



**THE PERCEPTION OF TWITTER CONCERNING POLITICAL
COMMUNICATION, MARKETING OF PRODUCTS AND SERVICES,
BRAND ENGAGEMENT AND FREEDOM OF SPEECH IN NIGERIA**

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**A DISSERTATION COMPLETED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT FOR THE
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ABSTRACT

BACKGROUND: In many academic and professional literatures, the growing and diverse interest in the user perception of Twitter has been established. User perception is important to creators of mobile applications and technologies as well as product manufacturers who collect such data to improve user experience and connect more with their target consumers. However, in a repressive society such as Nigeria, venturing into a multidisciplinary research area involving political communication, marketing, branding, and freedom of expression is both tempting on one hand and fulfils a research gap on the other hand. Most studies that have investigated user perception with regard to Twitter have focused on one or two of the dimensions. However, since marketing and branding will thrive better in a free society with less repression, examining this study from the point of view of Nigerian Twitter users vis-à-vis politics, marketing, branding and human rights became imperative.

GAPS: Most studies that have examined user perception of Twitter have focused on single areas of measurements such as disaster management, health dissemination and management, marketing and advertising, brand engagement or politics. However, examining marketing and brand engagement in a repressive context could develop insights that would be beneficial for society and industry (platform companies such as Twitter).

METHODOLOGY: This is a deductive research which employed the correlation design and quantitative research method to collect data from 155 Twitter users in Nigeria through the convenience sampling technique. Data were analysed using Pearson Correlation Coefficient.

RESULTS: Four null hypotheses developed for the study were rejected and their null counterparts accepted since the P-values of the null hypotheses were found to be less than the level of significance (0.05). The research shows that while there is a strong, significant and positive relationship between Twitter users' perception and political communication and exercise of the freedom of expression, there was weak but significant relationship between Twitter users' perception and marketing of products and services and brand engagement.

CONTRIBUTIONS: This is a multidisciplinary research study which validates previous studies whose findings show a significant and positive correlation between Twitter users' perception and political communication and exercise of the freedom of speech. In addition, this study shows that in repressive societies, Twitter users like those in Nigeria, may use Twitter to engage more in political communication and freedom of speech than marketing of services and brand engagement.

CONCLUSION: Twitter needs to overcome the threat that fake news poses to the world and the Nigerian society even as users engage in political communication and the exercise of their freedom of speech. Twitter also needs to expose/train users on how to benefit from its platform in the area of marketing of their products and services and brand engagements. This becomes a win-win for all parties.

Keywords: Perception, Twitter, Political Communication, Marketing, Brand Engagement, Freedom of Speech, Nigeria

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

Although Twitter is not among the leading Big Five international technology companies also referred to as FAMAG (Facebook, Amazon, Microsoft, Apple and Google), the international company has become an important global microblogging platform which gives a voice to the voiceless and visibility to the hitherto invisible members of the human populations in different countries of the world (Olaitan, 2021). It has been acknowledged as an important platform that users utilise to air or share their political views or engage in political activism or activate their rights to freedom of speech which leave some nations' leaders and elite very uncomfortable because of the growing popularity, empowerment and enfranchisement these provide their citizens (Adamu *et al.*, 2021). The success of the #Blacklivesmatter, #BringBackOurGirls and #ENDSARS movements are some direct cases which illustrate how Twitter empowers/enfranchises the silent majority, globalises their struggles and activism, and attracts support to them from different parts of the world.

Twitter has also been engaged in the connection of the people of the world, hence driving the globalisation train and connecting one part of the world with other parts of the world (Bednarek, *et al.*, 2022). In addition, Twitter has become a platform which supports the employment and income needs of employees who are facing a changing labour market (Bicen and Cavus, 2012). This market has been subject to the influences by new technologies such as the internet of things, artificial intelligence, Big Data, machine learning and others (Bicen, 2014). Through these new technologies, numerous jobs, including freelance and remote work for many interested job candidates including millennials, are created (Van der Bend *et al.*, 2022).

Similarly, Twitter is now used by new and established businesses to platform their brand promotion and marketing activities resulting in greater customer engagement and sales revenues respectively for the companies concerned (Giger *et al.*, 2021; Haman, 2020). For example, there is no serious international organisation without a presence on Twitter (Morshed *et al.*, 2021). Since companies go to where their customers can be found and since customer engagement offers companies many benefits to engage with their customers, address their challenges or concerns through multiple question-and-answer sessions and provide real-time solutions to problems raised by customers, Twitter as a social network has become one of the preferred choices for international and domestic businesses (Nababan, Mahendra and Budi, 2022).

Nigeria is one of the countries in which a large number of Twitter users are found (Olaitan, 2021). Therefore, in this proposed study, there is an attempt to understand the perception of users and consumers in Nigeria regarding Twitter in the areas of political communication, marketing of products and services, brand engagement and freedom of speech. This research could unveil interesting research findings for the body of literature on the role of social networks, particularly Twitter in an emerging economy.

1.2 Rationale for the Research

Understanding the role of a social media network such as Twitter is good for business, for government and also for society (Kejriwa, Wang and Wang, 2021). However, there appears to be multiple opinions and findings in this regard which require future research investigations in this area. For context, there is not a resolution pertaining to the use of Twitter and the significance of such relationship to business, political communication, brand engagement and freedom of expression. In fact, most previous studies have examined these issues with single variables which they focused on (Nababan, *et al.*, 2017). It therefore behooves future research to interrogate this subject focusing on the perception of Twitter in an emerging economy such as Nigeria in the areas of political communication, marketing of products and services, brand engagement and freedom of expression.

There have been ongoing research efforts to understand how social networks are being perceived and used in the modern society (Imhonopi and Urim, 2021). While some studies affirm that the role of social media networks such as Twitter is good for business, for government and also for society (Kejriwa, *et al.*, 2021; Olaitan, 2021), others have highlighted the issues of fake news and

different challenges facing their role in society (Musa, 2021; Haman, 2020). Twitter, particularly, as a social media network has been studied copiously in the literature regarding the different roles it serves for its users in the contemporary society (Harp *et al.*, 2021).

Although, it has been accused of allowing fake news on its platforms or supporting dissident voices (Ojedokun, Ogunleye, and Aderinto, 2021), Twitter appears to promote democratic norms and civil engagements while expanding the civic space through its global network (Oladapo and Ojebode, 2021). This study proposes to investigate or measure the perception of Twitter in Nigeria. This is important because on the 4th of June 2021, Twitter was banned in Nigeria (Anyim, 2021). This appears to be a result of executive arrogance or egocentricity of the Nigerian President whose tweet on 1st of June 2021 was deleted by Twitter for its genocidal threat against the Igbos (Musa, 2021). The Igbos are one of the three major ethnic groups in Nigeria who had fought a bloody Civil War with the Nigerian government between 1967-1970 in which millions of civilians and combatants died (Anyim, 2021). That tweet, which was deleted by Twitter for having violated its policy had threatened to reprise what appears to be a genocide (Musa, 2021).

Although Twitter has been restored in the country after 222 days of suspension, the importance of Twitter to Nigeria started to emerge. For instance, Nigeria was said to have lost \$6 million USD every single day during the period of the suspension (about \$1,322,000,000 for 222 days), whereas the Lagos Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI) claims the country lost close to N11 trillion during the suspension (James, 2022).

This is why further understanding the consumer or user perception of Twitter in Nigeria will deepen scholarship in this area.

1.3 Research Questions

The current inquiry will attempt to answer the following questions:

- i. Is there a significant relationship between users' perception of Twitter and its engagement for online political communication in Nigeria?
- ii. Is there a significant relationship between consumers' perception of Twitter and its engagement for marketing of products and services in Nigeria?
- iii. Is there a significant relationship between consumers' perception of Twitter and its use for brand engagement in Nigeria?

- iv. Is there a significant relationship between users' perception of Twitter and its engagement for freedom of expression in Nigeria?

1.4 Research Objectives

The main aim of this research is to investigate consumers' perception of Twitter in Nigeria regarding political communication, marketing of products and services, brand engagement and freedom of speech in Nigeria. The following objectives will help in the achievement of this aim.

- i. Examine whether there is a significant and positive relationship between users' perception of Twitter and its engagement for online political communication in Nigeria.
- ii. Evaluate if there is a significant and positive relationship between consumers' perception of Twitter and its engagement for marketing of products and services in Nigeria.
- iii. Investigate whether there is a significant and positive relationship between consumers' perception of Twitter and its use for brand engagement in Nigeria.
- iv. Find out if there is a significant and positive relationship between users' perception of Twitter and its engagement for freedom of expression in Nigeria.

1.5 Research Hypotheses

The formulated hypotheses for this study in their null forms are as follows:

- i. There is no significant relationship between users' perception of Twitter and its engagement for online political communication.
- ii. There is no significant relationship between consumers' perception of Twitter and its engagement for marketing of products and services.
- iii. There is no significant relationship between consumers' perception of Twitter and its use for brand engagement.
- iv. There is no significant relationship between users' perception of Twitter and its engagement for freedom of expression.

1.6 Significance of the Study

This study is significant and will be making theoretical and practical contributions to the literature on the use of Twitter for political communication, marketing of products and services, brand engagement and freedom of speech.

Social media networks are increasingly becoming part of the daily experiences of human beings all over the world (GBend, et al., 2022). Their importance is highlighted by the millions and billions of followers who follow them, daily visit them and interact with friends, family, acquaintances, brands, social media influencers and companies in many parts of the world. Because of their real-time information dissemination and the global reach of such disseminated information, social media networks are increasingly being used for political communication, marketing of products and services, brand engagement and freedom of speech. However, because existing literature has only focused on a single aspect of these dimensions (either branding, marketing, political expression or freedom of speech), the current study will be investigating these dimensions in this research as they are perceived by users in Nigeria. Such a novel approach is likely to generate theoretical insights which can be useful for future research in this area.

Practically, business organisations are increasingly gathering information to better understand how users of social media networks perceive their brand and offerings. This study will be useful to them particularly brands in Nigeria so that can better understand how consumers who are Twitter users perceive their brand engagement strategies, and their marketing propositions and campaigns. The study will also be useful to the Nigerian government and its state institutions as findings will show how Twitter is increasingly becoming an outlet that enables the political communication and freedom of speech of Nigerians.

1.7 Structure of the Dissertation

This research will be based on a five-chapter structure as explained below:

Chapter One presents the topic of the research, rationale for the research, and goes further to list the research questions, objectives and hypotheses that will be addressed in the study. In the same chapter, the significance of the study and structure of the dissertation will be highlighted.

Chapter Two is a critical evaluation of the review of existing literature on the subject of inquiry. Particularly, concepts used in the study will be clarified and the independent and dependent variables (perception of Twitter users regarding political communication, marketing of products and services, brand engagement and freedom of speech) will be discussed. This will help to

establish the research gaps that the study is aiming to address while at the same time provide a theoretical basis with findings to be validated by the current study.

Chapter Three is an academic snapshot of the research methodology and will be examining the research philosophy, design, method, choice of instrument of data collection and analysis and research ethics.

In chapter four, findings from the data analysis will be presented and discussed.

The conclusion and recommendations of the study will be presented in chapter five.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews relevant and previous literature on the subject of the perception of Twitter as a social media platform and its uses for political communication, marketing of products and services, brand engagement and freedom of speech. Sections covered include providing a discussion on user or consumer perception of Twitter and how Twitter is perceived in Nigeria by its users. Thereafter, there will be a discussion on the user perception of Twitter with regard to

political communication marketing of products and services, brand engagement and freedom of speech. This discussion will help to establish the gaps in the literature which informed the present study. This is followed by a conclusion of the chapter.

2.2 User Perception of Twitter

There is a growing and diverse interest in the user perception of Twitter in many academic and professional research literatures (Atamani and Özgüner, 2021; Imhonopi and Urim, 2021). Ordinarily, it is important to mention that the significance of user perception as a concept can be seen in the efforts and investments that creators of technologies and mobile applications, product manufacturers and service providers make to ensure that they receive feedback from consumers (Yuan, et al., 2021). This feedback is to help them improve on the user/consumer experience, address challenges experienced by users/consumers and harvest their thoughts, opinions and expectations on how they would want to be better served (Fiesler and Proferes, 2018). However, for a better understanding of this concept with regard to the present study, user perception or experience is limited to social media networks. In other words, this study aims to find out how users of social networks such as Twitter perceive the network, why they use it and what their opinions are regarding it.

The growth of social media networks has brought about a lot of transformation in the contemporary society. It has equally changed the way news is produced and consumed and liberalised content production so much so that a tweet, a video or a post from a social media network user can generate global media buzz with important political, social, economic or market ramifications (Culotta and Cutter, 2016). For example, Elon Musk is known for his tweets which most times crash or pump the value of equity or crypto markets (Dyer and Kolic, 2020). Many celebrities and politicians are also known to influence public opinion, galvanise their followers or stir public support for a cause or to keep up with their local or global audiences (Houston, et al., 2018). Fake news is known to disrupt peace or cause violence in countries and societies that are already on the brink of social and ethnic fragility or are experiencing political or religious fissures (Søilen, Tontini and Aagerup, 2017). This is why, increasingly, research studies have begun to investigate user perceptions of social media networks and the purposes they serve in the society; and how these purposes can better fit the needs of a fast evolving contemporary world (Bian, et al., 2016).

In their study of the Twitterisation of journalism and the role of user perceptions of news tweets, Houston et al. (2018) focus on the examination of normative news attitudes and the positive affect regarding the usefulness of tweets and their perceived credibility. They posit that user perception shows that the Twitter platform, for example, support humorous, novel, opinionated and interesting content which may not be objective and which may be supported by a younger audience who are less bothered by journalistic objectivity. However, their research discovers that contrary to their earlier assumptions, social media sites such as Twitter are still expected to uphold credibility and journalistic objectivity in the tweets posted or content created by their users.

This finding corroborates an earlier study by Shariff, Zhang and Sanderson (2017) in which the authors seek to find out the credibility perception of news on Twitter by predicting tweet features, news attributes and reader demographics. Aside finding that Twitter users are interested in tweets that establish news credibility, their study reveals that the geo-location and educational background of readers correlate with their credibility perception. The study also affirms the significance of the writing style of tweets and features of topic keywords as indicators in establishing tweet credibility.

Beyond user perception of tweet credibility, Yuan et al. (2021) provide an analysis of the perception of users of social media networks such as Twitter. According to the authors, users of Twitter as well as other social media sites see the latter as offering them the opportunity for social networking while also helping advertisers to influence and engage with their existing and potential customers. This networking could be local, regional or global in dimension.

Social media sites as well as Twitter have been perceived as veritable platforms for reporting and managing environmental hazards, disasters and health situations which help to improve the chances of survival for victims of such unfortunate incidents. For example, in their research of the Tweet for cure and a snapshot examination of Twitter usage by 3 U.S. oncologic professional societies, Jhawar *et al.* (2017) affirm that medical societies now incorporate Twitter as a medium to connect with their patients and communicate with their members. Comparing the online presence of three major oncologic societies (the Society of Surgical Oncology (SSO), the American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO), and American Society for Radiation Oncology) by collecting and analysing their tweets in 2014, the study reveals that all three societies

demonstrate increased use of Twitter during their annual meetings and for staying in touch with members and their patients. Similarly, another study by Nair, Ramya and Sivakumar (2017) focused on the use of Twitter for disaster management during the 2015 Chennai flood. Authors of the research acknowledge the important role that social media networks play in the spread of information and relief during disaster situations which was what happened when Twitter was used to give information to affected persons during the Chennai flood in 2015. Machine learning algorithms such as Decision Tree, Naïve Bayes and Random Forests were used to analyse the tweets collected during that year.

In their study on the factors influencing social networks use for business in Romania with focus on Twitter and YouTube, Ioanid and Scarlat (2017) sought to find out how Twitter and YouTube are perceived and what benefits users derive from them. Companies in the health, energy, production, retail, information technology, services, transportation, public sector and others were included in the study. The study finds that Twitter was not suitable for Romanian companies seeking employee recruitment, networking and increase in their sales revenues while respondents were indifferent regarding its use for marketing or new customer acquisition. However, these findings contrast other research investigations which found Twitter very useful to millennials for shopping, marketing of their services or products and for brand and customer engagements (Olaitan, 2021; Olaniran, 2014). In fact, a study claims from its findings that Twitter is a business hub for entrepreneurship and environmental sustainability (Osolase, 2021). The current research is in place to address this diversity of research findings by investigating the perception of Twitter from individual users and consumers in Nigeria based on specific areas, namely, political communication, marketing of products and services, brand engagement and freedom of speech

Twitter has also proved to be useful during the COVID-19 pandemic especially in Canada and the United States as revealed in the study by Shirgaokar, Reynard and Collins (2021). According to the research study, Twitter was used in Canada and the United States to reallocate street space for bicycling and walking, ease business interactions during curbside dining and pickup and for maintaining social distancing guidelines. Using a crowdsourced dataset of 292,103 geolocated tweets, government actions regarding curbside, business, driving, walking and cycling were

analysed. The study further proves the utility of Twitter for health disaster management from the perception of users.

