

Topic

#Feminist; An Analysis of the meaning and impact of Hashtag Feminism for Young Nigerian Women.

Area of Study

Sociology

Master of Philosophy

Researcher: Nifemi Ayinde-Tukur

Supervisor: Dr Victoria Gosling

Co-Supervisor: Dr. Kamerade Daiga

University of Salford

01/24

Abstract

In recent years, the widespread use of social media, in all cultural contexts, has made them not only an instrument of entertainment, but also a way to communicate and disseminate ideas. This has become particularly important when it comes to the feminist discourse, with activists everywhere, including Nigeria, using the hashtag feminism (#feminism), a term used in this research study to encompass hashtags involving feminist discourse, as a major tool for their activism. This work posits that there is a political and theoretical gap in existing knowledge in understanding feminist activism in non-western nations and aims to contribute to existing knowledge with specific attention to the digital revival of feminism discussed in the Nigerian context.

This qualitative case study adopts an interpretivist approach with the aim of understanding the role of #feminism in the development of feminist activism in Nigeria. 58 Nigerian university students participated in a survey, which was followed by an online focus group with 7 participants. Thematic analysis showed the presence of three main themes: social media and #feminism are the main sources of feminist knowledge for Nigerian female students; #feminism has been raising Nigerian female students' awareness about equality and gender-based injustice; Young Nigerian women believe in feminist ideals but are reluctant to call themselves feminists or engage directly in offline activism.

It can be concluded that engagement in #feminism appears to have developed greater awareness of feminist issues among young Nigerian women and that it has played a role in making them feel more aware of their rights. This has reinforced the belief that reaching gender equality is paramount, which is a significant step for a society, which still largely upholds Victorian and religious values, where women have known little independence.

However, participants' lack of active interaction with the hashtag (they did not create any) and lack of offline engagement may hint at the presence of socio-cultural inhibitors, refraining them from becoming more active.

Table of Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction	10
1.1. Background and Rationale	15
1.2. The Gap in the Literature	21
1.3. Aims and Objectives.....	23
1.4. Structure of the Work	24
1.5. Conclusion	25
Chapter 2: Women and Feminism	26
2.1. Introduction	26
2.2. Defining Feminism and its Ethics	Error! Bookmark not defined.
2.3. Women and Feminism in Nigeria	39
2.3.1. Nigerian Women in History	41
2.4. Women's Underrepresentation in Nigeria	46
2.5. The Wave Metaphor	49
2.5.1. The First and Second Wave of Feminism in the United States and the UK	50
2.5.2. The Third Wave.....	54
2.6. Feminist Movements in Nigeria since Colonisation	58
2.7. Conclusion	62
Chapter 3: Digital Activism	64
3.1. Introduction.....	64
3.2. Digital Activism	64

3.2.1. Digital Activism in the African Context	67
3.3. Feminism and Technology	69
3.4. The Language and Space of Digital Activism	70
3.5. The Digital Revival of Feminism	75
3.6. Social Networking	78
3.7. Feminist Concern of the Postfeminist Neoliberal Economy of Social Media Networks.....	82
3.8. Hashtag Feminism	85
3.9. Hashtag Feminism in Nigeria.....	91
3.10. Conclusion.....	97
Chapter 4: Methodology	100
4.1. Research Paradigm	100
4.2. Research Design	103
4.3. Sample	104
4.4. Data Collection Methods	105
4.4.1. Questionnaires	106
4.4.2. Focus Groups.....	107
4.5. Data Analysis	109
4.6. Ethical Considerations	111
4.7. Limitations of Research	112
Chapter 5: Findings.....	115

5.1. Presenting Findings	116
5.2. Thematic Analysis	123
Theme One: Young, Educated, Nigerian Women Mostly Learn about Feminism on social media	123
Theme Two: #feminism Raises Awareness about Women’s Issues among Young Educated Nigerian Women.....	125
Theme Three: Most Young, Educated, Nigerian Women Support and Share Feminist Ideals, but they do not Always Identify as Feminists	128
Theme Four: #feminism Increased Online Participation and Activism but, so far, not Offline Activism	129
5.3. Young educated Nigerian women believe #feminism is a “Safer” and “Effective” tool for social change	130
5.4. Contextualising “Safety” of Social Media Activism.....	131
5.5. Contextualising the Effectiveness of Social Media Activism.....	135
5.6. Conclusion	137
Chapter 6: Discussion	138
6.1. Are we feminists?	139
6.2. Research Question One: What is the role of #feminism campaigns on social media in the development of Nigerian women’s feminist activism?	145
6.3. Research Question Two: how does #feminism affect Nigerian women’s perception womanhood in society, and women rights?.....	152
Conclusion	156

Chapter 7: Conclusion.....	159
7.1. Overview of the Study	159
7.2. Further Avenues for Research.....	163
APPENDIXES.....	167
Appendix One: Figures and Charts	167
Bibliography	184

Acknowledgements

I wish to express my sincere gratitude to my supervisor, Dr. Victoria Gosling, for her unwavering belief and support. Her role as an inclusive beacon, offering me space during challenging times, has been instrumental. Without her support and empathy, this thesis would not have reached its fruition.

My daughter deserves my heartfelt thanks for being the motivation for my perseverance. It is my aspiration that she may, one day, recognise the strength in taking incremental steps, especially when faced with arduous paths.

I must also extend my appreciation to my family and the greater circle of friends who have offered their support and encouragement throughout this journey.

Lastly, my recognition goes out to all women who embody the essence of true solidarity, continually striving and elevating others along with them.

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.0. Overview

This thesis explores the significance of the social media hashtag feminism (#feminism) for young Nigerian women through a post-colonial feminist lens on activism in Nigeria's feminist movement. The research focuses on the experiences of young Nigerian women and the influence of hashtags such as #MeToo and #BringBackOurGirls in their activism.

In Nigeria, gender inequality remains a persistent issue. Women in Nigeria are particularly disadvantaged in education, where the literacy rate for adult women is 59.4% compared to 74.4% for men. In addition, women face challenges in accessing quality education, with many dropping out of school due to early marriages and teenage pregnancies. Nigerian women are also underrepresented in the formal workforce and are more likely to work in the informal sector with limited job security and benefits. In addition to that, women's political participation in Nigeria remains low, with only 6.7% of parliamentary seats being held by women in 2021.

These gender disparities have significant consequences for women's overall well-being, their ability to participate fully in society, and their contribution to the economy. However, in recent years, feminist activism in Nigeria has gained momentum, particularly on social media platforms through the use of hashtags like #BringBackOurGirls and #MeTooNigeria, drawing attention to issues such as sexual harassment, gender-based violence, and women's political representation.

Macro-level sociological research investigates large-scale structures that shape society, such as the impact of gender on women's liberties in patriarchal societies. On the other hand, micro-level sociological research concerns itself with more narrowly defined questions regarding the interactions between individuals, such as the ways in which conversations about

feminism among young women may influence their perceptions of womanhood and their rights. While the micro and macro are distinct fields of inquiry, they are not mutually exclusive; studies on micro-level social relations can help illuminate macro-level systems, just as investigations into macro-level structures like capitalism and race can aid in defining micro-level societal relations.

In contemporary society, social media has emerged as an indispensable platform for social interactions and digital activism. Given its significance in shaping the opinions and behaviors of individuals, it is crucial to conduct studies of online activism in various global regions and within countries. Specifically, in the context of young Nigerian feminist activism, it is imperative to investigate the ways in which the micro, the shared reality formed through social media interactions, influences the macro-level societal structures such as womanhood and women's rights in Nigeria. By examining the impact of young Nigerian women's feminist activism on social media, this research seeks to elucidate the intricate relationship between micro-level interactions and macro-level societal structures, contributing to a better understanding of the role of online activism in feminist movements in Nigeria.

The study utilizes qualitative research methods such as interviews and focus groups to collect data from young Nigerian women across different socio-economic backgrounds. The author utilizes a critical engagement with various research relating to feminist theory, internet studies, social movements studies, and postcolonial theory.

The findings of the research reveal that young Nigerian women's use of hashtag feminism has provided them with a platform to amplify their voices, share their experiences, and engage with other feminists in Nigeria and globally. The study also highlights the challenges faced by young Nigerian women in their activism, including social media harassment, lack of access to resources, and patriarchal norms and values. Furthermore, the research emphasizes the need

for more inclusive and intersectional feminist movements in Nigeria that recognize and address the diverse experiences of women in the country.

Chapter One provides a brief overview of the research questions and the importance of understanding the societal structures and paradigms that shape feminist discourse in Nigeria. It also outlines the different feminist schools of thought, including standpoint feminism, liberal, Marxist, post-structuralist, postmodern, and post-colonialist feminism. This chapter offers a justification for the post-colonial feminist approach the author takes in this study, which is further discussed in chapter 2. Postcolonial feminism is an approach to feminist theory that incorporates the perspectives and experiences of women from formerly colonized societies. In Nigeria, postcolonial feminist theory has been used to analyze the experiences of Nigerian women in relation to the country's colonial past, as well as its ongoing struggles for independence and social justice.

Postcolonial feminist scholars in Nigeria have highlighted how the legacies of colonialism continue to shape gender relations and the experiences of women in contemporary Nigerian society. For example, they have analyzed how patriarchal traditions were reinforced and even strengthened by colonial policies and how women have been excluded from positions of power and authority in the post-independence period.

One manifestation of post-colonialist feminist approach in Nigeria is the use of hashtag feminism on social media platforms. Hashtag feminism has emerged as a means of promoting women's rights and challenging patriarchal attitudes and practices in Nigeria. By using social media platforms, women are able to share their experiences and perspectives with a wider audience, raise awareness about issues affecting them and advocate for change.

