

**THE USE OF TWITTER HASHTAG FOR THE
MOBILIZATION OF LAGOS YOUTH FOR
THE #ENDSARS PROTESTS OF 2020.**

BY

**EZE MIRACLE
ART1601455**

**DEPARTMENT OF MASS COMMUNICATION
UNIVERSITY OF BENIN,
BENIN CITY. NIGERIA**

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EZE MIRACLE
MAT NO: ART1601455**

**A RESEARCH PROJECT SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT
OF MASS COMMUNICATION, FACULTY OF ARTS,
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FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR
THE AWARD OF A BACHELOR OF ARTS
DEGREE IN MASS COMMUNICATION.**

MARCH, 2021.

DECLARATION

I, Eze Miracle, declare that this project is based on a research undertaken by me in the Department of Mass Communication, Faculty of Arts, University of Benin, under the supervision of Prof. E. S. Asemah. All ideas therein are results of my personal research and the views of others where they are used are duly acknowledged.

EZE MIRACLE
ART1601455

CERTIFICATION

This is to certify that this research work was carried out by **EZE MIRACLE, MAT NO: ART1601455** of the department of mass communication of the University of Benin, and that it is adequately in line with the scope for the award of Bachelor of Art in mass communication.

Prof. E. S. Asemah
Project Supervisor

Date

Dr. F. P. Olise
Head of Department

Date

Date

DEDICATION

This project is dedicated to God Almighty, my Ever Loving Father without whom this would not be possible; and for giving me the strength to go on every time. This work is also dedicated to my mother, Mrs. Promise Eze for standing by me unconditionally, loving me fiercely and reminding me that I am a champion.

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ABSTRACT

This research specifically examines the use of the Twitter hashtag in the mobilization of Lagos youth for the #EndSARS protests of 2020. This study became necessary and was carried out due to the fact that there has been no extensive research done to measure the extent and influence of the Twitter hashtag in the mobilization of Lagos youth for the #EndSARS protests of 2020. The objectives of this study were to determine the extent of the access to information on the #EndSARS protest through the Twitter hashtag, to ascertain the perception of Lagos youth to the information available to them on the #EndSARS protest and to investigate the extent to which Lagos youth were able to influence the Twittersphere using the Twitter hashtag. The survey design was adopted for this study with the aid of a 15-item questionnaire which was administered to 400 respondents purposively selected from the three senatorial districts in Lagos state. Data obtained were analyzed and presented with the aid of frequency tables, simple percentages and mean score. The key findings of this study showed that the Twitter hashtag was instrumental for spreading information about the #EndSARS protests, Lagos youth had a positive outlook towards this information and they were able to influence the Twittersphere to a very large extent using the Twitter hashtag. Therefore, this study concludes that the Twitter hashtag was indeed effective and influential in spreading information about the 2020 #EndSARS protests and in the mobilization of Lagos youth for the protests. To this end, it is recommended that the Twitter hashtag should be used more as a tool for the exchange of information as well as online activism. Also, this study proved that the Twitter hashtag was effective for mass physical mobilization therefore; it is recommended that it should be sustained.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

The dramatic and fast paced evolution of technology (especially new social media) has greatly influenced every facet of human society; the way people use time and space, and the perception of media (platforms). Through the Internet, people have gained access to different types of information all over the world at their fingertips and the geographical gap that exists between people has been greatly bridged. So in today's world, it is difficult to imagine oneself without the Internet and social networks.

As a sequel to the speedy evolution of the Internet and technology, the emergence of web applications known as Web 2.0 have been developed over the last two decades and have led to the materialization and intensive use of Social Networking Sites (SNSs), making them very popular. As a concept, the Web 2.0 paradigm stands for different things to different people while to others, it remains largely unfamiliar. Notwithstanding, the Web 2.0 phenomenon has gained a unique level of relevance in today's world where its models have become popular, widespread, ubiquitous and prevalent in everyday life; revolutionizing the manner in which people communicate, interact and socialize with one another. The web 2.0 has several models, one of which is micro-blogging.

Micro-blogging according to Java, Song, Finin and Tseng (2007, p. 56-65) is a small-scale form of blogging, generally made up of short, succinct messages, used by both consumers and businesses to share news, post status updates and carry on conversations. Also, Passant, Hastrup, Breslin and Bojars (2008) posit that micro-blogging permeates the gap between blogging and instant messaging and allows individuals to publish short messages about their current status. Micro-blogging has several platforms or models but the model which will be selected for the purpose of this research is Twitter. (Oloyede and Elegba, 2019).

Twitter (created in 2006) is one of the sub-models of the Web 2.0 platform which has distinctive features that make it cut across as both a micro-blogging and social media platform that enables the construction and exchange of consumer generated content. Twitter comprises of millions of interconnected users around the world who socialize by sharing content such as news, pictures, status updates, thoughts, and ideas or even respond to trending or current issues for the purpose of interaction. Because of its nature of easy usage, speed and far reach, Twitter has been able to achieve a sort of explosion in setting the pace and trend for public and sometimes even private communication at a colossal rate.

Anyone who owns an account on Twitter is able to post messages known as Tweets that as a matter of the rule cannot exceed 280 characters per post. Some of the other distinguishing features of Twitter are the @ and the # signs. The @ sign attached to a username can be used to publicly tag and address another user, while the # sign

which is popularly known as the Twitter hashtag, is a sort of social-meta-data that is generated by the users for the purpose of filtering or searching for specific current or trending topics or drawing attention to same. According to Axel and Burgess (2011, p. 1); recent works have especially highlighted the role of the Twitter hashtag - a short keyword, prefixed with the hash symbol ‘#’ - as a means of coordinating a distributed discussion between more or less large groups of users, who do not need to be connected through existing ‘follower’ networks.

This is a pointer to the fact that Twitter in the contemporary digital world has become tool for global activism and mobilization through the use of the Twitter hashtag. Twitter users now use the hashtag to advocate for change, roll out public opinion, create and spread awareness, demand for transformation and others. This is what Yang (2016) referred to as hashtag activism when he said that hashtag activism is a discursive protest on social media organized with a hashtagged word, phrase or sentence. Also, Moscato (2014, p. 9) explained that the ability of hashtags within Twitter to diffuse and amplify information and ideas across social media has afforded new media outreach opportunities for activists.

A classic case of this is the EndSARS protest of Lagos, 2020. In Nigeria, it is very rare to find organized public protests against police brutality but through the Twitter hashtag in 2020, Lagos youths caused something close to a revolution when Twitter users in Lagos used the hashtag to expose the ill practices of the Special Anti-

Robbery Squad (SARS) which is the arm of the Nigerian Police Force under the Force Criminal Investigation and Intelligence Department created to handle violent crimes in the nation (Amnesty International, 2016). Some of these ill practices include extortion, unlawful arrest and detention, kidnapping, humiliation, assault and battery and even forcefully breaking into student dormitories. In June 2020, the Amnesty International decided after attempts to cry out against the SARS unit had been subdued that SARS officials continued to commit extensive human rights violations and that impunity remained pervasive. In the same way, aside from the awareness created on social media and the online space through the use of Twitter hashtags, they also used it for the mobilization of Lagos youths for the EndSARS protest at Lekki Toll Gate.

Following this trend, the Lagos youth took advantage of the Twitter hashtag and fully utilized it to result in a large gathering of the youth for a peaceful protest that began in October 2020 to advocate against police brutality using the Twitter hashtags #EndPoliceBrutality and #EndSARS. So far, the #EndSARS trend on Twitter has been going on since 2017 but none has attracted international attention and mass mobilization like the October 2020 EndSARS protest. It gradually evolved so much that international celebrities and public figures like Rihanna, Joe Biden, Pope Francis, Kanye West, Hillary Clinton and others spoke about it while the CEO of Twitter himself, Jack Dorsey, shut down Twitter for some hours just to create an EndSARS emoji (a raised fist with the Nigerian green and white flag colours) that is peculiar to the plight of Nigerians and the EndSARS movement.

