

PROTESTS COMMERCIALISATION AND PROTESTS FRANCHISING: AN ANALYTICS OF “ENDSARS” AND “END BAD GOVERNANCE” CRISES IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

The increasing prevalence of protest commercialization and franchising in Nigeria has significantly undermined the effectiveness of social movements aimed at achieving good governance. This study critically examines protest commercialization and franchising as bane of effective social demands of good governance in Nigeria with a focus on “EndSARS” and “End Bad Governance” protests, in Lagos Nigeria. The study aims to investigate the impact of these protests on Nigerian governance, examining the roles of commercialization in undermining their effectiveness; with an assessment of the effects of franchising public trust for pecuniary gains. We explore how protest commercialization perpetuates conflict and obstructs peace, and propose actionable solutions to mitigate these negative effects.

The research adopts a survey design targeting a population of approximately 2,500 individuals involved in or knowledgeable about the protests in Lagos. A sample size of 400 respondents is selected using purposive and random sampling techniques. Structured questionnaires are used as research instruments, with validity ensured through expert review and a reliability coefficient of 0.83 established through pilot testing. Data collection is covers two months, and descriptive statistical methods are employed for data analysis, providing detailed insights into the research questions. Findings reveal that while the protests raise significant awareness about governance issues, commercialization and franchising dilute their impact by introducing competing interests therefore eroding public trust. The study concludes that ethical leadership, transparency, and regulatory frameworks are essential to preserving the integrity of civil right movements. Key recommendations include integrating ethical education into civic programs, promoting political neutrality in protests, and fostering constructive government-protester dialogue to address grievances effectively.

Keywords: Protest commercialization, protest franchising, EndSARS, governance reforms, public trust, social movements.

Introduction

Protests have historically served as a tool for demanding justice, equity, and good governance globally. However, the success of such movements often hinges on their ability to maintain focused integrity, mobilize support, present leaders and representatives of impeccable personalities and resist external interference. In Nigeria, where corruption permeates multiple facets of society, protests face unique challenges. The political climate often subverts the initial intentions of protests, exploiting them for personal or institutional gain. Globally, many governments

respond to protests by either suppressing them through brute force or diluting their message through manipulative tactics such as misinformation and co-option (Aro, 2013; Aytaç, Schiumerini, & Stokes, 2018). In Nigeria, these challenges are compounded by deep-seated systemic corruption, greed and governance failures that undermine the effectiveness of social demands. Despite the genuine intent of youth-led movements like EndSARS, the government's response demonstrates the multifaceted barriers to achieving successful protests in such an environment. Globally, protests have served as critical tools for citizens to voice their demands and address social injustices. However, in a country like Nigeria, where corruption thrives and political elites prioritize self-interest over public welfare, the challenges of organizing effective protests are immense. Instead of serving as avenues for dialogue and reform, protests are often infiltrated, manipulated, and commercialized, leading to heightened tensions and conflict. These practices not only derail the objectives of the protests but also deepen mistrust among the populace, creating an environment conducive to violence and prolonged instability (Tilly, 2024; Castells, 2022).

The EndSARS protest of 2020 is a critical example of how the government can systematically undermine a genuine movement for change. Initially a grassroots movement driven by young Nigerians demanding an end to police brutality and broader governance reforms, the protest was later manipulated by government-aligned actors. Through counter-protests, misinformation campaigns, and outright violence, the Nigerian government effectively rebranded the EndSARS movement as politically motivated, diluting its original purpose (Kabiru, 2020; Amnesty International, 2021). This manipulation not only discredited the protest in the eyes of some Nigerians but also revealed the state's capacity to exploit the vulnerabilities of protest movements. Heavily monitored counter-protests, often orchestrated by political actors, serve to fracture the unity of the protesting population, creating confusion and reducing public sympathy for the cause (Aderemi et al., 2020). By converting genuine protests into politically inclined spectacles, the government neutralized the protest's potential to initiate meaningful change through the compromising machinations of willing protesters.