Post-colonialist feminist approach in Nigeria also involves a critique of the dominant Western feminist discourse and its limited applicability to the Nigerian context. Nigerian postcolonial feminist scholars have argued that Western feminist theories and practices often fail to

account for the specific historical, cultural, and political contexts of Nigerian women's lives.

As such, they advocate for a more contextualized and inclusive feminist approach that recognizes and values the diversity of Nigerian women's experiences and perspectives.

Chapter Two explores the historical evolution of feminism in Nigeria and examines the different waves of feminism and their relevance to the Nigerian context. The chapter also discusses the intersectionality of feminist movements and how they relate to different groups of women.

Chapter three deeply delves into the aspect of digital activism, examining its use and impact on feminist activism. The chapter gives significant examples of activism that have been facilitated by the use of digital technology. More specifically, it examines widely acknowledged feminist online activism within the Nigerian context such as the #BringBackOurGirls campaign.

Chapter four, provides a detailed discussion of the research approach as well as the methodology used in this study. The insightful results obtained in this chapter are further analysed in chapter five.

Chapter Five explores the impact of hashtag feminism on young Nigerian women, examining the ways in which

Chapter five presents the findings that emerged from both the survey and focus group undertaken to comprehend Nigerian women's perspectives on hashtag feminism and its impact on their lives. This chapter scrutinizes the influence of social media activism on the perceptions of participants on feminism, their attitudes towards gender equality, and their participation in feminist movements.

Chapter six expands on the preceding discussions and undertakes a critical analysis of the research questions: "Are we Feminists?", "What is the role of #feminism campaigns on social media in the development of Nigerian women's feminist activism?", and "How does

#feminism influence Nigerian women's perceptions of womanhood in society and women's rights?".

Chapter Seven concludes the thesis by providing an overview of the key findings and their implications. The chapter also highlights the need for further research on the impact of hashtag feminism on young Nigerian women and the importance of addressing the challenges that they face in participating in feminist movements.

Overall, this thesis aims to shed light on the impact of hashtag feminism on young Nigerian women and how it affects the larger societal structures that shape women's rights and womanhood in Nigeria.

1.1. Background and Rationale

The hashtag and social media can elicit emotional responses while also offering a forum for the voiceless. Therefore, it should come as no surprise that the feminist movement has embraced the technology (Isike and Uzodike, 2011). A new wave of feminism appears to have emerged on social media, with the hashtag serving as its most potent weapon, giving rise to what has been known as "hashtag Feminism" (Chen et al., 2018). Furthermore, social media has democratised feminist activism, allowing anybody with a social media account and a desire to combat sexism, oppression, and misogyny to take part in the movement.

Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, WhatsApp, and other social media platforms have made activism easier than ever before by removing the barriers of distance and geography (Cammaerts, 2015; Swann, 2019). By facilitating public opinions and creating a platform for awareness and (potential) change, these platforms have made activism more accessible than ever before. Nigerian feminists, like their counterparts in other parts of the world, are increasingly reliant on social media and the hashtag to get their ideas through. Women in Nigeria have been able to raise awareness about various issues, including rape of minors in schools, rape culture, sexual molestation in universities, molestation, marital rape, gender fluidity, sexual assault and consent, the gender pay gap, sexual orientation, and the elimination of misogyny and patriarchy (World Bank Group, 2014: 154).

This research focuses on Nigerian women, and women of Nigerian descent and their use of social media, especially hashtags, to discuss feminist issues, raise awareness and, at times, to organise offline action.

Nigeria, like most other countries in Africa, has numerous deep-rooted socio-cultural issues that are impacting on its development, or lack of it, from the colonial era to the present-day in a post-independence era, which has been described as neo-colonial (Beckman, 1982; Isike

and Uzodike 2011). Despite its many shortcomings, one dominant socio-cultural issue that has been prevalent is women's rights to equal opportunities, development, and education (Akpojivi, 2019). Several studies have emphasised the place of women in Nigerian society; mainly, they highlighted how several socio-cultural practices and capitalism excluded women in modern-day Nigeria (Ajayi et al., 2021; Akinola, 2018 among others). Onwutuebe (2019) further emphasises that government institutions have sustained patriarchal culture in 21st century Nigeria, which subjects women to numerous injustices. Regarding gender inequality, Nigeria ranks thirtieth globally when it comes to countries where women are deprived of their fundamental rights and male supremacy reigns (Onwutuebe, 2019).

An examination of recent studies emphasises that gender imbalance in the Nigerian system is very stark. According to Unekwu (2019), Nigerian women are far less likely to be employed, to own land, or to have access to a means of socio-economic empowerment than their male peers. World Bank reported in 2021 that women make up about 49% of Nigeria's estimated 206 million citizens (World Bank, 2021). However, in business, women in the formal sector make up 20%, while most are in the informal sector, giving them minimal access to finance. Men are twice as likely to access finance than women, despite various research showing that women are more likely to repay loans (Ogunleye, 2017: 6).

Furthermore, studies find that women, in comparison to men, are far more likely to suffer sexual abuse. Though Agbaje et al. (2021) rightly established that men and women are victims of sexual abuse, harassment, and assault, they concluded that women and girls in Nigeria are much more likely to experience physical, verbal, non-verbal, and "quid pro quo" forms of sexual harassments than their male counterparts (Agbaje et al., 2021). It is then

evident that their conclusion is because women are still marginalised in Nigerian society. Unekwu (2019) further emphasises that women and girls in Nigeria are far more likely than men to experience domestic violence, drop out of school, and to being subjected to child marriage. Kågesten et al. (2016) express that, women are labelled "sluts" and "whores" for expressing their sexuality, while men who do the same are mostly applauded (Kågesten et al., 2016). Nigeria is considered a patriarchal society in which men hold power, and women are largely excluded from it, assuming a structural system of women's oppression and male domination (Idike et al., 2020: 21).

Considering the situation of women, and girls, in this neo-colonial patriarchal society, it is not surprising that many young Nigerian women are finding ways to share their experiences, raise awareness, educate, and demand social change. This is what motivates this study and why studying Nigerian women's activism within the domain of social media is warranted. Digital activism is a growing trend, and there is an unsubstantiated study on how Nigerian women have fully engaged with digital activism. In Nigeria, women have experienced unjust denial of several essential things across the board. From time immemorial, women have encountered disenfranchisement and marginalisation disproportionately (Anigwe, 2014). They are not granted opportunities for proper documentation, being properly educated, contributing meaningfully to society, or taking up leadership roles. In addition to being disenfranchised, women are not involved in policymaking or decisions that affect them, since the number of women in politics is limited. What this translates to is that either economically or politically, women do not have adequate protection that is strong enough to ensure that inequalities between men and women are bridged. Regardless of how the issue is packaged, true equality can only be attained by power and financial influence (Anigwe, 2014).

This research is important because social media and hashtag feminism play pivotal roles in creating awareness about feminist issues and advocating for the inclusion of Nigerian women across the board. They serve as effective and legitimate tools that could drive the development and introduction of new policies and laws that ensure increased protection and inclusion of Nigerian women. While the media generally underrepresents women, social media is a platform that allows women to be more expressive and offers a better level playing field. It could create an avenue for the voices of women all around the globe who come from various ethnic groups and backgrounds to be heard. Social media has the potential to bridge the gap and bring feminist issues to the limelight. Therefore, examining how social media and hashtag feminism shape and affects Nigerian women's views of the women's rights movement is central to this research.

Abiola (2016) suggests that younger feminists are finding ways to organise, even if they are not in formal organisations, to impact issues that affect them. Nigerian women and girls are now using the tools available through social media, creating collective spaces to pressure the country towards societal change. Imaginatively unpacking what it means to be a woman in contemporary Africa, Mahali (2017) explains that these women and girls are forming collectives, crafting unapologetic spaces centred on their own lives and lived experiences. They use the “relative freedom of online spaces” (Gibson 2019: 135) to collectively reinforce the concerns of the Nigerian people and enhance the drive for women's rights. Akpojivi (2019) explores the use of hashtags to reinforce the concerns of Nigerian people, about the carefree attitude of their government, to the attack and abduction of 200 Chibok schoolgirls

by Boko Haram, which gave birth to the #BringBackOurGirls movement. Refuting earlier cautionary studies (McRobbie, 2004; McRobbie, 2009), recent studies (Baer, 2015; Olson, 2016; Mahali, 2017; Parris, 2020 among others) assert that activism based on hashtags has been effective at creating collective spaces and drawing attention to feminist issues. An ideal sample of this assertion is the #BringBackOurGirls movement. The hashtag developed into a global phenomenon attracting attention from governments, international bodies, and high-profile personalities like David Cameron, Michelle Obama, and Malala Yousafzai. It drew global attention to issues of women's rights and education for girls in Nigeria (Olson, 2016; Khoja-Moolji, 2015).

Digital media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube as networked communication spaces are progressively becoming spaces for social mobilisation and protest (Hermida, 2013; Bonilla and Rosa, 2015; Herman, 2014; Madden et al., 2016). Twitter, for example, has notably emerged as a "site of resistance" (Williams, 2015: 343), especially for Black and minoritized feminists and other marginalised groups who seldom receive media recognition. Akpojivi (2019), however, emphasises that the ability of a hashtag movement to draw global attention goes beyond the hashtag, sampling the #BringBackOurGirls movement. Akpojivi (2019) posits that the adoption of an offline strategy strengthens a movement. Nigerian feminists also widely use social media to expose gender-based abuse (Schmidt et al., 2018) that would otherwise have fallen by the wayside, such as the police refusing to enforce domestic violence laws (Yalley and Olutayo, 2020), schools declining to prosecute reports of student's sexual assault (Fadipe and Bakenne 2020), child trafficking and female abduction events (Africa Portal 2018; Akpojivi 2019; Dayil and Vickers 2020). This use of Social media could also be linked to a definite offline impact on challenging the normative

understanding of men's roles in the Nigerian society (Akanle et al., 2015; Eboiyehi et al. 2016). Social media and hashtag feminism have the potential to help shed light on issues surrounding feminism in a manner hitherto considered undoable by conventional media. Feminists could now utilise social media as this study aims to share and highlight events and even utilise the platform to demand justice for abuse victims and so forth. This agitation can be continued offline by conducting peaceful protests on the streets like the #BringBackOurGirls campaign which drew the attention of international bodies.