This goes to prove how effective the Twitter hashtag was as a tool for mass mobilization. The EndSARS emoji created by Twitter is a first of its kind occurrence as it has never happened before. It was through the actions of the youth and their voices on social media that this was able to be achieved.

Since it has been established that the use of the Twitter hashtag in today's world is now becoming a popular agenda setting and mobilization tool, it has become necessary to examine carefully how this is achieved. Therefore, the researcher seeks to examine how this factor served as a mobilization tool for the EndSARS protest of 2020 in Lagos.

It is against this background that this study seeks to contribute to the relative dearth of existing literature on the mobilization of Lagos youths for the 2020 EndSARS protest using the Twitter hashtag. This is largely because little or no empirical research has been conducted to examine this issue.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

It is an undeniable fact for all who live in Nigeria that the Special Anti Robbery Squad has deserted the reason for which it was established and now serve to terrorize the citizens and pose as a threat to their lives and properties; especially the youth. In Nigeria, the youth are harassed, brutalized and manhandled by SARS officials simply for looking good, owing a good phone or laptop or dressing well.

Over the years, Nigerians have cried out for government intervention about this injustice and inhuman treatment through several social media platforms. Some

have even gone as far as exposing their nefarious crimes all to no avail as there remained a deafening silence from the authorities. This problem made way for the youth to resort to using the Twitter hashtag to draw public attention to the problem and advocate for a reformation and revolution as well as demand that the SARS unit be dissolved completely.

Another problem is the fact that over the years, several studies and research have been carried out on the Twitter hashtag for social or digital activism and mass mobilization of the youth; but none of those studies have treated these respective issues as a whole and focused on the use of Twitter hashtag for the mobilization of Lagos youth for EndSARS protest. It is this gap that this study seeks to fill.

Therefore, the problem that this research aspires to solve is the use of Twitter hashtag for the mobilization of Lagos youth for the 2020 EndSARS protests.

1.3 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

This research is designed to achieve the following objectives:

1. To determine the extent of the access to information on the EndSARS protest that was available through the Twitter hashtag.
2. To ascertain the perception of Lagos youth to the information available on the EndSARS protest through the Twitter hashtag.
3. To investigate the extent to which Lagos youths were able to influence the Twittersphere using the Twitter hashtag.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In a bid to achieve the set objectives, this study will attempt to answer the following questions:

1. What is the extent of the access to information on the EndSARS protest that was available through the Twitter hashtag?
2. What is the perception of Lagos youth to the information available on the EndSARS protest through the Twitter hashtag?
3. What is the extent to which Lagos youths were able to influence the Twittersphere using the Twitter hashtag?

1.5 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

Despite the fact that EndSARS protests were carried out by youths in several states in Nigeria as the issue gradually became a matter of national (and international) concern, this study is limited to the EndSARS protest that took place in October 2020 at Lekki Toll Gate, Lagos state. This is because even though the 2020 EndSARS protests were triggered by a viral video of SARS officials torturing and shooting a man in Ughelli, Delta State, the heart of the protest was at the Lekki Toll Gate in Lagos state and it was most significant there.

It was there that the celebrities in charge of the protest focused the majority of their efforts and it was also at Lekki Toll Gate that peaceful protestors were shot and murdered on the 20th of October, 2020 by unknown armed officers. Lagos state served as the major protest ground and mobilized the largest number of protestors through the

use of the Twitter hashtag.

The scope of this study is also limited to only the Twitter hashtag and emphasizes on it even though other social media and micro-blogging platforms also used the #EndSARS hashtag to advocate for change. This is because the Twitter hashtag was the most effective one both as a tool for the mobilization of Lagos youth for the protest and as a tool for massive online publicity, the creation of awareness and an advocate for local and international aid. Also, Twitter was the only social media platform that fully showed support for the cause by creating an EndSARS emoji uniquely made for the EndSARS protests in Nigeria.

I.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The findings of this research would contribute to the comparative dearth of literature and research work that currently exists on this topic. People who are interested in reading about or researching this topic would find the outcome of this work helpful.

Also, the outcome of this study would provide empirical data and information on the topic of research that could serve as a documentation of the EndSARS protest at Lekki Toll Gate, Lagos and be used as reference material to readers and researchers alike.

Another significance of this study is it could serve as a deterrent to police officers and authority figures in Nigeria to put an end to the practice of brutality, assault and battery; and refrain from inhuman treatment of the citizens of Nigeria.

Also, it will help them realize that they are to carry out their duties and responsibilities in a civil manner that befits their job description while at the same time being careful not to violate any of the fundamental human rights of the citizens.

1.7 DEFINITION OF TERMS

For better understanding of the terms frequently used in this study and their conceptual meanings, there is a need to define them within the context of use in relation to this research.

Keywords: EndSARS, Hashtag, Lagos, Mobilization, Protest, Twitter, Youth.

EndSARS: An online and offline movement advocating for an end to police brutality with special focus on the Special Anti Robbery Squad department.

Hashtag: A phrase or keyword used after the symbol (#) on Twitter to draw attention to a post, archive or distribute information.

Lagos: One of the western states in Nigeria that is popularly called Eko and is known as the centre of excellence.

Mobilization: The action of moving, preparing and organizing people for active service.

Protest: Statement or action expressing objection or disapproval to something that has been said or done.

Twitter: A fast growing real-time social media and micro-blogging tool that embodies keeping up with trends through user participation and consumer generated content.

Youth: A time of life when one is young and believed to be vibrant, strong and active.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Preamble

This chapter covers a review of literature related to this research under the following headings:

- The Concept and History of the Twitter Hashtag
- An Overview of Mass Digital Mobilization
- The History of Twitter Hashtag for Mobilization
- The Special Anti Robbery Squad (SARS)
- The EndSARS Movement
- Social Media and Mobilization
- Review of Empirical Studies
- Theoretical Framework
- Summary of the Chapter

2.2 The Concept and History of the Twitter Hashtag

The use of hashtags started long before Twitter was created as online hashtag usage can be traced as far back as the late 1990s; but even though it is used across several social media platforms currently, it was made popular by Twitter. In the late 1990s, the hashtag was used on Internet Relay Chat (IRC) to classify items into groups (Shea, 2014). On the 23rd of August 2007, a San Francisco technologist, Chris

Messina, became the first person to use the Twitter hashtag by asking his followers this question “how do you feel about using # (pound) for groups. As in #barcamp [msg]?”

After that, Twitter officially accepted the hashtags into code in July 2009 with an automatically hyperlinking term affixed with the # sign. The proliferation and use of hashtags have grown to tremendous popularity that the use of this symbol has become associated or even synonymous to trends and discussions in social media. Tagging keywords, phrases and other strings of texts and letters are what social media users do to track topics and conversations—and provide the ability to other users as well (Gregorio, 2014).

According to the Oxford English Dictionary (2019), it was stated that in June 2014, the term ‘hashtag’ was added to the Oxford English Dictionary after it started gaining popularity and is used to identify publications related to a specific topic. In the opinion of Doctor (2012), the hashtag is a phrase or keyword following the hash symbol (#) which was initiated by a community of micro-bloggers for the purpose of creating a flow of information around a particular topic or trend. He went further to state that the purpose of the hashtag is to categorize topics, combine ideas, and to encourage exchanges and joining. Q3 Instagram study (2014) stated that while hashtags cannot contribute to the growth of exponential activity, they provide audiences with an easy way to detect certain content through topics and forums that interest them.

The Twitter Hashtag is a very useful tool for creating, filtering, archiving and distributing information on the Internet and its power to initiate and effectively spread certain information or cause a trend cannot be overlooked. It also serves the purpose of classifying and analyzing text, retrieving information and the diffusion of information. This digital activism through Twitter is sometimes referred to as clicktivism. Hashtags have been recommended for better retrieval and categorization of tweets. They can be grouped into three classes which are content-based hashtag recommendation, topic-based hashtag recommendation and personalized hashtag recommendation (Hsia-Ching, 2010).