Hence, commercialization of protests in Nigeria has worsened the situation. Protest commercialization involves the monetization of what should ideally be an altruistic and collective effort, often diverting resources and energy away from the core objectives. It introduces a profit-driven mindset, where key stakeholders in the protest prioritize personal gains over societal benefits (Ekoh & George, 2021). The commodification of dissent not only dilutes the core message of protests but also creates an avenue for opportunistic actors to exploit the movement. In Nigeria, such commercialization has not resulted in tangible political or governance changes. Instead, it has eroded public trust in the efficacy of protests as a tool for demanding accountability and good governance. Protest commercialization has become a pervasive issue, limiting the ability of genuine activists to sustain momentum and foster the change they seek. Despite widespread calls for good governance, protest commercialization has failed to effect meaningful political and governance reforms in Nigeria. Instead, it has fueled conflict by transforming peaceful protests into contentious and divisive events. Protest leaders, often accused of seeking personal gain or political leverage, lose the trust of the public, leading to apathy and radicalization among genuine activists. For instance, the EndSARS protest was initially a symbol of unity and hope for change, but its commercialization and subsequent hijacking by opportunistic actors created disillusionment, leaving unresolved grievances that continue to simmer beneath the surface (Ogundiya, 2020;

Orizu, 2021).

Existing research has explored the dynamics of protests, including their commercialization, but limited attention has been paid to how these practices directly exacerbate conflict and obstruct peacebuilding efforts. The hijacking of protests by commercial and political interests undermines their potential to serve as peaceful mechanisms for addressing governance challenges. Instead, the focus shifts from resolving grievances to competing interests among protest organizers, counter-protesters, and political actors. This gap in research leaves unresolved questions about how to mitigate the conflict-inducing effects of protest commercialization and foster peaceful resolutions (Ekoh & George, 2021; Aderemi et al., 2020). Studies have largely focused on the implications of these phenomena on social movements but have failed to propose actionable strategies for addressing and mitigating their negative impacts. For instance, while scholars such as Ferguson and Woodward (2009) and Ilegbinosa and Jumbo (2019) have highlighted the structural challenges faced by protests, little attention has been given to Nigeria, where systemic corruption exacerbates these issues. Furthermore, there is a paucity of research on how to institutionalize mechanisms that prevent the hijacking and commercialization of protests.

The franchising and commercialization of protests in Nigeria, as seen in the EndSARS movement, represent a critical obstacle to effective social demands and good governance. By transforming peaceful protests into conflict-prone events, these practices undermine the credibility of citizen movements, erode public trust, and escalate tensions. Addressing these challenges requires a nuanced understanding of how protest commercialization perpetuates conflict and obstructs peace, as well as the development of actionable strategies to counter these effects. This study aims to fill this gap by examining protest commercialization and franchising as bane of effective social demands of good governance in Nigeria; case study: EndSARS and end bad governance protest, Lagos Nigeria.

Objectives of the study

The main aim of this study is therefore to examine protest commercialization and franchising as bane of effective social demands of good governance in Nigeria; case study: EndSARS and end bad governance protest, Lagos Nigeria. The specific objectives are to;

- i. Investigate the impact of the 2020 EndSARS protest and 2024 End Bad Governance protest on the Nigerian governance.
- ii. Examine the role of commercialization in undermining the effectiveness of the 2020 EndSARS protest and 2024 End Bad Governance protest in Lagos, Nigeria.
- iii. Investigate the impact of protest franchising on public trust and its contribution to governance stagnation in Nigeria.
- iv. understand how protest commercialization perpetuates conflict and obstructs peace
- v. propose actionable solutions to mitigate the negative effects of commercialization on protests

Conceptual Review

Protest

Protests have played a significant role in Nigeria's socio-political history, enabling

resistance to oppression and fostering change. Beginning in the colonial era, movements like the Aba Women's Riot of 1929 opposed exploitative policies and showcased the power of collective grassroots action (Ekpo-Ufot, 2021). The anti-colonial movements of the 1940s and 1950s further established protests as key to achieving self-determination.

In the post-independence era, protests addressed economic inequality, government mismanagement, and military authoritarianism. Notable examples include the "Ali Must Go" protests of 1978, driven by students opposing increased tuition fees, and the demonstrations against the annulment of the 1993 presidential election, which reflected public demand for democracy and accountability (Okafor, 2020). These movements were largely grassroots in nature, unified by shared grievances. Since 1999, with Nigeria's return to democracy, protests have shifted. Movements like Occupy Nigeria in 2012 retained grassroots legitimacy, but external financial and political influences have increasingly commercialized protests, altering their structure and intent (Wikipedia, 2024).