It appears, therefore, that literature portrays users' perceptions of Twitter based on its role in furthering political participation in local, regional and international politics, supporting consumers and companies who use the social media network for business and because it aids disaster and crisis management. These previous studies, as good as they are, individually focus on how Twitter is perceived to address singular interests or needs, namely, politics, disaster management, brand engagement and management, and health crisis management. None of the studies appraises user perception of Twitter in the areas of political communication, marketing of products and services, brand engagement and freedom of speech. Also, all of the research sites are located outside of Nigeria which means that findings may differ when compared to users' perception of Twitter in Nigeria. It is in a quest to further understand this subject that led to the current study.

2.3 User Perception of Twitter in Nigeria

The importance of Twitter among the other social media networks has been acknowledged in the literature in Nigeria. There is a sense of ambivalence in the perception of Twitter by Nigerian authorities. While many of them use the platform to canvass votes, inform citizens of government policy and generally engage their Nigerian constituents, some government institutions and politicians also perceive the network to be a purveyor of fake news which could trigger violence and uprising in multi-ethnic and very diverse country as Nigeria (NOI Polls, 2019). Nonetheless, Twitter has been generally seen to serve important purposes for its Nigerian users as will be shown in this section.

For example, Twitter has been perceived as serving as an instrument for political participation. In this light, Imhonopi and Urim (2021) critically dissect the role of social media (especially Twitter) as a perceived vehicle for citizens' participation in elections and an engenderer of the dividends of democracy in Nigeria's Fourth Republic. Their findings show that Twitter and other social media networks provide platforms which give voice to and enable citizens participate in the political process in Nigeria. While their study however finds that this may not result in the achievement of a democratic government that represents the wishes of the people owing to certain socioeconomic

contradictions in Nigeria (e.g. electoral violence, rigging, ballot snatching, etc.), the study acknowledges the power inherent in the online political activism that such networks as Twitter provide to citizens facing repressive governments in their country. However, the study only focused on the perception of Twitter in the area of political participation in Nigeria.

Onyinye's (2012) research focuses on the perception of Twitter by consumers and advertisers as a veritable advertising vehicle in Port Harcourt, Nigeria. The study explores how Twitter advertising aids in affecting consumer buying behavior and improved revenue for corporate advertisers. The study reveals that 70% of the surveyed corporate respondents perceive Twitter as a worthy advertisement vehicle and a platform for engaging their customers. The findings of study further demonstrate that 35% of advertisers claim to achieve their advertising targets and goals while more than 65% perceive Twitter as a relevant platform to inform their customers and consumers of their products and services and engage them at the same time. The study only focused on the perception of Twitter as an advertising vehicle for businesses.

More studies from Nigerian authors have also focused on how Twitter is used for the practice of the freedom of speech (Onireti, 2021; Obiaje, 2021; ICNL, 2021). For example, Obiaje (2021) examines the role of Twitter as an enabler of freedom of speech and freedom of information in Nigeria. The qualitative study perceives Twitter as the modern-day instrument for championing the rights of citizens, for constitutional jurisprudence and for due process. The study particularly identifies how Twitter permits Nigerians who own a smartphone device or personal computer to express themselves on the microblogging platform without let or hindrance. This freedom of speech however threatens the politicians in the country and was one of the reasons that led to the unfortunate genocidal tweet by the Nigerian president on 1st of June 2021 which was later deleted by Twitter for violating its policy (Musa, 2021).

These studies only focused on individual uses of Twitter in Nigeria, therefore necessitating this study which will be investigating the perception of Twitter in the following areas: political communication, marketing of products and services, brand engagement and freedom of speech

2.4 User Perception of Twitter and Political Communication

In many repressive societies as well as free societies, social media sites such as Twitter have continued to provide a platform for those without a voice to participate in the political processes

in their countries (Budi and Setiawan, 2022; Moody, et al., 2013). Generally, the perception of social media networks such as Twitter for political communication is gaining attention in the literature. What then is political communication? Political communication is an interactive process which allows for the exchange of information of political relevance between political actors and institutions, the media, and the electorate or the public (Mihálik, Garaj and Bardovic, 2022). Therefore, according to Soedarsono et al. (2020) and Abu Bakar et al. (2018), the media, which consists of the new media where social media function prominently, provide the channels through which these engagements, interactions and exchanges take place. This is why Soedarsono et al. (2020) define political communication as that relationship involving political actors or politics, citizens and the exchange channel which supports the relationship. How then do users of Twitter perceive the social media site and its support for political communication?

Twitter has been perceived as a useful tool for journalists, parties, candidates and the electorate to communicate and share political content, and information and canvass interests during elections. This is the finding of Jungherr (2016) in which the author asserts that Twitter allows different stakeholders in a political environment to interact around, comment on and research public reactions to politics. The study finds that by this role, Twitter is perceived to be performing a good job because it gives opportunity for the various segments of society to react to or comment on the political situation of their interests. This is the opportunity that was not in existence until social media sites like Twitter emerged on the scene.

In the politics of Twitter, emotions and the power of social media as an access arrow, Duncombe (2019) analyses Twitter's role as a support for user's emotional dynamics, which allow them to communicate their positions regarding the political processes and situations in their societies. The author argues that in doing this, Twitter allows the users' emotive political expressions which also provoke further emotions and could escalate or de-escalate conflict in the political environment. This study therefore implies that the end result of political communication by Twitter users can douse or inflame political conflict which is why there is growing concern in various quarters all around the world to rein in the excesses of some Twitter users who could be mischievous with the freedom to use such a site to propagate agendas which may lead to the hurts and deaths of others (Mangerotti, et al., 2021; Haman and Školník, 2021).

In Greece, Twitter has been considered as a veritable platform that provides its site for Greek citizens to engage in political communication and dialogue. According to Poulakidakos and Veneti (2019), political parties, government and politicians are now using Twitter to communicate with and engage the Greek electorate. However, the study while drawing on the concepts of propaganda and public sphere and thematically analysing tweets from two of the biggest Greek political parties (e.g. Coalition of the Radical Left and New Democracy) finds that the likelihood of dishing out propaganda which is a tool of politics is bound to happen in such Twitter engagements. Therefore, while the study acknowledges that Twitter animates political communication and participation in Greece, it fears that propagandic elements may use the opportunity to sell misinformation to the Greek electorate to suit their political interests.

Because these studies have only focused on users' perception of Twitter for political communication in different research sites, this study will do well to broaden the understanding of this subject by investigating other dimensions from Nigeria.

2.5 User Perception of Twitter and Marketing of Products and Services

Several studies have investigated the usefulness of social media sites such as Twitter for the marketing of products and services (Vanga, 2019). While some have found these sites of providing real-time, disruptive impact on how businesses now advertise or market their services or products to a local or global audience (Cripps, et al., 2020), others still feel there are immense limitations and challenges using social media sites such as Twitter solely for marketing of products and services (Gbadeyan and Boachie-Mensah, 2016).

However, in the research by Appell et al. (2019), nine themes are identified as characterising the way social media, including Twitter, are perceived for marketing in the contemporary society which affect individuals, firms and public policy. These nine themes include for individuals that social media provide consumers with an omni-social presence, help them combat loneliness and isolation and increase their sensory richness by giving them a wide array of options to pick from regarding any product or service they are interested in. For firms, social media such as Twitter now allows them to make use of influencers whose millions of followers can be made to gravitate

towards a brand just by celebrity or influencer endorsement (Oro, et al. 2019). Also, regarding the firm, social media, such as Twitter, now integrates its customer care which means that customers can now communicate their feedback in real-time using several channels unlike in the past where the options for such interactions were few. Firms now also experience complete convergence and enjoy offline and online integration in marketing their services to consumers. Appell et al. (2019) also mention that public policy is enhanced by social media such as Twitter because it tries to address privacy concerns, serves as a political tool and could be used by non-humans or social bots or robots to promote public interests. Thus, the study highlights the immense role social media including Twitter plays in the area of marketing of products and services as perceived by users but also mention the need for more security and privacy protection for users.

In the study on marketing with Twitter, investigating factors that impact on the effectiveness of tweets, Soboleva (2018) investigates how leading global brands and a large not-for-profit organisation use Twitter for marketing. By analysing organisational activity, the research finds that there is high use of Twitter within their network by commercial organisations and a not-for-profit organisation. The study also finds high retweet count achieved through electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) by the study organisations. The study further shows that tweets are effective when they include hashtags and photos which attract the attention of target users, leading to a higher retweet count. The research also finds that reciprocal promotion opportunities exist for the study organisations who could co-brand and co-create tweets that could benefit the organisations. However, the study fails to confirm whether the marketing outcomes by the organisational tweets used by the study organisation were positive. This contrasts an earlier study in Nigeria which validates the effectiveness of Twitter as a vehicle for marketing of products and services in Port Harcourt, Nigeria (Onyinye, 2012).

To further understand users' perception regarding the use of Twitter for the marketing of products and services, the current study will be attempting to validate or refute the findings made in the reviewed previous research inquiries.

2.6 User Perception of Twitter and Brand Engagement

Interest in the use of social media sites such as Twitter for brand engagement has continued to engage the attention of academic and professional researchers (Hay, 2010). This is because it has been established in the literature that one of the components of a successful brand is brand engagement (Sashi, et al., 2018). In other words, brands that care for their customers and consumers go where the latter can be found and seek ways to engage them while those that fail to do so lose out in the competitive race in their industries (Zanini, et al., 2019). Thus, consumers are being engaged on social media platforms such as Twitter by brands by posting content (pictures, tags, information, videos and others) which generate likes, retweets, comments and shares from their customers and consumers (Gretry, et al., 2017).

Brand engagement has been defined as a user's connection with and intense participation in the offerings and activities of an organisation initiated by either the user or the organisation (Al-Meshal and Al-Zohman, 2019). Brand engagement has also been defined as characterised by specific levels of cognitive, emotional, and behavioral activity in the interactions of the brand which arise from the consumers' level of motivational mental state related to the brand and dependent on what the brand does (Zor, et al. 2021). These definitions show that for brand engagement to happen, it takes both the brand and the consumer to initiate the engagement. However, from the literature successful companies are known to go where their customers can be found so as to make such engagements possible in the first place (Eriksson, et al., 2019). Gretry, et al. (2017) believe that marketers could be important in initiating brand engagement which is now considered a key measure of consumer-brand relationships and strong self-brand connections which inspire consumer loyalty and could increase brand usage intentions. According to Menon et al. (2019), brand engagement can also be measured by the number of comments, shares and likes connected to a brand's social media handle. In other words, highly engaged brands have more likes, shares and comments than those that are not highly engaged with consumers.

Pertaining to brand engagement on Twitter, the research by Garcia-Rivera et al. (2022) is worth considering here. In the study which evaluates engagement on Twitter, a closer look from the consumer electronics industry, the authors demonstrated the importance of Twitter to leading global electronic companies which is why most of them have a presence on the site. Thus, the

study shows that Amazon (@amazon), Microsoft (@Microsoft), LG Electronics (@LGUS), Huawei (@Huawei), Dell (@Dell), Lenovo (@Lenovo) among many others can be found on Twitter. According to the authors, the presence of these brands on Twitter reveals the bond and commitment the brands have with their customers because they recognise the competitive advantage they stand to enjoy when they achieve high levels of engagement with their customers. Using 30 companies and 95,000 tweets of the companies at the Consumer Electronics Show 2020, the study finds that the companies constantly tweeted about their products during the show and by so doing engaged their existing and potential customers some of whom had visited the show and wanted more information or assurances concerning the products they wanted to buy.

In an attempt to further validate these findings, the present study will be evaluating the perception of users regarding brand engagement from the optics of Nigerian consumers/Twitter users.

2.7 User Perception of Twitter and Freedom of Speech

One of the advantages that social media provides the modern society is that it gifts various members of society a voice to air their opinions, say what they see happening in and around them and participate in the freedom of speech which is a fundamental human right in most free societies (Shattuck and Risse, 2021). Although, several abuses have been recorded with this privilege (it is a right to the individual but a privilege provided by each social media platforms to users), measures are being taken by the social media platforms themselves and several governments to force social media outlets to be more responsible and accountable for their users' posts (Wilson and Hahn, 2021). This is because of the evils caused by fake news which have led to needless conflicts in many societies in which such fake news emanated from. However, this does not take away from the fact that many studies in the literature perceive social media platforms as enabling the freedom of speech of the citizens of the world (Mamangon et al., 2018). The caveat is, such individuals must have a smartphone or technology device enabled by the internet to participate in this enfranchisement or legitimation of one of human's fundamental human rights (Stolee and Caton, 2018; Alalwan, et al., 2017).

In the study on the future of freedom of speech of expression online by Aswad (2018), the author raises the questions whether social media companies should ban or tolerate hate speech, Holocaust

denial and other forms of offensive speech even as they support freedom of speech on their platforms? The author cites the United Nations in June 2018 which called on social media platforms to encode their speech standards in line with international humanitarian rights law especially the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) which promotes freedom of speech as a fundamental human right. However, the author wonders whether restrictions being demanded from social media companies by countries such as the U.S., many European, Asian and MENA countries which border on the need for these platform companies to strengthen their content moderation policies would not injure this fundamental human right being promoted by social media companies?

A vivid example was illustrated by the Twitter ban in Nigeria which happened in 2021 because Twitter had deleted a tweet by the Nigerian president Mr. Muhammadu Buhari. Anyim (2021) examines that Twitter ban in Nigeria and the implications it has on freedom of speech and information among others. Being a qualitative study, the author examines the speeches and comments of a wide cross-section of Nigerians including members of the elite, civil society, religious leaders, legal experts, industrial experts, IT-based business specialists, international organisations and the political opposition regarding the ban. The study finds that apart from the damage done to the economy through job losses, business failures, loss of foreign direct investments, and rise in the climate of investment hostility, there was an attempt to curb the freedom of expression of Nigerians and their access to and sharing of information. The study advised the government to reverse the ban in order for citizens to regain their voice of expression in an unhindered manner and for those who lost their sources of income which were connected to the platform to regain them.

Understanding where to draw the line between the exercise of the freedom of speech and ensuring strict content moderation guidelines will form another objective of the current research through the examination of the perceptions of Nigerian twitter users.

2.8 Conclusion

This study has carried out a robust review of the literature regarding the perception of Twitter concerning political communication, marketing of products and services, brand engagement and freedom of speech. Results from existing research show diversity of opinions and findings. While

there is a general agreement that social media, particularly Twitter, has revolutionised political communication, marketing of products and services by businesses and supported brand engagement activities and freedom of speech of users, it is evident that most of the studies examined this subject with focus on single variables. Also, most of the research sites which produced the extant literature are not Nigerian. This means also that existing results and findings will need to be investigated and validated by Nigerian Twitter users. By combining the various variables which were considered singly by most of the earlier studies, it is expected that the current research will be making useful contributions to the literature on the subject of users' perception regarding political communication, marketing of products and services, brand engagement and freedom of speech.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the methodology used in the investigation of the user perception of Twitter concerning political communication, marketing of products and services, brand engagement and freedom of speech in Nigeria. This chapter examines important sections that will explain the

methodology adopted for the study such as the research site, approach, design and method for data collection and analysis.

3.2 Participants, Study Setting, and Study Area

The location for this research is Nigeria. As of May 2022, Nigeria has a population of 216 million people (Macrotrends, 2022). The study area is user perception of Twitter concerning political communication, marketing of products and services, brand engagement and freedom of speech in Nigeria. Twitter is a microblogging social media platform which allows users to post micro posts which are also called tweets. These posts consist of 140 characters long and can include videos or pictures (Moody, Cohen and Fournon, 2013). Often with links to websites, pictures or videos, having a message limited in length means that tweets have to be condensed information. According to Ganninger (2021), although active Twitters may be less in number than Facebook, the platform has an unrivalled concentration of influential and engaged content creators. The unit of analysis are adults from the age of 18 years and beyond residing in Nigeria who are users and consumers of Twitter services and products with focus on how it serves their online political communication, marketing, brand engagement and freedom of speech.

3.3 The Choice of the Study Area

There are several reasons for the choice of the study area and research site. First, there are not many studies in the literature that have investigated the perception of Twitter users concerning political communication, marketing of products and services, brand engagement and freedom of speech. On the contrary, there are many studies that have examined this subject by focusing on one of the dependent variables but not all of them (Briggs, 2018; McGoldrick, 2013). Such studies have either examined the perception of Twitter users regarding political communication or freedom of speech or brand management or marketing, among other areas of focus (Chadwick, et al., 2021; Santini, et al., 2020). Also, most of the studies that have investigated this subject have

done so from other research sites (Sajjanit, 2021; Tunca, 2019). Only very few bodies of research originate from Nigeria (Onireti, 2021; Obaje, 2021).

However, the importance of this study continues to resonate in repressive societies such as Nigeria. In the country, under President Muhammadu Buhari, the nation has neared the brink of a failed state; citizens are repressed, arrested and jailed for minor offences including many that are laughable (such as naming a goat after the President) (Anyim, 2021). Also, corruption and corrupt government officials pervade the entire country and citizens are not free to express themselves like they would have done in years before the government came into power. Thus, Twitter and other social media networks are playing very critical roles, some of which are important for the salvation of the soul of Nigeria. Nevertheless, it is important to investigate this subject and compare findings with the literature. It is expected that results should expand literature on the subject matter and provide an intellectual basis on which future research can be anchored.