2.3 An Overview of Mass Digital Mobilization

Mobilization can be referred to as the process by which people, groups and/or organizations are induced or prompted to take action for or against a policy that would achieve (a) specific objective(s). It can also be paraphrased to mean the process by which people are sensitized, informed and motivated into taking desirable action towards a specific goal either in support of or against an issue in society (Fasunwon, 2019).

Digital mobilization therefore, refers to the use of social media to create, distribute and disseminate information about a particular issue in society to cause people to advocate for a change. Handlykken (2011, p. 2, 22-37) cited in Lee and Katz (2015, p. 20, 615-631) described it as information spread digitally enabling human

mobility and real time connectivity where heterotopic spaces linked people together in the securing of physical places while in transient and resources.

Technological advancements have led to a form of social media revolution which enables people across different locations to instantly communicate, share and circulate information and meaning through low-key channels. Social media have radically democratized the free flow of information enabling a diverse heterogeneous population to both receive and produce knowledge content. It also provides information and resources for “resource-poor actors” by functioning as an instrument of protest and resistance, and by performing “a new repertoire of collective action” and solidarity (Diani, 2000 in Cardon and Granjon, 2003, p. 67).

To this end, hashtag activism can be seen as an effort that concurrently induce awareness to a movement and ambiguous important phases of the movement such as historical background or socio-political context (Dadas, 2017).

2.4 The History of Twitter Hashtag for Mobilization

Gadi, Elad and Tamir (2013) noted that around the time the Twitter hashtag started becoming popular as a tool for mobilization (a period referred to as Twitter revolution by Gonzalez-Bailon, Borge-Holthoefer, Rivero and Moreno in 2011), it was divided into two groups of people known as the “cyber-enthusiasts” and the “cyber-skeptics.”

The cyber-skeptics at the time attached little importance to social media achieving any form of change through online activism with the view that the web

gives people a misconception of political participation and prevents them from partaking in physical protests. Cyber-enthusiasts on the other hand, saw the use of the Internet as a tool to mobilize and inform people for greater social transformation (Gadi et al, 2013).

Over the years however, it has become clearly undeniable that the cyber-enthusiasts turned out to be right as the twitter hashtag is more than just a tool for achieving social transformation now. It has transcended its original and traditional uses to become a popular way for agitation for change in society, creating awareness and the mass mobilization of the public for both physical and online protests. Some popular hashtags which have been used for online and offline activism are #BringBackOurGirls, #OccupyNigeria, #BlackLivesMatter #Xenophobia and the most recent #EndSARS campaign that had massive global recognition and impact.

Online activism through Twitter hashtag can be traced as far back as the year 2009 when the #LightUpNigeria hashtag was created by former Nigerian rapper Eldee the Don. Through his Twitter account, he openly expressed his displeasure about the inconsistent power supply in the country due to the fact that his friend who was scheduled for a surgery could not go through with it because there was no power supply at the time the surgery was supposed to take place. With the help of four other young Nigerians (Seyi Kuyinu, Banky W, Amara Nwakpa and Sheile Ojei), they made a public discussion of the poor power supply in Nigeria and within a few minutes, it became a trending issue on Twitter with the use of the hashtag (Odewale, 2014).

Shortly after the success of the #LightUpNigeria hashtag as an online campaign, the use of the Twitter hashtag for online activism became a trend. Thus, the #EnoughIsEnough trend followed in 2011 where the youth used the Twitter hashtag to demand for a free and fair election. Another significant online protest was the #OccupyNigeria which was used to agitate against the increase in fuel price from ₦65 to ₦140. #OccupyNigeria drew global attention through online mobilization and the fact that the youth eventually physically occupied the streets (Egbunike, 2015).

Following this trend, the Twitter hashtag gradually became a tool to turn to when the youth need to make a statement about issues in the nation and when they need to advocate for societal change. When the #LightUpNigeria and the #OccupyNigeria Twitter hashtags trended and attracted both national and international attention, the Nigerian youth took to the Twitter verse to advocate for or against issues in the nation. This is seen in some of the aforementioned Twitter hashtags in this research and others like #BringBackOurGirls, #RevolutionNow, #LightUpNigeria, #EndPoliceBrutality, #OccupyNigeria, #SoroSoke and others.

This is the reason the Nigerian youth once again used the Twitter hashtag to achieve online and offline activism and mobilization for the #EndSARS protests of 2020. This happens to be the most recent case of Twitter hashtag activism for mass mobilization in Nigeria and is thus the focus for this research.

2.5 The Special Anti Robbery Squad (SARS)

The Special Anti Robbery Squad was created in 1992 in Lagos State as an arm of the (Nigerian Police Force). It was created at the time when Shina Rambo, a notorious armed robber in Lagos state and others were terrorizing people in the state. It was originally meant to be a faceless, incognito unit for undercover operations against armed robbers. However, as the unit gradually spread to all states, their responsibilities expanded from just undercover operations against robbers to handling violent crimes in the nation.

As the unit spread, there was no proper orientation or documentation of their responsibilities; neither was there a proper structure. Thus, members of the infamous unit began to carry out lawless and nefarious activities and attacking citizens for economic gain as opposed to the original duty of protecting lives and properties. There have even been local sightings and reports over the years where police officers stop motorists and private car owners at checkpoints along the road where they threaten and sometimes shoot at people who refuse to pay bribe that start from as low as #50. This has resulted in people losing confidence in the SARS unit over the years and taking to the Internet as a form of protest against the misconducts (Oloyede and Elega, 2019).

2.5.1 The EndSARS Movement

The EndSARS movement made its first appearance in the year 2017 when a petition publication was released by Segun Awosanya demanding the abolition of the

SARS unit. According to reports by The Cable (<https://www.thecable.ng/nigerians-say-end-sars-police-brutality>), the petition was signed by 10,195 Nigerians and submitted to the National Assembly to abolish the unit. The online campaign against #EndSARS started on Twitter on the 2nd of December, 2020 when Nigerians began to share experiences of police misconducts and brutality against citizens, using the Twitter hashtag. Within twelve hours, the topic became a trending issue with over 400,000 tweets (www.twitter.com). While sharing their experiences, they used the medium to call out the government to dissolve the infamous SARS unit of the Nigerian Police. In response to the demands of the people as well as the protests, the Nigerian government promised that they would investigate the crimes and experiences shared as well as reorganize the unit with immediate effect.

However, these promises were not followed through by the government and the misconducts continued and became even worse. The unit continued to arrest and detain ‘suspects’ without any form of communication with their family and friends. Such suspects would then eventually be forced to confess or pay huge bribes in order to be released. It got so bad that in June 2020, Amnesty International concluded that “SARS officers continued to commit extensive human rights violations and that impunity remained pervasive” (Tomas, 2020).

The 2020 #EndSARS protests were revived in October 2020 after a video of some SARS officers who shot a victim and tried to run away with his car went viral. Nigerian youth took to the Internet using several platforms especially the Twitter

hashtag to express their displeasure at the actions of the infamous police unit. Physical peaceful protests started on the 8th of October 2020 and quickly spread to all parts of the nation; and indeed all parts of the world as several international public figures openly expressed their support for the protestors also using the Twitter hashtag #EndSARS.

The 2020 #EndSARS protest spread like wildfire and became very significant for its duration, reach and the size of the crowd that showed up for the protest at the Lekki Toll gate. It was recorded as the largest gathering of peaceful protestors in Nigeria and continued for weeks. On the 11th of October 2020, the Inspector General of Police, Mohammed Adamu announced the dissolution and redeployment of the Special Anti Robbery Squad in a bid to dissolve the protests. But the rebranding and redeployment of the SARS unit into SWAT provoked further demonstrations and #EndSWAT was added to the currently trending hashtags at that moment (#EndPoliceBrutality, #EndSARS, #RevolutionNow and #EndBadGovernance). The youth compared the disbanding to past reforms that had no effect on the misconducts of SARS and called for a complete shutdown of the unit in form of an order from the President, Muhammadu Buhari. As the protests continued, several state governments imposed curfews and banned large gatherings in a bid to curb the protests. However, none of these measures worked as the crowd continued to grow.