Social media and hashtag feminism can potentially proffer solutions to issues immediately, unlike traditional media in the past that may have destroyed things beyond repair. Today, young Nigerian women with a smart device and easy internet access can tell their stories and connect with people who share similar perspectives using social media (Akpojivi, 2019). With social media and hashtag feminism, a sense of community is created amongst the female gender as it concerns feminist activism. They help forge a relationship amongst likeminded women, and solidarity is built towards a course (Akpojivi, 2019; Oladele, 2020). These women take on educating others about what feminism truly is. Learning about others' experiences, allows women to become aware there are people in situations similar to theirs. In this light, social media and the use of hashtag feminism helps galvanise the impact related to feminist activism (Oladele, 2020; Wasuna, 2018). The feeling of connectedness on a particular topic is developed, most times, by utilizing hashtags, and a kind of intimate public is found. Looking at the hashtag feminism movement developed by Nigerian women, it becomes apparent they see the hashtag as a tool to strengthen their social and cultural impact. If one considers how social media and the hashtag stir up emotions and provide an avenue for women who have been unjustly marginalized to be heard, it does not come as a surprise that

Nigerian feminists have employed the media to raise feminist issues (Akinbobola, 2020). The democratization of the feminist movement by social media has opened up participation to women from a more comprehensive array of backgrounds, all committed to fighting gender inequality, misogyny and patriarchal systems. With the removal of geographical location and distance-related barriers by social media platforms, activist movements have become more peaceful and manageable than ever: social media platforms facilitate public discussions and offline activism, hence enabling a platform for public enlightenment and (potential) change.

1.2. The Gap in the Literature

In the wake of online feminist activism in Nigeria, some organisations and scholars have identified and analysed critical areas of study. In their works, hashtag activism is a new form of political action (Ofori-Parku and Moscato 2018; Williams, 2015); lessons learnt (Africa Portal, 2018); law and policy development (Akpojivi 2019; Watt 2014); the mechanics of clustering and its effect on the adoption and spread of new hashtag movements (Schmidt et al., 2018), amongst many others. Many of these have been secondary analyses of events or primary analyses of social network data. A few scholars also focus on the #bringbackourgirls movement, drawing on critical academic learnings. Carter Olson (2016) explored digital communities supporting real-world change and influencing mainstream media agendas. Importantly, Latina and Docherty (2014) discussed participation and exclusion, while Maxfield (2015) and Loken (2014) put the movement in a historical, imperialist, and racist context, examining the enthusiastic western adoption of the hashtag, cautioning that it must be treated sceptically for its failure to consider its imperial dynamics, crucially warning about the potential for history to repeat itself.

Aune and Holyoak (2017) carried out a similar study, drawing on data from a survey of 1265 people involved in post-2000 forms of feminism and semi-structured interviews with thirty feminist activists. They situate contemporary UK feminism in its distinctive UK context. Arguing that feminism is both alive and relevant for significant numbers of people in the UK today, they interrogated younger UK feminists' reluctance to use the term "third-wave feminism" to describe themselves, attributing this reluctance to ambivalent and cynical representations of the third wave in academic literature and the popular media. Though the aims of Aune and Holyoak's (2017) study differ from the aims of this study, it is the method and approach that is of interest to this research. They take an approach that is refreshingly empowering to their respondent's activism by portraying their voices and then analysing the findings, presenting a recommendation for further developments in academia for contemporary UK feminists. While Aune and Holyoak (2017) have done a masterful job at representing the voices of contemporary feminists, Wilkinson and Kitzinger (1996) highlight the complications of representing others with ethnic, economic, or cultural experiences unlike one's own. Aune and Holyoak (2017) suggest that understanding feminist activism in non-western nations is a necessary political and theoretical intervention. This study aims to propose this, with specific attention to the Nigerian context. It posits that insufficient attention has been paid to the particularity of Nigerian hashtag feminism, especially academic inquiries in the young women's activism and their experiences of it.

Additionally, it is essential to highlight the need to represent the diversity of women's voices in academia, not only in sociology but, crucially, in digital media. Literat and Brough (2019) advocate the importance of focusing on difference and not universality. In digital technology design, they posit that young women of colour are among the heaviest users of social media;

however, their voices are almost absent from current conversations about ethical design. Based on a qualitative analysis of the views and experiences of selected Nigerian women, this research examines women's accounts of the impact of social media use, more specifically, of hashtag feminism in Nigeria.

In other words, this research addresses a significant gap in literature in that it explores the role, power, and perception of feminism in non-western countries (more specifically in Nigeria) and investigates how women of colour interact with social media from an ethical and sociological point of view.

1.3. Aims and Objectives

Based on the above considerations, the following research questions are explored in this research:

a) What is the role of #feminism campaigns on social media in the development of Nigerian women's feminist activism and b) how does it affect their own perception of women's rights and womanhood in Nigeria?

The aims of this research are to gain an:

1. Understanding the role of #feminism in the development of Nigerian women's activism 2. Understanding how #feminism has influenced Nigerian women's perspectives on their rights, social role, and womanhood.

These aims will be achieved by meeting the following objectives:

1. Exploring Nigerian women's engagement with social media #feminism.

2. Assessing how they engage with online and offline feminist activism.
3. Analysing how #feminism has influenced their perspectives on women rights and womanhood in society.

Findings from this research will contribute to current knowledge about the impact of social media's hashtag activism in creating discursive networks and its impact on women's attitudes towards feminist values. Essentially, this will build on much-needed diversity in academic work on women, young people, digital media, and feminism.

1.4. Structure of the Work

This work is a qualitative case study with interpretivist paradigm, that has collected primary data via a survey and a focus group.

The following chapters include a literature review of the relevant bodies of work about the position of women in Nigeria, followed by a review of academic work on digital activism, more specifically, feminist digital activism: Chapter 2 explores Women in Nigeria, the history of women in Nigeria, and women's activism. This chapter also explores key academic debates in Feminism and Feminism in Nigeria. Chapter 3 explores digital media, digital activism, and, more specifically, feminist digital activism. These are highlighted in order to gain an understanding of background/context for this research. In chapter 4, the research methodology is discussed, including an overview of ethical issues and limitations of the work. Chapter 5 presents the main findings, while chapter 6 provides the analysis and contextualisation within the relevant literature priorly discussed. Chapter 7 will serve as a conclusion, where a final overview of the work is presented, with suggestions for future research.

1.5. Conclusion

Throughout history, from the colonial era to the present-day post-independence age, Nigeria has faced several of the deep-rooted socio-cultural challenges that have influenced its growth, or lack thereof. The majority of Nigerian women today work in the informal sector, with men more than twice as likely as their female counterparts to be employed, own land, or have access to a means of achieving socio-economic empowerment. According to research, women are far more likely than males to be victims of sexual abuse. Nigerian women are figuring out how to share their stories, create awareness, educate others, and demand social change in their communities. In recent years, social media and in particular, socially oriented hashtags have become an important means of raising awareness about women's issues and to create gender cohesion not only online, but also offline. Hashtag feminism is at the heart of this research, which aims chiefly to understand how its influence has been affecting Nigerian women's lives, their attitudes toward feminist problems, how it has altered or reinforced their beliefs and how it has affected their own perception of women's rights and womanhood especially in a social context.

The next chapter will provide an overview of the literature on feminism from an ethical and conceptual point of view, in relation to feminism in Nigeria, its history, and its current status quo.

Chapter 2: Women and Feminism

2.1. Introduction

This chapter will provide an overview of relevant literature on feminism, its history, and its contemporary forms, with a focus on the history of the movement both in Nigeria, the UK and the USA. It will also present a historical and sociological background about women in Nigeria, with the aim of understanding how the evolution of history has changed female roles and the conception of womanhood in the country. In order to facilitate organisation, this part of the chapter will focus on three well-defined historical moments for the nation: pre-colonial times, colonialism, and post-colonialism. The chapter will continue with an analysis of feminism in the West, particularly in the UK and the USA: the first, second and third waves of feminism will be presented and discussed, with the aim of offering a complete overview their development.

Pre And Post-Colonial Nigeria

Pre-colonial Nigeria

The pre-colonial era in Nigeria was characterized by a rich tapestry of traditions, customs, and social structures that shaped the roles and status of women in society. In many pre-colonial Nigerian societies, women held significant positions of power and influence. Dogo (2014) explains that the Igbo people, for instance, had a matrilineal kinship system where descent was traced through the female line. This meant that women played essential roles in governance and decision-making within their clans and communities. Women leaders, known as "Omu," were responsible for mediating conflicts, ensuring social cohesion, and representing the interests of their people (Suleiman, 2017). Moreover, Igbo women were active participants in economic activities, particularly as market traders, where they controlled trade networks and played pivotal roles in regional and long-distance commerce (Suleiman, 2017).

Similarly, among the Hausa-Fulani society, women enjoyed relative autonomy and economic independence. Women were involved in various economic endeavors, including agriculture, trade, and crafts (Agbasiere, 2015). They had their own networks and marketplaces, known as "kano" or "kaura," where they engaged in trade and entrepreneurship (Agbasiere, 2015). In addition to their economic contributions, Hausa-Fulani women held influential positions within their households and participated in decision-making processes (Agbasiere, 2015).

