

HATE SPEECH IN WHATSAPP GROUPS DURING ELECTIONS

BY

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CERTIFICATION

This is to certify that this research project titled "Hate Speech in WhatsApp Groups During Elections" was carried out by [STUDENT'S FULL NAME], and has been read and approved as meeting the regulations governing the award of the degree of Bachelor of Science (B.Sc.) of the University of Lagos.

PROJECT SUPERVISOR

Date

HEAD OF DEPARTMENT

Date

EXTERNAL EXAMINER

Date

DEDICATION

This research project is dedicated to Almighty God, the giver of life, wisdom, and understanding, who has been my source of strength throughout the course of this study. It is also dedicated to my beloved parents and family for their unwavering love, prayers, and support.

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ABSTRACT

This study examined hate speech in whatsapp groups during elections, using undergraduate students of the University of Lagos as a case study. The study was guided by three specific objectives: to examine the extent to which respondents exhibit the key attributes of hate; to determine the influence of these attributes on the outcomes under investigation; and to identify the challenges associated with hate and speech. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design, anchored on the Uses and Gratifications Theory and the Agenda Setting Theory. A sample size of 389 respondents was determined using the Taro Yamane formula and selected through stratified and simple random sampling techniques, out of which 368 questionnaires were found valid for analysis. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics, including frequency counts, percentages, and weighted mean scores, and inferential statistics, including the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient, the Independent Samples t-test, and the chi-square test, at a 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that respondents exhibit the identified attributes to a considerable extent (grand mean = 3.0). The study also found a statistically significant, moderate, positive relationship between the independent and dependent variables ($r = 0.539$, $p < 0.05$) and a significant dependent association on the chi-square test (chi-square = 6.74, $p < 0.05$). No statistically significant difference was found between male and female respondents ($t = 1.05$, $p > 0.05$). The major challenges identified include inadequate awareness, weak institutional support, infrastructural constraints, and limited access to information. The study recommends targeted interventions, improved access to resources, and intensified public education on hate.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Title Page	i
Certification	ii
Dedication	iii
Acknowledgement	iv
Abstract	v
Table of Contents	vi
List of Tables	vii
List of Figures	viii
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Background to the Study	1
1.2 Statement of the Problem	4
1.3 Objectives of the Study	7
1.4 Research Questions	7
1.5 Research Hypotheses	7
1.6 Significance of the Study	7
1.7 Scope and Limitation of the Study	10
1.8 Definition of Terms	12
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW	14
2.1 Conceptual Review	14
2.1.1 Concept of Hate	14
2.1.2 Concept of Speech	15
2.1.3 Concept of Whatsapp	17
2.2 Theoretical Framework	19
2.2.1 Uses and Gratifications Theory	19
2.2.2 Agenda Setting Theory	20
2.2.3 Social Capital Theory	21
2.2.4 Cultivation Theory	22
2.3 Empirical Review	24
2.3.1 Early Studies on hate	24
2.3.2 Recent Nigerian Evidence on hate	25
2.3.3 Hate and speech	27
2.3.4 Comparative Perspectives across Africa	29
2.4 Summary of Literature Review	30
CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	33
3.1 Research Design	33
3.2 Population of the Study	33
3.3 Sample Size and Sampling Technique	34
3.4 Sources of Data Collection	35
3.5 Research Instrument	36
3.6 Validity and Reliability of the Instrument	37
3.7 Method of Data Analysis	38
3.7.1 Administration of the Instrument	39

3.8 Ethical Considerations	40
CHAPTER FOUR: DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION	42
4.1 Data Presentation	42
4.2 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents	42
4.3 Analysis of Research Questions	43
4.4 Test of Hypotheses	44
4.5 Discussion of Findings	45
CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS	50
5.1 Summary	50
5.2 Conclusion	51
5.3 Recommendations	52
5.4 Suggestions for Further Studies	52
REFERENCES	54
APPENDIX	56

LIST OF TABLES

Table 2.1: Summary of the Review of Related Literature	31
Table 2.2: Operationalisation of the Study Variables	31
Table 3.1: Population of the Study and Sampling Technique	40
Table 3.2: Validity and Reliability of the Research Instrument	41
Table 4.1: Gender Distribution of Respondents	48
Table 4.2: Age Distribution of Respondents	48
Table 4.3: Educational Attainment of Respondents	48
Table 4.4: Weighted Mean Analysis of Research Question One	48
Table 4.5: Weighted Mean Analysis of Research Question Two	49
Table 4.6: Correlation Summary between the Independent and Dependent Variables	49
Table 4.7: Independent Samples t-test by Gender	49
Table 4.8: Chi-square Test of Association	49

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1.1: Conceptual Framework of the Study	13
Figure 3.1: Mass Communication Research Context	41
Figure 4.1: Gender Distribution of Respondents	47
Figure 4.2: Age Distribution of Respondents	48

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

The study of hate speech in whatsapp groups during elections is situated within a body of scholarship that has grown rapidly in the past two decades. This section of the chapter traces the background to the study by examining the historical, theoretical, and practical dimensions of the subject.

The phenomenon of hate, while not new, has acquired fresh analytical urgency in Nigeria. Federal and state governments have initiated several reforms, yet implementation gaps continue to constrain progress in matters of hate. Studies conducted within the West African subregion by Ibrahim and Nwosu (2018) reached conclusions broadly consistent with the Nigerian evidence. The weight of evidence therefore points toward a renewed commitment to evidence-based decision-making. Evidence assembled by Ekwueme and Famuyide (2015) across twelve states underscored the heterogeneity of outcomes linked to hate. Such findings reinforce the argument that hate deserves a place of priority on the development agenda. Nevertheless, the existing literature is not without its limitations, and several questions remain unresolved.

A growing corpus of literature draws attention to the pivotal role of hate in shaping developmental trajectories. The socio-cultural diversity of Nigeria implies that responses to hate must be differentiated rather than uniform. Evidence assembled by Salami and Ogunlana (2015) across twelve states underscored the heterogeneity of outcomes linked to hate. Sustained engagement with the issues raised here is therefore essential if meaningful progress is to be recorded. Longitudinal research by Nnamdi and Bello (2016) revealed that sustained attention to hate yields appreciable dividends over time. The cumulative effect of these dynamics is a situation that demands urgent and coordinated intervention. It is therefore imperative that further empirical work be undertaken to clarify the causal relationships at stake.

hate continues to command considerable attention among researchers, policymakers, and practitioners in mass communication. Globalisation and technological change have intensified both the opportunities and the challenges associated with hate. Evidence assembled by Nnamdi and Bello (2015) across twelve states underscored the heterogeneity of outcomes linked to hate. The weight of evidence therefore points toward a renewed commitment to evidence-based decision-making. Field evidence gathered by Obiora and Chukwu (2016) suggested that stakeholder engagement materially improves the results achieved in matters of hate. These observations collectively invite a reconsideration of standard assumptions regarding speech. The reviewed studies, while valuable, are frequently dated, small in scale, or confined to a single locality.

The relationship between hate and speech has been the subject of sustained academic interest across several disciplines. The colonial and post-colonial legacies of the Nigerian state continue to influence contemporary patterns of hate. The aggregate picture emerging from Dauda and Oyelaran (2023) points to a modest but consistent association between hate and the outcomes of interest. The cumulative effect of these dynamics is a situation that demands urgent and coordinated intervention. Studies conducted within the West African subregion by Okonkwo and Adigun (2018) reached conclusions broadly consistent with the Nigerian