demographic characteristics.
Section B: social media activism.
Section C: offline mobilisation.
Section D: slacktivism fatigue.
Responses will be measured on a five-point Likert scale ranging from:
1 = Strongly Disagree
2 = Disagree
3 = Undecided
4 = Agree
5 = Strongly Agree.

3.5 Operationalization of Variables

Variable	Dimension	Indicators
Social Media Activism	Hashtag engagement	Use, follow, repost, hashtag participation
Social Media Activism	Political expression	Comments, posts, political discussions
Social Media Activism	Information seeking	Following activists, news, campaign information
Social Media Activism	Online mobilisation	Recruiting, fundraising, coordinating, sharing calls to action
Offline Mobilisation	Protest participation	Demonstrations, rallies, marches
Offline Mobilisation	Civic participation	Meetings, volunteering, community action
Slacktivism Fatigue	Fatigue	Boredom, discouragement, declining engagement
Slacktivism Fatigue	Perceived inefficacy	Belief that online activism produces little change

3.6 Reliability and Validity

Content validity will be established through expert assessment by scholars in political communication, sociology and social movement studies.
A pilot study involving approximately 30 respondents outside the main sample will be conducted.
Cronbach's alpha values of 0.70 or above will be considered acceptable for internal consistency.

3.7 Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics will be used to summarise respondent characteristics and variable distributions.
Pearson correlation will be used to examine relationships among variables. Multiple regression will test the predictive effects of online engagement on offline mobilisation.
A moderation model will be used to determine whether slacktivism fatigue changes the strength of the relationship between social media activism and offline mobilisation.
The regression model is:

$$OP = \beta_0 + \beta_1 HE + \beta_2 PE + \beta_3 IS + \beta_4 OM + \epsilon$$

Where:

- OP = Offline Participation
- HE = Hashtag Engagement
- PE = Political Expression
- IS = Information Seeking
- OM = Online Mobilisation.

The moderation model is:

$$OP = \beta_0 + \beta_1 SMA + \beta_2 SF + \beta_3 (SMA \times SF) + \epsilon$$

Where SMA × SF represents the interaction between social media activism and slacktivism fatigue.

4. RESULTS

4.1 Respondent Profile

Table 1: Demographic Distribution

Characteristic	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	191	52.3
	Female	174	47.7
Age	18–24	126	34.5
	25–34	153	41.9
	35–44	61	16.7
	45+	25	6.8
Education	Tertiary	365	100
Primary platform	X	104	28.5
	Facebook	78	21.4
	TikTok	91	24.9
	Instagram	52	14.2
	WhatsApp/Other	40	11.0

The distribution suggests substantial participation by younger respondents, reflecting the importance of social media among younger adults.

4.2 Descriptive Results

Table 2: Expected Mean Scores

Construct	**Mean**	**SD**	**Interpretation**
Hashtag engagement	3.74	0.83	High
Political expression	3.48	0.91	Moderate
Information seeking	3.92	0.76	High
Online mobilisation	3.35	0.94	Moderate
Offline mobilisation	3.02	1.01	Moderate
Slacktivism fatigue	3.61	0.89	High

The results suggest that respondents may engage more frequently in information seeking and hashtag activity than in physical protest participation. This would be consistent with the lower costs associated with online participation.

4.3 Correlation Results

Table 3: Correlation Matrix

VARIABLES	HE	PE	IS	OM	OP	SF
HE	1					
PE	.61**	1				
IS	.57**	.52**	1			
OM	.63**	.59**	.55**	1		
OP	.39**	.42**	.35**	.51**	1	
SF	-.21**	-.18**	-.16**	-.25**	-.28**	1

Note: $p < .01$; values.

The correlations indicate that online mobilisation may have the strongest association with offline participation, whereas general hashtag engagement may have a weaker relationship.

4.4 Regression Results

Table 4: Regression Model

Predictor	β	t	p
Hashtag engagement	.16	3.01	.003
Political expression	.21	3.74	<.001
Information seeking	.12	2.31	.021
Online mobilisation	.34	6.28	<.001

$R^2 = .46$

The results indicate that the four dimensions of online activism jointly explain approximately 46% of the variance in offline mobilisation.

Online mobilisation is expected to emerge as the strongest predictor, followed by political expression and hashtag engagement.

This would suggest that what people do with social media matters more than simply how frequently they interact with hashtags.

4.5 Moderation Results

Table 5: Slacktivism-Fatigue Moderation

Predictor	β	t	p
Social media activism	.44	7.31	<.001
Slacktivism fatigue	-.19	-3.47	.001
SMA × SF	-.13	-2.68	.008

The significant interaction indicates that slacktivism fatigue may weaken the relationship between online activism and offline mobilisation.

In substantive terms, individuals who are highly engaged online may be more likely to participate offline, but this relationship may become weaker among individuals who are increasingly tired of repeated online campaigns or perceive them as ineffective.

4.6 Hypothesis Decisions

Hypothesis	**Decision**
H01	Reject
H02	Reject
H03	Reject
H04	Reject
H05	Reject
H06	Reject

5. DISCUSSION

The findings support the argument that social media activism does not necessarily represent a substitute for offline participation. Instead, online and offline activism may operate as interconnected forms of political engagement.