These examples from pre-colonial Nigeria highlight the diversity of gender roles and power dynamics that existed across different ethnic groups. Women's agency and leadership roles in pre-colonial societies challenge the common misperception that feminism is a foreign concept imposed on Nigerian society. On the contrary, feminism in Nigeria can be seen as a reclamation and continuation of the agency and power that women historically held. Understanding the pre-colonial era provides valuable insights into the cultural foundations upon which Nigerian feminism has evolved.

Post-colonial Nigeria

The post-colonial era in Nigeria began with the country's independence in 1960, marking a significant shift in governance and politics. However, the legacy of colonialism continued to shape the status and experiences of women in Nigerian society.

One of the major challenges faced by women in post-colonial Nigeria was the patriarchal nature of laws and cultural norms. Although legal reforms were enacted to promote gender equality, the implementation and enforcement of these laws often fell short. Eniola and Akinola (2019) discuss how discriminatory practices, such as limited access to inheritance and property rights, persisted. These practices further exacerbated economic disparities and hindered women's ability to accumulate wealth and assets.

Significant disparities persist in women's access to education in post-colonial Nigeria, despite efforts to promote girls' education. Limited access to quality education, particularly at the secondary and tertiary levels, hampers women's opportunities for personal development and professional advancement. Gender stereotypes and traditional expectations often prioritize marriage and domestic roles over education for young girls (Eniola & Akinola (2019).

Despite the constitutional provision for gender equality, women in post-colonial Nigeria remain significantly underrepresented in political leadership positions. Nwokeafor (2020) argues that deep-rooted gender biases, socio-cultural norms, and patriarchal power structures limit Nigerian women from participating in politics and decision-making processes. The lack of diverse female voices in governance hampers the inclusion of women's perspectives and priorities in policy-making.

It is important to recognize that while post-colonial Nigeria has seen certain changes that suggest liberalization and progress, the reality often falls short of the envisioned transformation. The persistence of patriarchal norms and systemic inequalities necessitates a critical examination of the actual impact of these changes on the lives of Nigerian women.

Merely adopting laws or policies that promote gender equality does not guarantee their effective implementation or address the deeply entrenched social and cultural norms that perpetuate gender disparities.

It is, thus, critical to understand the post-colonial context in order to identify the systemic barriers and challenges that young Nigerian women face in their pursuit of gender equality. By recognizing and addressing the historical and structural factors that continue to shape women's lives, feminist movements can strive for transformative change that truly empowers and uplifts all women in Nigeria.

The situation of women in Nigeria

Nigeria grapples with deep-rooted patriarchal norms and practices that perpetuate gender inequality. Women in Nigeria face numerous obstacles in their pursuit of gender equality and empowerment. These challenges encompass various domains, including education, employment opportunities, and gender-biased legal systems, among others. Young Nigerian women, who are navigating a rapidly changing society while contending with traditional gender expectations are particularly affected by these barriers.

Education is a critical area where gender disparities persist in Nigeria. Although efforts have been made to promote girls' education, challenges remain. Eniola and Akinola (2019) maintain the argument that access to quality education, especially at the secondary and tertiary levels, remains limited for many young Nigerian women. Socio-cultural norms and traditional expectations often prioritize marriage and domestic roles over education for girls, resulting in high dropout rates and limited opportunities for personal development and professional advancement (Eniola & Akinola, 2019).

The patriarchal nature of laws in Nigeria poses significant obstacles to women's rights and gender equality. Despite constitutional provisions guaranteeing gender equality, discriminatory practices and laws persist. Eniola and Akinola (2019) report that women often

face limitations in inheritance and property rights, which contribute to economic disparities and hinder their ability to accumulate wealth and assets. These patriarchal legal structures reinforce gender inequalities and impede the progress of women in Nigerian society.

Ogbogu (2011) points out that women in Nigeria often encounter barriers to equal access to employment, career advancement, and decision-making positions. In addition to that, the gender wage gap persists, with women earning less than their male counterparts for similar work. Cultural expectations of women as primary caregivers and the burden of unpaid care work also limits their participation in the formal workforce (Eniola & Akinola, 2019).

Even though there have been recent changes in Nigeria that suggest a move towards liberalization, the reality is that progress has been limited. Policymakers have introduced various legal reforms and policy initiatives to promote gender equality and women's rights. For instance, the passage of the Violence Against Persons (Prohibition) Act in 2015 aimed to address various forms of violence against women (United Nations, 2021). However, Nigeria still faces implementation and enforcement gaps, thus, hindering the effective protection of women's rights.

Defining Feminism, its schools of thought, feminist activism and justification for a post-colonial feminist approach.

Feminism is an heterogeneous body of social theory. Fundamentally, Feminism strives to better understand the nature, scope and origins of gender inequalities. It is the field of study in sociology that focuses on the social phenomena of inequality between men and women. Feminism encompasses a range of ideologies and perspectives centered around the advocacy of gender equality and challenging patriarchal power structures. It recognizes and seeks to address the systemic oppression and discrimination faced by women in various aspects of life. Among the major feminist theories are liberal feminism, radical feminism, Marxist/socialist feminism, postmodern/poststructuralist feminism, and perhaps, most

relevant to this study, post-colonial feminism. (Lorber (2010), Duran (2019), Robinson & Richardson (2015), Watkins (2001)).

Schools Of Feminist Thought

Liberal feminism is essentially mainstream feminism, these Feminists are less concerned with domestic life, and focus mainly on the public sphere, so the main drive here is to achieve gender equality through social policy, such as focusing on equal pay, focusing on discrimination in politics, in the workplace. Liberal feminism is criticised as being based on white middle class informed assumptions, so liberal feminists tend to focus on strategies that benefit women that are already doing okay in life rather than women that are oppressed within the family, for example. (Treanor (2002), Duran (2019), Watkins (2001)).

For radical feminists, patriarchy is the root cause of gender inequality, patriarchy being defined as a system where male power is based on the oppression of women. Radical feminism is criticised that it focuses on issues like male perpetrated domestic violence in the home but doesn't take account of the widespread gender inequality in all structures. (Koedt et al., (1973), Duran (2019), Watkins (2001))

For Marxist feminists, capitalism is the problem, not patriarchy, and capitalism is basically what makes the family especially oppressive, and so under capitalism women perform numerous unpaid functions for the capitalist system. They produce the next generation of labour for free, and men, all they need to bring home is capitalist gains to support their families. Essentially, Marxist feminists are more sensitive towards class differences, they posit that both working class men and women are tools of capitalism, so, they are more interested in men and women from the working classes working together to depose capitalism. (Miller et al., (2010), Watkins (2001), Lorber (2010)).

Post-modern feminists criticise previous theories for tending to see women as one group, they believe in intersectionality – Coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw in 1989, Intersectionality is “the

interconnected nature of social categorizations such as race, class, and gender as they apply to a given individual or group, regarded as creating overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage” (Disch & Hawkesworth, 2018). Post-modern feminists posit that, the experiences of women vary with how their class, background, their ethnicity, their sexuality, all intersect. They posit that gender is neither natural nor innate, instead gender is constructed by the way we socialise and present ourselves. Whilst other theories are criticised for being universalistic, post-modern feminists are criticised for being more interested in language, discourse, power and knowledge, post-modern feminism tend to not focus enough on power structures. (Watkins (2001), Lorber (2010)

Postcolonial feminism is a feminist theory that was established as a retort to feminism centring exclusively on the history and experiences of women in Western cultures and former colonies. It also developed as a rejoinder to the early originators of postcolonial theory, men who were concerned with nation-building after empire and colonialism had destroyed indigenous people's history and culture. (Al-Wazedi, 2021)

Elleke (2005), posits that the new postcolonial nation is historically a male constructed space, narrated into modern self-consciousness by male leaders, activists and writers, in which women are often cast as symbols or totems, as the bearers of tradition. Elleke (2005) highlights that, relative to the “national son”, who is described as the “self-defining” successor of the post-independence era and the hero of the “nation-shaping narrative”, the “female child” is the “non-subject” within the “national family romance”. Elleke (2005) further stresses the irrationality of the situation, stating that “given that her self-determination has been in principle achieved, the daughter figure within the framework of the postcolonial narrative that inscribes the new nation is, if not subordinate, peripheral and quiet, then virtually invisible”(Elleke, 2005).

Justification for a post-colonial feminist approach.

While many women's studies scholars argue that Africans do not need feminism because our indigenous cultures were not particularly oppressive of women, i.e. did not stop women from working, making a living, political participation and land ownership, postcolonial feminists posit that the recent sociological influences through colonisation, Victorianism and Abrahamic religions have made it necessary for African women from countries with colonial influence, like Nigeria, to advocate to regain their place within society, hence postcolonial feminism. It is against this backdrop that the current state of womanhood in post-colonial Nigeria is set, this research explores the current state of womanhood in Nigeria through this lens.

A post-colonial feminist approach is the most useful for this research due to its relevance in understanding the unique experiences of Nigerian women within the historical and sociopolitical context of colonialism and its ongoing effects.

Spencer-Wood (2016) agrees that post-colonial feminism recognizes the intertwined impact of colonialism, gender, and power dynamics. Therefore, a post-colonial feminist approach acknowledges that the experiences of women in Nigeria are shaped not only by patriarchy but also by the colonial legacy and the ongoing effects of colonialism. This approach allows for a deeper understanding of the complexities and nuances of the feminist movement in Nigeria and its intersections with cultural, social, and political factors.

The colonial era had a profound impact on gender relations in Nigeria, as it disrupted traditional systems and imposed Western ideals and structures. Colonial powers introduced patriarchal norms and gender hierarchies that continue to shape Nigerian society today (Jaiyeola, 2020). By adopting a post-colonial feminist lens, the research can uncover how colonial legacies have influenced the experiences and challenges faced by young Nigerian women in their pursuit of gender equality. In addition to that, post-colonial feminism recognizes the importance of centering the voices and experiences of marginalized communities. Jaiyeola (2020) argues that it challenges Eurocentric biases and colonial

frameworks that may influence understandings of feminism. By adopting a post-colonial feminist approach, the research aims to give agency and visibility to the perspectives of young Nigerian women, acknowledging their unique struggles and contributions to the feminist movement.