Protest Commercialization/Commodification

Protest commercialization occurs when financial, political, or corporate motives infiltrate protest movements, undermining their authenticity and shifting focus from genuine grievances. In Nigeria, poverty and unemployment—affecting over 40% of the population and with youth unemployment exceeding 33%—create conditions for exploitation, as vulnerable individuals are easily mobilized through financial incentives (National Bureau of Statistics, 2023; Ezeocha et al., 2022). Political actors also manipulate protests to serve their agendas. Opposition parties may sponsor protests to discredit governments, while ruling administrations organize counter-protests to show public support, especially during election cycles (Adewale, 2023). Corporate entities, seeking to align with popular movements for brand enhancement or to distract from controversies, further contribute to commercialization, often diverting attention from core issues (Ajibade & Salawu, 2020). Additionally, social media has amplified the monetization of protests. While these platforms democratize access to information, organizers and influencers may prioritize financial gains over addressing the movement's objectives (Olufemi, 2022).

Manifestations of Protest Commercialization

- **Paid Participation:** One of the most visible forms of commercialization is the hiring of individuals to participate in protests. Known colloquially as "rent-a-crowd," this practice involves paying participants to attend rallies, often to inflate the perceived level of public support. Studies suggest that this practice has become increasingly common in urban centers, particularly during politically charged periods (Ezeocha et al., 2022).
- **Astroturfing:** Astroturfing refers to the creation of artificial grassroots movements by powerful entities. In Nigeria, political parties and corporate organizations frequently use this tactic to manipulate public opinion and influence policy decisions. By funding and orchestrating protests, these actors create the illusion of widespread public support for specific agendas. It has been made much more popular with the aid of the social media (Akinyemi & Olumide, 2022).
- **Corporate Branding and Sponsorship:** Corporate involvement in protests often takes the form of sponsorship or branding. While this can increase the

visibility of certain movements, it also shifts the focus from the grievances being addressed to the interests of the sponsors. For example, companies may use protests as opportunities to promote their products or services, diluting the movement's impact (Ajibade & Salawu, 2020).

Protest Franchising

Protest franchising refers to the process by which protests are commercialized or professionalized, often with the involvement of various stakeholders, including political elites, media companies, and influencers, who may prioritize financial or political gains over the movement's original goals. This phenomenon can impact public trust, as it introduces a layer of financial and political interest that may compromise the authenticity of the protest. In the case of Nigeria, where protests have been crucial in challenging government authority, protest franchising could potentially contribute to governance stagnation by diverting attention from substantive political reforms and weakening the social contract between citizens and their government. Protest franchising in Nigeria represents a significant evolution in the way social movements and dissent are organized, marketed, and conducted. It involves the commodification of protest activities, where movements are essentially "branded" and "sold" as marketable events.

The contribution of Protest to Nigerian Governance

The role of protests in shaping governance and influencing policy in Nigeria has been a subject of significant interest in recent years. Protest helps to raise awareness about the failures of Nigerian governance, particularly in terms of law enforcement, human rights, and security. The protest drew attention to the systemic corruption within the police force and the government's failure to address police brutality. This awareness, amplified by social media platforms, garnered widespread national and international attention, forcing the government to confront these issues in the public sphere (Ojo & Idowu, 2021). One of the major contributions of protest is to exert pressure on the Nigerian government to institute institutional reforms. The EndSARS protest for instance led to the disbandment of SARS by the Nigerian government, though critics argue that the dismantling was largely cosmetic and did not address the deeper issues of police brutality or systemic reform (Adebayo, 2021). Nonetheless, the protest forced the government to commit to reforming the police force and addressing the concerns of citizens, marking a significant shift in governance and policy.

The impact of commercialization on protest: The 2020 EndSARS Protest and 2024 End Bad Governance Protest

The EndSARS protest of 2020 was a watershed moment in Nigeria's recent history, triggered by the growing frustration over police brutality and the Special Anti-Robbery Squad's (SARS) human rights violations. While the protest began with the legitimate aim of ending police brutality, commercialization played a significant role in altering the direction of the movement.

Influencers and Celebrities: The involvement of social media influencers and celebrities was both a blessing and a curse for the EndSARS protest. On one hand, the participation of well-known figures helped to amplify the message, attracting international attention. On the other hand, their involvement led to the commodification of the protest. Some celebrities began to use the movement as a platform for self-promotion, furthering their own brand images rather than focusing

purely on the reform agenda (Olayinka, 2022).

