

Ideological Representation and Identity Construction in #EndBadGovernance Digital Activism: A Transitivity Approach

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Abstract

This paper investigates the linguistic mechanisms through which ideology and collective identity are constructed in the digital discourse surrounding Nigeria's #EndBadGovernance protests of August 2024. Employing Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics, with particular focus on the transitivity system, the paper analyses a purposively compiled corpus of high-engagement posts from X (formerly Twitter) and Facebook produced between 1st and 10th August 2024, the period widely designated as the "10 Days of Rage." The analysis demonstrates a clear predominance of material and relational processes. Material processes systematically position the Nigerian state, its economic policies and abstract forces such as "bad governance" and "hunger" as Actors that inflict hardship, while ordinary citizens appear predominantly as Goals or Beneficiaries of negative processes. Conversely, when protesters occupy the Actor role, material clauses encode collective agency and resistance. Relational processes define the crisis in terms of shared attributes and construct an inclusive national identity that claims to transcend ethnic, regional and religious divides. Mental processes encode collective sensory and cognitive experience of suffering, while verbal processes amplify demands and circulate counter-narratives. Circumstances of cause, location and contingency further reinforce the ideological framing of governance failure and the temporal identity of the movement as sustained resistance. The study argues that these clause-level choices perform both representational and constitutive work: they ideologically diagnose the sources of hardship and simultaneously enact a participatory civic identity. By applying a transitivity framework to a recent African digital protest corpus, the paper contributes to scholarship on language, ideology and identity in Global South activism and demonstrates the continuing analytical power of Systemic Functional Linguistics for understanding hashtag-mediated resistance.

Keywords: #EndBadGovernance, digital activism, ideology, identity construction, transitivity analysis

Introduction

In the first ten days of August 2024, Nigeria experienced a wave of decentralised mass protests under the hashtag #EndBadGovernance (also circulating as #EndBadGovernanceInNigeria and #HungerProtest). The movement, frequently referred to by organisers and participants as the “10 Days of Rage,” emerged against a backdrop of acute economic hardship. The removal of fuel subsidies in May 2023, the subsequent floating of the Naira, record food inflation, rising electricity tariffs and persistent insecurity which combined to produce what many citizens described as the worst cost-of-living crisis in a generation. Protesters articulated a set of interrelated demands that included the reinstatement or substantial mitigation of fuel subsidy effects, drastic reduction in the cost of governance, electoral and judicial reform, improved security for farmers and communities, increased budgetary allocation to education and health and the release of previously detained activists.

Social media platforms (especially X, Instagram, Facebook and WhatsApp) functioned as the primary infrastructure for mobilisation, real-time coordination, documentation of state responses and the discursive construction of both grievance and solidarity. Hashtags served not merely as indexing devices but as semiotic resources that allowed geographically dispersed users to align individual experiential statements under a shared collective label. Within this digital public sphere, language performed critical ideological and identity work: it attributed causality for suffering, defined the nature of the crisis and positioned speakers as members of a unified national “people” in opposition to a failing elite.

Globally, digital activism has played a pivotal role in shaping numerous socio-political movements. Campaigns such as the Arab Spring, Occupy Wall Street, #BlackLivesMatter, #MeToo and #FridaysForFuture demonstrate the capacity of social media to mobilise citizens, amplify marginalised voices and influence public opinion and policy discourse. In these movements, hashtags function not merely as indexing tools but as discursive resources through which participants organise collective action, articulate grievances, construct identities and negotiate ideological positions. Consequently, social media discourse has become an important site for investigating how language constructs

social reality, legitimises resistance and represents competing ideological perspectives.

In Nigeria, digital activism has gained increasing prominence over the past decade, particularly in response to recurring socio-economic and political challenges. While a growing body of scholarship has examined the organisational and mobilisational dimensions of Nigerian digital activism (from #OccupyNigeria (2012) through #BringBackOurGirls and #EndSARS (2020) to the 2024 protests) fewer studies have applied a detailed clause-level linguistic framework to reveal how ideology and identity are encoded in the everyday language of the posts themselves. Therefore, this paper asks three questions:

- i. What patterns of process types, participant roles and circumstantial elements characterise the digital discourse of #EndBadGovernance on X and Facebook during the peak protest period?
- ii. How do these transitivity choices ideologically represent the Nigerian state, economic policy, hardship and the relationship between government and citizens?
- iii. In what ways do the same linguistic choices contribute to the construction of a collective activist identity that claims inclusivity across Nigeria's social diversity?