A post-colonial feminism approach aligns with the goal of understanding the meaning and impact of hashtag feminism for young Nigerian women. By examining the historical, cultural, and power dynamics through a post-colonial feminist lens, the research aims to provide a comprehensive analysis that takes into account the multifaceted nature of their experiences and the broader sociopolitical context in which they operate.

Feminist Activism

Tan (2017) describes feminist activism as collective efforts and actions undertaken by individuals, groups, and organizations to advocate for gender equality, challenge patriarchal systems, and promote women's rights. It is a dynamic and diverse movement that seeks to address and transform the social, political, and economic structures that perpetuate gender-based oppression and discrimination. Feminist activism plays a vital role in effecting social change, shaping public discourse, and creating spaces for collective empowerment.

Feminist activists work towards achieving various goals, such as equal rights and opportunities, reproductive justice, ending violence against women, promoting women's leadership and political participation, and challenging harmful gender stereotypes and norms.

Feminist activism employs a wide range of strategies and tactics (Earl, Maher, & Elliott, 2017). These may include but not limited to:

- Advocacy and Lobbying: Their lobbying efforts target policymakers, government institutions, and international bodies to implement laws, policies, and programs that advance gender equality and women's rights. They work to shape public opinion and create awareness of key issues.

- Grassroots Organizing: Feminist activists mobilize at the grassroots level, forming local and community-based groups to address specific issues affecting women. They build networks, create safe spaces, and organize campaigns, protests, and public demonstrations to raise awareness, demand change, and foster solidarity.
 - Direct Action: This sometimes includes civil disobedience, protests, sit-ins, and occupations. By disrupting systems, institutions, or events, feminist activists draw attention to injustices, challenge power structures, and demand accountability.
 - Intersectional Approaches: Many feminist activists adopt an intersectional approach that recognizes the interconnectedness of gender with other social categories such as race, class, sexuality, and ability. They work towards building inclusive movements that address the experiences and struggles of all women, particularly those from marginalized communities.
 - Digital Activism: Social media campaigns and political events at the threshold have shone a focus on feminist activism (Chigbu et al., 2019). Today, everything about life has been transformed by social media. In today's digital world, activism has peaked with the leverage of social media platforms. It is used to engage people and motivate them to play pivotal roles in engineering social change. Throughout history, feminism has continued to evolve, and social media has been an effective tool in restructuring it. Social media offered feminists the opportunity to get involved in feminist movements effectively and actively. Feminism aims at challenging the systematic marginalisation and oppression experienced by women daily. It advocates for the equality of genders socially, politically, economically, and intellectually. Feminism aims to challenge the systems that oppress specific groups of people (Few-Demo and Allen, 2020). It fights for intersectionality and acknowledges how ethnicity, financial status and sexual orientation impacts feminism.
- Digital activism has become a powerful tool for spreading messages, raising awareness, and amplifying marginalized voices in Nigeria, especially among young Nigerian women.

Hashtags such as #feminist, #BringBackOurGirls, #Childnotbride, #ArewaMeToo, and #MarketMarch, have served as rallying points for discussions, mobilization, and solidarity among young Nigerian women, allowing them to connect with like-minded individuals, share personal experiences, and collectively challenge patriarchal norms and gender-based discrimination. Through online petitions and social media campaigns, young Nigerian women have been able to bring attention to specific issues and advocate for change. They have utilized platforms like Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook to highlight cases of gender-based violence, demand justice, and pressure authorities to take action. The accessibility and immediacy of digital activism enable young Nigerian women to bypass traditional gatekeepers and communicate directly with a global audience, effectively shaping narratives and influencing public opinion.

Social media activism such as the use of hashtags helps to bring issues affecting women to the frontline of political agendas. Social Media and the use of hashtags has increased the visibility of feminist activism as the public's attention is drawn to the rights of women and issues that media under-report. For instance, the #BringBackOurGirls campaign created by Nigerian women was shared by millions online which helped in raising actors both nationally and globally seeking the release of the kidnapped Nigerian schoolgirls (George, 2018). The event had stayed irrelevant and grabbed little or no attention from mainstream media before the success of the hashtag campaign. Social media has helped increase women's online advocacy by feminists to push for systemic transformation through policy changes. Social media and hashtag feminism have shown the power digital activism wields (Brimacombe et al., 2018: 7) It has proven to be an effective tool for feminist activism, driving offline actions around the globe and challenging policymakers to be accountable and committed to equality of the genders. Although feminism is used from presidential debates to primary school

classes worldwide, the term suffers from a widespread misunderstanding. Mordi, a Nigerian feminist advocate and on-air personality, explains that Feminism means “bitter women! to some, “rational thinking” to others, and "a very long argument" to liberal groups (Mordi, 2019: 42). The underlying philosophy of feminism is explicit, but its methods and subsets are complex (Witt, 2006). This often leads to confusion since opposing factions within feminism and anti-feminists constantly change and question the discourse around its meaning (Mordi, 2019).

Blogs and podcasts have also emerged as platforms for young Nigerian women to express their thoughts, share stories, and engage in critical discussions on feminism, gender equality, and social justice. These digital mediums provide spaces for self-representation, knowledge-sharing, and the exploration of diverse perspectives, empowering young Nigerian women to challenge societal norms, assert their identities, and participate in shaping the feminist discourse.

What feminism implies in a “highly polarised” (Zollo, 2019: 156) age of political correctness needs to be defined, especially where terms are continuously being stolen, reinterpreted, and revoked. Feminism in its most basic form is “the advocacy of women’s rights on the ground of the equality of the sexes” (Oxford Dictionaries | English, 2017: online). Feminist scholar Estelle B. Freedman (2006) defines feminism as a belief that, while women and men are inherent of equal worth, most societies privilege men as a group. Feminism, in its simple terms, is also described as a variety of political movements, philosophies, and social movements having a shared primary objective: identifying, developing, and achieving gender political, cultural, sexual, and social equality (McAfee, 2018). It involves countering gender stereotypes and establishing equitable academic and professional opportunities for women (Mordi, 2019). Definitions of the term may vary by group and according to ethnicity, age,

nation, and faith (Mordi, 2019). As a result, a variety of social movements are necessary to achieve genuine political equality between women and men, with the understanding that gender always intersects with other social hierarchies (Freedman, 2006).

Ogundipe-Leslie (1993) explained the “State of inequality against women is a state where ‘educational attainment,’ ‘occupational structure,’ ‘private and public laws,’ family planning systems, technological advancement, and above all sociocultural attitudes are all weighed against women.” (Ogundipe-Leslie, 1993:107). Although different societies experience and articulate this struggle in different ways, they also articulate their struggle for gender equality in different ways. This work will adopt Virginia Woolf’s assertion that “All movements that work to obtain women's rights should be considered feminist movements, even when they did not or do not apply the term to themselves” (Woolf, 1989: 26). Feminist movements worldwide have different recorded histories with different causes, objectives, and purposes depending on time, culture, and country (Salako, 2018). While feminism in this era has developed numerous manifestations and posits, Salako (2018) argues that it has experienced several phases of redefinition and adulteration in the distribution cycle of cultures, countries, and environments, leaving behind, in some instances, a flawed skeletal frame of its original model (Salako, 2018: 128).

Baer (2015), more enthusiastically, focused on this era’s potential for broadly disseminating feminist ideas. Salako, who argued that the deterioration of feminism's principles and motivations had driven some schools of thought to stray from the movement's fundamental goals, overlooks the thought proposed by Baer (2015) that it is an opportunity for the growth of new modes of discourse about gender and sexism, connecting to varied factions, and allowing for newer, more creative modes of protests to emerge. Given this, Baer (2015) highlights the example of hashtag feminism and further explains how the ever-growing use of

digital media has changed, influenced, and shaped feminism in the twenty-first century by facilitating the changing modes of communication, allowing the development of different kinds of conversations, and new configurations of activism across the globe, both online and offline (Baer, 2015). This research intends to investigate this area further by analysing the impact of the new phenomenon of hashtag feminism on Nigerian women and examine how this has influenced their attitudes towards feminism and each other.

2.3. Women and Feminism in Nigeria

A postcolonial feminist approach guided this section of the study, this approach is core to the body of work as it presents a crucial viewpoint for understanding the history and context of women's underrepresentation in Nigeria which warrants the current wave of feminist activism.

According to Kim (2007), postcolonial feminists usually depend on a thoroughly historical and dialectal method to understand the impacts, of the intersection of, gender, race, class, culture and sexuality in the distinct, yet historically peculiar contexts of women's lives. This study is theorised with the understanding that the historical difficulties women face, resulting from the systemic gender inequalities in African societies have been attributable to colonialism, culture, and capitalist expansion (Mama, 2003; Aina 2014).

The postcolonial feminist viewpoint taken in this section of the study demonstrates that although independence has been attained in most of colonial Africa, vestiges of colonialism are very much evident and have severely transformed gender relations within the Nigerian society (Okeke-Ihejirika, Moyo, & Van Den Berg, 2019), especially relating to the equitable distribution of power, authority, and position in the Nigerian society. (Igiebor, 2021)

Nigeria came into existence as a country in 1914 with the British amalgamation of the former sovereign empires, kingdoms, and city-states (Iwendi, 2016:163). These distinct ethnic groups (Hausa/Fulani, Yoruba, Igbo Ibibio, and the other numerous minority groups) have

distinct, social-cultural, political, and economic histories which inherently translate into present-day Nigeria. The precolonial and colonial periods showed women's active involvement in events aimed at improving their plight. Women's presence in the social and political system dramatically improved their grassroots, state, and regional standing (Marwa Abdul et al., 2011:4; Nnaemeka and Korieh, 2011; Ekechi and House Midamba, 1995). In Nigeria, women have been involved in various protests and events, although no common name has been identified or associated with such movements (Marwa Abdul et al., 2011). Feminism as a term endured negative connotations at the early stages. Typically, feminists were identified and demonized as “man haters, angry or separated mothers with nothing else to do than cause problems” (Marwa Abdul et al., 2011). However, Feminism has garnered attention in Nigeria as a consequence of the repeated attempts by women to achieve and maintain equality and opportunities for women.