On the 16th of October 2020, Jack Dorsey, the CEO of Twitter created and unveiled the EndSARS emoji in support of the protests in a tweet where he used the

new emoji along the #EndSARS hashtag. The emoji is a raised fist designed in the green and white colours of the Nigerian flag. He also enjoined people to support the #EndSARS protest by donating bitcoins. He said this via his tweet: “Donate via #Bitcoin to help #EndSARS.” He also retweeted a tweet from @feminist_co, the official handle for a group of feminists fighting against the misdeeds of SARS through fundraising, social media and peaceful protests (Larnyoh, 2020).

On the 20th of October 2020, live shots were fired at peaceful protestors at the Lekki Toll Gate in Lagos where hundreds were injured and killing several people. These shots were fired even while the protestors sat on the ground and sang the national anthem to show unity and lack of hostility. Again, this attracted the attention of the international audience as celebrities, public figures and world leaders openly condemned the act. An example of this is a statement by Secretary of State, Michael Pompeo on the 22nd of October, 2020. Amongst other things, he mentioned and condemned “the use of excessive force by military forces who fired on unarmed protestors in Lagos.”

The results of the Lekki shooting was a state of total chaos as individuals and groups of people started to react against the police and government by attacking police stations and even prisons across the nation. This started after an official live broadcast was made by the President of Nigeria where he addressed the Lekki shooting by remunerating the families of the deceased police officers and completely ignoring the killings of peaceful protestors at Lekki.

Also, Burna Boy, a Nigerian artiste released a single on the 30th of October 2020, produced by the Elements which he titled “20:10:20;” the date when the unfortunate Lekki massacre occurred. In a statement, Burna Boy said, “The proceeds of this song will be used to support families of victims and people suffering affliction as a result of the Lekki shootings. May the heavens open and celebrate all our fallen heroes who have died for this movement from the very beginning. Rest in peace to all the beautiful lives lost.” The track ended with audio content (shooting sounds and voices of people singing the national anthem and talking in the background) recorded during the massacre.

Through social media, especially the Twitter hashtag, both local and international people have shown support for the #EndSARS protest. Examples of some of such occasions are the Nigerian Diaspora using Twitter for mobilization at locations in the United Kingdom and the United States with tweets such as:

“Please speak up, and join us tomorrow – noon at Nigeria High Commission, London for #ENDSARS protest”

“Dallas protest gearing up now. If you are in Dallas come join us. We are here at Aso Rock restaurant lounge #ENDSARS”

Also, Kizz Daniel joined the protest on October 16th, 2020; Burna Boy changed his profile picture on the 20th of October, 2020 to the viral photo of the bloodstained Nigerian flag projected to be from the attack on the protestors by the Nigerian military; DJ Cuppy physically joined the protest at Lekki Toll Gate on

October 18, 2020 and posted pictures on her twitter handle. Some local and international celebrities and public figures like David Adeleke (Davido), Folarin Falana (Falz), Pastor Sam Adeyemi, Peter Okoye (Mr. P), Chinedu okoli (Flavour), Ayodeji Balogun (Wizkid) and others also showed their support through their social media handles and physical participation in the protest (Oluwadara, A., Olayoku, P. & Danielle, H. (2020).

Presently, even though physical protests and demonstrations advocating for #EndSARS have stopped, the activism online has continued. Till date, some Twitter users still have the #EndSARS hashtag attached to their Twitter handles and some still attach it to their tweets.

2.6 Social Media and Mobilization

Social media platforms and Social Networking Sites (SNSs) were originally created for the purpose of social interactions either in real-time or asynchronously. However, with the passage of time and advancements in technology, social media platforms have gone beyond their traditional and original uses and purposes to include more peculiar and unique functions.

The concept of mobilization through social media starts with the process of digital activism which some have come to know as ‘clicktivism.’ It begins when an issue is raised on the Internet via social media platforms and begins to spread or trend across all social media networks. There are several tools and features of social media platforms that make this spread of information possible one of which is the hashtag.

Social media triggers and influences mobilization in several ways. Through the dissemination of information for digital communication and the exchange of information, the issue is made to make its rounds on the Internet. Social media platforms are also highly interactive in nature and encourage the feedback process so it is very easy for people to actively get involved in the conversation.

It is no longer news that over the years, social media platforms have been used to actively pave way for mass mobilization of people both at the local and international level; and for different purposes. Sometimes, social media is used to pave way for the mobilization of people to speak for or against an issue, to share public opinion, to agitate for political and social change and transformation, to partake in online and physical protests and a host of other reasons.

2.7 Review of Empirical Studies

Oloyede & Elegba (2019) carried out a study on Exploring Hashtag Activism in Nigeria. The authors looked at the concept of hashtag activism in Nigeria along with its influence and effectiveness; using the #EndSARS campaign as its focal point. The article was designed to examine the concept under different headings that aid full and detailed understanding by the readers. It examined the history of hashtags and hashtag activism, a detailed overview of the #EndSARS campaign as well as the concept of social media setting the agenda for traditional media.

Similarly, this current research also seeks to examine the effectiveness of the Twitter hashtag in relation to the #EndSARS protests of 2020. While Oloyede and

Elega (2019) only focused on hashtag activism and the #EndSARS campaign, this study seeks to further expand on it and fill the gap by analyzing how the Twitter hashtag (as a form of hashtag activism) was effective in the mobilization of Lagos youth. This also points to another gap in the research by Oloyede and Elega (2019). While they broadly and generally examined the #EndSARS protests in Nigeria, this study is narrowed down and specifically focuses on the Lagos #EndSARS protests of 2020.

Afeez & Adeolu (2020) carried out a study on Impact of Social Media on Police Brutality Awareness in Nigeria. This paper examined the success of Social Networking Sites (SNSs) as tools for digital communication and exchange of information; and also the transcending nature of social media platforms into other features. It examined this evolution in light of police brutality (especially the Special Anti Robbery Squad, SARS) awareness in Nigeria and how social media helped in spreading information ‘at the speed of light.’

The article further delved into concepts such as social media and situational awareness, social media and fast information, international demonstrations and Nigerian police brutality, torture and abuse of human right. According to research, carried out in the study, it was unveiled that Twitter was the strongest and most influential social networking site which had the most impact on the police brutality protests as opposed to other social networking sites or social media platforms like WhatsApp, Instagram and Facebook.

This research is related to the article mentioned above since they both recognize the influence and impact of the Twitter hashtag in spreading awareness about the #EndSARS protests. However, while Afeez and Adeolu (2020) only sought to examine the influence of social media in the awareness of police brutality in Nigeria, this research seeks to expand this concept further and fill the gap by also investigating how social media not only played a role in spreading awareness but also in the mass mobilization of youth for the #EndSARS protests of 2020 using the Twitter hashtag. Tomas (2020) did a study on #EndSARS Protests Against Police Brutality. The article was prepared by the Congressional Research Service and focused on the #EndSARS protests against police brutality in Nigeria; and how these protests shook cities across the country and gained international recognition as well. It gave detailed analysis of the #EndSARS protests and how it began, the protestors' demand to disband SARS—a demand that they amplified using the Twitter hashtag and the Lekki massacre that followed to quell the activities of peaceful protestors on the 20th of October, 2020 which left dozens of protestors killed and several others injured.

It also examined the implications of the response to the #EndSARS protests by the president of Nigeria, Muhammadu Buhari and how it may affect US policy and assistance; as well as U.S-Nigeria military cooperation. It went further to examine #EndSARS protests and responses in line with considerations for U.S Congress.

The main focus of the article cited above is the crackdown response of the Nigerian government to and against peaceful protestors in Nigeria, using the

#EndSARS protests as an example. However, the current study is an expansion on that concept as it not only focuses on the #EndSARS protest but also seeks to analyze the role of the Twitter hashtag as a tool for mass digital mobilization of Lagos youth for the 2020 #EndSARS protests.