3.4 Approach

The approach chosen for this research investigation is deductive research. This approach is very suitable for the quantitative research method which permits the gathering of primary data from a targeted sample drawn from a population (Saunders *et al.*, 2016). The approach also permits the deployment of statistical measures which foster accuracy and objectivity in the research outcomes. By choosing this approach, the population of study will be identified and a sample drawn from it using the convenience sampling technique. Furthermore, the approach supports the development of hypotheses which are tested in the study, thus generating findings which validate or refute existing studies, thereby making the research outcomes generalisable (Okesina, 2020). This approach benefits both theory and practice and supports future research endeavours.

3.5 Research Design

The research design for this study is the correlational design. It is chosen because of its suitability in achieving the research objectives of the study. The research design allows the testing of the significant relationship between the independent variable (user perception of Twitter) and the dependent variables (political communication, marketing of products and services, brand

engagement and freedom of speech). It tests the strength, direction and significance of the relationship between those variables (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2019).

3.6 Quantitative Research Method

When using the deductive research method and the correlational design, the quantitative research method becomes preferable (David, 2018). This method is chosen because its findings or results produce reliable, consistent, accurate and straightforward research outcomes (Lawrence and Tar, 2013). The method supports the preparation and administration of a questionnaire, which is a self-managing research instrument, to a target sample for data collection and thereafter data analysis. Its research outcomes can be generalised in most instances since it allows the collection of data from a large sample. Through this method, the likelihood for objectivity and accuracy of the results is higher which means future research can duplicate the research parameters in a similar or different research context and produce comparable results.

3.6.1 Sampling Method and Technique

The sampling method adopted for the present study is the non-probability sampling method while the sampling technique to be used is convenience sampling. When there is an attempt to collect data without randomisation or probability, this sampling method becomes most suitable (Taherdoost, 2016). The convenience sampling technique is one of the techniques in the method which permits a researcher to collect data from respondents that are accessible to him or her. The justification for this sampling technique is that it is cost effective; it is easy and convenient when identifying respondents that match the criteria for participation in the study; and it is useful when exploring new subjects (Chege and Otieno, 2020).

3.6.2 Sample Size

Although the literature validates a minimum of 100 participants for quantitative research investigations, but in order to achieve greater robust research outcomes, the sample size expected for this study is between 150 and 200 participants (Burmeister and Aitken, 2012). Sample will be drawn from users and consumers of Twitter services and products residing in Nigeria with focus on how it serves their online political activism, marketing, brand engagement and freedom of speech. Respondents are expected not to be less than 18 years or above 60 years old. They are also

expected to have high literacy levels as they will be completing an online Google Form questionnaire because of the prevailing social distancing measures which do not allow for direct engagement with people because of the COVID-19 pandemic whose scare is still present in many parts of Nigeria. Through convenience sampling, the right respondents will be identified and when they give their consent to participate in the study will be given the opportunity to do so. A link will be posted on Twitter which will lead them to the online Questionnaire for easy completion. According to Saunders et al. (2016), online questionnaires have been found useful in the past for collecting quantitative data from research participants.

3.6.3 Data Collection Instrument

A self-managed or administered online Google form questionnaire will be prepared for the current research consisting of two sections. In the first section of the questionnaire instrument, statements that will address the research questions and objectives and test the research hypotheses will be featured. On the other hand, in the second section, the bio-data or socio-demographic information of the respondents will be displayed. This includes participants' gender, age, education, employment status, and industry. The sections will be used to determine the descriptive and inferential statistics of the study. While statements in the first section will be based on a five rating Likert Scale, namely, Strongly Agree (SA, or coded as 5), Agree (A, or coded as 4), Undecided (or U, or coded as 3), Disagree (D or coded as 2), and Strongly Disagree (SD or coded as 1), responses in section two will just be coded with numbers in an ascending manner.

3.6.4 Validity and Reliability of the Research Instrument

The goal here is to achieve the validity and reliability of the research instrument which is crucial for the success of the research (Haradhan, 2017). The validity and reliability of the instrument of research makes it possible and easier to measure the items in the research instrument. The structure and content of the instrument of research will be tested to ensure that its validity is guaranteed. On the contrary, to make sure that the results of the research instrument are consistent when replicated by another researcher, the instrument must be seen to have reliability. This happens when the observed score and the actual score produced by the research instrument are equals. The research instrument is seen to be reproducible, precise, credible and consistent when it has high reliability. To achieve validity and reliability of the research instrument, the questionnaire will be

administered to the researcher's colleagues as a pilot for the study. This is to ensure that the instrument's content and structure are sufficient and if not, amendments will be made to its arrangements and wordings of the content.

3.7 Data Analysis

The data analysis will be carried out reflecting both descriptive and inferential statistics using Pearson Correlation Coefficient contained in the IBM's SPSS software. The statistical technique will study the significance, strength and direction of the relationship between the independent and dependent variables as stated in the formulated hypotheses for the study. This is an important aspect of the research (Saunders *et al.*, 2016). This is expectedly so because the results produced at this section will be used to validate or refute the research hypotheses.

3.8 Ethics

Participants' consent will be sought before they are allowed to participate in the study. They will also have the right to refuse to continue with the survey at any point in the course of completing the questionnaire. Meanwhile, their data and information provided will be treated with confidentiality and anonymity. Questions that may reveal their identities will not be included in the questionnaire. Also, academic resources used in the study will be rightly cited and included in the list of references as is required for academic integrity (Contreras, Baykal and Abid, 2020).

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS, PRESENTATION AND SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the results of the data analysis, its interpretation and summary of findings. Broadly divided into two sections, this chapter features the descriptive analysis section and the inferential statistics section.

4.2 Descriptive Analysis

In this section, the results of the data analysis will be presented in tables and charts. This section summarises the demographic information and opinions of the respondents who took part in the survey. The results of the descriptive analysis are presented below:

Table 1: Age

Options	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
18-24 Years	32	20.6%	20.6%	20.6%
25-34 Years	58	37.4%	37.4%	58.1%
35-44 Years	38	24.5%	24.5%	82.6%
45-54 Years	16	10.3%	10.3%	92.9%
55-64 Years	11	7.1%	7.1%	100.0%
Total	155	100.0	100.0	

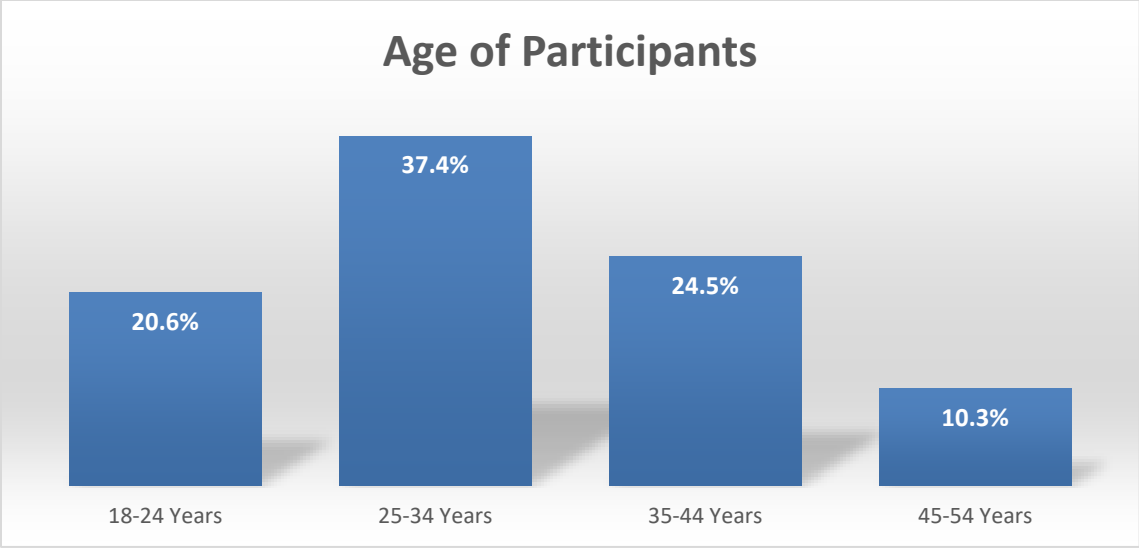


Figure 1: Age of the Respondents

Regarding the age of respondents, Table 1 and Figure 1 reveal that many respondents (37.4%) fall into the age category of 25 – 34 years, while others in a descending order are within the following age categories: 35 – 44 years (24.6%), 18 – 24 years (20.6%) and 45 – 54 years (10.3%). This suggests that only persons of legal age participated in the survey and therefore their responses could emanate experience and maturity. Also, while this may not be definitive because of the sample size, it appears that in the survey, participants within the age of 25 and 34 years were more than the other age categories. Could reflect the earning ability of participants who at this point in their lives should have a job or career, earn a living, afford to own a smartphone and data to participate on Twitter. According to Kelfve et al. (2020), research involving participants of legal age tends to reflect awareness, experience and knowledge which can generate quality responses and data.

Table 2: Gender

Options	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Male	82	52.9%	52.9%	52.9%
Female	70	45.2%	45.2%	98.1%
No Response	3	1.9%	1.9%	100.0%
Total	155	100.0	100.0	

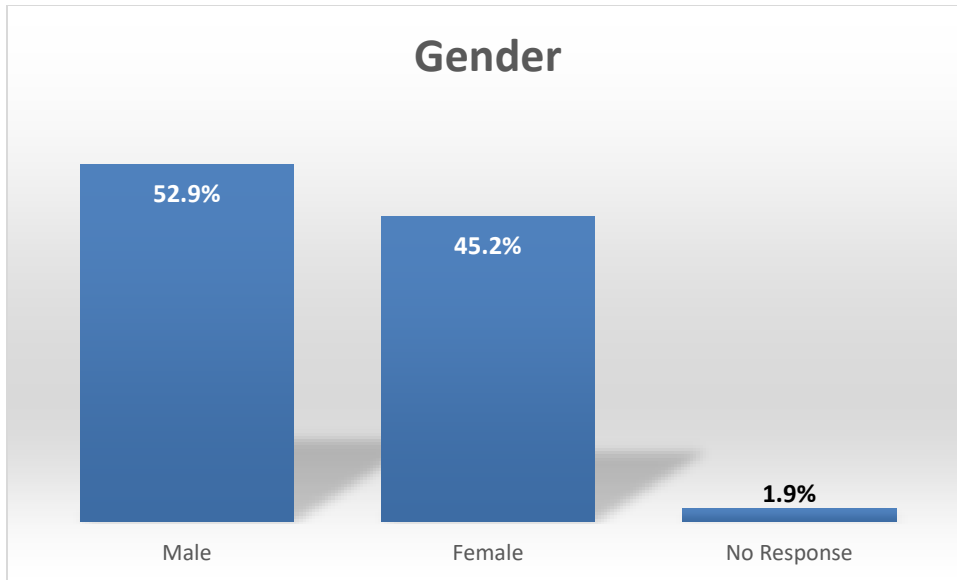


Figure 2: Gender of the Participants

Concerning Table 2 and Figure 2, more male Twitter users (52.9%) participated in the survey than female Twitter users (45.2%) while 1.9% of the respondents chose not to reveal their gender identities. While there is no consensus regarding gender use of social media platforms such as Twitter (GBend, et al., 2022; Olaitan, 2021), statistics show that Twitter has more male users than female users (Statista, 2022).

Table 3: Twitter Usage

Options	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Everyday	80	51.6%	51.6%	51.6%
Once in three days	61	39.4%	39.4%	91.0%
Once a week	14	9.0%	9.0%	100.0%
Total	155	100.0	100.0	

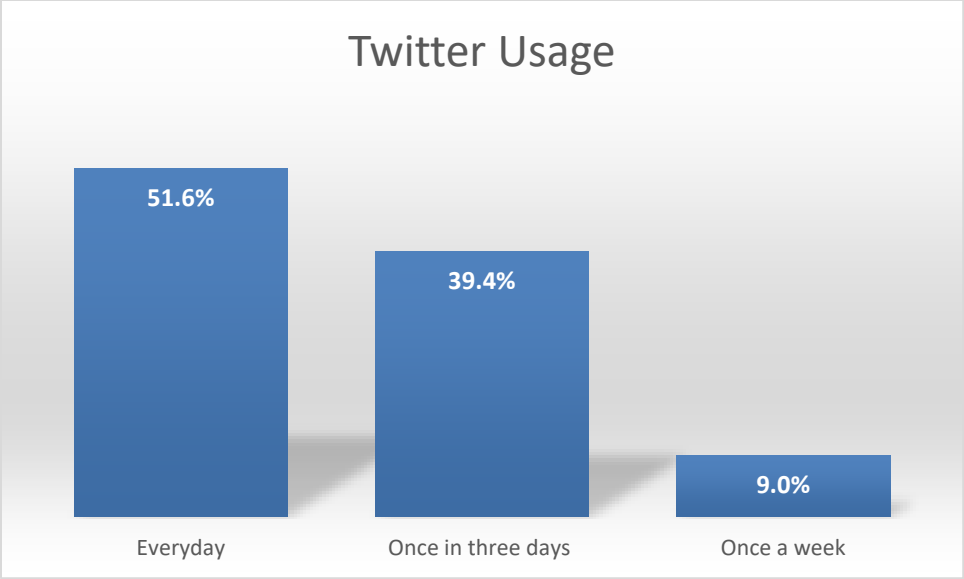


Figure 3: Twitter Usage

Table 3 and Figure 3 show that more participants (51.6%) use Twitter every single day while 39.4% and 9.0% of the respondents use it once in three days and once a week respectively. This confirms Sule’s (2021) and Varrella’s (2021) positions that many Nigerians find Twitter useful for various purposes which is why many were affected by the Twitter ban by the administration of President Muhammadu Buhari and had to resort to the use of VPN to navigate the ban which lasted for 222 days.

Table 4: What do you use Twitter for?

Twitter Activities	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
To participate in political discussion/ engage in political activities	51	32.9%	32.9%	32.9%
To market products and services	30	19.4%	19.4%	52.3%
To support brand engagement	25	16.1%	16.1%	68.4%
To exercise my freedom of speech	49	31.6%	31.6%	100.0%
Total	155	100.0	100.0	

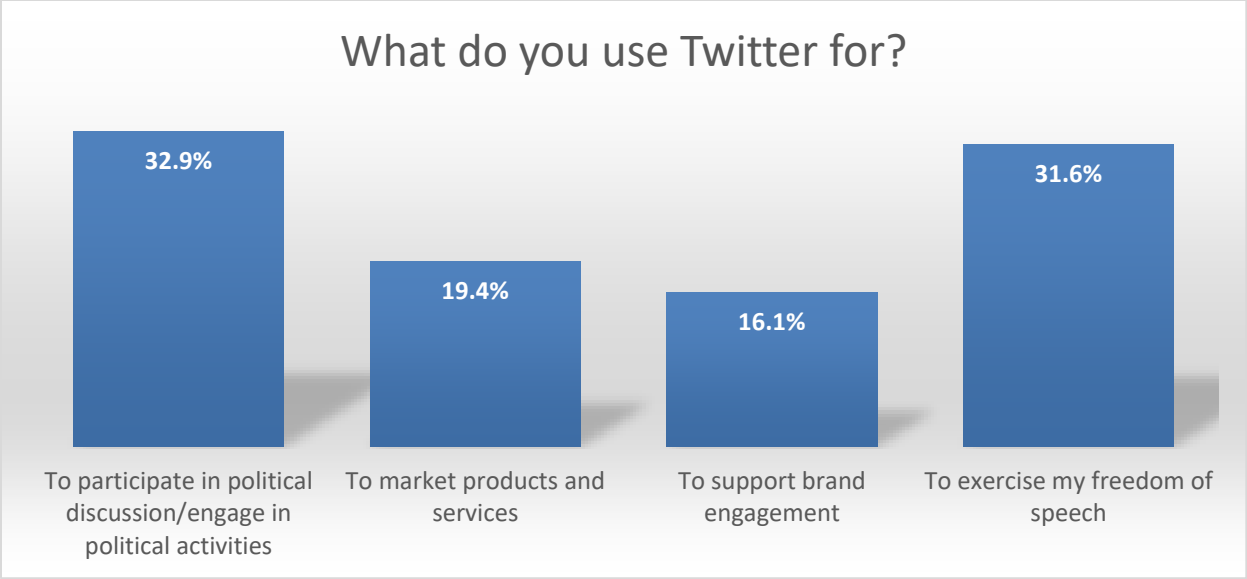


Figure 4: What do you use Twitter for?

When asked what they used Twitter for, majority of the participants (32.9%) said they used the platform to participate in political discussions and engage in politics-related activities followed by those who use the platform to exercise their freedom of speech (31.6%), market their products and services (19.4%) and support brand engagement opportunities (16.1%). This confirms the literature in which it is stated that Twitter offers users opportunities to meet various needs important to them (Imhonopi and Urim, 2021; Onireti, 2021; Musa, 2021).

Table 5: How do you rank these activities from 1-10?