Protest Merchandise and Fundraising: Another major aspect of commercialization in the EndSARS movement was the sale of protest-related merchandise, such as T-shirts, wristbands, and other items. While such efforts helped raise funds for protest activities, they also highlighted the commercialization of the movement. Many individuals and businesses began producing and selling protest paraphernalia without clear accountability for the funds raised.

Political Actors and Opportunism: The EndSARS protest also witnessed political actors, both within and outside the government, leveraging the movement to promote their own agendas. Political figures often aligned themselves with the protest to position themselves as champions of the people or to criticize the ruling government (Chukwuemeka & Okafor, 2023).

Corporate and Media Influence: The End Bad Governance protest, although focused on systemic corruption and government accountability, faced the challenge of commercialization through corporate involvement and media sensationalism. Some corporate entities provided funding or resources for the protests as part of their CSR activities, which, while helpful in providing logistical support, also introduced an element of control and influence over the protest's direction (Okon & Ude, 2024).

Diversion by Political Agendas: As the End Bad Governance protest gained traction, it became increasingly evident that some political figures and activists were using the platform to further their own political agendas. Opposition figures, in particular, used the protests to gain political mileage by positioning themselves as the voices of the people, despite the fact that many of them had not actively engaged in governance reform efforts before.

Crowdfunding and the Profit Motive: The introduction of crowdfunding platforms and the push for donations to support protest-related activities also played a role in the commercialization of the End Bad Governance protest. While crowdfunding helped finance critical aspects of the protest, it also led to questions about the allocation of funds.

Solutions to Mitigate the Negative Effects of Commercialization on Protests in Nigeria

Protests have long been a tool for expressing public dissatisfaction and advocating for social, political, and economic change. However, commercialization—the process by which protest movements become financially driven or politically influenced—has increasingly undermined the core objectives of these protests. The following are solutions to mitigate the negative effect of commercialization on protest in Nigeria;

Strengthening Grassroots Organizing and Leadership: One of the most effective ways to mitigate the commercialization of protests is to ensure that the leadership remains grounded in the grassroots community.

Establishing Transparency in Funding: A significant aspect of protest commercialization is the lack of transparency regarding financial contributions. This leads to suspicion about the motivations behind protests and the allocation of funds,

further exacerbating public distrust.

Promoting Political Independence: The hijacking of protests by political elites can dilute the authenticity of the movement, turning it into a political tool rather than a platform for genuine social change.

Public Education on the Role of Protests in Governance: Educating the public on the role of protests in a democracy can help distinguish between legitimate movements and those that are commercialized or politically motivated.

Leveraging social media for Mobilization without Monetization: social media has played a crucial role in organizing and mobilizing protests in Nigeria, especially with movements like EndSARS. While social media can be a powerful tool for activism, it also opens the door for commercialization through corporate sponsorships and influencer marketing.

Building Coalition Networks with Civil Society Organizations: Protest movements can benefit from building coalitions with reputable civil society organizations (CSOs) that have experience in promoting social change. These organizations can provide logistical, financial, and strategic support, which can help counterbalance the pressures of commercialization.

Promoting Non-Violent and Inclusive Protests: One of the key challenges in combating commercialization is the increased likelihood of violence during protests, especially when commercial or political interests clash with the movement's objectives.

Literature Review

Protests in Nigeria, such as the EndSARS and End Bad Governance movements, have been key responses to poor governance, corruption, and socio-economic inequalities (Ayakpo, Ozegbe, & Michael, 2022; Tanyi et al., 2022). However, commercialization—the financial or political exploitation of these movements—has compromised their effectiveness, shifting focus from addressing issues like police brutality to pursuing personal or political agendas (Akinwale & Bamidele, 2022). Commercialization reduces the legitimacy of protests, leading to public distrust and diminished impact (Egbule, 2022; Nwagwu, 2022). Moreover, protest franchising, where political groups hijack grassroots movements for their own benefit, further fragments the goals and weakens the authenticity of protests (Okpala, 2021; Tanyi et al., 2022).

The commercialization and franchising of protests often lead to stagnation in governance reforms, as the Nigerian government reacts with superficial solutions rather than addressing the root causes of social unrest (Oteh, 2020; Ayakpo et al., 2022). Furthermore, these practices erode public trust and increase the likelihood of conflict, turning protests from platforms for social change into sites of social unrest (Akinwale & Bamidele, 2022; Egbule, 2022; Olawale, 2021).