By answering these questions, the paper aims to demonstrate that the experiential grammar of activist posts is neither random nor merely descriptive; it systematically distributes agency, defines social categories and enacts solidarity. In doing so, it contributes both to the linguistic study of African digital activism and to the broader theoretical understanding of how clause-level resources operationalise resistance in networked public spheres.

Literature Review

Digital Activism in Nigeria

The rapid expansion of digital communication technologies has transformed the nature of political participation, civic engagement and social movements across the world. Nigeria has a well-documented history of digitally mediated protest. #OccupyNigeria (2012) responded to the removal of fuel subsidies; #BringBackOurGirls (2014) demanded government action on the Chibok abductions; and #EndSARS (2020) protested police brutality and, more broadly, systemic governance failures. In each case, social media platforms enabled rapid information

dissemination, decentralised coordination and the amplification of voices often marginalised in mainstream political discourse. Facebook supported community-building among older or less digitally native users and X served as a site for public amplification and global visibility. Hashtags such as #EndBadGovernance, #EndBadGovernance2024 and #HungerProtest functioned as unifying devices that allowed users to track conversations, express solidarity and frame the protests as a national rather than sectional struggle.

Digital activism, sometimes referred to as online activism, cyber activism, or networked activism, encompasses the strategic use of digital technologies to promote political, social, economic, or cultural change. Joyce (2010) conceptualises digital activism as the coordinated use of digital communication tools to influence public opinion, mobilise communities and stimulate collective political action. Similarly, Vegh (2003) identifies three principal dimensions of digital activism: awareness and advocacy, organisation and mobilisation and direct digital action. These dimensions illustrate that digital activism extends beyond information sharing to include coordinated political engagement capable of influencing offline events and policy debates.

One of the defining characteristics of contemporary digital activism is the emergence of hashtag movements, which utilise hashtags as discursive and organisational tools for mobilising collective action. Originally developed as metadata markers to categorise online content, hashtags have evolved into powerful communicative resources that organise conversations, facilitate information retrieval and symbolise collective identities (Bruns & Burgess, 2015). By aggregating dispersed voices around a common linguistic marker, hashtags enable geographically dispersed individuals to participate in shared socio-political conversations, thereby creating what Papacharissi (2015) describes as affective publics—networked communities connected through shared emotions, experiences and political aspirations.

Ideology in Digital Activism Discourse

Ideology is recognised as a dynamic resource through which individuals and groups construct identities, negotiate social relationships and interpret the world around them. This broader conceptualisation has made ideology a fundamental concern in linguistics, communication studies, sociology and political discourse analysis. Technically, van Dijk (1998, 2006) offers one of the most influential cognitive approaches to ideology. He defines ideologies as socially shared systems of beliefs that

organise the knowledge, attitudes and values of social groups. According to van Dijk, ideologies influence not only what individuals think but also how they communicate, interpret information and interact with others. Language therefore becomes a principal medium through which ideological beliefs are expressed, reproduced and negotiated.

Similarly, Fairclough (2015) conceptualises discourse as a form of social practice through which power relations and ideological assumptions are produced and reproduced. Within Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), Fairclough argues that language both reflects and constitutes social structures, making discourse a crucial site for understanding the relationship between language, power and society. Ideologies are embedded within linguistic practices in ways that often appear natural, objective, or commonsensical. Consequently, one of the principal aims of discourse analysis is to expose these underlying assumptions and demonstrate how apparently ordinary linguistic choices contribute to the maintenance or transformation of social inequalities.

Fairclough further proposes a three-dimensional framework consisting of textual analysis, discursive practice and social practice. At the textual level, linguistic features such as vocabulary, grammar, cohesion and textual organisation reveal how meanings are constructed. Discursive practice concerns the production, circulation and interpretation of texts, while social practice situates discourse within broader political, economic and cultural contexts. This multidimensional perspective is particularly relevant to digital activism because social media discourse simultaneously functions as text, communicative practice and socio-political action. Hashtags, comments, images and online interactions therefore participate in broader ideological struggles concerning governance, democracy, citizenship and social justice.

Within digital communication, ideology is expressed not only through explicit socio-political statements but also through grammatical choices that assign agency, distribute responsibility and evaluate social actors. Every clause represents a particular interpretation of reality by selecting who performs actions, who experiences events and who bears responsibility for social outcomes. These grammatical decisions are rarely neutral; rather, they reflect ideological assumptions concerning causality, legitimacy, morality and power. Consequently, analysing grammatical structures provides valuable insights into how ideological meanings are encoded within discourse.