Twitter Activities	Ranking	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
To participate in political discussion/engage in political activities	9	55	35.5%	35.5%	35.5%
To market products and services	5	30	19.4%	19.4%	54.8%
To support brand engagement	3	27	17.4%	17.4%	72.3%
To exercise my freedom of speech	7	43	27.7%	27.7%	100.0%
Total		155	100.0	100.0	



Figure 5: How do you rank these activities from 1-10?

According to Table 5 and Figure 5, more participants ranked participation in political discussions and politics-related activities 9 points (35.5%) followed by others who ranked exercise of freedom of speech 7 points (27.7%), marketing of products and services 5 points (19.4%) and supporting of brand engagement 3 points (17.4%). While this study may be among the few that have examined how users of Twitter ranked the activities they engage in on the platform, it however confirms earlier studies which report high engagement of Twitter for politics-related activities (Imhonopi and Urim, 2021), freedom of speech (Mamangon, 2018) and marketing of products and services (Gbadeyan and Boachie-Mensah, 2016).

Table 6: What activity do you find most engaging and interesting to you?

Statements	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
To participate in political discussion/engage in political activities	55	35.5%	35.5%	35.5%
To market products and services	29	18.7%	18.7%	54.2%
To support brand engagement	24	15.5%	15.5%	69.7%
To exercise my freedom of speech	47	30.3%	30.3%	100.0%
Total	155	100.0	100.0	

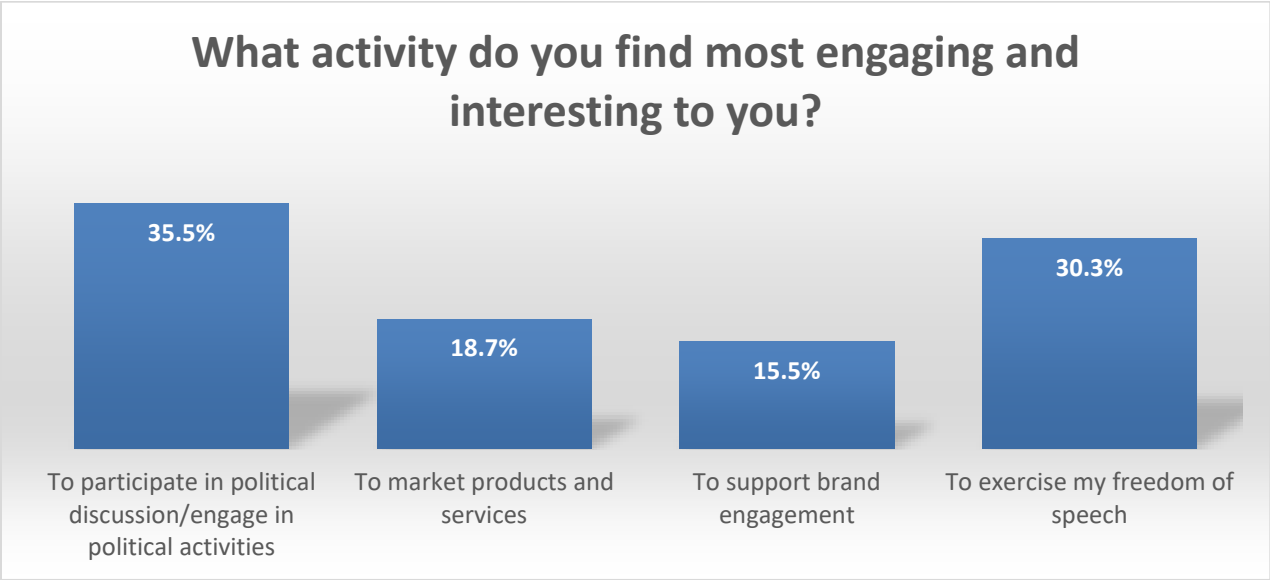


Figure 6: What activity do you find most engaging and interesting to you?

Pertaining to what they found most interesting and engaging to them, Table 6 and Figure 6 demonstrate that majority of the respondents found politics-related activities engaging to them (35.5%). They are followed by respondents who found exercise of their freedom of speech most engaging and interesting (30.3%), and those who preferred using the platform for the marketing of their products and services (19.7%) and those who use the platform for brand engagement (15.5%). This find validates the literature in which it is found that Twitter supports the use of its platform for politics-related activities, freedom of speech and marketing of products and services (Harp *et al.*, 2021; Musa, 2021).

Table 7: Twitter meets my numerous needs for communication, political participation, marketing of products and services and for brand engagement.

Scales	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Disagree	7	4.5%	4.5%	4.5%
Disagree	13	8.4%	8.4%	12.9%
Undecided	10	6.5%	6.5%	19.4%
Agree	70	45.2%	45.2%	64.5%
Strongly Agree	55	35.5%	35.5%	100
Total	155	100.0	100.0	

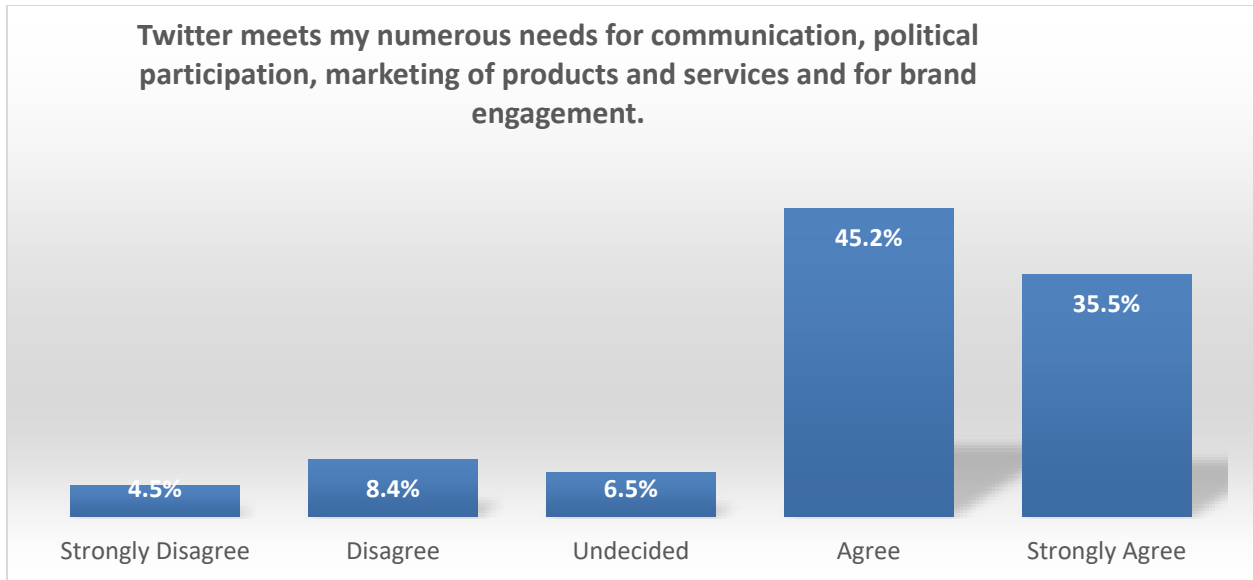


Figure 7: Twitter meets my numerous needs for communication, political participation, marketing of products and services and for brand engagement.

Regarding how Twitter meets their numerous needs for communication, political participation, marketing of products and services and for brand engagement, Table 7 and Figure 7 reveal the results as follows. More participants (45.2%) agreed to the statement followed by those who strongly agreed to the statement (35.5%) and 8.4% and 4.5% of the participants who disagreed and strongly disagreed with the statement respectively.

Table 8: Twitter allows me to engage in online political discourse about the political situation in my country.

Scales	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Disagree	5	3.2%	3.2%	3.2%
Disagree	11	7.1%	7.1%	10.3%
Undecided	5	3.2%	3.2%	13.5%
Agree	74	47.7%	47.7%	61.3%
Strongly Agree	60	38.7%	38.7%	100.0%
Total	155	100.0	100.0	

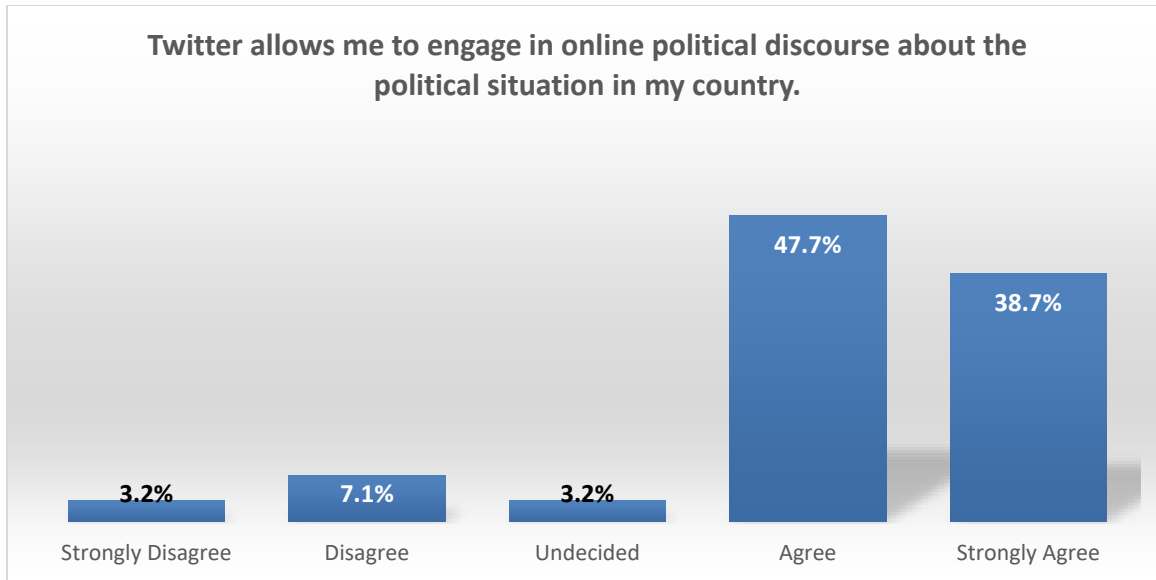


Figure 8: Twitter allows me to engage in online political discourse about the political situation in my country.

Pertaining to whether Twitter allows participants to engage in online political discourse about the political situation in Nigeria, Table 8 and Figure 8 produce the following results. More participants (47.7%) agreed to the statement followed by those who strongly agreed to the statement (38.7%) and 7.1% and 3.2% of the participants who disagreed and strongly disagreed with the statement respectively.

Table 9: Twitter allows me to air my political views.

Scales	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Disagree	12	7.7%	7.7%	7.7%
Disagree	10	6.5%	6.5%	14.2%
Undecided	9	5.8%	5.8%	20.0%
Agree	71	45.8%	45.8%	65.8%
Strongly Agree	53	34.2%	34.2%	100.0%
Total	155	100.0	100.0	

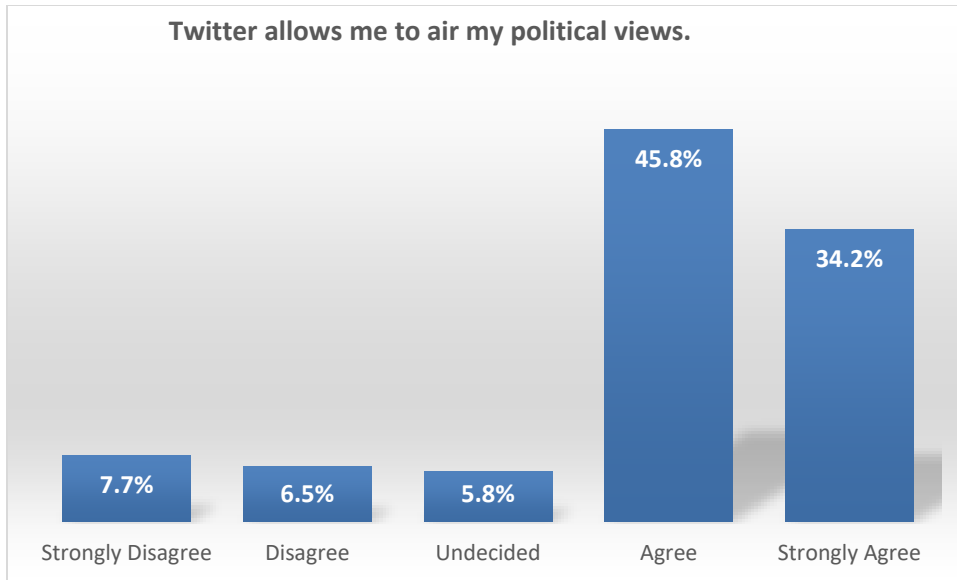


Figure 9: Twitter allows me to air my political views.

Concerning the statement whether Twitter allows participants to air their political views on the platform, Table 9 and Figure 9 show the following results. More participants (45.8%) agreed to the statement followed by those who strongly agreed to the statement (34.2%) and 6.5% and 7.7% of the participants who disagreed and strongly disagreed with the statement respectively.

Table 10: I reach more to people who share my political views through Twitter.

Scales	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Disagree	9	5.8%	5.8%	5.8%
Disagree	25	16.1%	16.1%	21.9%
Undecided	20	12.9%	12.9%	34.8%
Agree	41	26.5%	26.5%	61.3%
Strongly Agree	60	38.7%	38.7%	100.0%
Total	155	100.0	100	

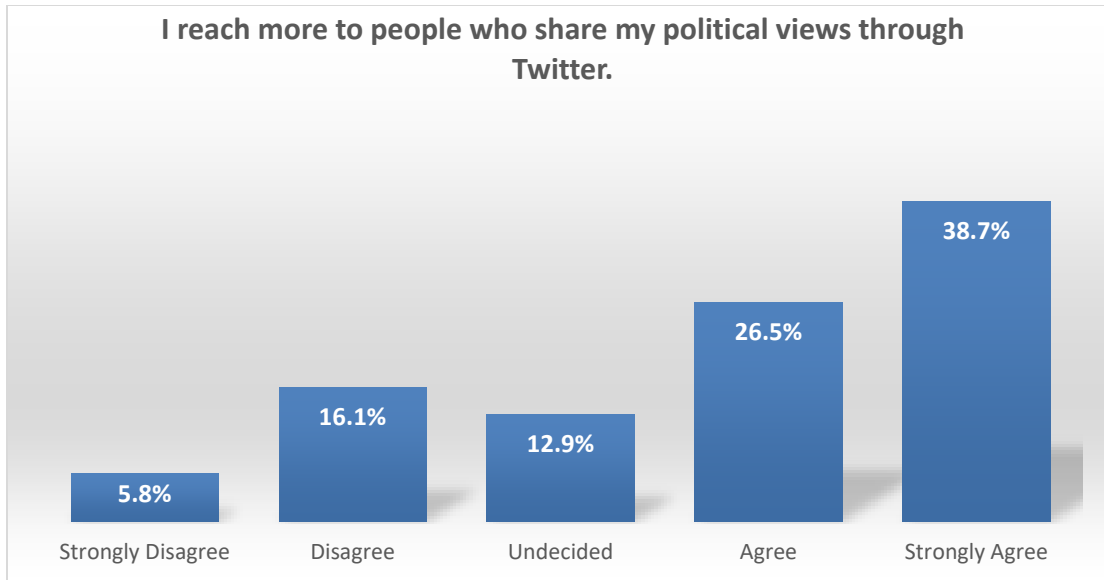


Figure 10: I reach more to people who share my political views through Twitter.

Concerning the statement whether Twitter allows participants reach more people who share their political views on Twitter, Table 10 and Figure 10 uncover the following results. More participants (38.7%) strongly agreed to the statement followed by those who agreed to the statement (26.5%) and 6.5% and 7.7% of the participants who disagreed and strongly disagreed with the statement respectively.

Table 11: I hold government and its representatives accountable through Twitter.

Scales	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Disagree	16	10.3%	10.3%	10.3%
Disagree	25	16.1%	16.1%	26.5%
Undecided	21	13.5%	13.5%	40.0%
Agree	47	30.3%	30.3%	70.3%
Strongly Agree	46	29.7%	29.7%	100.0%
Total	155	100.0	100	

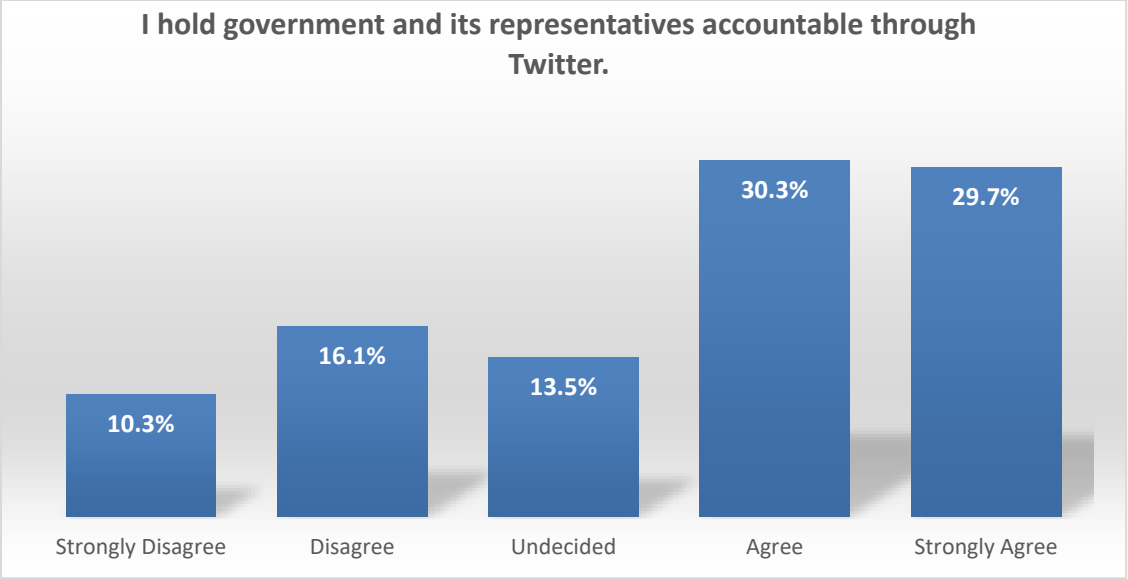


Figure 11: I hold government and its representatives accountable through Twitter.