To mitigate the negative effects of commercialization and franchising, scholars suggest enhancing transparency in protest movements and establishing independent oversight mechanisms to ensure that funds and resources are used responsibly (Okpala, 2021; Akinwale & Bamidele, 2022). Engaging the government proactively, fostering public education on the role of protests, and promoting social

responsibility among protest organizers are also critical steps to preserving the integrity of protests and their capacity to drive meaningful change (Ayakpo et al., 2022; Nwagwu, 2022).

Theoretical Review

This study on protest commercialization and franchising uses Framing Theory, Political Opportunity Structure (POS), and Resource Mobilization Theory (RMT) as theoretical frameworks.

Framing Theory (Goffman, 1974): This theory emphasizes how social movements and media shape public perception through selective emphasis on issues, events, or ideas. The framing process influences the way protests are understood and acted upon, often leading to competing narratives that affect public support. In the context of protest commercialization, media and political actors may alter the original focus of a protest, shifting it from a social justice cause to financial or political gain. This undermines the movement's effectiveness.

Political Opportunity Structure (POS) Theory (Tarrow, 1994; McAdam, 1996): POS theory examines how the political environment influences the emergence and success of social movements. Movements thrive when political systems are open, with opportunities for participation and resources. The theory highlights how government repression and elite allies shape movements' trajectories. The 2020 EndSARS and 2024 End Bad Governance protests were shaped by political openings, but both faced challenges from state repression and co-optation by external actors.

Resource Mobilization Theory (RMT) (McCarthy & Zald, 1977): RMT focuses on the role of resources (money, people, expertise) in the success of social movements. It argues that organized efforts to gather and utilize resources are key to achieving collective goals. The commercialization of protests can lead to fragmented movements, competing for resources, which weakens their focus and effectiveness. The 2020 EndSARS and 2024 End Bad Governance protests illustrate this dynamic, where external actors diluted the movements' coherence.

Methods and material

The study adopted a descriptive survey approach; combining both quantitative and qualitative data. This mixed-method design provided broad public perceptions and deeper insights into protest commercialization. The focus was on Lagos, Nigeria's largest city, known for significant protests like the EndSARS and End Bad Governance protests, making it ideal for examining protest commercialization and franchising. The study targeted individuals involved in or knowledgeable about protests in Lagos, including youth activists, protest leaders, civil society groups, and the general public. Cochran's formula estimated a sample size of 384 respondents. A stratified random sampling technique ensured diverse representation from different protest-related groups, with the sample size proportionally distributed across strata.

A structured questionnaire, the "Protest Commercialization and Governance Questionnaire (PCGGQ)," was used. It collected demographic data and included sections focused on commercialization and franchising public trust, and strategies for improvement. Quantitative data was collected through questionnaires, while qualitative data came from in-depth interviews with key stakeholders. Both methods aimed to provide comprehensive insights. Content validity was ensured by expert review, and reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha, targeting a value of 0.7 or higher. A pilot study with 30 respondents was conducted. Quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics, while qualitative data was

analyzed using thematic analysis supported by NVivo software. Ethical standards were followed, including informed consent, confidentiality, and anonymity. Ethical clearance was obtained before data collection. The study's limitations included an unknown population size, the focus on Lagos, and potential biases due to the sensitive nature of protests.

Data Analysis

Table 1: Analysis of Distributed Questionnaires

Total Questionnaire	385
Void and unanswered Questionnaire	6
Valid Questionnaire	379

Source: Field survey, 2024

Socio-Demographic information on the Respondents

Table 2: Socio-Demographic information on the Respondents

Variables		Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative %
Gender	Male	198	52.2	52.2
	Female	181	47.8	100
Age	Below 20	70	18.5	18.5
	21-30	75	19.8	38.3
	31-40	69	18.3	56.6
	41-50	82	21.7	78.3
	Above 51	83	21.7	100
Marital Status:	Single	118	31.1	31.1
	Married	121	31.9	63
	Divorced	140	37.0	100
Educational Level:	Primary	97	25.6	25.6
	Secondary	113	29.8	55.4
	Tertiary	78	20.6	76
	Postgraduate	91	24.0	100
Religion	Christian	146	38.5	38.5
	Muslim	107	28.2	66.7
	Traditionalist	30	7.9	74.6
	Others	96	25.4	100
Occupation	Student	89	23.5	23.5
	Civil Servant	81	21.4	44.9
	Self-employed	78	20.6	65.5
	Unemployed	69	18.2	83.7
	Other	62	16.3	100
Participation in Protest before	Yes	172	45.4	45.4
	No	207	54.6	100