Identity Construction in Digital Activism

Identity in activist contexts is not a pre-given attribute but an ongoing discursive accomplishment. Benwell and Stokoe (2006) conceptualise identity as a discursive accomplishment that emerges through everyday language use. They argue that discourse provides speakers with resources for constructing both personal and collective identities while simultaneously reproducing broader social categories and power relations. Rather than reflecting pre-existing identities, discourse actively constitutes them through categorisation, evaluation and positioning. Consequently, identity construction involves continuous negotiation between self-representation and the representations imposed by others. This perspective is particularly relevant to protest discourse, where participants strategically position themselves as citizens, activists, patriots, victims, or agents of social change while simultaneously representing governments, institutions, or political elites in contrasting ways.

Bucholtz and Hall (2005) argue that identities are constructed through discourse and emerge from interaction rather than existing independently of communication. According to their framework, identity construction involves five interrelated principles: emergence, positionality, indexicality, relationality and partialness. The principle of emergence emphasises that identities are continuously produced through communicative interaction. Positionality highlights that individuals simultaneously occupy multiple social positions depending on context, while indexicality explains how linguistic choices point to particular social meanings and identities. Relationality underscores that identities are constructed through relationships with others and partialness recognises that identities remain fluid, incomplete and constantly negotiated.

Joseph (2004) further argues that language constitutes one of the most significant markers of identity because linguistic choices communicate not only information but also social belonging, ideological orientation and interpersonal relationships. According to Joseph, speakers continuously construct identities through lexical selection, grammatical structures, pronoun usage, evaluative expressions and other linguistic resources that signal group membership and social alignment. In political discourse, such choices frequently distinguish between in-groups and out-groups, thereby reinforcing ideological boundaries and collective identities.

The relationship between ideology and identity has also received considerable scholarly attention. Scholars increasingly recognise that identities are not fixed personal attributes but discursive constructions continuously negotiated through language and social interaction (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005; Benwell & Stokoe, 2006). Ideological beliefs influence how individuals categorise themselves and others, while discourse simultaneously reproduces these social categories through linguistic representation. Consequently, ideological representation and identity construction are mutually reinforcing processes. Protest movements provide particularly rich contexts for examining this relationship because participants continually negotiate collective identities such as citizens, youths, victims, activists, or patriots, while simultaneously constructing institutional identities associated with governments, political elites, security agencies and other social actors.

Transitivity System

Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) conceptualises language as a resource for making meaning in social context developed principally by Michael Alexander Kirkwood Halliday and subsequently extended by Christian M. I. M. Matthiessen. The theory conceptualises language as a social semiotic system through which individuals construct meaning, negotiate interpersonal relationships and organise communicative experiences within specific social contexts (Halliday, 1978; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014). A fundamental principle of SFL is that language simultaneously performs three broad communicative functions known as metafunctions. Halliday argues that every clause simultaneously encodes experiential, interpersonal and textual meanings.

The experiential metafunction enables language users to represent experiences of the external and internal worlds. Through this metafunction, speakers construe events, actions, relationships, perceptions, emotions and states of existence by selecting appropriate process types, participant roles and circumstantial elements. The interpersonal metafunction concerns the enactment of social relationships between speakers and listeners or writers and readers. Through grammatical resources such as mood, modality, pronouns, appraisal and evaluative expressions, language enables individuals to express attitudes, negotiate power relations, establish solidarity and influence the behaviour or beliefs of others. On the other hand, the textual metafunction organises linguistic elements into coherent and meaningful texts. It governs the arrangement of information through thematic

structure, cohesion, reference, conjunction, substitution, ellipsis and lexical cohesion, thereby enabling discourse to function as unified communication rather than isolated sentences.

The experiential metafunction is realised primarily through the Transitivity System, which constitutes the principal analytical framework adopted in the present study. By examining how different process types represent experience, it identifies how language attributes agency, distributes responsibility and constructs particular representations of social reality. According to Halliday and Matthiessen (2014), a clause as representation consists of a process, the participants involved in that process and optional circumstances. Processes are classified into six types:

- **Material processes** encode outer experience of doing and happening. Typical participants are Actor (the doer), Goal (the entity affected) and Beneficiary (the entity for whom the process occurs).
- **Mental processes** encode inner experience of sensing. Participants are Sensor and Phenomenon.
- **Relational processes** encode states of being and having. They include intensive (attributive and identifying), possessive and circumstantial subtypes.
- **Verbal processes** encode saying and symbolic exchange. Participants include Sayer, Verbiage and Receiver.
- **Behavioural processes** lie on the boundary between material and mental, encoding physiological and psychological behaviours.
- **Existential processes** simply assert that something exists; the sole obligatory participant is the Existent.