Regarding the statement that participants hold government and its representatives accountable through Twitter in Nigeria, Table 11 and Figure 11 reveal the following results. More participants (30.3%) agreed to the statement followed by those who strongly agreed to the statement (29.7%) and 16.1% and 10.3% of the participants who disagreed and strongly disagreed with the statement respectively.

Table 12: Twitter’s enabled online political communication helps me engage in offline political participation.

Scales	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Disagree	12	7.7%	7.7%	7.7%
Disagree	15	9.7%	9.7%	17.4%
Undecided	20	12.9%	20.0%	37.4%
Agree	53	34.2%	34.2%	71.6%
Strongly Agree	55	35.5%	35.5%	107.1%
Total	155	100.0	100	

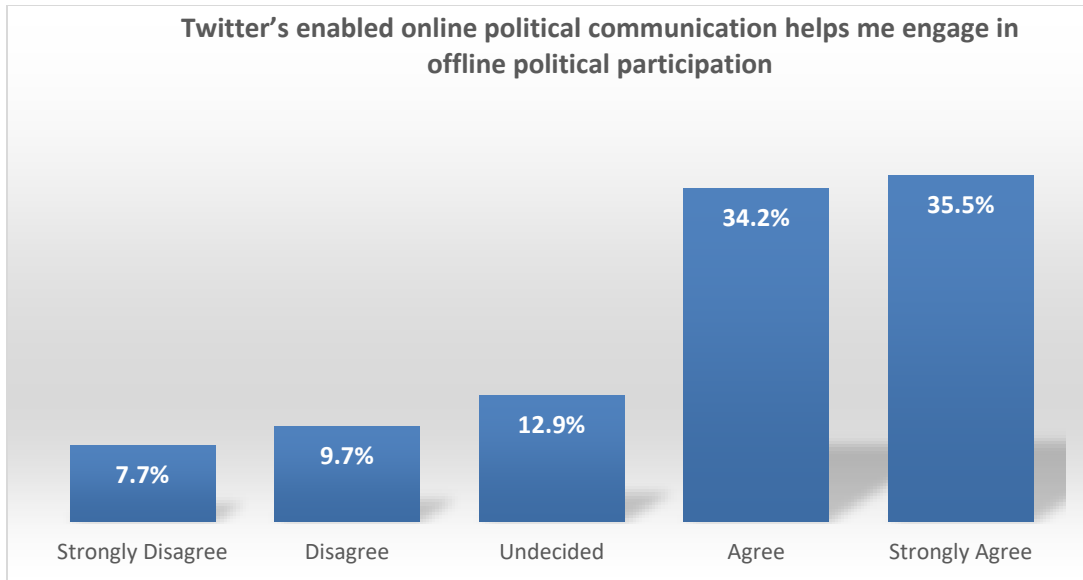


Figure 12: Twitter's enabled online political communication helps me engage in offline political participation

Pertaining to the statement that Twitter's enabled online political communication helps participants to engage in offline political participation, Table 12 and Figure 12 show the following results. More participants (35.5%) strongly agreed to the statement followed by those who agreed to the statement (34.2%) and 9.7% and 7.7% of the participants who disagreed and strongly disagreed with the statement respectively. This finding corroborates earlier studies such as or Mihálik, Garaj and Bardovic (2022) and Soedarsono et al. (2020) which argue that Twitter allows users to engage in political communication which is translated into offline political participation. The result also answers research question one.

Table 13: Twitter allows me to market my products and services to users of the network.

Scales	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Disagree	31	20.0%	20.0%	20.0%
Disagree	50	32.3%	32.3%	52.3%
Undecided	5	3.2%	3.2%	55.5%
Agree	39	25.2%	25.2%	80.6%
Strongly Agree	30	19.4%	19.4%	100.0%
Total	155	100.0	100.0	

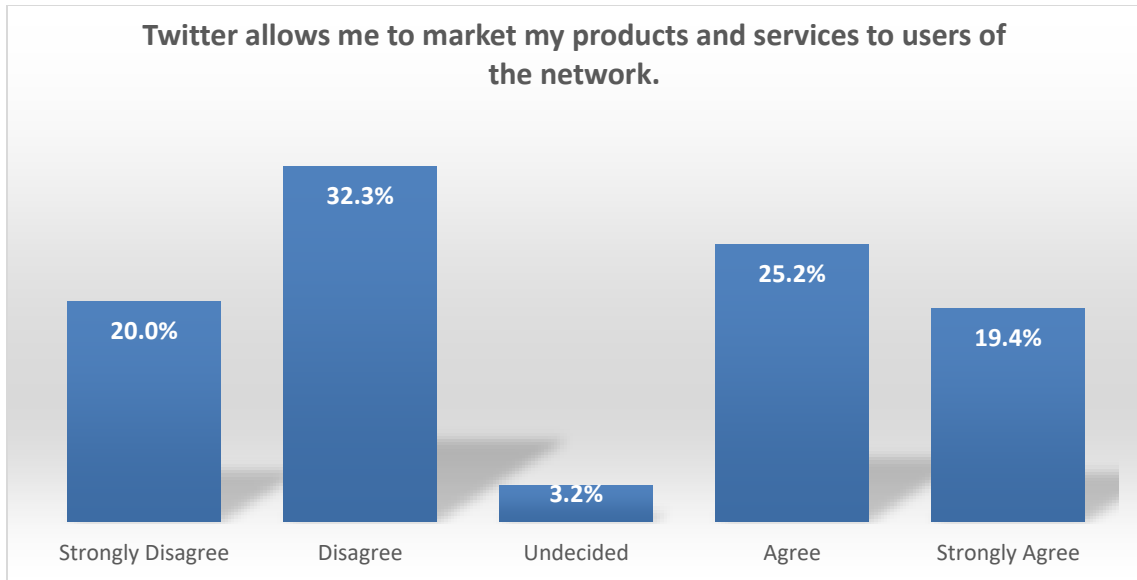


Figure 13: Twitter allows me to market my products and services to users of the network.

The statement that Twitter allows participants to market their products and services to users of the network/platform elicited the following results as represented in Table 13 and Figure 13. More participants (35.5%) strongly agreed to the statement followed by those who agreed to the statement (34.2%) and 9.7% and 7.7% of the participants who disagreed and strongly disagreed with the statement respectively. This result does not corroborate Vanga's (2019) claim regarding the usefulness of Twitter for marketing or products and services. This could be as a result of the characteristics of the users many of whom may be employees not directly involved in marketing for their employers.

Table 14: I sell more goods through Twitter marketing.

Scales	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Disagree	31	20.0%	20.0%	20.0%
Disagree	57	36.8%	36.8%	56.8%
Undecided	5	3.2%	3.2%	60.0%
Agree	38	24.5%	24.5%	84.5%
Strongly Agree	24	15.5%	15.5%	100.0%
Total	155	100.0	100.0	

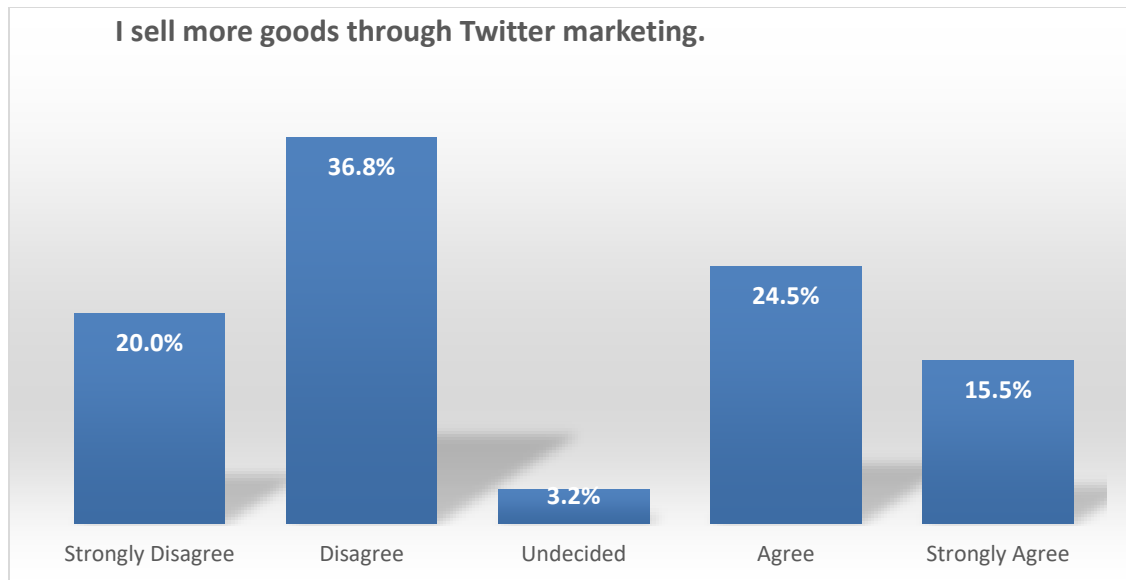


Figure 14: I sell more goods through Twitter marketing.

The statement that Twitter allows participants to sell more goods uncovered the following results as represented in Table 14 and Figure 14. More participants (36.8%) disagreed with the statement followed by those who strongly disagreed with the statement (20.0%). However, only 24.5% and 15.5% of the participants agreed and strongly agreed to the statement respectively. This finding confirms the finding by Gbadeyan and Boachie-Mensah (2016) that Twitter and other social media platforms face immense challenges and limitations selling their services or products on such platforms.

Table 15: I record new customer acquisitions through Twitter marketing.

Scales	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Disagree	24	15.5%	15.5%	15.5%
Disagree	70	45.2%	45.2%	60.6%
Undecided	5	3.2%	3.2%	63.9%
Agree	31	20.0%	20.0%	83.9%
Strongly Agree	25	16.1%	16.1%	100.0%
Total	155	100.0	100	

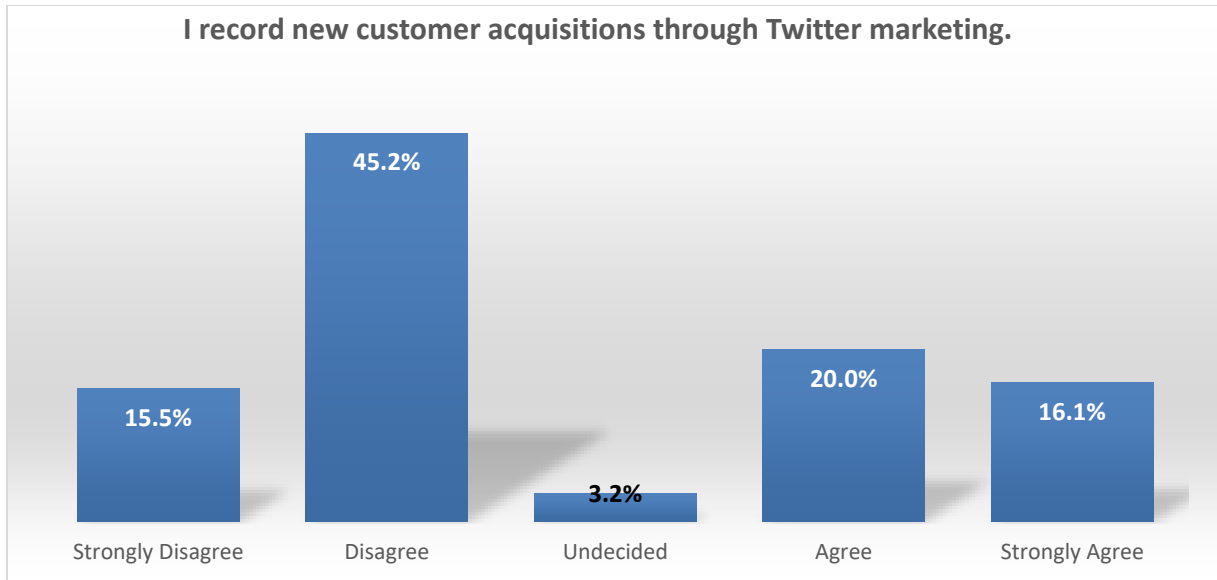


Figure 15: I record new customer acquisitions through Twitter marketing.

The statement that Twitter allows participants to record new customer acquisitions revealed the following results as represented in Table 15 and Figure 15. More participants (45.2%) disagreed with the statement followed by those who strongly disagreed with the statement (15.5%). However, 20.0% and 16.1% of the participants agreed and strongly agreed with the statement respectively. The result does not support findings from earlier studies which state that Twitter and other social media platforms help companies and entrepreneurs to acquire new customers (Soboleva, 2018; Onyinye, 2012). This may be due to the characteristics of the survey participants.

Table 16: I make more revenues through Twitter marketing.

Scales	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Disagree	23	14.8%	14.8%	14.8%
Disagree	71	45.8%	45.8%	60.6%
Undecided	6	3.9%	3.9%	64.5%
Agree	30	19.4%	19.4%	83.9%
Strongly Agree	25	16.1%	16.1%	100.0%
Total	155	100.0	100.0	

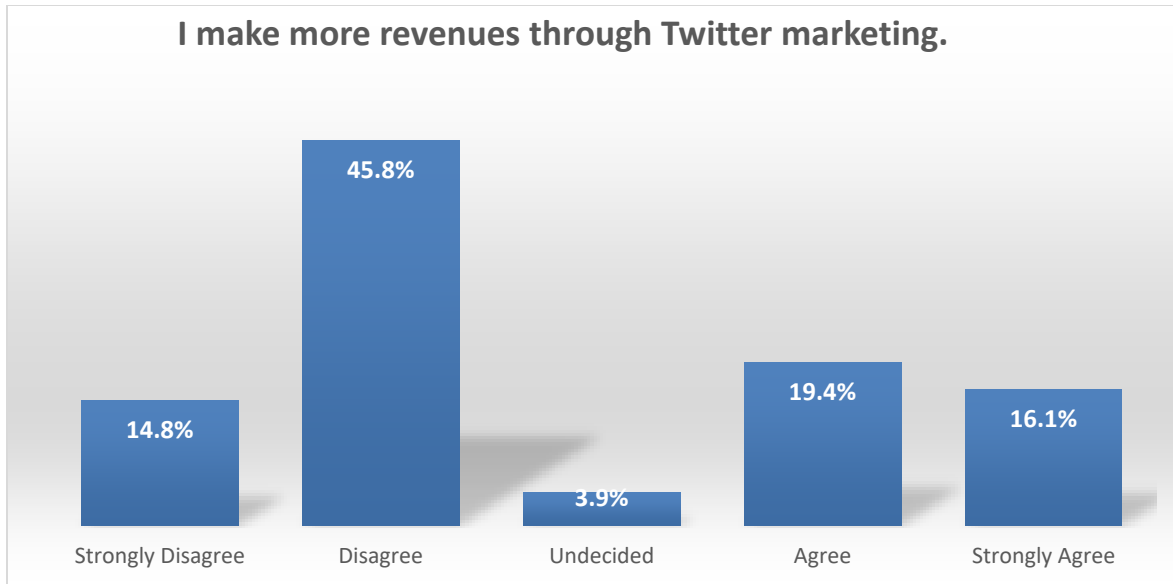


Figure 16: I make more revenues through Twitter marketing.

The statement that Twitter allows participants to make more revenues through marketing showed the following results as represented in Table 16 and Figure 16. More participants (45.8%) disagreed with the statement followed by those who strongly disagreed with the statement (14.8%). However, only 19.4% and 16.1% of the participants agreed and strongly agreed to the statement respectively.

Table 17: I experience more benefits than losses through Twitter marketing.

