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ABSTRACT

Corruption is a destructive force for the development of any society. It hampers effective governance and erodes public trust. The growth of digital technologies and their potential have created platforms for some individuals to hold public officers accountable and help address the ongoing challenge of corruption. Research has been limited in examining the role of vloggers as alternative voices in the anti-corruption movement in Nigeria. Therefore, this discourse examines how vloggers influence the anti-corruption effort in Nigeria. One theory forms the basis of this study: public sphere theory. The methodology involves a review of existing studies, grey literature, project reports, and other evidence of vloggers as alternative voices in Nigeria's anti-corruption drive. Findings show that vloggers significantly complement mainstream media by raising public awareness, giving a voice to citizens, exposing corruption, and supporting agencies on transparency and accountability. Challenges to vloggers' effectiveness include limited internet access, unreliable power supply, and misinformation. It concludes that to combat corruption effectively across Nigeria, the mainstream media must recognize the crucial role of vloggers and foster greater cooperation. Improving infrastructure and access to technology is essential to ensuring corruption campaigns reach all citizens for maximum impact.

KEYWORDS: Anti-Corruption, Alternative voices, Crusade, Vloggers

Introduction/the problem

The affordances of the internet, mobile technologies, and social media have made it possible for ordinary citizens to perform the traditional role of journalists by owning vlogs or websites to fight causes that include corruption, insecurity, poverty, rape, inflation, police brutality, gender discrimination, bullying, extrajudicial killings, violent repression, assault, and other societal vices. In Nigeria, events like the "Ebi Npawa" (we are dying of hunger) protest, "#BringBackOurGirls," and "#EndSars" and its variant "sorosoke" (meaning speak up) and #Justice For Sylvester, "our mumu don do" and "#OccupyNASS" have demonstrated the power of vlogging in fighting corrupt practices. The concept of "sorosoke," in particular, has further emboldened vloggers to use social media to demand accountability as they key into the "sorosoke" (speak up) generation (Akpojivi, 2024; Naziru, 2023; Orah & Asemah, 2023; Osuagwu, 2021).

However, little attention has been paid to the efforts of vloggers in the anticorruption crusade in Nigeria. This gap is what necessitates this paper because an endeavor like this is

necessary to contribute to the realization of Goal 16 of the 2030 UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which pertains to building peaceful, accountable, and inclusive institutions at all spheres of social systems (Odoh & Olagunju, 2025). It is a known fact that corruption is inimical to the development of a society, and combating it is often a challenge (Banko & Onyekachi, 2020; Egwemi, 2012; Hope, 2023; John & Nhlamulo, 2023). It is in this regard that Banko & Onyekachi (2020) stated that corruption and development are an “incompatible marriage” that holds no good for society.

Aim and objectives

The general aim of this paper is to examine how bloggers are serving as alternative voices to the anti-corruption crusade in Nigeria. The specific objectives are to:

- 1) Ascertain the ways vloggers are contributing to the anti-corruption crusade in Nigeria.
- 2) find out the challenges impeding vloggers from adequately contributing to the anticorruption crusade in Nigeria;

Theoretical framework

The public sphere theory foregrounds this article. The theory, as propounded in the 18th century by the German scholar Jurgen Habermas, sees the mass media as agencies that should provide spaces for public discussion and debate towards deepened options for good governance and accountability. The interplay of communication, democracy, and citizenship highlights the importance of this theory (Usua & Osuagwu, 2026) as the basis and guarantee for an informed citizenry that is aware of and can participate in social, economic, and political issues in the society. The theory suggests that the only legitimate government is considered to be the one that listens to the public sphere (Oso, 2012). Public sphere theory has its origin in the Greek agora (Mahoney, 2003) and serves as the earliest effort in public opinion formation and legitimization of democracy. It embodies the thinking that the public sphere is a good prism for exploring public service broadcasting and the political participation of youth.

The public sphere doctrine is the view that the media should provide a platform for public debate and discussion towards arriving at the best of options in issues of governance. It conceives the public sphere as social life where public opinion can be formed as citizens discuss matters of general interest and how they can be addressed, as opposed to private or individual interests. Specifically, the concept of the political public sphere captures public discussion of the state and political practices. Though the public and private divide in its initial Aristotelian conception was between the state and the family, it metamorphosed into a dichotomy between the individual and the market in liberal democracies (Mahoney, 2003).