Oluwadara, Olayoku, & Danielle (2020) did a study on Millennial Activism within Nigerian Twitterscape. This article examined the concept of activism within the Nigerian Twitterscape which stands for the population of Nigerian Twitter users in relation to the #EndSARS protest and how it metamorphosed from mobilization through the Twitter hashtag to the social action of physically occupying the streets in protest. While exploring the concept of social media activism and the digital dynamics of the #EndSARS activism on Twitter, the article delved into the outcry on Twitter and the support from celebrities. The aforementioned article is related to this study in the sense that it explored the symbolism of digital mobilization through the Twitter hashtag. However, this current study placed more emphasis on the Lagos 2020 #EndSARS protests specifically instead of broadly examining the concept.

2.8 Theoretical Framework

The Agenda Setting Theory

This research is anchored on the Agenda Setting Theory which was propounded by Dr. Max McCombs and Dr. Donald L. Shaw in 1972 after a study on the 1968 presidential election. The theory is based on the premise that the media has the ability to influence and set the agenda for topics on the public agenda. Asemah

(2011) stated that an agenda simply refers to an issue or topic for discussion. He also went further to say that agenda setting is the process of reflecting issues in our society and that they monitor trends and events in our society and raise their agenda based on what they have monitored. According to DeFleur (2010), the agenda setting theory assumes that due to different levels of prominence afforded by the media, the public receiving these messages will form its own hierarchy of beliefs about their relative level of importance.

The Agenda Setting Theory describes the “ability (of the news media) to influence the importance placed on the topics of the public agenda.” It emphasizes on the shaping the public’s perception of reality, awareness and conversation by the media’s constant coverage of it. That is to say, if a news item is covered frequently enough; the audience will regard the issue as more important and it will become the focus of public attention. This is why Folarin (2015) opines that the theory proposes that the facts which people know about issues are those that the media present to them. Also the significance which the media ascribes to the issues tend to be given much attention by the audience.

The theory rests on two basic assumptions:

1. The media filters and shapes what we see and hear rather than just reflecting stories to the audience.
2. The more attention the media gives to an issue, the more likely the public will focus on the issue and attach importance to it.

In relating the agenda setting theory to this study, it can be gathered that when the online activism for the #EndSARS campaign began and started spreading through the Internet and Twitter, it became a matter of public discourse both locally and internationally. Thus, by constantly seeing and reading about news content on SARS officers' misconducts, it became implanted in the minds of the public and prompted them to talk about it often and act on it. They also attached importance to the #EndSARS movement simply by seeing and hearing about it.

2.9 Summary of the Chapter

This chapter encompasses the analysis and conceptualization of terms; as well as the summary and review of literature related to this study. In this chapter, the history of the Twitter hashtag is fully detailed as well as its role in the mass digital and physical mobilization of Lagos youth for the #EndSARS protests of 2020. Also, the theoretical framework serves as further background to the fact that the media is a powerful tool for shaping and spreading public opinion and this is what the Lagos youth utilized, took advantage of and used as leverage to propel the 2020 #EndSARS protests.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Preamble

This chapter emphasizes on the methodology used for this study. Therefore, it explores the following:

- Research design
- Population of the study
- Sample size
- Sampling technique
- Instrument of data collection/Administration
- Validity/Reliability of the research instrument
- Method of data collection
- Method of data analysis

3.1 Research Design

In a bid to inquire into the use of the Twitter hashtag for the mobilization of Lagos youth for the #EndSARS protests of 2020, the survey method of research will be adopted and used with the questionnaire as the main instrument of data collection and interpretation.

This is because there is a need to employ a specific strategy to find out the perception of people towards the use of Twitter hashtag as a tool for mobilization of Lagos youth for the 2020 EndSARS protests. To this end, the survey method of research which involves the use of questionnaires on a sample drawn from the

population will be used to obtain this information and aid the advancement of this research work.

According to LinkedIn Slide Share (<https://www.slideshare.net>) which was updated January 8, 2018, “survey research designs are procedures in quantitative research in which investigators administer a survey to a sample or to the entire population of people to describe the attitudes, opinions, behaviours or characteristics of the population. In this procedure, survey researchers collect quantitative, numbered data using questionnaires or interviews and statistically analyze the data to describe trends about responses to questions and to test research questions and hypothesis.”

This goes to explain that as a method of collecting data, the purpose of survey is to explain, describe and predict the behaviour or phenomenon that is under study. Surveys are often used in social and psychological research because it explores and describes human behaviour. It is therefore safe to conclude that the data collected using this research method can provide and certify uncoloured explanation and description of the subject the research work focuses on.

3.2 Population of the Study

The population of the study is drawn from the youth of the three senatorial districts in Lagos state. These senatorial districts are Lagos central, Lagos east and Lagos west with a total combined youth population of 10,000,000 (ten million) residents as of 2021, according to figures gotten from www.urbanet.info. This figure forms the population of this study.

3.3 Sample Size

A sample size is a subset of a population which is usually a representative of the entire population of the study. The purpose and essence of a sample size in a research work is to take out a part of the entire population as it would be cumbersome to use the entire population. Therefore, a representative sample is selected to solicit responses using the questionnaire.

Hence, the sample size for this study comprises 400 youth of Lagos state drawn from the 10,000,000 youth population using the Taro Yamane formula for sample size determination and extraction.

(See computation in appendix).

3.4 Sampling Technique

The sampling procedure used in the collection of data is the Multistage sampling technique which is sometimes known as the Multistage Cluster Sampling. It is a sampling technique that involves the process of dividing the significant sub-sect of the total population of a study into groups (or clusters) for the purpose of making the collection of primary data easier while conducting a research. This makes for adequate representation of members of the population selected.

The stages or steps in the Multistage sampling technique and which were followed in this research are:

- **Step One:** Choosing a sampling frame after considering the population of interest. The researcher did this by first considering the population of interest

which is the total number of youth in Lagos state. After this, the youth were divided into separate relevant groups of the three Senatorial districts in Lagos state to enable easy extraction of the sample size.

- **Step Two:** Select a sample size or relevant separate sub-groups. The relevant sub-groups in this study are the youth of the three Senatorial districts as opposed to the entire population of Lagos state. Therefore, this is where the sample size was extracted from using the Taro Yamane formula for sample size determination and extraction.
- **Step Three:** Repeat the second step if necessary. This is done to ensure that error is minimized as much as possible. The researcher did this as well.
- **Step Four:** Using some variation of probability sampling, choose the members of the sample group. The researcher did this by allocating a certain number of copies of questionnaire to youth members of each of the Senatorial districts to match the figure derived from the sample size extracted.

3.5 Instrument of Data Collection/Administration

For the purpose of this study, the questionnaire was used as the instrument of data collection. The questionnaire consisted of well structured, close ended questions designed for easy comprehension by the respondents. It also had a multi-choice format and the 5-point Likert scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Undecided (U), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD) to enable appropriate response to the questions.

The questionnaire was divided into two sections labeled A and B. Section A focuses on the demographic data of the respondents while section B examines the psychographic data of the respondents and their responses.

The instrument was administered to four hundred (400) youth respondents who reside in Lagos state and who adequately represented the three senatorial districts in Lagos state.

To adequately reach the respondents and represent each senatorial district effectively, 133 copies of questionnaire were shared to 133 randomly selected respondents from two senatorial districts and 134 questionnaires were administered to 134 youth respondents from the last senatorial district to make up 400 respondents. Most of the questionnaires were administered online to reach respondents from the senatorial districts in Lagos state because of the barrier of distance; while some were physically administered to students of the University of Benin who reside in Lagos state.

The self-administered questionnaires were given out to students in their lecture classes and collected on the spot after administration.

3.6 Validity/Reliability of the Research Instrument

The instrument which was constructed by the researcher was presented to the supervisor. Based on face to face interaction, the supervisor confirmed that the items were appropriate and capable of eliciting the required information. Thus, the items are valid and the recommended corrections have been made.