Scales	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Disagree	21	13.5%	13.5%	13.5%
Disagree	73	47.1%	47.1%	60.6%
Undecided	6	3.9%	3.9%	64.5%
Agree	35	22.6%	22.6%	87.1%
Strongly Agree	20	12.9%	12.9%	100.0%
Total	155	100.0	100.0	

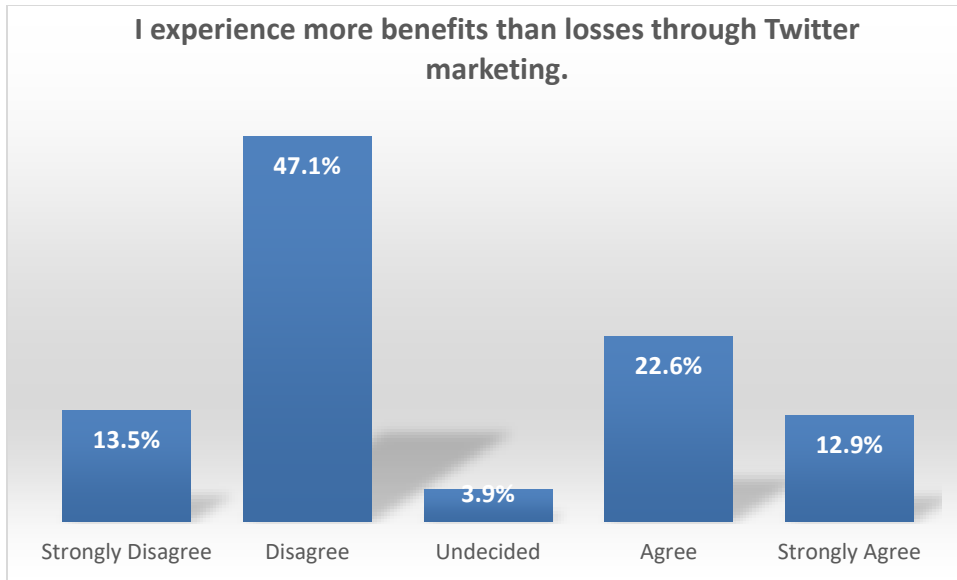


Figure 17: I experience more benefits than losses through Twitter marketing.

The statement that participants experience more benefits than losses through Twitter marketing reveals the following results as represented in Table 17 and Figure 17. More participants (47.1%) disagreed with the statement followed by those who strongly disagreed with the statement (13.5%). However, only 22.6% and 12.9% of the participants agreed and strongly agreed to the statement respectively. This result addresses research question two. It contradicts Vanga’s (2019) research which identifies the usefulness of Twitter for marketing but supports the finding by Gbadeyan and Boachie-Mensah (2016) that Twitter is limited with use for marketing products and services on its platform. However, this may be explained by the characteristics of the survey participants.

Table 18: Twitter allows me to participate in brand promotions.

Scales	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Disagree	22	14.2%	14.2%	14.2%
Disagree	25	16.1%	16.1%	30.3%
Undecided	10	6.5%	6.5%	36.8%
Agree	60	38.7%	38.7%	75.5%
Strongly Agree	38	24.5%	24.5%	100.0%
Total	155	100.0	100.0	

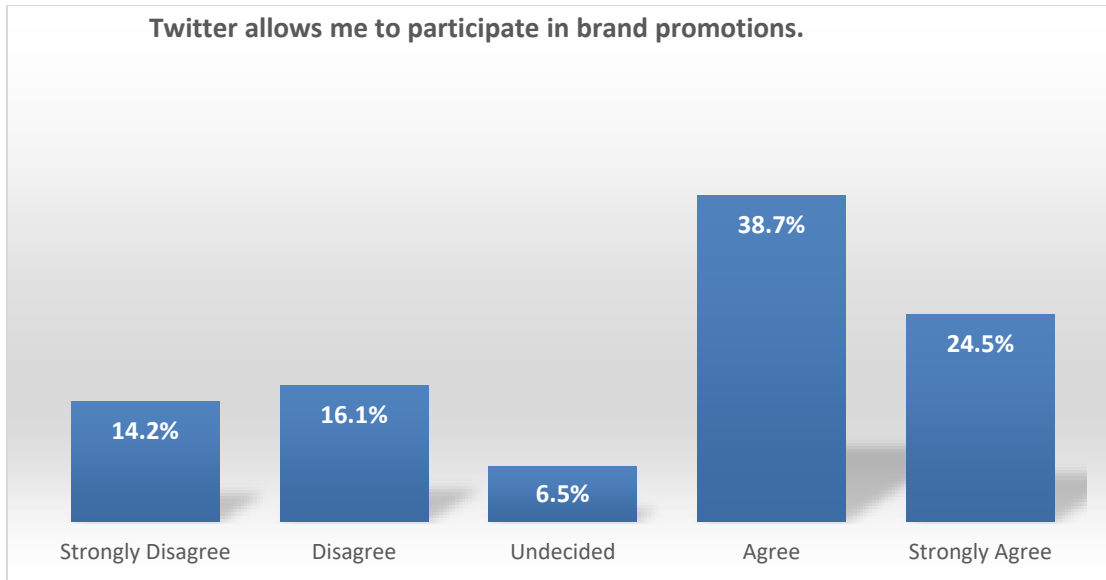


Figure 18: Twitter allows me to participate in brand promotions.

The statement that Twitter allows participants to take part in brand promotions produces the following results as represented in Table 18 and Figure 18. More participants (38.7%) agreed to the statement followed by those who strongly agreed to the statement (24.5%). However, only 16.1% and 14.2% of the participants disagreed and strongly disagreed with the statement respectively. This finding largely negates the position held in the literature that Twitter promotes brand engagement (Garcia-Rivera et al., 2022). While there is a small difference between those agreeing and not agreeing to the statement, the characteristics of participants might have informed this difference. It also addresses research question three.

Table 19: I am able to discuss my brand with interested Twitters users who respond to our company posts.

Scales	Frequenc y	Percen t	Valid Percen t	Cumulati ve Percent
Strongly Disagree	21	13.5%	13.5%	13.5%
Disagree	39	25.2%	25.2%	38.7%
Undecided	50	32.3%	32.3%	71.0%
Agree	25	16.1%	16.1%	87.1%
Strongly Agree	20	12.9%	12.9%	100.0%
Total	155	100.0	100.0	

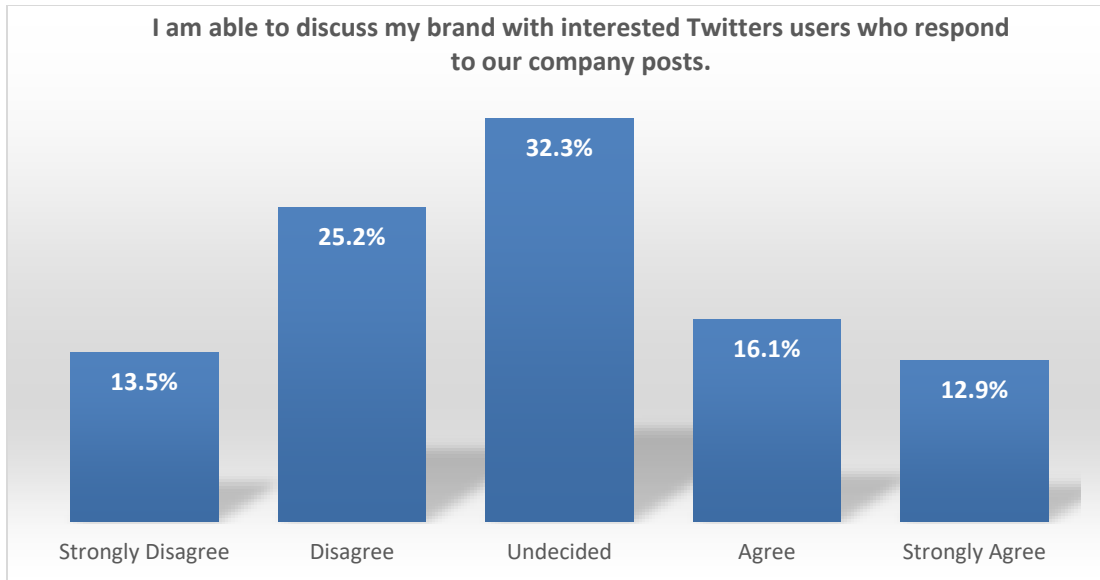


Figure 19: I am able to discuss my brand with interested Twitter users who respond to our company posts.

The statement that Twitter allows participants to discuss their companies' brands with interested Twitter users who respond to their company posts shows the following results as represented in Table 19 and Figure 19. Aside a large number of participants who did not respond to the statement (32.3%), more participants (25.2%) disagreed with the statement followed by those who strongly disagreed with the statement (13.5%). However, only 16.1% and 12.9% of the participants agreed and strongly agreed to the statement respectively.

Table 20: I am able to answer customers' enquiries through brand engagement on Twitter.

Scales	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Disagree	21	13.5%	13.5%	13.5%
Disagree	40	25.8%	25.8%	39.4%
Undecided	49	31.6%	31.6%	71.0%
Agree	25	16.1%	16.1%	87.1%
Strongly Agree	20	12.9%	12.9%	100.0%
Total	155	100.0	100.0	

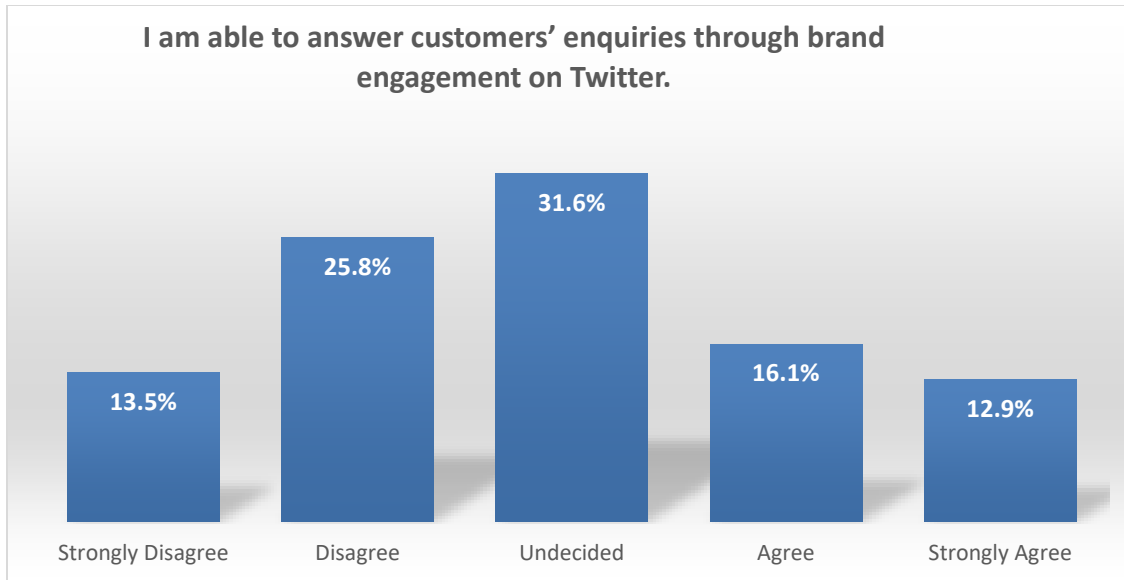


Figure 20: I am able to answer customers' enquiries through brand engagement on Twitter.

The statement that Twitter allows participants to answer customers' enquiries through brand engagement on the platform elicited the following results as represented in Table 20 and Figure 20. Aside a large number of participants who did not respond to the statement (31.6%), more participants (25.8%) disagreed with the statement followed by those who strongly disagreed with the statement (13.5%). However, only 16.1% and 12.9% of the participants agreed and strongly agreed to the statement respectively.

Table 21: I provide more customers with solutions on Twitter.

Scales	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Disagree	21	13.5%	13.5%	13.5%
Disagree	41	26.5%	26.5%	40.0%
Undecided	48	31.0%	31.0%	71.0%
Agree	25	16.1%	16.1%	87.1%
Strongly Agree	20	12.9%	12.9%	100.0%
Total	155	100.0	100.0	

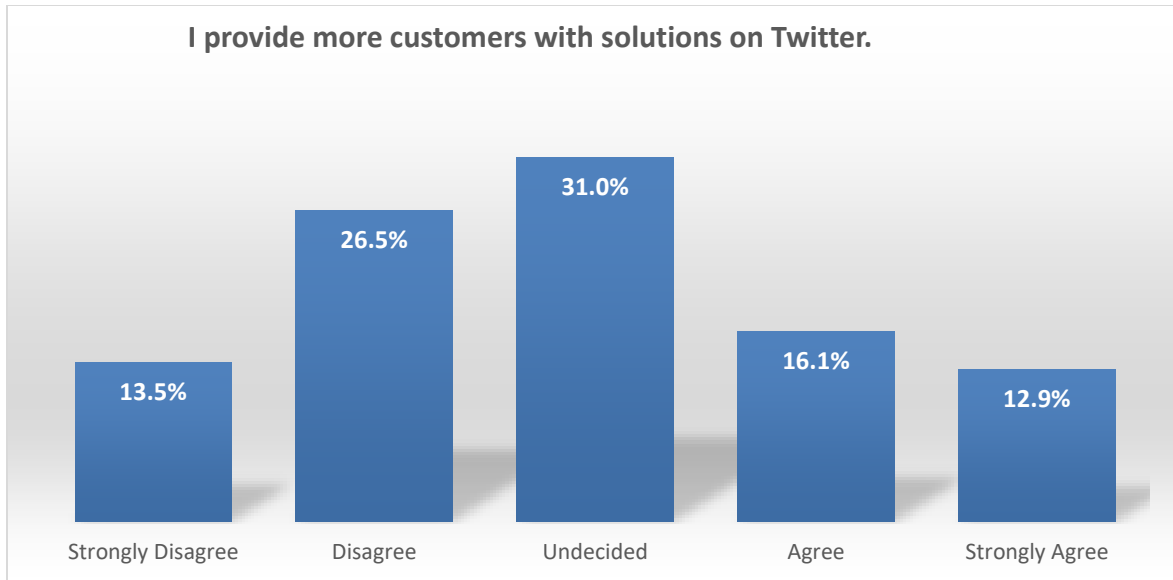


Figure 21: I provide more customers with solutions on Twitter.

The statement that Twitter allows participants to provide more customers with solutions through the platform revealed the following results as represented in Table 21 and Figure 21. Aside a large number of participants who did not respond to the statement (31.0%), more participants (26.5%) disagreed with the statement followed by those who strongly disagreed with the statement (13.5%). However, only 16.1% and 12.9% of the participants agreed and strongly agreed to the statement respectively.

Table 22: I am able to address customers' complaints through brand engagement on Twitter.

Scales	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Disagree	21	13.5%	13.5%	13.5%
Disagree	40	25.8%	25.8%	39.4%
Undecided	50	32.3%	32.3%	71.6%
Agree	24	15.5%	15.5%	87.1%
Strongly Agree	20	12.9%	12.9%	100.0%
Total	155	100.0	100.0	

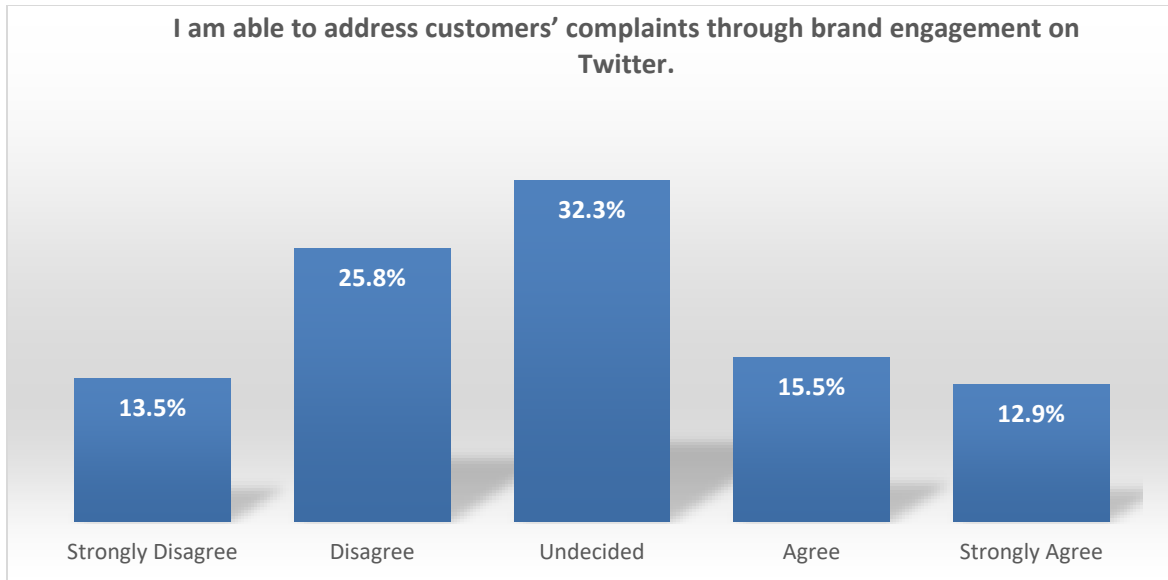


Figure 22: I am able to address customers' complaints through brand engagement on Twitter.