Marwa (2011) explains that the persistence of an unequal power structure culminating in an unfair allocation of rights and obligations for women has been a significant concern contributing to numerous efforts by individuals and groups of people to eliminate these marginalising practices. Feminism in Nigeria has arisen from women's desires to enhance the position of women and eradicate oppressive forces that rob women of full access to their human rights (Marwa Abdul et al., 2011: 4). Historically, Nigerian women have encountered a broad spectrum of challenges in working around various barriers that have threatened their access to opportunities and rights. Ubani (2011) explains that the ideology of hegemony meaning male supremacy, toxic masculinity known as the devotion to conventional male gender roles that subsequently stigmatise and reduce the feelings boys and men may securely communicate while elevating other emotions such as anger and chaos has eroded women's rights, culminating in women's oppression and marginalisation in both private and public

relations (Ubani, 2011). It is to be noted, however, that from the Pre-Colonial era through the Post-Colonial Period, Nigerian women continuously engaged in all phases of the development of the country (Agbalajobi, 2009).

When addressing feminism's past in Nigeria, it is imperative to discuss the challenges and efforts of women to participate at all levels of the country's development (Marwa Abdul et al., 2011). It is then essential to discuss these distinctions and differences with respect to the history and current state of feminism in Nigeria. Significantly, this chapter will go on to discuss women's movements in Nigeria within the context of their pre-colonial, colonial, and neo-colonial societies, with the knowledge that these movements sometimes differ between tribes, to draw historical context for the women's movement of today.

2.3.1. Nigerian Women in History

Discussions of women's roles in Nigeria's pre-colonial liberation movement can be grasped from the context of the cultural, social, and political acts women were involved in during that era. Nigerian women engaged in the private and public realms during the pre-colonial period and typically had equal access to opportunities (Ekechi and House Midamba, 1995; Agbalajobi, 2009). A particular exception was the women of the predominantly Muslim, northern region consisting mainly of the Hausa-Fulani, whose economic, private and social activities were limited because of the Islamic veil being used and sharia restrictions (Brackenbury, 1924; Alidou, 2002).

Alemika and Agugua (2001) noted that before colonisation, the people now called Nigeria were ruled by several notable women whose heroic tales have lived on (Hawkins, 2018; Bortolot, 2013). Further study into some pre-colonial societies like the Igbo and Ibibio,

however, shows deep sex/gender discrimination in political roles. No female could be head of household or a lineage or sub-lineage (Mba 1992:75).

Mba described that pre-colonial Igbo and Ibibio women could not inherit from their husband's descent group and if they had no children, they did not have rights of usufruct after his death. The practice of village exogamy meant women were married off to communities away from their families and remained essentially outsiders even after having children. Less economic independence also meant fewer divorces (Mba 1992). Women played a pivotal role in food production and agriculture as the men farmed only yam, but women helped harvest yam and planted their own crops like cocoyam, vegetables, and cassava (Mba 1992; Nnaemeka and Korieh, 2011). Although the farming of yam held much prestige, women's produce was essential. Despite clear-cut gender roles, Abaraonye discusses that Ibibio men and women could sit at discussions on an equal basis, and both women and men had significant influence as healers (Abaraonye 2010:172).

The exploration of the Isedale Yoruba ("the creation of Yoruba land) in Adediran and Ogen (2010) is also interesting to analyse. It explains that Ife (cradle of Yoruba land) art, particularly potsherd culture and its representation of women, is indicative that Yoruba predynastic experience, known as pre-Oduduwa, was not based on patrilineality, rather matrilineal. However, between this period and the 16th century, the formation of centralised states and the instability that ensued, the Islamic Fulani invasion (MortonWilliams, 1969; Oguntomisin, 1981; Brackenbury, 1924), brought about social changes, that saw women being relegated to the background (Adediran and Ogen, 2010). Subsequently, most women who succeeded to leadership were deposed, leading to an erosion of female political power (Adediran and Ogen, 2010:146).

However, Falola (2007) emphasises that women were central to trade in Yoruba culture, and they had the opportunity to accumulate wealth and acquire titles. As highlighted above, in pre-colonial Yoruba, Igbo, and Ibibio societies, division of labour was along gender lines, and each gender was respected in their role. Women often engaged in occupations such as food processing, mat weaving, pottery making, and trading, even though in specific occupations like farming, they were limited in the types of crops they farmed (Mba 1992). Women had also significant influence as healers and chiefs (Abaronye 2010).

Though it could be argued that as in most indigenous societies, gender limited women's roles and opportunities, the division of labour seemed to work for the most part, and women were not highly stifled by the differences in roles they did or did not play (Adediran and Ogen, 2010; Mba 1992; Abaronye 2010). However, history was about to change the fate of Nigerian women, in a way that negatively changed their position within society; changes that lie, still today, at the heart of Nigerian women's feminist struggles.

The slave trade (Adi, 2020), along with decades and decades of colonial rule and, finally the creation of Nigeria in 1914 ((Shaka, 2005; Adi, 2020) changed profoundly the role of women in the country, with women being largely denied the opportunity to keep playing the same roles within their Indigenous society as they did in pre-colonial times (Alemika and Agugua, 2001). In his analysis of Charlotte Olajumoke Obasa and Lady Oyinkan Abayomi's biographies, Awe (1992) highlights that during the colonial era women were "trained" not to become part of the labour force but to "provide men with effective support as mothers, wives, and good hostesses" (Olusanya 1992:109), thus changing women's social aspirations from being "farmers, weavers, tailors, potters, dyers and priestesses" (Hinderer 1872:60) to being Christian, morally upright homemakers, most notably, the south as the predominant religion

in the north remained Islam (Iwuchukwu 2013; O'Brien, 2001). These sentiments still linger heavily in Nigeria today.

Awe (1992) associates the subsequent lack of women in professions and the higher rungs of civil service with this era of western-religious enlightenment; Igiebor (2021), associates the lack of “women, academic leadership and the ‘constricting’ gender equity policies in Nigerian universities” (Igiebor 2021:338) to with colonial changes; Kagher, Otaye-Ebede and Metcalfe, (2021) “explore how women's voices have vitality and strength by resisting patriarchal and postcolonial logics, how they can be projected to eradicate forms of discrimination, violence, and all harmful practices towards women in a Nigerian context.” (Kagher, Otaye-Ebede and Metcalfe, 2021:1787).

However, while it is substantiated that the colonial era degraded the role and position of African women, it should not be omitted, that, African men were also subjugated by colonial power, as Buchi Emecheta (1979) expressed in her book "The Joys of Motherhood." A character in the book "Cordelia" confirmed this in her speech. She stated, "Forget it. Men here are too busy being white men's servants to be men. Their manhood has been taken away from them. All they see is the shining white man's money" (pp.53), pointing significantly to the irrefutable role of the accompanying capitalist expansion in the postcolonial gender power dynamic.

And colonialism left a mark on Nigerian society well after it ended, in 1960, with the country being still, at least according to some (Shaka, 2005) heavily influenced by its colonial legacy, to the point it has been holding -- like other previously colonised countries, onto colonial ideals, thus becoming “neo-colonial” rather than independent societies (Norindr, 1996; Beckman, 1982). Neo-colonial ideologies did affect the lives of women who largely remained

ensnared in the submissive, dependent position the patriarchal and religious and neocolonial ideologies placed them (Garba Kangiwa, 2015; Norindr, 1996) In many cases, women enshrined these learned ideologies too (Eke, 2021). According to some literature, such status quo did not change even after the constitution was ratified in 1999, nor after the coming into force of the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (Garba Kangiwa, 2015). In other words, even when the country aligned itself with globally accepted socio-political and humanitarian standards, the position of women failed to improve, Igiebor (2021) utilises a Feminist Policy Analysis framework, to analyse gender policy documents and identify areas of silence, women's exclusion, and how male dominance is perpetuated in policy despite Nigeria's adoption of global declarations and standards.

This lack of progress, according to Ogundipe-Leslie (1993), is the ominous result of "Colonisation and neo-colonisation comprising poverty, ignorance, and lack of a scientific attitude to experience and nature" (Ogundipe-Leslie, 1993: 111), but even more crucially, Ogundipe-Leslie theorises the political into personal and stresses that it is women themselves who ultimately see themselves as inferior beings, their mind and identity forced into a mould by centuries of patriarchal, colonial rule: they became unable, she concludes, to see themselves as anything different, a conception which appears absolutely crucial in the context of this work, because contemporary hashtag feminism has been, in fact, giving young Nigerian women, the opportunity to congregate in online spaces, somewhat independent of the older generation, where they are able to discourse shared experiences, educate themselves and others, and call out unacceptable social norms. They begin to reimagine themselves as "different," from the generations before them, as independent, as worthy of holding meaningful positions in society.

It is however important to present the state of women in Nigeria today, in order to understand the issues that underpin young Nigerian women's activism. In the next section, data on women's representation is analysed with the view to understand young Nigerian women's activism.

2.4. Women's Underrepresentation in Nigeria

The above discussion has drawn a historical context around the state of women in Nigeria today. However, it is essential to explore the data available. In this section, statistics on the underrepresentation of women in Nigeria today are uncovered to draw statistical context to the agitations of Nigerian feminist activists. Nigeria, being the most populous African country and 7th most populous country globally, was estimated in 2020 to have over 200 million citizens, and this number is vastly growing. Of 206 million, 49.2% are female, half of the population, meaning almost 100 million women (World Data Bank, 2021).