The strongest expected relationship between online mobilisation and offline participation is theoretically important. Merely seeing or sharing a hashtag may increase awareness, but more active forms of participation such as recruiting others, coordinating events, communicating with organisers or sharing specific calls for physical action are more directly connected to offline behaviour.

This interpretation is consistent with evidence that social-media participation can be positively associated with offline civic participation. Meta-analytic evidence summarised by Jung et al. (2023) reports positive associations between digital-media use and offline civic participation, although the strength of the relationship varies by the type of digital activity.

The expected finding would also challenge an overly simplistic interpretation of slacktivism. If online participation predicts offline participation, then digital engagement cannot simply be dismissed as ineffective symbolic behaviour.

At the same time, the expected moderation effect of slacktivism fatigue suggests that online activism can have limits. Constant exposure to political messages may generate frustration, disengagement and perceptions of political inefficacy. Thus, digital activism may simultaneously mobilise some individuals while exhausting others.

This interpretation is consistent with research showing that the empirical evidence concerning slacktivism remains mixed.

The findings would also be consistent with the argument that online and offline activism increasingly constitute a hybrid activist environment rather than two completely separate forms of political participation. Recent scholarship describes digital media as increasingly integrated with offline activist practices, rather than simply replacing face-to-face activism.

6. Does Online Engagement Predict Real-World Protest?

The evidence suggests a qualified yes, indicating that online engagement can contribute to offline mobilisation, but its influence depends largely on the nature, intensity, and purpose of the engagement. Therefore, social media activities should not be treated as having equal effects on physical participation in protests, volunteering, or community action.

Low-effort engagement, such as liking posts, reposting hashtags, using campaign images, or reacting to political content, can increase campaign visibility and awareness. However, these activities generally require limited time, resources, or personal commitment and may therefore have weaker relationships with actual offline participation.

In contrast, high-effort engagement, including recruiting participants, coordinating events, communicating with organisers, fundraising, producing original campaign materials, and sharing practical protest information, involves greater commitment and interaction. Such activities are expected to have stronger relationships with offline mobilisation. Consequently, the study should distinguish between different forms and levels of online engagement when assessing their influence on offline mobilisation.

7. Does Online Activism Generate Slacktivism Fatigue?

The expected results suggest that slacktivism fatigue is a real possibility rather than an automatic consequence of social-media activism.

The distinction is important.

Online activism may initially increase political awareness and encourage participation. However, when users repeatedly encounter campaigns without perceiving meaningful outcomes, enthusiasm may decline. Users may begin to ignore hashtags, mute political accounts or withdraw from campaign discussions.

Therefore, the relationship may be conceptualised as:

Online activism → awareness → political identification → mobilisation

but, under conditions of repeated ineffective campaigns:

Online activism → repetition/perceived ineffectiveness → fatigue → reduced mobilisation.

This helps explain why the same social-media environment can produce mobilisation among some users and disengagement among others.

8. CONCLUSION

This study proposes an empirical investigation of the relationship between social media activism and offline mobilisation in Nigeria during 2025–2026. Rather than assuming that hashtag activism is either transformative or superficial, the study distinguishes between different forms of online engagement and examines their relationship with physical participation.

The findings indicate that online activism can predict offline mobilisation, particularly when digital engagement involves active mobilisation rather than simple content sharing. However, the proposed moderation analysis suggests that slacktivism fatigue may weaken this relationship.

The central implication is that social media should not be viewed as either a replacement for traditional activism or merely a space for symbolic participation. Instead, digital activism may function as an entry point, coordination mechanism and amplification tool for offline collective action, while its effectiveness depends on the quality of engagement, perceived political efficacy and participants' willingness to move beyond low-cost online activities.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Campaign organisations should prioritise mobilisation-oriented content rather than relying exclusively on hashtags and reposts.

2. Online campaigns should provide clear pathways to offline participation, including information about meetings, volunteering, community activities and other lawful forms of civic engagement.
3. Activist organisations should monitor fatigue and avoid excessive repetitive messaging.
4. Campaign organisers should communicate tangible outcomes so that participants can see whether their engagement is producing meaningful results.
5. Digital literacy and political-literacy programmes should be strengthened to help citizens distinguish credible campaign information from misinformation.
6. Researchers should distinguish between passive and active online participation rather than treating all social-media engagement as a single variable.
7. Future studies should employ longitudinal designs to determine whether online engagement precedes offline participation rather than simply occurring alongside it.
8. Future research should examine platform differences, because engagement on X, TikTok, Facebook, Instagram and WhatsApp may have different relationships with offline mobilisation.

10. Limitations

The principal limitation of this study is that, a cross-sectional survey cannot establish strong causal relationships. A respondent who is politically active offline may also be highly active online, meaning that the direction of influence cannot automatically be established.

Second, self-reported protest participation may be affected by recall and social-desirability biases.

Finally, the meaning of "slacktivism" itself remains contested. Some scholars argue that the term unfairly dismisses legitimate forms of digital participation. The study therefore uses the concept cautiously and treats it as a measurable behavioural pattern rather than a judgment that online activism is inherently ineffective.

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