The statement that Twitter allows participants to be able to address customers' complaints through brand engagement on the platform shows the following results as represented in Table 22 and Figure 22. Aside a large number of participants who did not respond to the statement (32.3%), more participants (25.8%) disagreed with the statement followed by those who strongly disagreed with the statement (13.5%). However, only 15.5% and 12.9% of the participants agreed and strongly agreed to the statement respectively. The results is not in agreement with the finding by Menon et al. (2019) that states that Twitter allows for brand engagement which can allow brand professionals to address customers' complaints through the platform.

Table 23: Twitter allows me to exercise my right to freedom of speech.

Scales	Frequenc y	Percen t	Valid Percent	Cumulat ive Percent
Strongly Disagree	18	11.6%	11.6%	11.6%
Disagree	27	17.4%	17.4%	29.0%
Undecided	10	6.5%	6.5%	35.5%
Agree	25	16.1%	16.1%	51.6%
Strongly Agree	75	48.4%	48.4%	100.0%
Total	155	100.0	100.0	

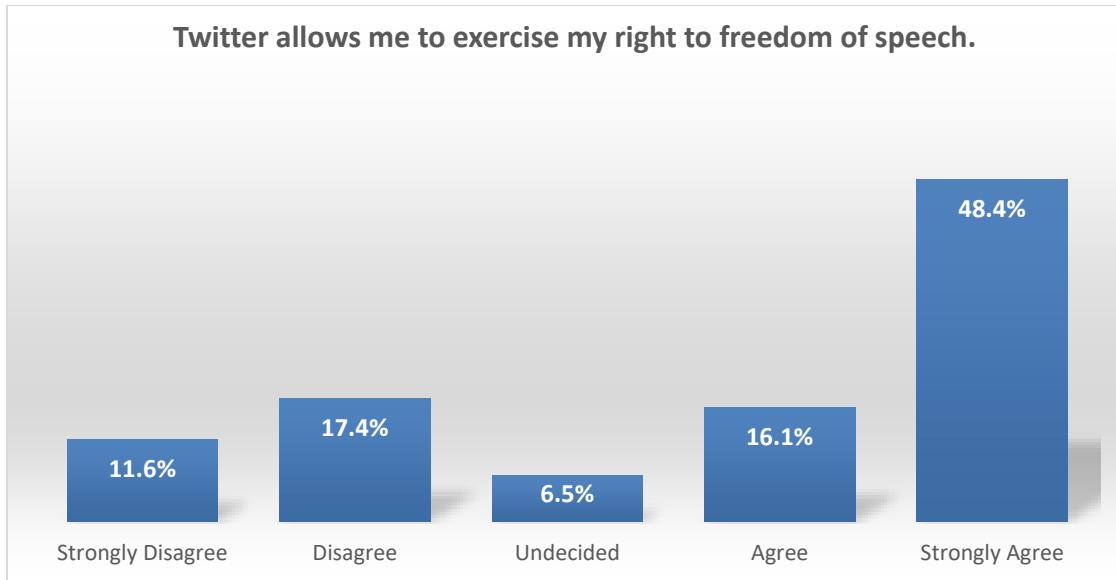


Figure 23: Twitter allows me to exercise my right to freedom of speech.

Concerning the statement that Twitter allows participants to exercise their right to freedom of speech, Table 23 and Figure 23 show the outcome of participants' responses. More participants (48.4%) strongly agreed with the statement followed by those who agreed with the statement (16.1%) and 17.4% and 11.6% of the participants who disagreed and strongly disagreed with the statement respectively. The result aligns with several studies which argue that Twitter provides a platform which allows its users to exercise their right to freedom of speech (Stolee and Caton, 2018; Alalwan, et al., 2017). It also answers research question four.

Table 24: Twitter allows me to express my thoughts and beliefs freely.

Scales	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Disagree	28	18.1%	18.1%	18.1%
Disagree	22	14.2%	14.2%	32.3%
Undecided	11	7.1%	7.1%	39.4%
Agree	24	15.5%	15.5%	54.8%
Strongly Agree	70	45.2%	45.2%	100.0%
Total	155	100.0	100.0	

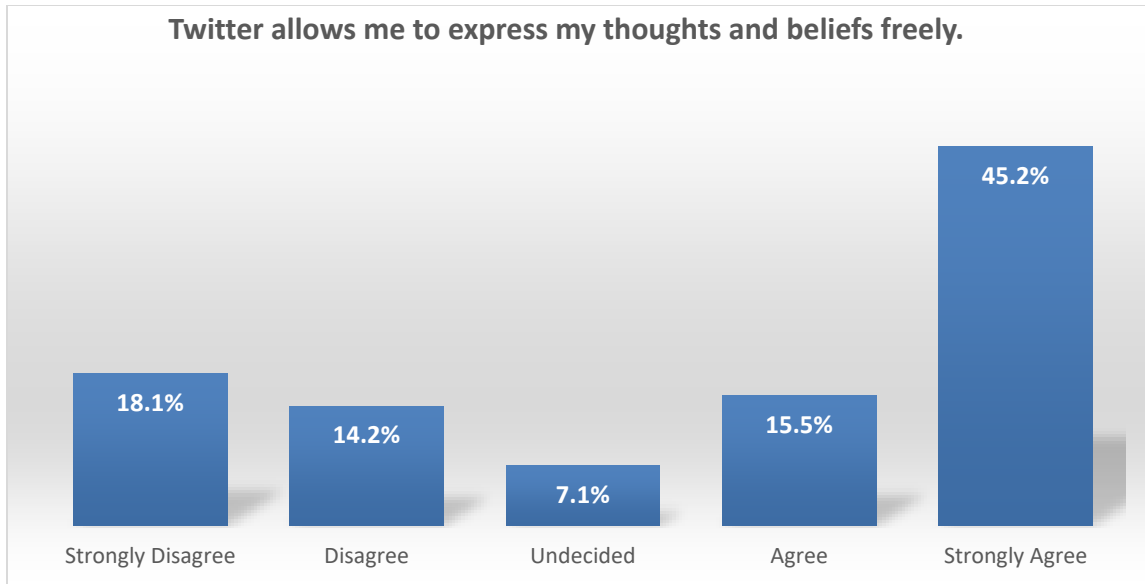


Figure 24: Twitter allows me to express my thoughts and beliefs freely.

Regarding the statement that Twitter allows participants to express their thoughts and beliefs freely on the platform, Table 24 and Figure 24 show the outcome of participants' responses. More participants (45.2%) strongly agreed with the statement followed by those who agreed with the statement (15.5%) and 18.1% and 14.2% of the participants who strongly disagreed and disagreed with the statement respectively.

Table 25: I use Twitter to express my observation of the world around me.

Scales	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Disagree	34	21.9%	21.9%	21.9%
Undecided	20	12.9%	12.9%	34.8%
Agree	23	14.8%	14.8%	49.7%
Strongly Agree	78	50.3%	50.3%	100.0%
Total	155	100.0	100.0	

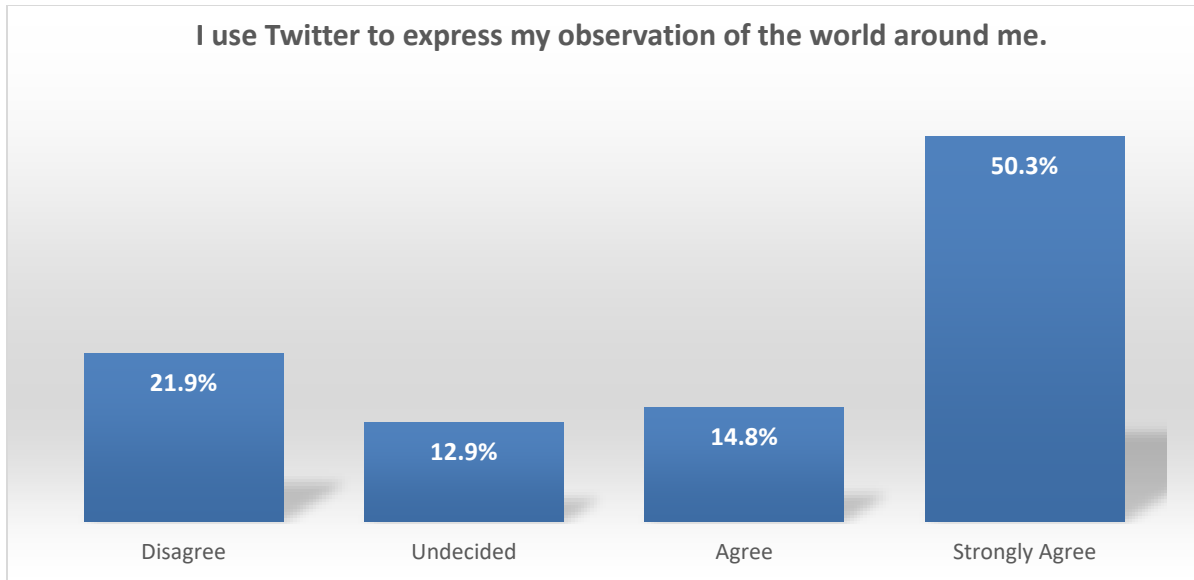


Figure 25: I use Twitter to express my observation of the world around me.

Pertaining to the statement that Twitter allows participants to express their observations of the world around them, Table 25 and Figure 25 show the outcome of participants' responses. More participants (50.3%) strongly agreed with the statement followed by those who agreed with the statement (14.8%) and 21.9% who disagreed with the statement respectively.

Table 26: I use Twitter to report negative as well as positive happenings around me.

Scales	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Disagree	12	7.7%	7.7%	7.7%
Disagree	20	12.9%	12.9%	20.6%
Undecided	21	13.5%	13.5%	34.2%
Agree	22	14.2%	14.2%	48.4%
Strongly Agree	80	51.6%	51.6%	100.0%
Total	155	100.0	100.0	

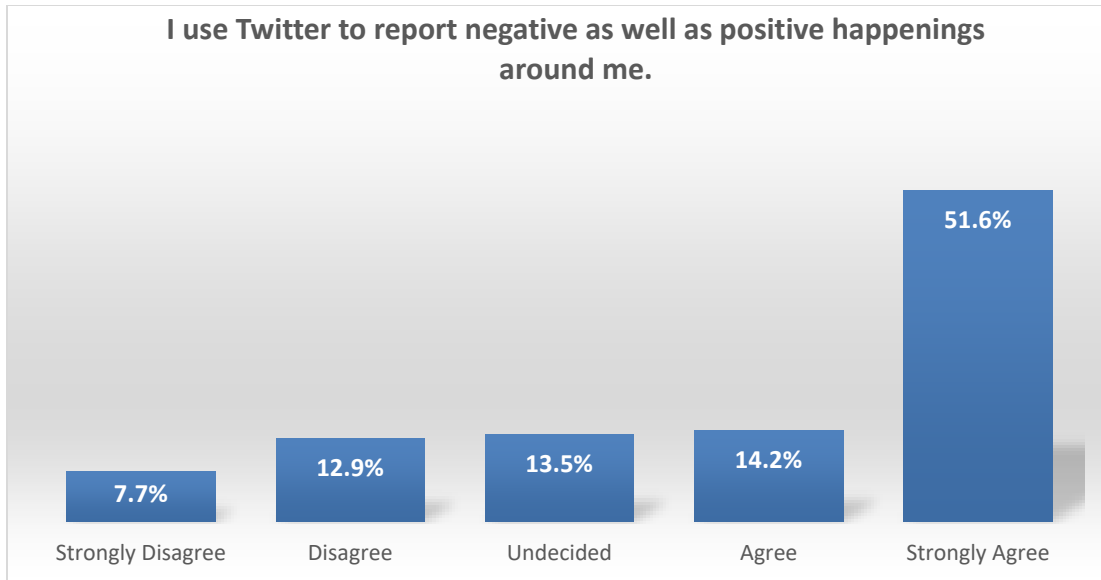


Figure 26: I use Twitter to report negative as well as positive happenings around me.

Concerning the statement that Twitter allows participants to use the platform to report positive and negative happenings around them, Table 26 and Figure 26 show the outcome of participants' responses. More participants (51.6%) strongly agreed with the statement followed by those who agreed with the statement (14.2%) and 12.9% and 7.7% of the participants who disagreed and strongly disagreed with the statement respectively.

Table 27: I engage in meaningful discussions on Twitter where I say what I feel without fear.

Scales	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Disagree	9	5.8%	5.8%	5.8%
Disagree	22	14.2%	14.2%	20.0%
Undecided	19	12.3%	12.3%	32.3%
Agree	40	25.8%	25.8%	58.1%
Strongly Agree	65	41.9%	41.9%	100.0%
Total	155	100.0	100.0	

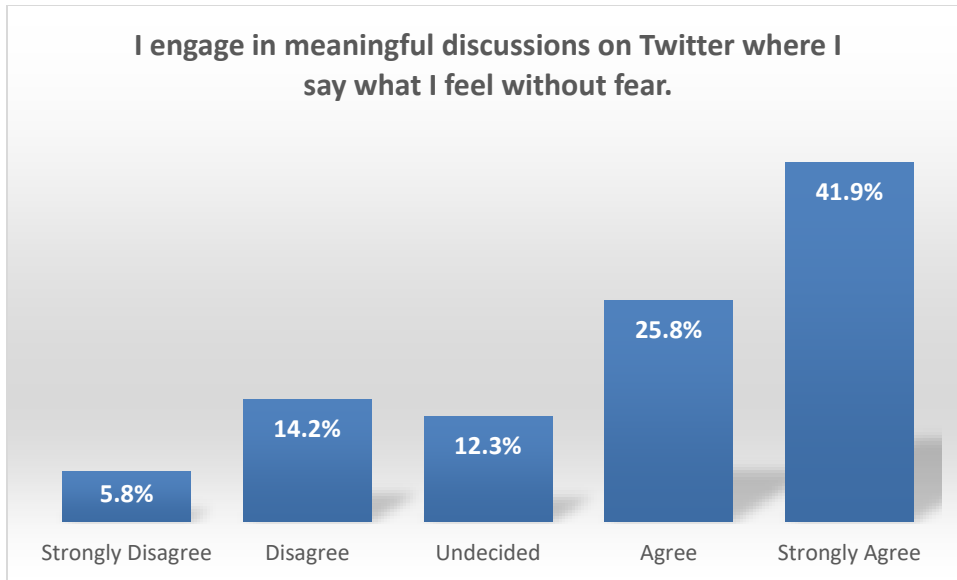


Figure 27: I engage in meaningful discussions on Twitter where I say what I feel without fear.

Regarding the statement that Twitter allows participants to engage in meaningful discussions on Twitter where they can say what they feel without fear, Table 26 and Figure 26 represents the results of participants' responses. More participants (41.9%) strongly agreed with the statement followed by those who agreed with the statement (25.8%) and 14.2% and 5.8% of the participants who disagreed and strongly disagreed with the statement respectively.

4.3 Inferential Analysis

In this inferential analysis section, Pearson Correlation Coefficient was deployed to examine the association between the independent and dependent variables. This is done to test the hypotheses developed for the study.

4.3.1 Hypothesis 1

- H_0 : There is no significant relationship between users' perception of Twitter and its engagement for online political communication.

- H₁: There is a significant relationship between users' perception of Twitter and its engagement for online political communication.

To test hypothesis one, the following statements were compared using Pearson Correlation Coefficient: "Twitter allows me to engage in online political discourse about the political situation in my country" and "Twitter's enabled online political communication helps me engage in offline political participation." Below is the result of the statistical test:

Table 4.4.1 Testing Hypothesis 1

Correlations			
		Twitter allows me to engage in online political discourse about the political situation in my country	Twitter's enabled online political communication helps me engage in offline political participation
Twitter allows me to engage in online political discourse about the political situation in my country	Pearson Correlation	1	.792**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.001
	N	155	155
Twitter's enabled online political communication helps me engage in offline political participation	Pearson Correlation	.792**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	
	N	155	155
** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).			

The result of the hypothesis testing in Table 4.4.1 shows that the P-value is 0.001 which is less than the level of significance (0.05). On that basis, the H₀ is rejected which states that there is no significant relationship between users' perception of Twitter and its engagement for online political communication and its alternate is accepted.

4.3.2 Hypothesis 2

- H₀: There is no significant relationship between consumers' perception of Twitter and its engagement for marketing of products and services.
- H₁: There is a significant relationship between consumers' perception of Twitter and its engagement for marketing of products and services.

To test hypothesis two, the following statements were compared using Pearson Correlation Coefficient: "Twitter allows me to market my products and services to users of the network" and "I record new customer acquisitions through Twitter marketing." Below is the result of the statistical test:

Table 4.4.2 Testing Hypothesis 2

Correlations			
		Twitter allows me to market my products and services to users of the network	I record new customer acquisitions through Twitter marketing
Twitter allows me to market my products and services to users of the network	Pearson Correlation	1	.215**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.002
	N	155	155
I record new customer acquisitions through Twitter marketing	Pearson Correlation	.215**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.002	
	N	155	155
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).			

The result of the hypothesis testing in Table 4.4.2 shows that the P-value is 0.002 which is less than the level of significance (0.05). On that basis, the H₀ is rejected which states that there is no significant relationship between consumers' perception of Twitter and its engagement for marketing of products and services and its alternate is accepted.

4.3.3 Hypothesis 3

- H₀: There is no significant relationship between consumers' perception of Twitter and its use for brand engagement.
- H₁: There is a significant relationship between consumers' perception of Twitter and its use for brand engagement.