3.7 Method of Data Collection

The data for this study was collected through a questionnaire administered both physically and online on the subject of research from the selected respondents. The questionnaires administered physically were retrieved on a person to person basis while the ones administered online were retrieved through the website to minimize loss of questionnaires. The ensuring data were gotten from books, articles, newspapers, magazines, the Internet, etc.

3.8 Method of Data Analysis

The data collected through the use of questionnaire were analyzed using simple percentages, frequency tables and mean scores. Frequency tables were chosen and used to enhance easy and comprehensive interpretation of the data collected and collated so as to show the findings in a simplified manner.

On the other hand, the simple percentage was used to analyze the data in a simple mathematical order. This enabled the researcher to fully explore and explain the data collected and collated from the questionnaire in a non-complex mathematical manner.

Mean scores were used to calculate each of the items in the questionnaire based on the 5-point Likert scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Undecided (U), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD). This enabled the researcher to infer the acceptance and rejection of the items with direct bearing on the research questions posed for this study. The mean score for this study was 2.50 so in essence; items

calculated to be on and above 2.50 were accepted while those that fell below 2.50 were rejected.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the data collated and collected via the questionnaire administered to the respondents, as well as the discussion of findings derived from the data. The first section of data analysis is the grouping of data according to items in the research instrument using frequency tables and simple percentages. The second section discusses the findings of the study based on the research questions for this study. All 400 questionnaires administered and distributed were retrieved by the researcher (resulting in a 100% return rate). Therefore, this data presentation and analysis is based on this figure.

4.1 Data Presentation and Analysis

SECTION A: BIOGRAPHIC DATA

Table 1: Gender Distribution of Respondents

Gender of respondents	Frequency of response	Percentage of response
Male	120	30%
Female	280	70%
Total	400	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2021

The data on table 1 shows that more female respondents responded to more questionnaires than male respondents. This is based on the fact that 70% of the total percentage of respondents were female.

Table 2: Age Range of Respondents

Age Range	Frequency of Response	Percentage of Response
15-20 years	130	32.5%
21-25 years	150	37.5%
26-30 years	70	17.5%
31-35 years	49	12.25%
36-40 years	1	0.25%
Total	400	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2021

The data on table 2 shows that youth aged between 21-25 years formed a greater percentage of the respondents for this research as they constituted 37.5% of the total percentage of respondents. This table also shows that all respondents were mature emotionally and mentally enough to provide the needed response and that they are active youth of productive age and stage in life; therefore, they are familiar enough with the issue to give knowledgeable answers.

Table 3: Religion Distribution of Respondents

Religion	Frequency of Response	Percentage of Response
Christianity	278	69.5%
Islam	102	25.5%
Traditional	20	5%
Other	---	---
Total	400	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2021

The data on table 3 showed that majority of the respondents were Christians. This is as a result of the fact that Christians constituted 69.5% of the total number of respondents.

Table 4: Marital Distribution of Respondents

Marital Status	Frequency of Response	Percentage of Response
Single	390	97.5%
Married	10	2.5%
Divorced	---	---
Separated	---	---
Total	400	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2021.

Data on Table 4 deduced that a greater percentage of the respondents were single as they amounted to 97.5% of the total percentage of respondents.

Table 5: Occupation Distribution of Respondents

Occupation	Frequency of Response	Percentage of Response
Self-employed	90	22.5%
Employed	70	17.5%
Student	178	44.5%
Business	32	8%
Unemployed	30	7.5%
Total	400	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2021.

According to the data on Table 5, there were more student respondents than others.

This is based on the fact that they constituted 44.55% out of 100%.

Table 6: Educational Attainment Distribution of Respondents

Educational Attainment	Frequency of Response	Percentage of Response
WAEC/SSCE/GCE	102	25.5%
Diploma/OND	116	29%
B.A., BS.c., M.E.d	102	25.5%
PhD	80	20%
Total	400	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2021.

According to data presented in Table 6, it shows that the respondents who have completed their Diploma/OND program constitute a larger percentage of the population of respondents which is 29%.

SECTION B: PSYCHOGRAPHIC DATA

Table 7: Respondents' Awareness of and familiarity with the #EndSARS Twitter Hashtag.

Item	Details	Yes	No	Not Sure	Total	Percentage
7.	Are you aware of the Lagos #EndSARS protests of 2020?	400	---	---	400	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2021.

Table 7 shows that all of the respondents are aware of and are familiar with the #EndSARS Twitter hashtag as well as the 2020 Lagos #EndSARS protests. This is because it covered all of the 100%.

Item	Details	Yes	No	Not Sure	Total	Percentage
8.	Are you familiar with the EndSARS hashtag on Twitter?	392 (98%)	8 (2%)	---	400	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2021.

The data presented in Table 8 proves that majority of the percentage of respondents were familiar with the #EndSARS Twitter hashtag because the number of respondents who agreed constituted 98% of 100%.

Table 9: Respondents’ Perception on the Propagation of the #EndSARS Hashtag by Twitter.

Item	Details	SA	A	U	D	SD	Total	-X	Decision
	Values	5	4	3	2	1			
9.	Twitter strongly propagated the #EndSARS hashtag.	225 1,125 56.25%	90 360 22.5%	12 36 3%	50 100 12.5%	23 23 5.75%	400 1,644÷400 100%	4.11	Accepted

Source: Field Survey, 2021.

Table 9 reflects that the majority of the respondents accept that the Twitter hashtag was indeed influential in propagating the #EndSARS hashtag as the results of the responses amounted to a mean score of 4.11 which was above the required 3.0 for this study. Therefore, it was accepted.

Table 10: Respondents’ Opinion on the Effectiveness of the Twitter Hashtag for Spreading Information about the EndSARS Protests.

Item	Details	SA	A	U	D	SD	Total	-X	Decision
	Values	5	4	3	2	1			
10.	Twitter	250	98	3	40	9	400	4.11	Accepted
	effectively	1,250	392	9	80	9	1,644÷400		
	spread	56.25%	24.5%	0.75%	10%	2.25%			
	information								
	about the								
	#EndSARS								
	protests.								

Source: Field Survey, 2021.

According to the data on Table 10, majority of the respondents accepted the fact that the Twitter hashtag effectively spread information about the #EndSARS protests as the results derives from the responses also amounted to 4.11 mean score above the 3.0 required. As a result of this, it was accepted.

Table 11: Respondents' Perception of the Effectiveness of the Twitter Hashtag for Online Activism.

Item	Details	SA	A	U	D	SD	Total	-X	Decision
	Values	5	4	3	2	1			
11.	You perceive the Twitter hashtag to be effective for online activism	92	125	85	74	24	400	3.5	Accepted
		460	500	255	148	24	1,387÷400		
		23%	31.25%	21.25%	18.5%	6%	100%		

Source: Field Survey, 2021.

From the data presented in Table 11, it shows that majority of the respondents accepted that they perceived the Twitter hashtag to be effective for online activism. This is because the mean score derived was 3.5 which is 0.5 above the required 3.0 for this research. Hence, this was accepted.

Table 12: Respondents' Perception on the Necessity of the #EndSARS Protests.

Item	Detail	Yes	No	Not Sure	Total	Percentage
12.	Do you feel that the #EndSARS protest was necessary?	255 (63.75%)	140 (35%)	5 (1.25%)	400	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2021.

According to data presented in Table 12, majority felt that the #EndSARS protest was necessary and had to be done. This is due to the fact that respondents who responded positively constituted 63.75%.

Table 13: Respondents' Perception on the Twitter hashtag as an Effective Tool for Mass Mobilization.

Item	Details	Very Effective	Effective	Uncertain	Less Effective	Not Effective	Total	Percentage
13.	The Twitter hashtag is effective for mass mobilization.	195 (48.75%)	98 (24.5%)	23 (5.75%)	50 (12.5%)	34 (8.5%)	400	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2021

Table 13 proved that the #EndSARS Twitter hashtag was very effective for the mass mobilization. This is because 48.75% of the total percentage of respondents affirmed that the Twitter hashtag was very effective for mass mobilization.