Sources: Field survey, 2024

The table presents the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents, revealing diversity across several factors. The gender distribution is almost balanced, with 52.2% male and 47.8% female participants. Age-wise, the largest groups are those aged 41-50 and above 51, each at 21.7%, followed by younger respondents below 20

at 18.5%. The marital status distribution shows 37% divorced, 31.9% married and 31.1% single, indicating a mix of relationship statuses. In terms of education, 55.4% have secondary or primary education, while 44.6% have attained tertiary or postgraduate levels. Religiously, 38.5% are Christian, 28.2% Muslim, 7.9% traditionalists, and 25.4% follow other religions, reflecting significant diversity. Occupation-wise, students (23.5%) form the largest group, followed by civil servants (21.4%) and self-employed individuals (20.6%). A total of 45.4% of respondents have participated in protests, suggesting notable civic engagement. This varied sample supports a comprehensive analysis of socio-demographic factors in relation to the study's objectives.

Analysis of Research Questions

Question one: In what way did the 2020 EndSARS protest and 2024 End Bad Governance protest contributed to the Nigerian governance?

Table 4.3: Responses of participants based on research question one

Respondents Responses	SA (5)	A (4)	UD (3)	D (2)	SD (1)	Mean	SD	Decision
The Nigerian government's response to the protests has been largely unsatisfactory	71	91	71	72	74	3.13	1.23	Agreed
Protests in Nigeria have led to meaningful policy changes	87	74	93	73	52	3.05	1.26	Agreed
Protests have brought issues of police brutality and governance to the international spotlight	91	69	78	77	64	3.09	1.24	Agreed
The outcomes of these protests are a testament to the power of collective action in Nigeria	70	83	69	77	80	2.99	1.23	Agreed
Protests have created a stronger sense of civic responsibility among Nigerians	85	84	67	80	63	3.11	1.22	Agreed
Protests have raised awareness on key governance issues in Nigeria	81	82	70	64	82	3.04	1.26	Agreed
The government responded effectively to the demands of protest	90	77	77	75	60	3.16	1.20	Agreed
Criterion Mean: 2.5								

Source: Field survey, 2024

The findings indicate that the protests played a pivotal role in raising awareness about governance failures, particularly police brutality and accountability issues. Respondents strongly agreed that the protests brought governance challenges to the international spotlight (Mean = 3.09, SD = 1.24) and created a stronger sense of civic responsibility among Nigerians (Mean = 3.11, SD = 1.22). These protests demonstrated the power of collective action (Mean = 2.99, SD = 1.23), even though respondents found the government's response largely unsatisfactory (Mean = 3.13, SD = 1.23). This finding aligns with Adebayo (2022), who emphasized the transformative potential of the EndSARS protest in amplifying youth voices. The disbandment of the Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS) and the establishment of judicial panels of inquiry into police misconduct were direct outcomes of these

movements. However, these achievements remain limited, as Eze et al. (2023) observed that systemic reforms have been sluggish due to governmental inertia.

Question two: What is the role of commercialization in undermining the effectiveness of the 2020 EndSARS protest and 2024 End Bad Governance protest in Lagos, Nigeria?

Table 4.4: Responses of participants based on research question two

Respondents Responses	SA (5)	A (4)	UD (3)	D (2)	SD (1)	Mean	SD	Decision
Exploitation of protest has undermined its core objectives	96	79	71	76	57	3.33	1.15	Agreed
When money is involved in protests it leads to the diversion of resources away from the actual cause	80	72	87	76	64	3.07	1.25	Agreed
The involvement of commercial entities in protests distorts the message and purpose of the protest.	98	62	73	80	66	3.13	1.23	Agreed
When protest is monetized, it distracts the public from the major intents	108	68	69	67	67	3.24	1.18	Agreed
Political figures exploiting protests for personal gain weaken the credibility of social movements.	86	81	72	85	55	3.09	1.24	Agreed
Commercial interests have introduced corruption into the protest movements in Nigeria	77	73	80	69	80	3.04	1.26	Agreed
Profit driven activism has led to fragmentation of the protest's leadership and demands	91	95	61	61	71	3.23	1.19	Agreed
The commercial exploitation of protests compromises their ability to generate political change	103	74	74	68	60	3.21	1.16	Agreed
Criterion Mean: 2.5								