Methodology

The study adopts a qualitative, interpretative design grounded in Systemic Functional Linguistics. A corpus of 25 English-language posts containing the hashtag #EndBadGovernance was compiled from X. Posts were selected purposively according to three criteria: (1) publication date between 1 and 10 August 2024; (2) high engagement metrics (retweets, likes and replies) as a proxy for visibility and resonance; and (3) thematic relevance to the core demands of the movement or to the experiential representation of hardship and resistance. The sample includes posts from known organisers, civil society accounts, diaspora users and ordinary citizens.

Each post was segmented into ranking clauses. For every clause, the process type was identified, participant roles were labelled and circumstantial elements were noted. Frequency distributions of process types were calculated to establish overall patterns. Representative clauses were then subjected to close qualitative analysis, focusing on how the configuration of process, participants and circumstances contributes to ideological representation and identity construction. The analysis is not claimed to be statistically generalisable to the entire population of #EndBadGovernance posts. All examples presented below are anonymised to protect user privacy while preserving the experiential structure of the original clauses.

Analysis and Findings

Although the Transitivity System primarily explains how language represents experience, numerous scholars have demonstrated its usefulness for revealing ideological meanings embedded within discourse (Fowler, 1991; Simpson, 1993; Thompson, 2014). Since process selection determines how events are represented and participant roles determine who performs or experiences actions, transitivity inevitably influences ideological interpretation.

Within #EndBadGovernance digital activism, transitivity choices are expected to reveal how protesters, government officials, political leaders and citizens are represented through competing grammatical configurations. By examining process types, participant roles and circumstantial elements, the present study seeks to demonstrate how experiential meanings function as linguistic resources for ideological representation and identity construction. This analytical perspective provides the conceptual foundation for the empirical analysis presented in the subsequent sections of the study.

1. Material Processes and Ideological Representation

Material processes dominate the corpus. Government, APC, Tinubu, police, inflation and hunger are frequently represented as Actors responsible for actions that negatively affect ordinary Nigerians. Citizens and protesters are commonly realised as Goals, thereby constructing them as victims of state actions. Conversely, protesters also appear as Actors in clauses representing resistance and political mobilisation.

Table 1. Material Process Analysis

Corpus Excerpt	Participants	Ideological Interpretation	Identity Construction
"Our police are not trained."	Actor: <i>Police</i>	Institutional failure	Police constructed as incompetent institution
"They give them uniform without education."	Actor: <i>They</i> ; Goal: <i>them</i>	Government negligence	Victims of poor recruitment system
"Children were arrested, detained and arraigned."	Actor (suppressed); Goal: <i>children</i>	State repression	Children as innocent victims
"The government promised to protect them."	Actor: <i>Government</i>	Broken social contract	Government as failed protector

The repeated allocation of Actor roles to governmental institutions constructs governance as the principal source of suffering, while the frequent positioning of citizens, minors and protesters as Goals reinforces an ideology of state oppression and public victimisation. At the same time, material clauses in which protesters are Actors portray citizens as agents of democratic resistance. These patterns corroborate the predominance of material processes observed in the study.

2. Mental Processes and Collective Consciousness

Mental processes encode the protesters' shared perceptions, emotions, beliefs and aspirations regarding governance. Unlike material processes that foreground physical actions, mental processes reveal how participants cognitively and emotionally experience the socio-political crisis. The predominance of cognitive (*know*), affective (*cry*, *weep*) and perceptive (*see*, *watch*) processes demonstrates that the #EndBadGovernance movement is sustained not only by material hardship but also by a collective consciousness shaped by shared suffering, frustration and hope for change.