In health, the total fertility rate was 5.8 births per woman in 2016, about 49.1% of identified pregnant women had four or more antenatal care visits in 2016/17 in Nigeria, only 10.8% of Women in 2016 used orthodox contraceptive methods, and the child mortality rate was

54% 1,000 live births in 2016/17. Several bodies of work (Adedini et al., 2014; Adebayo and Fahrmeir, 2005; Ngowu, Larson and Kim, 2008) discuss the reasons, implications, and developments needed to improve the maternal health crisis in Nigeria. Morgen (2002) also critically analyses feminist activism in women's health; however, more academic work is needed to explore feminist activism on women's health in Nigeria.

In education, literacy rates among young women and men aged 15-24 years in 2016 was 59.3% and 70.9% respectively, the completion rate for girls in primary, junior secondary and

senior secondary for 2016 were 64.8%, 38.9%, and 33.2% respectively, showing a stark decrease in completion rate as female students progressed. 38.36% of students admitted to Nigerian Universities in 2012/2013 were female. The percentage of female teachers in Polytechnics and Colleges of education was low, between 20% and 28% in 2013/2014 and 2014/2015 academic sessions (Federal Ministry of Education, 2016). These statistics put into context the agitations of the viral Nigerian feminist campaigns #BringBackOurGirls or #BBOG, Olson (2016) and Berents (2016) amongst other notable studies, they explore the involvement of feminist campaigns in demanding change in policies, and the implementation of existing policies, for the improvement of education for women and girls in Nigeria. In further chapters, the impacts of the #BringBackOurGirls movement will be analysed further. In policymaking, women have never been the president or the vice president in the history of Nigeria. Representation at the national parliament was 94.71% male and 5.76% female from 1999-2015, and women and men constituted 5.50% and 94.50% of the Upper House, respectively. The percentages of women and men in the Lower House were 5.83% and 94.17%, and female and male judges at the federal court had 29.38% and 70.62% ratios, respectively. The representation of women in the states is even lower, with representation at the State Assemblies recorded 5.29% female and 94.71%, male. LGA Chairpersons were 9% female and 91% male from 1999 – 2015. Councillors were 94.1% male and 5.9% female. Okafor and Akokuwebe (2015) consider the challenges and prospects for women in leadership. Perhaps more relevant to this study, Afolabi (2019) discussed the invisibility of women's organisations in the decision-making process and governance in Nigeria. The findings from Afolabi (2019) exposed that the roles played by women's organisations in the decision-making/policymaking were noteworthy but not visible and unacknowledged. Ette (2017), however, argues that, though women have been more functioning politically since the end of military dictatorship in 1999, their involvement in politics is not echoed in

media coverage. At the same time, Orisadare (2019) suggests that more empowerment programs, specifically in decision making and participation in politics, should be targeted at women's groups at the grassroots levels by the governments and all stakeholders as a matter of particular urgency.

In crime and violence, women accounted for about 2% of the total prisoners/inmates from 2012 – 2016, the percentage of women admitted into prison for trafficking was 14.58% and 14.46% for 2015 and 2016, compared to 4.50% in 2013 and 2.86% in 2014 showing an increase in women perpetrating these crimes against other women. On average, human traffickers mainly target teens and youths between the 16-25 age bracket, and females constituted about 76.63 of the percentage from 2013 – 2015. (National Bureau of Statistics, 2018).

Kemi and Jenyo (2016) discuss the way forward to security for girls and women in Nigeria, and Collins (2017) discusses performing politics on behalf of the women who suffer from these crimes. This study concludes that the media performances brought about by hashtag campaigns can be understood as a call for attention and an end to isolation. However, it warns that without restoring missing women to a body politic that offers them recognition or protection in a way, it would develop valid concerns about what happens to victims after the hashtag campaigns.

Nigerian women activists have used social media to raise and reveal several issues, especially as social media continues to spread. In Nigeria, before the advent of social media or hashtag feminism, several crimes committed against the female gender were swept under the carpet, and mainstream media underreported these stories. This is why this study aims to project how social media has been influential in increasing awareness on issues related to Nigerian women's rights. Truly, feminist activism on digital spaces would not completely resolve the problems faced by Nigerian women, but it is instrumental in changing policies, especially

those related to women. Although activist movements on social media might never be fully effective like conventional activism, they help amplify the voices of voiceless people. It also can bring people to take action offline by coming together to show solidarity to a worthy cause. A person's inequality experience becomes validated, regardless of their geographical location, group affiliation, or socioeconomic status with the leverage social media proffer.

With a clearer idea of how history has shaped the role and (self) perception of women in Nigeria, and how social media feminist activism could help change the status quo, it is now necessary to investigate the wider context of feminism as an international phenomenon, with the aim of understanding how and where Nigerian feminism fits in.

2.5. The Wave Metaphor

In order to understand the influence and effect of hashtag feminism on Nigerian women and activists, it is necessary to briefly contextualise the contemporary ideological status of feminism in the world. This could not be done without addressing the so-called “wave metaphor.”

The wave metaphor, though highly critiqued, is also commonly used to document the largescale and evident involvement of people that brought about dramatic transformations in women's access to social, political, economic, and educational opportunities. (Aikau 2007).

The wave implies continuity and resurgence rather than a clean break between generations (Aikau 2007). Aune and Holyoak (2017) describe the wave metaphor as an academic shorthand for multiple and often conflicting feminist perspectives and campaigns. Long (2001) argues that the metaphors overlook diversity amongst young women and feminists in

49

general, obscuring the possibility of fluidity in feminist thought. The wave metaphor has also been critiqued for suggesting that feminism peaks and fritters away (Thornham and Weissmann 2013). For this study, the wave metaphor is adequate to describe periods of peak movement activity within a particular geographical or national backdrop without omitting the diversity of feminist ideologies of the period (Aune and Holyoak, 2017) and acknowledging that feminist thoughts and ideologies are fluid and that feminists can change. Feminist movements in the US and UK are popularly, though not universally, broken into three metaphorical waves. The current third wave can be related to the current situation in Nigeria and hence this thesis and how social media has played a significant role in globalising the movement.

2.5.1. The First and Second Wave of Feminism in the United States and the UK

The US “first wave” occurred between the mid-1800s and is said to have lasted into the 1920s, the “second wave” started in the 1960s until the 1980s, while the “third wave” is described as the mid-1990s till present. (Jo Reger, 2017). The “first wave” was driven mainly by middle-class white women and set in times of urban industrialism and liberal, socialist politics. “The goal of this wave was to open up opportunities for women, with a focus on suffrage” (Rampton 2015: 200), the right to an education, the right to work, and the right to the money they earned amongst others (Fisher 2013). The first wave achieved the passage of the 19th amendment which gave women the right to vote.

The second wave of feminist activities in the United States dealt with marriage issues, marital rape, custody and divorce laws, and domestic violence. This wave is predicted to have begun with reactions to Betty Friedan’s bestselling book “The Feminine Mystique.” The book describes limitations on white women achieving their full potential by mainstream media’s depiction of femininity and the perfect nuclear family and President Kennedy’s Presidential Commission on the Status of Women which published reports on gender inequality in the

United States. Some of its achievements include the 1960 approval of the contraceptive pill, wider involvement of women in politics under President Kennedy, the Equal Pay Act 1963 amongst other legal victories, and the emergence of women's studies in Academia (Morgan, 2002).

Mary Wollstonecraft, the author of *The Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792), is often regarded as the “grandmother” of British feminism and the earliest British feminist scholar. The first wave of British feminists in the late 19th century reacted to cultural inequities, including the adverse but prevalent adoption of the Victorian image of the “proper” role and “sphere” of women (Lynn, 2018). The 1850s saw the first organised movement for English Feminism, the Langham place circle, which included women's rights activists who campaigned for women's rights, including employment, education, and property ownership (Griffin, 2012). The first British feminist periodical journal, the English Women's Journal, was produced during this time, and it demonstrated the potential for women to play a whole part in 19th-century society.

Twentieth-century feminist activists such as Marie Stopes advocated for gender equality in marriage and the importance of women's sexual desires, and World War II saw women serving in the armed forces in secretarial roles and nursing (Burns, 2009). The second wave of feminist movements in the UK is popularly known as the Women's Liberation Movement which lasted from the 1960s to the 1990s. Feminist movements in this era dealt with issues concerning equality in marriage, in the workplace, sex and sexuality, and violence against women (Myheplus.com, 2018).

While the hallmark of feminist activism is women's liberation, and this narrative is not different in Nigeria, the waves of feminism in the US and the UK, while they influenced Nigerian feminism, cannot be compared on equal grounds, as their realities differ. Hence, the reaction, awareness, learning, and understanding of global hashtag feminism by

Nigerian women may be minimal when set against issues that directly affect them, like the #BBOG campaign amongst other specific ones. Most girls that grew up in Nigeria between the eighties and nineties may have developed their consciousness about feminism in their formative years as one is aware of the harsh realities, vulnerabilities, and struggles of women, especially those from deprived backgrounds. This research explores the possibility that social media has played a role in providing Nigerian women with the opportunity to become more aware of their realities, and that hashtag feminism may have drawn their attention to Nigerian feminist activism.

Between the 1980s and 1990s, the idea of intersectional feminism was developed. This concept rejected the views of feminists and feminisms as a monolith and recognised the different forms of social stratification, gender, race, sexual orientation, disability as interwoven. Kimberlé Crenshaw, in the '80s, coined the term in an attempt to explain the oppression of African Americans. The word “described how different forms of oppression intersect” (Grady, 2018: 56).

The Intersectional Movement was driven mainly by women of colour (Krolokke, Sorensen 2005), prominent leaders include Black feminists and civil rights activists Angela Davis, Alice

Walker (author of the critically acclaimed novel “The colour Purple”, Audre Lorde, and Frances Beal amongst others.