The Habermasian theory has been applied to various components of society. For instance, scholars have noted the intersection of the public sphere with social movements,

new information technology, democratic principles, and the changes taking place in modern public spaces, as evident in participatory politics and emancipation. In other words, research has shown that vlogs are changing the form and content of the public sphere through political commentaries. Since the media, according to Rodríguez-Castro, López-Cepeda, and Campos-Freire (2020), should enhance the public sphere, the central argument applied to this study is that the public sphere can help hold individuals accountable. The "neo-Habermasians" have argued that social media embodies the modern public sphere and, theoretically, participatory democracy thrives through conversations like political discourses in the public arena. In this regard, social media and the activities of vloggers can be considered as where public opinion is heard. Further, bloggers significantly complement mainstream media through various roles they play in raising public awareness, giving a voice to citizens, exposing corruption, and supporting agencies on transparency and accountability.

Vlogging

Vlogging is the focal point of this discourse, which is the creation and sharing of online video content. A vlog is a video blog that records an individual's thoughts, opinions, and interests, usually for online publication and an online audience (SocialBee, 2026). In vlogging, video is blended with narration or music and edited to create a personal, authentic effect. To connect emotionally with viewers, vlogs emphasize visuals, voice, and immediacy. The advent of the internet, which culminated in the rise of gadgets and the proliferation of social media sites, gave birth to vlogging. Varieties of vlogging include lifestyle, current events, tutorials and how-to guides, music-related, beauty, education, comedy/sketch, reaction, and games.

A social media activity, like vlogging, has the potential to echo public scrutiny, reduce whistleblowing costs, and enable rapid mobilization (Akpojivi, 2024; Odoh & Olagunju, 2025). This is because of the personalized nature of communication that involves community building in blogging (Jenkins, 2020).

Vlogging constitutes daily digital communication traditions, which include posting on social media like Facebook and LinkedIn, microblogging on Twitter, videologging on YouTube, and photography-centered posting on Instagram or Pinterest. They have become novel genres that have reshaped the discourses in the public sphere (Lotherington, 2020) as well as personal narratives (Al-Zaman & Puja, 2021; Mambo, 2021).

Pasolo & Pasolo (2025) analyzed public reactions on TikTok to President Prabowo Subianto's anti-corruption speech, with emphasis on audit themes and governance. The thematic analysis showed that the greatest proportion of relevant comments showed positive support for the president, with significant attention given to issues of corruption, fostering public discourse on political issues and governance. The findings revealed that social media, particularly platforms like TikTok, can play a crucial role in shaping public

opinion on anti-corruption policies and can be strategically used to engage citizens in discussions about transparency and accountability.

Challenges

Prosecutions, fines and prison sentences: The recent Twitter ban, a social media census in Nigeria to deal with the expression of dissent in old and new media, is challenging the efforts of vloggers. Vloggers suffer judicial harassment and dehumanisation.

Manipulation and reputational damage: Vloggers are sometimes bribed by influential figures to influence content. (Petrova, Sonin & Enikolopov, 2016). We have had cases of vloggers who are not genuinely using their platforms to fight corruption. They produce content for businesses and the highest bidders.

Misinformation: This is a well-known shortcoming of online communication. The rush to break for clickbait sometimes makes bloggers propagate falsehoods (Al-Zaman & Puja, 2021; Ceron & Quiles, Furomfute, 2023; 2023; 2021; Osuagwu, 2018; Osuagwu, 2019).

Slacktivism: This is a well-known shortcoming of online communication. The rush to break for clickbait sometimes makes bloggers propagate falsehoods (Al-Zaman & Puja, 2021; Ceron & Quiles, 2023; Furomfute, 2023; 2021; Osuagwu, 2018; Osuagwu, 2019).

Imbalances and inequality: Some critics have also mentioned inequality of access to the social media public sphere, which distorts participation just like in the mainstream media. Thus, the majority of the people in the rural areas still do not have internet access, and where there is access, some older folks cannot use smartphones.

Why blogging/Vlogging matters for anti-corruption crusade in Nigeria

Bloggers play a plethora of roles in society, including information provision for deepening awareness. Some scholars have demonstrated how social media is a viable tool for stemming the tide of social vices (Asemah, 2023; Egwa & Asemah, 2023; Saka, 2020; SocialBee, 2026) and specifically for fighting corruption in many countries (e.g., Masiya & Lubinga, 2023; Naziru, 2023). Thus, according to Global South Hub (2025) and Nisiforou & Eteokleous (2014), blogging generally performs the under-listed functions in society:

1. Informing and educating the public

Bloggers curate and simplify difficult topics that border on security, health, education, politics, technology, corruption and gender issues, thereby making information accessible to all citizens. In many communities, they serve as informal alternate news channels when traditional media is limited or heavily controlled. Vloggers have reduced the cost of information and access to a click of a mouse. Concerning anti-corruption, they provide information about the activities of scammers and warn the public to be wary.

2. Giving voice to marginalised groups

Blogging allows people outside conventional media, including women, youth, ethnic minorities, and activists, to exchange their experiences and thoughts. This sometimes challenges dominant narratives, exposes injustices and brings about social change on issues like corruption, gender equality, environmental justice and human rights. Thus, people leverage vlogs for collective actions that are spontaneous.