Table 2. Mental Process Analysis

Corpus Excerpt	Participants	Ideological Interpretation	Identity Construction
"We knew he's a fascist."	Senser: We; Phenomenon: He's a fascist	Shared political awareness	Citizens as politically conscious actors
"I am crying."	Senser: I	Emotional response to injustice	Citizen as victim of hardship
"Tears in my eyes. I weep for Nigeria."	Senser: I; Phenomenon: Nigeria	National grief and empathy	Patriotic citizen concerned about national wellbeing
"See the same malnourished children."	Senser (implicit): Audience: Phenomenon: Malnourished children	Invitation to witness suffering	Collective observer of injustice

The recurring assignment of Senser roles to first-person pronouns (*I, we*) and collective expressions (*Nigerians, citizens*) constructs a shared cognitive and emotional community. Governance failures, hunger and injustice are consistently realised as Phenomena, reinforcing the ideological claim that hardship is a collective rather than an individual experience. These mental processes transform personal emotions into collective consciousness, strengthening solidarity among protesters and legitimising resistance against perceived governance failures.

3. Relational Processes and Identity Attribution

Relational processes are employed to assign identities, attributes and classifications to governments, politicians, institutions and citizens. These clauses function ideologically by defining what political actors *are*, rather than what they *do*. Consequently, they become powerful resources for constructing legitimacy, delegitimising authority and establishing collective identities.

Table 3. Relational Process Analysis

Corpus Excerpt	Participants	Ideological Interpretation	Identity Construction
"Nigeria is a captured state."	Carrier: Nigeria; Attribute: Captured state	Governance failure	Nation portrayed as politically oppressed
"We are now slaves."	Carrier: We; Attribute: Slaves	Loss of freedom	Citizens as victims of systemic oppression
"APC is a pandemic."	Carrier: APC; Attribute: Pandemic	Political condemnation	APC constructed as a national threat
"Tinubu is against the Northern people."	Carrier: Tinubu; Attribute: Against Northern people	Political exclusion	President portrayed as divisive
"Children deserve protection."	Carrier: Children; Attribute: Worthy of protection	Moral obligation	Children as innocent victims

Relational clauses consistently attribute negative characteristics such as wicked, useless, heartless, pandemic and captured to government institutions and political leaders. In contrast, citizens are represented as victims, slaves, or ordinary Nigerians deserving dignity and justice. The repeated use of inclusive pronouns (*we*, *our*) constructs a unified civic identity that transcends ethnic and regional differences, while simultaneously delegitimising governmental authority.

4. Verbal Processes and Discursive Resistance

Verbal processes reveal how digital activism functions through communication, advocacy and political engagement. They foreground the voices of protesters, activists, journalists and ordinary citizens, illustrating how discourse itself becomes a tool of resistance and mobilisation.

Table 4. Verbal Process Analysis

Corpus Excerpt	Participants	Ideological Interpretation	Identity Construction
"I said this couple of times."	Sayer: I; Verbiage: This	Personal testimony	Citizen as persistent advocate
"He said it guys."	Sayer: He; Receiver: Guys	Reinforcement of shared opinion	Collective affirmation
"Activists are calling..."	Sayer: Activists; Verbiage: Call for action	Political mobilisation	Activists as agents of change
"The people are demanding..."	Sayer: The people; Verbiage: Demands	Democratic participation	Citizens as rights claimants
"Leave your keyboard and lead Nigerians."	Sayer (implicit); Receiver: Nigerians	Call for offline mobilisation	Citizens as active participants

The repeated allocation of Sayer roles to activists, protesters and ordinary citizens foregrounds public participation in political discourse. Their Verbiage predominantly consists of demands for accountability, criticism of governance and appeals for collective action. These communicative acts transform individual voices into a collective political narrative, reinforcing digital activism as a participatory space where citizens challenge official narratives and negotiate alternative visions of governance.

5.Behavioural Processes and Protest Performance

Behavioural processes represent observable physiological and psychological responses to political events. They bridge mental experience and material action by portraying how participants physically express grief, empathy, vigilance and solidarity.

Table 5. Behavioural Process Analysis

Corpus Excerpt	Participants	Ideological Interpretation	Identity Construction
"I am crying."	Behavior: I	Emotional impact of governance failure	Citizen as suffering individual
"I weep for Nigeria."	Behavior: I	Patriotic grief	Citizen as compassionate patriot
"Watch the actions."	Behavior (implicit): Audience	Public vigilance	Citizens as active observers
"The video is just sad to watch."	Behavior (implicit): Viewer	Emotional engagement	Collective witness to injustice

Behavioural processes portray participants as emotionally invested observers of national events. Expressions such as *crying*, *weeping* and *watching* symbolise collective grief and vigilance rather than mere individual reactions. These behaviours reinforce solidarity by encouraging audiences to witness, empathise with and respond to the suffering of protesters, particularly minors and economically vulnerable citizens. Consequently, behavioural processes strengthen the moral legitimacy of the movement while humanising its participants.