To test hypothesis three, the following statements were compared using Pearson Correlation Coefficient: "Twitter allows me to participate in brand promotions" and "I am able to address customers' complaints through brand engagement on Twitter." Below is the result of the statistical test:

Table 4.4.3 Testing Hypothesis 3

Correlations			
		Twitter allows me to participate in brand promotions	I am able to address customers' complaints through brand engagement on Twitter for
Twitter allows me to participate in brand promotions	Pearson Correlation	1	.235**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.002
	N	155	155
I am able to address customers' complaints through brand engagement on Twitter	Pearson Correlation	.235**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.002	
	N	155	155
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).			

The result of the hypothesis testing in Table 4.4.3 shows that the P-value is 0.002 which is less than the level of significance (0.05). On that basis, the H₀ is rejected which states that there is no

significant relationship between consumers' perception of Twitter and its use for brand engagement and its alternate is accepted.

4.3.4 Hypothesis 4

- H₀: There is no significant relationship between users' perception of Twitter and its engagement for freedom of expression.
- H₁: There is a significant relationship between users' perception of Twitter and its engagement for freedom of expression.

To test hypothesis four, the following statements were compared using Pearson Correlation Coefficient: "Twitter allows me to exercise my right to freedom of speech" and "Twitter allows me to express my thoughts and beliefs freely." Below is the result of the statistical test:

Table 4.4.4 Testing Hypothesis 4

Correlations			
		Twitter allows me to exercise my right to freedom of speech	Twitter allows me to express my thoughts and beliefs freely
Twitter allows me to exercise my right to freedom of speech	Pearson Correlation	1	.779**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.001
	N	155	155
Twitter allows me to express my thoughts and beliefs freely	Pearson Correlation	.779**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	
	N	155	155
** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).			

The result of the hypothesis testing in Table 4.4.4 shows that the P-value is 0.001 which is less than the level of significance (0.05). On that basis, the H_0 is rejected which states that there is no significant relationship between users' perception of Twitter and its engagement for freedom of expression and its alternate is accepted.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter summarises and discusses the findings of the research which examined the perception of Twitter concerning political communication, marketing of products and services, brand engagement and freedom of speech in Nigeria.

5.1 Summary of Findings

Of the 155 survey participants who took part in the study, there were more males than females. This is in consonance with Twitter user statistics which shows that more males use the platform than females (Statista, 2022). While all the participants were of legal age, the majority of them fell into the age categories of 25 – 34 years (37.4%) and 35 – 44 years which are productive years of

individuals who are likely part of the workforce in Nigeria. Because they earn an income, it is possible for them to own a smartphone and subscribe to data in order to use the Twitter platform for their various engagements. Those of them who are likely to be students could be using their pocket money to subscribe to data for social media use or share their data meant for their personal and school work for social media online engagement. This has been confirmed in the literature (Osolase, 2021; Olaitan, 2021). Many of the participants (51.6%) stated that they used Twitter every single day followed by those who use it once in three days (39.4%) and those who use it once a week (9.0%). Generally, the survey participants supported the idea of Twitter use for their various activities, albeit in varying degrees as explained through the results displayed earlier.

Four null hypotheses were formulated for the study. They are:

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between users' perception of Twitter and its engagement for online political communication.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant relationship between consumers' perception of Twitter and its engagement for marketing of products and services.

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant relationship between consumers' perception of Twitter and its use for brand engagement.

Hypothesis 4: There is no significant relationship between users' perception of Twitter and its engagement for freedom of expression.

Results show that all four hypotheses had P-values less than the level of significance (0.05); hence they were rejected and the alternative hypotheses were accepted. Below is the discussion of the findings.

5.1 Discussion

Generally, from the results of the data analysis, more respondents (32.9%) spent more time using Twitter for political discussions/activities followed by those who used it for the exercise of their freedom of speech (31.6%), to market their products and services (19.4%) and to be involved in brand engagement activities (16.1%). These sentiments were also similar in participants' ranking

of the following activities: 35.5% scored participation in political discussions/political activities on Twitter 9/10; 27.7% scored exercise of freedom of speech on Twitter 7/10; 19.4% scored marketing of products and services on Twitter 5/10 while 17.4% scored brand engagement on Twitter 3/10, which was the lowest score. Although findings show that a majority of the participants used Twitter for participation in political discussion/activities and expression of their freedom of speech, there is a general perception by the respondents that Twitter meets their needs for communication, political participation, marketing of products and services and for brand engagement. This finding has been validated by numerous studies some of which are Atamani and Ozguner (2021) and Imhonopi and Urim (2021) which demonstrated the importance of Twitter use for business and political activities in different parts of the world, including Nigeria.

The results from the hypotheses testing are discussed below:

5.1.1 Research Question One and Hypothesis One

Results from Table 8 and Figure 8 and Table 9 and Figure 9 address research question one which aims to find out whether there is a significant and positive relationship between users' perception of Twitter and its engagement for online political communication in Nigeria. Majority of the participants, more than 80% who agreed and strongly agreed with the statement, prove that there is a positive relationship between users' perception of Twitter and their engagement of the platform for online political discourse which allows them to air their opinions about the political situation in Nigeria.

Table 4.4.1 in the hypothesis testing section also shows that there is a positive and significant correlation between users' perception of Twitter and its engagement for online political communication. This is because Twitter is perceived to allow participants to engage in online political discourse about the political situation in Nigeria and to take this a step further by making active offline political participation. In other words, Twitter allows participants to hold their government and representatives accountable, share their political views and translate their political consciousness and vivaciousness into offline political participation.

These findings answer research question one and validate hypothesis one as well. Twitter and other social media platforms have been recognised for providing citizens of modern states with platforms to voice their opinions, including repressive societies, where such an opportunity may not exist within the traditional media and institutional set-ups (Budi and Setiawan, 2022; Moody et al., 2013). These results corroborate several studies in the literature. For example, Jungherr (2016) believes that Twitter not only allows parties, politicians and journalists to share political information, and content, and canvas interests to thousands and millions of target users, it also enables citizens to do the same. While Twitter and other social media platforms have been accused because they enable fake news and propaganda which could inflame political conflict (Haman and Školnik, 2021; Mangerotti, et al., 2021), Poulakidakos and Veneti (2019) believe, as it was done in Greece, that Twitter allows users to engage in dialogue and political communication between and among them. This might explain the buzz on Twitter regarding the forthcoming 2023 elections in Nigeria where supporters of the three main presidential candidates and other candidates for political offices are jostling for users' attention on Twitter.

5.1.2 Research Question Two and Hypothesis Two

Results from Table 13 and Figure 13 and Table 14 and Figure 14 address research question two which seeks to find out whether there is a significant and positive relationship between consumers' perception of Twitter and its engagement for marketing of products and services in Nigeria. Majority of the participants disagreed that Twitter served their purposes for marketing of their products and services while a significant number agreed that the platform was useful for marketing their products and services to users.

However, Table 4.4.2 in the hypothesis testing section shows that there is a positive and significant correlation between users' perception of Twitter and its engagement for marketing of products and services in Nigeria. However, while the relationship is positive and significant it is weak which reflects the sentiments they expressed in Tables 13 and 14 and Figures 13 and 14. In other words, while a positive relationship exists between users' perception of Twitter use for marketing of their products and services, it is rather low or weak.

These results corroborate Vanga's (2019) finding that Twitter is considered useful by many of its users because it helps them to market their products and services and to sell more of their goods. It also validates the study by Onyinye (2012) that Twitter is an effective vehicle for marketing products and services in Nigeria. However, results from the current study shows that while a relationship does exist, it appears this association is weak. This aligns with the submission by Gbadeyan and Boachie-Mensah (2016) that the reason users encounter poor results using Twitter and other social media platforms for the marketing of their products and services may be due to the limitations and challenges involved. For example, if users do not properly target their audiences when marketing their products online using social media platforms such as Twitter, they may encounter poor or no results (Soboleva, 2018). It could also be that many of the users that participated in the current study are not entrepreneurs or marketers which is why their focus was not on using Twitter for marketing and selling products and services.

5.1.3 Research Question Three and Hypothesis Three

Results from Table 18 and Figure 18 and Table 19 and Figure 19 answers research question two which seeks to find out whether there is a significant and positive relationship between consumers' perception of Twitter and its use for brand engagement in Nigeria. While majority of the participants agreed that Twitter allowed them to participate in brand promotions, they did not agree that they used it to discuss their companies' brands with interested Twitter users who respond to their company posts.

However, Table 4.4.3 in the hypothesis testing section shows that there is a positive and significant correlation between consumers' perception of Twitter and its use for brand engagement. However, while the relationship is positive and significant it is weak which depicts the sentiments participants expressed in Tables 18 and 22 and Figures 18 and 22. In other words, while a positive relationship exists between users' perception of Twitter use for brand engagement, it is rather low or weak.

From the literature, it has been established that interest in the use of Twitter and other social media platforms for brand engagement has continued to soar (Sashi et al., 2018; Hay, 2010), but results have been inconclusive regarding the actual usefulness in this regard. However, results from the present study which finds a significant and positive relationship between Twitter use and brand engagement have been corroborated by Zanini et al. (2019). The authors have argued that engaging social media platforms such as Twitter for brand engagement helps organisations to engage their customers, attend to their numerous queries and receive their suggestions first-hand to address any aspects of their business which consumers consider to require some fixing. This position has been further validated by Eriksson, et al. (2019), Zor et al. (2021) and Garcia-Rivera et al. (2022). However, results from the current study shows that while a relationship does exist, it appears this association is weak. This could be explained by the composition of some of the users who may not be entrepreneurs, marketers or brand managers hence the reason that their focus was not on using Twitter for brand engagement.

5.1.4 Research Question Four and Hypothesis Four

Results from Table 23 and Figure 23 and Table 24 and Figure 24 answer research question four which aims to find out whether there is a significant relationship between users' perception of Twitter and its engagement for freedom of expression. Majority of the participants, about 60% who agreed and strongly agreed with the statement, prove that there is a positive relationship between users' perception of Twitter and their engagement of the platform for freedom of expression.

Table 4.4.4 in the hypothesis testing section also shows that there is a positive and significant correlation between users' perception of Twitter and its engagement for freedom of expression. This is because Twitter is perceived to allow participants to exercise their right to freedom of speech, express their thoughts and beliefs freely, capture their observations of the world around them, report negative as well as positive happenings around them and engage in meaningful discussions where they say what they feel without fear.

These results answer research question four and validate hypothesis four as well. The findings prove that social media and indeed Twitter supports the exercise of the freedom of expression

which is a fundamental human right enshrined in most constitutions of the world. In the free world, this might appear as nothing but in repressive societies or pseudo-repressive societies such as Nigeria, it is a great opportunity that helps citizens to find their voice. These findings have been corroborated in the literature by Shattuck and Risse (2021) and Hahn (2021) who argue that Twitter has become a platform, like other social media platforms, for the enfranchisement or legitimation of one of human's fundamental rights, which is the right to expression. Although, social media platforms such as Twitter are facing the issue of rising fake news on many of their platforms, as soon as other users flag a comment or post or video which may be fake news and it is confirmed by them, such posts are removed and the user may be banned. In the past, several important personalities such as Donald Trump and President Muhammadu Buhari, Nigeria's president, were banned on Twitter for their posts considered as incendiary.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Conclusion

This study has examined the research topic concerning the perception of Twitter concerning political communication, marketing of products and services, brand engagement and freedom of speech in Nigeria. This chapter concludes the study, makes relevant recommendations and suggestions for future research and also provides the researcher's personal reflection on the dissertation:

There is a strong, significant and positive relationship between users' perception of Twitter and its engagement for online political communication. In a pseudo-repressive society like Nigeria, participants perceived that Twitter allowed to hold their elected officials and governments accountable, discuss their political views, canvass support for such views and translate their online political engagements into offline political participation. This may well represent what is happening right now in Nigeria where the youths of Nigeria have arisen to support one of the candidates for the forthcoming 2023 elections, Mr. Peter Obi, whom they considered as representing competence and the right brand of politics.

On the other hand, there is a weak but significant and positive relationship between consumers' perception of Twitter and its engagement for marketing of products and services in Nigeria. This is because a sizeable number of participants did not see Twitter's usefulness for them for the purposes of marketing of products and services even though the study also proved a significant correlation exists between how Twitter is perceived and its use for marketing of products and services.

Also, there is a weak but significant relationship between consumers' perception of Twitter and its use for brand engagement. While a good number of participants did not consider Twitter usefulness

for them for the sake of brand engagement, the study proves that a significant correlation exists between how Twitter is perceived and its use for brand management.

There is a strong, significant and positive relationship between users' perception of Twitter and its engagement for the exercise of the freedom of expression. This was important to many of the participants who living in a repressed society as Nigeria found Twitter an escape hatch to exercise their right to freedom of speech, capture their observations of the world around them, express their thoughts and beliefs freely, and report negative as well as positive happenings around them while engaging in meaningful discussions without fear of persecution.

6.2 Recommendations

This study advances the following recommendations:

The findings of this study will resonate more with people in most repressive or pseudo-repressive societies. While Twitter continues to offer such people a platform to engage in political communication, canvass their political views and foster online and offline political engagements, the company needs to continue to weed out fake news capable of causing disaffection among users or inciting political violence. The platform needs to continue to encourage health political discussions and engagements which can help to foster the deepening of democracy in modern nations while banning voices and users who fan embers of ethnic and religious violence hiding behind political content.

To make itself a platform for the effective use for marketing of products and services, there is need for Twitter to teach its users or simplify to its users how to use its services for marketing purposes. These should include how users can package their marketing information, identify the right target, aim to reach this target and how they can measure their returns on their marketing investments. This will assist more users understand how to use Twitter for marketing purposes.

This also goes for its use as a platform for brand engagement. To make more money, the company should teach people how to leverage the platform, tools and services to foster greater brand

engagement to reap more sales, brand awareness, conflict resolution and even make more profitability and sales. Since branding is not limited to only products and services but to people, nations, groups, causes and even ideas, making its users understand how the platform can be used for brand engagement will increase such activity on the platform and bring more benefits to all the parties.

From this study, Twitter has shown to excel more in the area of granting its users its platform for the exercise of their freedom of expression which is a fundamental human right. Citizens living in repressive or pseudo-repressive societies and communities like Nigeria will appreciate this privilege by Twitter than those in free societies. To improve this, Twitter needs to continue to strengthen its platform as a hub that supports the freedom of expression of its users and aggregates these expressions for the good of the individual societies concerned while also working hard to isolate voices and content that breed hate, division, discrimination and violence.

6.3 Suggestion for Future Research

This study has only examined the perception of 155 Twitter users in Nigeria. It did not consider their professions or trade which may be sensitive areas and which could have narrowed the study to either how Twitter helps participants to brand and market their products and services. Rather it tested how users generally perceived Twitter in the areas of political communication, marketing, brand engagement and freedom of speech. While this study appears to be one of the few that have combined correlated Twitter usage vis-à-vis these four areas, future researchers could consider narrowing this focus in order to compare the results. The limited sample and lack of narrowed area of research could make it difficult to generalise the findings. Also, not making use of a mixed method which could have involved the use of both quantitative and qualitative research methods for data collection and analysis means that the results lack context rich data. This could have helped to throw more light on certain participants' responses and perhaps improved the overall findings. Finally, being a cross-sectional study may make the findings difficult to compare over a long period of time. Therefore, these areas provide future researchers opportunities to replicate this study in a different context while being mindful of these limitations.

6.4 Personal Reflection on the Study

This research has offered me the opportunity to venture into a multi-disciplinary area which involves marketing, branding, politics and human rights. While these areas may not be mutually exclusive, research in these areas in one study is still scant in the literature. I was motivated to venture into this area after reading wide and understanding that politics and human rights are important for effective marketing and brand engagements (Kejriwa, et al., 2021; Musa, 2021). What I mean is that where people are repressed, where people cannot find their voices, or where social media platforms are overly regulated or monitored, using such platforms for marketing and brand engagements may be difficult as the present study shows. This is why I decided to embrace the disciplinary idea behind the study in order to further understand how the whole research would pan out in a country like Nigeria which for the past few years has been facing repression at all levels of the society (Anyim, 2021).

In carrying out this research, I have been prepared by my various tutors and given great guidance by my supervisor. These have contributions which helped me a great deal in wording my topic, coming up with my research methodology, designing my questionnaire instrument and embarking on the data collection and analysis processes. It has been an exciting experience. My time management skills are enhanced so is my creativity. I have also improved my knowledge regarding my use of Microsoft Office, research skills, and use of the IBM SPSS software application.

I faced the challenge of coming up with a robust, meaningful and applicable academic research report. It means writing formally, referencing all sources cited within the report and abiding by strict research ethics even towards one's research participants. However, my academic and formal writing has improved a great deal and I hope to bring these skills to bear on my career as a marketer. Much more, this study has shown me that to excel in my field of marketing, I must also be a good citizen who should be involved in the electoral process. This is because when the wrong party or candidate is chosen, it could unfold repression and poor leadership on the society, affecting organisations and the marketing function.

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