Table 14: Opinion of Respondents towards the Effectiveness of the #EndSARS Twitter Hashtag for Mobilizing Lagos Youth in 2020.

Item	Details	Very Effective	Effective	Uncertain	Less Effective	Not Effective	Total	Percentage
14	The #EndSARS Twitter hashtag was effective for mobilizing Lagos youth in 2020	95 (23.75%)	182 (45.5%)	23 (5.75%)	50 (12.5%)	50 (12.5%)	400	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2021

According to the data presented in Table 14, a greater percentage of the respondents agreed that the Twitter hashtag was effective for mobilizing Lagos youth for 2020 #EndSARS protests as the findings from the table showed that 45.5% agreed that it was effective.

Table 15: Respondents' Perception of the Effects of the 2020 Lagos #EndSARS Hashtag and Protests.

Item	Detail	Positive	Negative	Uncertain	Total	Percentage
15.	The 2020 #EndSARS hashtag and protests had what kind of effects?	255 (63.75%)	125 (31.25%)	20 (5%)	400	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2021

Table 15 showed that majority of the total 400 respondents agreed that the #EndSARS Twitter hashtag and protests had more positive than negative effects. They amounted to 63.75%.

4.2 Discussion of Findings (Answers to Research Questions)

In order to ensure that the aims of this research were achieved, the three research questions posed for this study were answered through the data collected and generated from the research instrument. The section A was only concerned with the biographic data of respondents while sections B-C sought to find answers to the three research questions formulated for this study.

This discussion of findings is based on the answers to the research questions as collected and interpreted from the responses provided by answering the items in the questionnaire.

4.2.1 Research Question 1: What is the extent of the access to information on the #EndSARS protest that was available through the Twitter hashtag?

The answer to this research question can be found in Table 10. In this table, it was proven that the Twitter hashtag effectively spread information about the #EndSARS protests and gave people access to the necessary information through the respondents' answers.

This is backed up by the article written by Oluwadara et al (2020) on millennial activism within Nigerian Twitterscape. They explained the concept of

social media activism and the digital dynamism it employed for spreading information and awareness about the #EndSARS protests.

This is also related to the agenda setting theory adopted for this study as it relates to the power and influence of the media when it comes to prioritizing certain information and laying so much emphasis on it that it becomes popular agenda in society.

Therefore, against the backdrop of the theoretical framework and the article cited, it is proven that the access to information about the #EndSARS protest through the Twitter hashtag was influential, impactful and effective in the sense that the Twitter hashtag strongly promoted information about the #EndSARS protest.

4.2.2 Research Question 2: What is the perception of Lagos youth to the information available on the #EndSARS protest through the Twitter hashtag?

Table 11 provided the answer to this research question by showing that majority of the respondents perceived the Twitter hashtag to be effective for online activism through the dissemination of information made available. This implies that their perception towards the information available on the #EndSARS protests through the Twitter hashtag tilted towards a positive outlook as they believed that it was effective for online activism.

This was highlighted by Tomas (2020) in his article where he confirmed that the information made available through the #EndSARS Twitter hashtag was very instrumental and played a vital role in the mobilization of Lagos youth for the 2020

#EndSARS protests at the Lekki Toll Gate. He explored how the demand began on Twitter and how it later generated into information that spread on twitter via the hashtag, asking youth to gather at the Lekki Toll Gate. Subsequently, the Lagos youth reacted to the information and began to gather there en masse for physical mobilization and occupying of the streets.

In addition to this, Fasunwon (2019) laid emphasis on the use of information available through social media for the purpose of interaction and the opportunity to take certain action to achieve certain objectives. This factor is one that the Lagos youth utilized through the information available to them through the Twitter hashtag.

This is related to the theoretical framework because it encompasses how the media was able to influence the Lagos online and offline society enough through the dissemination and emphasis of information on the #EndSARS protests that it transcended the frontier of digital activism to result in physical mass mobilization. This shows how the agenda setting power of the media shapes society and forms public opinion as well as magnifying such opinions to make the members of the society focus on such information and rate it more important than others.

4.2.3 Research Question 3: What is the extent to which Lagos youth were able to influence the Twittersphere using the Twitter hashtag?

The answer to this research question can also be found in Table 11. The data on this table showed that the Lagos youth were able to influence the Twittersphere to a very large extent using the Twitter hashtag for online activism as majority of the

respondents attested to this fact. Such was this influence that it resulted in the mass mobilization.

This assertion is supported by Afeez and Adeolu's article where they examined the success of Social Networking Sites (SNSs) and social media platforms as tools for digital communication and the exchange of information. They also highlighted the situational awareness function of social media as well as the fast information attribute, while stating that Twitter has the strongest influence as opposed to other social media platforms.

The extent to which the Lagos youth were able to influence the Twittersphere using the Twitter hashtag cannot be overlooked because they succeeded in gaining both local and international attention as earlier proven in this research. This success hit the pinnacle when the #EndSARS emoji was created to show support for the #EndSARS protests.

Also, according to Tomas (2020) in his article, he highlighted the fact that the Lagos protestors employed the use of the Twitter hashtag to influence the Twittersphere and trigger action and reaction from users of the social media platform. Such was this influence that following the Lekki Massacre, it was stated that the intense crackdown by the government on its peacefully protesting citizens would injure the relationship between America and Nigeria by implication.

Oluwadara et al (2020) also examined this concept when they mentioned the dynamic nature of digital activism through the Twitter hashtag that the Lagos youth

employed. The level of social media activism that they were able to achieve was indeed monumental and a first of its kind.

The relationship between this and the agenda setting theory is more like a cause and effect situation. As a result of the fact that the media set the agenda for public discourse and action concerning the Lagos #EndSARS protests, the Lagos youth were able to pick up the pace, capitalize on it to influence the Twitter space to a very large extent and cause global impact.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary

The basis and focal point of this research is to investigate and find out the use of the Twitter hashtag as a tool for the mobilization of Lagos youth for the #EndSARS protests of 2020. Therefore, it aims at examining and ascertaining the extent to which the Twitter hashtag propelled and influence the #EndSARS protests and how it consequently resulted in the mass online and physical mobilization of Lagos youth for the 2020 #EndSARS protests.

To achieve this, the research was anchored on the agenda setting theory which posits that due to different levels of importance and prominence attached to certain messages and issues by the media, members of the public will as well attach importance to such messages and issues above others. This theory is related to this research in the sense that through the continuous seeing and hearing of the #EndSARS messages on every form of social and regular media, the public attached importance to the #EndSARS message and movement and was prompted to participate.

To this end, a total of three (3) research questions were formulated for this study and a sample size extracted from the total youth population of the three Lagos state senatorial districts using the Taro Yamane formula. The result was 400 questionnaires which were distributed physically and online to Lagos youth representing the three senatorial districts in Lagos; and they were all retrieved,

interpreted and analyzed using simple percentages and mean score. The purpose of this was to elicit responses and data required to advance this study.

The respondents selected for the sample size were grouped using the Multistage sampling technique to. Data collated showed that the Twitter hashtag largely influenced the propagation of the 2020 #EndSARS protests and consequently, the mobilization of Lagos youth for the said protest.

From the analysis of the study and the data/responses generated, it can be deduced that:

- The Lagos 2020 #EndSARS protest was strongly propagated by the Twitter hashtag. Even though the #EndSARS hashtag was used on several social media platforms, many identified with the Twitter hashtag as the greatest influence.
- The Twitter hashtag was an influential and impactful tool in giving the Lagos youth a platform to air their discontent about the issues. Thus, they were able to maximally influence the Twitter space to attract both local and international attention and support.
- Information and data about the #EndSARS protest was adequately provided using tweets as well as the popular Twitter hashtag.
- The #EndSARS online activism triggered through the Twitter hashtag consequently resulted in the mass mobilization of Lagos youth for the 2020

#EndSARS protests and the physical occupying of the streets with the largest gathering at Lekki Toll Gate.