6. Existential Processes and the Representation of Crisis

Existential processes are comparatively less frequent but play an important role in establishing the existence of socio-political crises. Rather than assigning explicit agency, these clauses foreground the presence of hardship, insecurity and institutional failure as national realities requiring urgent attention.

Table 6: Existential Process Analysis

Corpus Excerpt	Participants	Ideological Interpretation	Identity Construction
"There may be no one left to vote."	Existent: No one left to vote	Democratic crisis	Citizens as endangered electorate
"There are no reputable northern groups..."	Existent: No reputable northern groups	Leadership vacuum	Region portrayed as politically abandoned
"There have been restricted..."	Existent: Restrictions	State repression	Citizens as victims of control
"It's national disaster."	Existent: National disaster	National crisis	Nigeria constructed as a nation in distress

Existential clauses foreground the existence of economic hardship, democratic decline and institutional dysfunction while frequently suppressing explicit agency. By presenting these conditions as pervasive and undeniable realities, they reinforce the ideological argument that Nigeria faces a systemic governance crisis. These constructions also provide the experiential backdrop against which protesters construct collective identities based on shared suffering, resilience and the demand for democratic accountability.

Discussion

The transitivity patterns identified in the #EndBadGovernance corpus perform two tightly interrelated functions. Representationally, they construct an ideologically coherent picture of the Nigerian political economy: the state and its policies are agentive producers of hardship; ordinary citizens are the affected parties; and the resulting suffering is both widespread and unjust. Constitutively, the same patterns enact a collective activist identity. The consistent allocation of Actor, Senser and Sayer roles to an inclusive “we,” combined with relational definitions of shared attributes, transforms individual experiential statements into contributions to a larger political subject.

This dual work is especially potent in a digital environment. Hashtags function as textual and social anchors that allow dispersed

users to align their clause-level representations under a common label. The result is a scalable discourse in which local perceptions of hunger and injustice are aggregated into a national narrative of resistance. The relative scarcity of purely existential clauses (which merely assert that a problem exists without attributing agency) and the limited use of behavioural processes focused on individual physiological reactions suggest a discourse oriented toward diagnosis, attribution and collective action rather than passive observation or purely emotional expression.

The findings also extend insights by demonstrating the particularly prominent role of relational and mental processes in constructing a solidarity that explicitly claims to transcend Nigeria's well-documented social cleavages. In the 2024 context, the repeated framing of hunger as a universal Phenomenon enabled an identity that positioned economic hardship as a unifying force capable of overriding ethnic and regional divisions as an ideological move with significant political implications in a multi-ethnic federation.

At the same time, the analysis reveals the limits of purely digital identity construction. While the discourse successfully enacted a collective "we" online, the translation of that identity into sustained offline political leverage remained constrained by state repression, elite co-optation and the structural difficulties of converting networked mobilisation into institutional change. The linguistic construction of solidarity, however powerful, does not by itself guarantee political transformation; it remains one resource among others in the broader struggle for accountability.

Conclusion

This study investigated how Halliday's Transitivity System reveals the linguistic construction of ideology and identity in the digital discourse of the #EndBadGovernance movement in Nigeria. The analysis demonstrates that transitivity choices systematically represent governance, distribute agency and construct collective identities through different process types. Material processes predominantly assign responsibility for socio-economic hardship to government institutions and political actors while portraying citizens as both victims of governance failures and active agents of resistance. Mental, relational, verbal, behavioural and existential processes further encode shared emotions, ideological evaluations, communicative resistance, collective solidarity and the pervasive realities of economic and political crises. Together, these grammatical patterns reveal that digital protest discourse

functions not merely as a medium for expressing grievances but also as a mechanism for constructing political realities and mobilising collective action.

The study contributes to scholarship on Systemic Functional Linguistics, Critical Discourse Analysis and digital activism by demonstrating the explanatory power of Halliday's Transitivity System in analysing protest discourse. It establishes that grammatical choices are central to the representation of ideology and the construction of civic identities in networked communication. Although the study is limited to a qualitative analysis of selected English-language social media posts, it provides a valuable framework for examining digital activism in Nigeria and similar socio-political contexts. Future research should expand the corpus to include multilingual and multimodal data and undertake comparative analyses of other digital protest movements to further advance understanding of language, ideology and identity in digitally mediated civic engagement.

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