3. Shaping public opinion and setting agendas

Vlogging as the new public sphere devoid of restrictions allows influential bloggers like Vincent Otse (VeryDarkMan), a notable vlogger in Nigeria, to set the agenda by highlighting underreported issues, framing debates and calling public attention towards specific causes or policies. Their authenticity often makes their followers get uncensored viewpoints, which can increase trust and behavioural influence.

4. Building communities and networks

Bloggers create online spaces that foster a sense of belonging, peer mentoring, and sometimes even offline mobilisation for campaigns or movements. Blogs create niche communities around career paths, shared interests, parenting, faith, activism, or entertainment, where followers or media users interact, comment, and support one another.

5. Supporting media pluralism and accountability

Because blogs are relatively low-cost and easy to access, they contribute to media pluralism by diversifying sources of information, thereby serving as alternative voices. Many bloggers also monitor government actions, corporate behaviour, and media performance, acting as informal watchdogs that complement (or pressure) traditional journalism.

6. Contributing to economic and professional development

Bloggers are contributing to entrepreneurship, as they give opportunities for creativity and business to thrive. The engagement bloggers gain through social sharing allows them to get monetised. In terms of professionalism, upcoming bloggers often gain freelance opportunities, as well as educators and professionals. In academic and policy circles, blogs can help scholars reach wider audiences and even influence policy discussions by connecting research to everyday realities.

Related studies

Studies on the influence of social media on corruption are limited. Still, there is no census about the role of social media in tackling corruption. Some studies highlight their potential while some express scepticism. Also, some focus on both the positive and the negative usage outcomes. Some of the studies are presented in what follows.

Odoh & Olagunju (2025) conducted a qualitative study that examined the importance of social media in tackling corruption in Nigeria's democracy. Drawing insights from democratic participant theory, nine key informants were sampled purposively. Thematic analysis of the data found that "well-informed citizens are capable of utilising social media to expose corrupt practices and demand accountability in Nigeria's democratic government."

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Vloggers as alternative voices

Vloggers are alternative voices who complement the legacy media, as they sometimes serve as sources of quotes to stories through gossip from within or instantaneous rumour (Eldridge, 2021; Kenix, 2009). Rather than see vlogging as an alternative media, Eldridge & Scott (2017) see new media content creators as interlopers who just dwell on benefiting from the use of personalised digital technologies and powerful innovative content to disrupt old media monopolies with the discourse on their blogs/vlogs. Still, some have argued that new media users cannot be classified as amateurs, as some of them are educated elites with a background in activism and are well-versed in the area of citizen journalism, as evident in their resistance (Akser & McCollum, 2019; Yarnadagolu, 2019).

According to Wihbey (2019), there is a network of connections that influence media consumption habits as well as news-gathering practices in the present media ecology. Such networks shape the cordiality between news and democracy. Thus, vloggers post breaking news, photos, and videos daily to engage their audiences and fight certain social causes, thereby serving as alternative voices for making and gathering news (Yanardagolu, 2022). Vloggers create alternative spaces for contention as they often transcend silencing and self-restraining boundaries to become what El Isawi (2021), citing Butler (1997), calls the "speaking subjects", as, unlike the conventional journalists, they often ignore the domain of the "sayable" or "speakable" to embrace the domain of the "unsayable" or unspeakable because of the degree of freedom that new technology of information permits. In the words

of Butler, the two aforementioned domains “make certain kinds of citizens possible and others impossible” (p. 132). Vloggers are serving as influential sources of counter-narratives who engender public debates on corruption.

Methodology

The methodology of this discourse involves a review of existing studies, grey literature, project reports and other evidence of vloggers as alternative voices in Nigeria's anti-corruption drive. Thus, over forty (40) articles in journals, books, reports and projects were consulted.

Findings

Findings show that vloggers significantly complement mainstream media by raising public awareness, giving a voice to citizens, exposing corruption, and supporting agencies on transparency and accountability. Challenges to vlogging for the anti-corruption crusade involve misinformation, inequality of access, manipulation, among others.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This article concludes that vloggers are contributing to the area of whistleblowing to combat corruption in Nigeria. Challenges like misinformation and harassment, among others, are inhibiting the full realisation of their potential. To this end, this paper suggests more collaboration between journalists and bloggers to help strengthen the anticorruption crusade in Nigeria. This partnership is important towards engendering dissenting narratives that can foster new practices in the conventional media. The partnership, too, can be extended to the anti-graft agencies for a plausible result. Vloggers should not remain at the margins; they should adopt coping practices and mechanisms by avoiding confrontational language and by deploying humour or satire for whistleblowing as a survival strategy for mitigating draconian restrictions.

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