Source: Field survey, 2024

The study revealed that commercialization negatively impacts protest outcomes by distorting their original goals. Respondents agreed that profit-driven activism compromises the ability to achieve meaningful change (Mean = 3.21, SD = 1.16), shifts focus from advocacy to financial interests (Mean = 3.07, SD = 1.25), and weakens public trust. The data further shows that commercialization distracts from critical issues, leading to resource misallocation and diminished credibility (Mean = 3.13, SD = 1.23). This finding aligns with Abiodun and Oladapo (2021), who observed that the monetization of activism often leads to competing interests among stakeholders, reducing the overall impact of protests. Additionally, Adetunji (2022) highlighted the role of commercialization in enabling external manipulation, whereby political elites co-opt protests to advance their agendas. Conversely, Musa and Ahmed (2023) presented a nuanced perspective, arguing that commercial backing, if handled

transparently, can enhance organizational capacity and sustain advocacy efforts. However, the present study found little evidence to support this claim, indicating that the lack of transparency often exacerbates the negative consequences of commercialization.

Question three: What is the impact of protest franchising on public trust and its contribution to governance stagnation in Nigeria?

Table 4.5: Responses of participants based on research question three

Respondents Responses	SA (5)	A (4)	UD (3)	D (2)	SD (1)	Mean	SD	Decision
Franchising protests by multiple groups makes it difficult to achieve coherent, unified demands.	95	68	85	52	79	3.21	1.20	Agreed
Orchestrated demonstrations have resulted in decreased public participation in protests	85	85	79	73	57	3.15	1.22	Agreed
Public trust in protest leaders has declined due to franchising and mismanagements of the protests.	81	81	75	63	79	3.12	1.23	Agreed
Phony activism encourages political elites to exploit the protests for personal or political gain	81	72	77	76	73	3.05	1.25	Agreed
Manufactured outrage has led to confusion about the main objectives of protests.	87	81	72	74	65	3.14	1.22	Agreed
The involvement of multiple groups in protests leads to fragmentation of leadership and focus	95	79	72	74	59	3.24	1.18	Agreed
Copypat protest has contributed to stagnation in Nigerian governance by diluting protest messages.	77	86	71	76	69	3.07	1.25	
Criterion Mean: 2.5								

Source: Field survey, 2024

The findings suggest that protest franchising undermines unity and public trust. Respondents noted that franchising protests among multiple groups fragments leadership and focus (Mean = 3.24, SD = 1.18) and dilutes protest messages, making

it difficult to achieve coherent demands (Mean = 3.21, SD = 1.20). Participants also agreed that franchising contributes to governance stagnation by weakening public trust in protest leaders (Mean = 3.12, SD = 1.23). These results are consistent with Aina and Ogunleye (2023), who highlighted the challenges of fragmented leadership in achieving protest objectives. They argued that uncoordinated efforts among various protest groups often confuse the public and dilute the potency of advocacy efforts. Adeyemi and Bello (2022) further emphasized that declining trust in protest leadership is a significant barrier to achieving lasting change. However, Onuoha (2021) argued that diversity among protest groups can enrich advocacy efforts by bringing different perspectives to the table. This perspective was not explored in detail in the current study, suggesting an area for further research to investigate how diversity and coordination can coexist to strengthen protest outcomes.

Question four: In what way has the protest commercialization perpetuated conflict and peace obstruction in Nigeria?

Table 4.6: Responses of participants based on research question four

Respondents Responses	SA (5)	A (4)	UD (3)	D (2)	SD (1)	Mean	SD	Decision
The involvement of commercial interests in protests prolongs social unrest in Nigeria.	87	84	65	82	61	3.19	1.21	Agreed
Money-driven protests often escalate conflicts between protest groups and government authorities	95	72	73	76	63	3.25	1.18	Agreed
Exploitation of protests obstructs the path to peace by focusing on individual profit rather than collective action.	81	99	70	56	73	3.29	1.16	Agreed
Commercial interests in protests have led to widespread disillusionment among the Nigerian public.	86	86	69	76	62	3.18	1.21	Agreed
Profit driven activism encourages the exploitation of public grievances for financial gain	94	89	59	77	60	3.31	1.15	Agreed
When a protest is monetized, it prevents peaceful dialogue by shifting focus to non-constructive issues	92	84	66	73	64	3.24	1.18	Agreed
Criterion Mean: 2.5								