5.2 Conclusion

Based on the findings of this research, it is seen that despite all existing factors that mitigated against the Lagos #EndSARS protests of 2020, its impact, duration, size and influence cannot be overlooked. The Lagos 2020 #EndSARS protest turned out to be the first protest that spanned for over two weeks and was the most organized peaceful protest in the history of Nigeria.

It is also to be noted that the Twitter hashtag largely contributed to the global impact of the #EndSARS protests and is therefore an eye opener to the power of social media in today's world. Hence, this study affirmed that social media is an important and powerful medium of communication and that the Twitter hashtag in particular is a useful and powerful tool for mass digital and physical mobilization. Therefore, if more people are made to recognize this fact and take advantage of it, more issues in the nation will be addressed.

5.3 Recommendations

The following are the recommendations made by the researcher in line with the findings of this research:

1. The Twitter hashtag has gone beyond being just a feature of the Twitter application. It has proven to be powerful, effective and efficient for the dissemination of information and should be viewed as such. The researcher

recommends that more individuals and groups of people embrace this attribute and utilize it to trigger and effect social, economic and political change.

2. On the issue of mass mobilization, the Twitter hashtag; though being a digital phenomenon, was able to pave way for the mass physical mobilization of Lagos youth for the 2020 #EndSARS protests. Therefore, the researcher recommends that if any need arises for a mobilization for whatever purpose, the Twitter hashtag could be utilized by spreading word and information to cause people to gather together for a certain cause.
3. Although the Twitter application is also a micro-blogging website/tool, it is the researcher's opinion that the characters allowed could be extended to fit more than 280 to allow users express their thoughts, ideas and feelings more; as well as effectively get their point across.

5.4 Limitations of the Study

The major limitation encountered in the course of carrying out this research is the time factor. The time allocated for the completion of the research is too short and has put the researcher under undue pressure to finish it.

Another limitation to the study is the dearth of information and data that exists on the topic. Since it is a relatively new research topic, there is a scarcity of books, articles and up to date information relating to it. Some of the information online like videos, news and others which were previously published online have been deleted from the online space by people in authority who were not in support of the protest.

APPENDIX I

Department of Mass Communication,
Faculty of Arts,
University of Benin,
Benin City, Edo State, Nigeria.

Dear Respondent,

REQUEST FOR THE COMPLETION OF QUESTIONNAIRE

My name is Eze Miracle, a final year student of the aforementioned university and department. I am conducting a research on **The Use of Twitter Hashtag for the Mobilization of Lagos Youth for the EndSARS Protests of 2020**. This study is in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of Bachelor of Arts (B.A) degree in Mass Communication.

You have been carefully selected to help complete the items in this questionnaire. Please kindly complete the attached questionnaire to assist me in conducting my research. I assure you that any information supplied will be treated with utmost confidentiality in accordance with research ethics and used for the purpose of this research only.

Thank you for your kind assistance, co-operation and understanding.

Yours Sincerely,

**Eze Miracle
(Researcher).**

Please, tick (√) the option that best explains your disposition.

SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC DATA OF RESPONDENTS

1. Gender:

(a) Male [] (b) Female []

2. Age:

(a) 15-20 years [] (b) 21-25 years [] (c) 26-30 years [] (d) 31-35 years []

(e) 36-40 years []

3. Religion:

(a) Christianity [] (b) Islam [] (c) Traditional [] (d) Other [] Please specify _____

4. Marital Status:

(a) Single [] (b) Married [] (c) Divorced [] (d) Separated []

5. Occupation:

(a) Self-employed [] (b) Employed [] (c) Student [] (d) Business []

(e) Unemployed []

6. Educational Attainment:

(a) WAEC/SSCE/GCE [] (b) Diploma/OND [] (c) B.A., BS.c., M.E.d []

(d) PhD []

SECTION B: PSYCHOGRAPHIC DATA OF RESPONDENTS

7. Are you aware of the Lagos #EndSARS protests of 2020?

(a) Yes [] (b) No [] (c) Not sure []

8. Are you familiar with the #EndSARS hashtag on Twitter?

(a) Yes [] (b) No [] (c) Not sure []

Key: SA=Strongly Agree, A=Agree, U=Undecided, D=Disagree, SD=Strongly Disagree

9. The Lagos #EndSARS protest of 2020 was strongly propagated by the Twitter hashtag.

(a) SA [] (b) A [] (c) U [] (d) D [] (e) SD []

10. The influence of the Twitter hashtag was effective for spreading information and awareness about the 2020 #EndSARS protest.

(a) SA [] (b) A [] (c) U [] (d) D [] (e) SD []

11. The #EndSARS Twitter hashtag has affected your perception on the effectiveness of the Twitter hashtag as a tool for online activism.

(a) SA [] (b) A [] (c) U [] (d) D [] (e) SD []

12. Do you feel that the #EndSARS protest was necessary?

(a) Yes [] (b) No [] (c) Not sure []

13. What is your perception on the effectiveness of the Twitter hashtag as a tool for mass mobilization?

(a) Very effective [] (b) Effective (c) Uncertain (d) Less effective []

(e) Not effective []

14. What is your view on the effectiveness of the Twitter hashtag in spreading awareness about the 2020 #EndSARS protests and in the mobilization of Lagos youth for the protests?
- (a) Very effective [] (b) Effective [] (c) Uncertain [] (d) Less effective []
(e) Not effective []
15. Perception on the #EndSARS Twitter hashtag and the influence of the resulting protests.
- (a) Positive [] (b) Negative [] (c) Uncertain []

APPENDIX II

COMPUTATION FOR SAMPLE SIZE EXTRACTION

Taro Yamane's Formula for sample size determination and the application for the sample size chosen for this study are shown below:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where:

n = sample size from the population under study

N = total population under study

e = sampling error: 0.05

The formula is presented below;

$$n = \frac{10,000,000}{1 + 10,000,000(0.05)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{10,000,000}{1 + 10,000,000(0.0025)}$$

$$n = \frac{10,000,000}{1 + 25,000}$$

$$n = \frac{10,000,000}{25,001}$$

$$n = 399.9 \sim 400$$

$$n = 400$$

APPENDIX III

TARO YAMANE'S SAMPLE SIZE DETERMINATION FORMULA AND

TABLE

Formula

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where:

n= Sample size

N= Population figure

e= Error margin

If the level of error margin equal to 5%, use 0.05 instead of value in the formula (1)

Population	Error level				
	+1%	+2%	+3%	+4%	+5%
100	99	96	92	86	80
200	196	185	169	152	133
300	291	268	236	203	171
400	385	345	294	244	200
500	476	417	345	278	222
1,000	909	714	526	385	286
2,000	1,667	1,111	714	476	333
4,000	2,857	1,538	870	541	364
6,000	3,750	1,765	938	566	375
8,000	4,444	1,905	976	580	381
10,000	5,000	2,000	1,000	588	385
20,000	6,667	2,222	1,053	606	392
40,000	8,000	2,353	1,081	615	396
50,000	8,333	2,381	1,087	617	397
60,000	8,571	2,400	1,091	619	397
80,000	8,889	2,424	1,096	620	398
100,000	9,091	2,439	1,099	621	398
200,000	9,524	2,439	1,105	623	399
500,000	9,804	2,469	1,109	624	400
1,000,000	9,901	2,488	1,110	625	400
2,000,000	9,950	2,494	1,110	625	400
4,000,000	9,975	2,497	1,111	625	400
6,000,000	9,983	2,498	1,111	625	400
8,000,000	9,988	2,499	1,111	625	400
10,000,000	9,990	2,500	1,111	625	400
20,000,000	9,995	2,500	1,111	625	400
30,000,000	9,997	2,500	1,111	625	400
40,000,000	9,998	2,500	1,111	625	400
50,000,000	9,998	2,500	1,111	625	4009

Source: Yamane, T. (1967). Statistics, an Introductory Analysis, (2nd Ed), New York: Harper and Row.

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