Source: Field survey, 2024

The study found that commercialization perpetuates conflict by escalating tensions between protesters and authorities (Mean = 3.25, SD = 1.18), prolonging unrest (Mean = 3.19, SD = 1.21), and obstructing peace through a focus on profit rather than collective goals (Mean = 3.29, SD = 1.16). Respondents also agreed that monetized protests prevent peaceful dialogue by shifting attention to non-constructive issues (Mean = 3.24, SD = 1.18). These findings align with Okonkwo et al. (2022), who observed that financial exploitation of protests creates internal divisions and external hostility. Such divisions often prevent the establishment of constructive dialogue between protest leaders and authorities. Similarly, Olaniyi (2023) highlighted how profit-driven activism encourages disillusionment and alienates genuine supporters, thereby obstructing pathways to peace. The findings underscore the need for ethical leadership and transparent funding mechanisms to mitigate the destabilizing effects of commercialization. They also align with broader critiques of monetized activism, as highlighted by Adedokun (2023), who argued that commercial interests often undermine the legitimacy of social movements and their ability to negotiate peacefully.

Question five: What are the actionable solutions to mitigate the negative effects of commercialization on protests?

Table 4.7: Responses of participants based on research question five

Respondents Responses	SA (5)	A (4)	UD (3)	D (2)	SD (1)	Mean	SD	Decision
Education on the ethical implications of	106	101	63	45	64	3.43	1.10	Agreed

protest commercialization should be included in civic education programs.								
Civil society organizations should monitor protest activities to ensure their legitimacy	91	96	60	78	54	3.23	1.19	Agreed
There should be laws in place to discourage the commercialization of protest movements.	108	75	67	55	74	3.32	1.15	Agreed
Political actors should avoid using protests for personal or political gain.	87	81	75	64	72	3.15	1.22	Agreed
Protest leaders should prioritize public interest over personal gain to enhance the effectiveness of protests.	95	88	67	70	59	3.28	1.17	Agreed
Increased transparency in protest leadership will reduce the negative effects of commercialization.	89	82	67	75	66	3.17	1.21	Agreed
Government regulation of protest financing will reduce commercialization and protect the integrity of protests	88	83	70	68	70	3.19	1.20	Agreed
Criterion Mean: 2.5								

Source: Field survey, 2024

Participants identified several actionable solutions to address the negative effects of commercialization. These include incorporating ethical education on protest commercialization into civic education programs (Mean = 3.43, SD = 1.10), establishing laws to discourage monetization (Mean = 3.32, SD = 1.15), and enhancing transparency in protest leadership (Mean = 3.17, SD = 1.21). Respondents also emphasized the importance of civil society oversight (Mean = 3.23, SD = 1.19) and prioritizing public interest over personal gain (Mean = 3.28, SD = 1.17). These findings align with recommendations by Yusuf and Adeoye (2022), who stressed the need for ethical education to foster responsible activism. Similarly, Durojaiye (2023) highlighted the importance of regulatory frameworks in curbing financial exploitation and ensuring the integrity of protests. The emphasis on transparency and civil society oversight also echoes Adediran (2022), who argued that rebuilding public trust requires open and accountable leadership practices. The proposed solutions offer a practical roadmap for addressing the challenges identified in the study. By focusing on education, regulation, and ethical leadership, these measures have the potential to enhance the effectiveness of future protests and mitigate the adverse effects of

commercialization.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Protests in Nigeria have historically served as platforms for advocating for accountability and systemic reform. However, the commercialization and franchising of protests have introduced complexities that hinder their ability to achieve meaningful governance changes. The study concludes that while the 2020 EndSARS and 2024 End Bad Governance protests demonstrated the power of collective action, their effectiveness was undermined by financial and political influences. Addressing these challenges requires a multi-pronged approach involving ethical leadership, robust regulations, and public education to safeguard the authenticity of protest movements.

Based on the findings for this study, the following recommendations were preferred;

1. Incorporate education on the ethical implications of protest commercialization into civic education programs.
2. Establish transparent leadership structures within protest movements to enhance public trust.
3. Implement laws to regulate the commercialization of protests and protect their integrity.
4. Foster partnerships between protest organizers and civil society organizations to ensure accountability.
5. Introduce independent oversight mechanisms to monitor protest financing and expenditure.

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