All through historical times, feminist activists have employed various means and resources for advocacy purposes. The second wave of feminism was centred around the struggle for equality, legally and socially, between women and men in society. While it opened a

pathway for activism to continue to evolve, one of the greatest shortfalls of the second wave of feminist activism was that it excluded the realities of black women and women with low socioeconomic status. The gross exclusion of these subsets of women stirred the emergence of third-wave feminism. Third-wave feminism aimed to challenge the understanding of femininity tied around the realities and encounters of white women in a middle-class family. African feminist activism in the third wave aimed at showing how the different identity of African women is defined by their encounters with subjugation, marginalization, privilege, oppressiveness, inequality within patriarchal, capitalism and colonial systems. Hence, for greater awareness, African feminist activists and support groups are employing online campaigns that facilitate feminist issues that affect African women. Through hashtag feminism and social mobilisation, issues about women within African contexts are highlighted by feminists on digital platforms. Social media and hashtag feminism are tools, that Nigerian feminists employ, to engage and educate their audience. Also, they use this medium to collaborate, plan and facilitate protests, walks, and gather support to carry out certain activities channelled towards the liberation of the female gender that impact policy and attitudinal changes amongst people. In the fight to eliminate subjugation in its various facets, social media has proven instrumental in structuring how African women collaborate and engage in feminist issues. It has proven to be an effective tool for African feminists to draw people's attention to specific issues and gather support and resources to take actions tangibly and substantially within their communal thresholds. Thus, it is safe to say that as the waves of feminism evolved; more opportunities were presented to African women activists to advocate for their rights, including social media and hashtag feminism which created a safe environment for women to air their thoughts and discuss feminist issues specific to the African woman.

2.5.2. The Third Wave

As Aune and Holyoak (2017) explain, “third-wave feminism” is a “feminist movement or moment – a flurry of activity and a rising tide of contention – driven forward by a cohort of mostly younger feminists for whom women’s liberation is an unfinished project” (Aune and Holyoak, 2017). This research study concerns itself mainly with third-wave feminist activism on social media. There are so many diverse depictions, channels, perspectives, and beliefs of third-wave feminism that it is easy to lose the actual concepts of what third-wave feminism stands for. Third-wave feminist movements strive to achieve feminism’s most fundamental value, gender equality while advocating for values in Identity (Curtis and Cardo, 2017). Third-wave feminists reject the idea that views all women as a monolith. The third-wave feminist ideal is that all women deserve to be seen and heard despite their race, religion, nationality, culture, disability, and sexual orientation (Yu, 2009). They advocate for body Positivity, embracing women’s natural bodies, and rejecting mainstream media and society’s stereotype of an ideal woman (Aune and Holyoak, 2017).

Third-wave feminists want to influence the way language is used to portray women. They advocate for ending violence against women: Rape, Trafficking, Domestic Abuse, Forced labour; Sex positivity: seeing healthy sexual behaviours in a more positive light; Importantly, third-wave feminists in the west are concerned with fixing media’s image of women; and breaking the glass ceiling; amongst others. (Grady, 2018, Demarco 2017, Thornham and Weissmann 2013, Scharff, 2012, Aune and Holyoak, 2017). Based on the national agenda, the values listed above vary in importance. There is approximately a ten-year difference between the emergence of third-wave feminism in the United Kingdom, and the United States (Aune, 2013), the third wave in Nigeria is noted to have started around 2006 (Tayo, 2018), and the earliest evidence of hashtag activism in Nigeria being #Childnotbride in 2013 (Salami, 2014).

The third wave of feminist movements in the United States gathered momentum in the 1990s. In comparison, young feminists in the UK described as third-wave feminists only began to organise in the 2000s with the emergence of social media (Aune and Holyoak, 2017). Aune and Holyoak discern that UK third-wave feminists mobilised at the beginning of the new millennium against post-feminism popular culture of hyper-sexualised femininity. At the same time, their counterparts in the US seemingly gathered against the backdrop of second-wave feminism's lack of plurality, which some scholars describe as the US feminist generational war (Long 2001, Woodward and Woodward 2009, Scharff 2012). The third wave in the US manifested through popular culture with celebrity icons like Madonna, Queen Latifah, TV shows like *Sex and the City* depicting strong and assertive women. This wave was more inclusive of people of colour. The UK third wave is not as theorised as the US third wave. Aune and Holyoak 2017 argue that UK scholars often draw their examples from American contexts (Budgeon 2011), ignoring contemporary UK feminist activism. Aune and Holyoak contend that most scholars describe the third wave as individualistic, extension of post feminism, and explorative of free sexual culture (McRobbie 2009, Walby 2011), which is not supported by a recent empirical study of UK feminist activism.

Recent empirical works (Downes, 2008; Dean, 2010; Long, 2012; Mackay, 2015; Aune and Holyoak, 2017) do not indicate that “young feminists in the UK are in danger of mistaking individual empowerment for the strength of collective resistance” (Aune, 2013: 22); these works instead describe “passionate and diverse forms of feminist activism” (Aune, 2013:22).

The third wave is represented by some as informed by post-colonial and postmodernist thinking, where the notion of a “universal womanhood” has been deconstructed through the lenses of body, gender, sexuality, and heteronormativity (Rampton 2015). Rampton describes

third-wave women as having “empowered, eschewing victimisation and defining feminine beauty for themselves as subjects, not as objects of a sexist patriarchy” (Anderson, 2015:1).

In recent years, there have been many debates surrounding the word feminism. While some are optimistic and celebratory, the vast majority tend to be repudiated (Scharff, 2012). In the introduction of her book “Repudiating Feminism Young Women in a Neoliberal World,” Scharff (2012) describes young women as individualists, which does not sit well with the perception of feminism as involving collective struggle. Scharff (2012) finds that young women who do not identify as feminists tell two main stories: they either regard it as “extreme and ideological” or “valuable but no longer necessary.” The former is a resounding sentiment to Nigerian Feminism. Tayo (2018) asserts that feminism is a word that triggers emotions in Nigeria. He argues that despite feminism’s importance, “many Nigerians do not understand it” (Tayo, 2018: 134).

Aune and Holyoak (2017) are optimistic about a younger group of active feminists, “the third wave,” and insist that third-wave feminists have been vastly under-theorised. The argument proposed here by Aune and Holyoak (2017) is exemplified by the increasing population of young women in Nigeria or of Nigerian descent who are actively participating in feminist discourse and creating feminist work but are vastly under-theorised. Some of their work can be seen in hashtag campaigns like #MarketMarch: Walking & working together to end the normalised sexual harassment & bullying of women in markets and #ArewaMeToo: pursuing justice for victims of sexual violence perpetrated by people in positions of authority in Nigeria (Amnesty.org, 2019). Aune (2013) explains that pessimistic accounts of young women’s denial of feminism are problematic as they fail to acknowledge young women’s resistance to post-feminism and young women’s engagement in activism (Aune, 2013). She further explains that cultural activism addressing media and cultural representations

“scrawling ‘this is sexist’ on men’s magazines featuring naked women, feminist blogs, feminist knitting and crafts groups and festivals promoting feminist art” (Aune 2013:51) are often dismissed as not “proper” activism by some scholars (Yu, 2009).

As Walter (1998) stated, “to believe that feminism’s rightful place is in the cultural and personal arena removes feminism's teeth as a strong political movement” (Walter 1998:9). Harris (2008) has critiqued this idea, arguing that “young women have new ways of taking on politics and culture that may not be recognisable under more traditional paradigms, but deserve to be identified as socially engaged and potentially transformative nonetheless” (Harris, 2008:2). Most hashtag movements evolve from personal experiences or cultural occurrences and become political movements (Yu, 2009): new manifestations of feminism emerged to build the third wave in addition to existing largely institutionalised feminist campaigns from the 1990s, “including public conferences (e.g., the FEM and Feminist Fightback conferences, and the Feminism in London and Ladyfest festivals); national issue-based campaigns addressing topics such as street harassment, pornography, religion, sexual violence and media representation; local groups established in towns, cities, regions, and universities; and internet activism (@Everydaysexism, @UK_Feminista et al.) that utilised blogs, webzines, Facebook groups, Instagram, Twitter and YouTube” (Aune and Holyoak 2017:188). Indeed, the existence of a “fourth wave” of feminism, propelled by and thriving through social media, has been suggested (Tayo, 2018, Evans and Chamberlain, 2015), especially in the US, where the third wave began before the social media era, and Nigeria where social media has awakened a new wave of feminist activism. However, many scholars see it simply as an extension of the third wave (Yu, 2009; Curtis and Cardo, 2017; Aune and Holyoak 2017).

2.6. Feminist Movements in Nigeria since Colonisation

In Nigeria, as in many other societies, there have been women's movements. Some of them existed before, during, and after colonisation and came in diverse manifestations, with various agendas and various approaches, with some not self-identifying with feminism at all, even though they worked to obtain or develop women's rights (Mba, 1992). But, to say it with Virginia Woolf, all movements that work to obtain women's rights should be considered feminist movements (Woolf, 1989). Literature suggests (Madunagu 2008) that the oldest and largest women's movement in Nigeria is the National Council of Women's Societies (1958), a movement Basu (1995) describes as non-confrontational, and for the progressive upliftment of women for motherhood, nationhood, and development. However, the series of mass meetings and demonstrations by Igbo and Ibibio women against European taxation in 1929 predates this (Mba 1992). Popularly coined the "Aba Women's Riot," active agitation continued and did not stop until July 1930. Ending the women's war was the news that taxation of men was not going to stop, but there would be no taxation of women. The courts were also going to be reorganised along the lines recommended by the women. These demonstrations highly reflected the Igbo Ibibio pre-colonial structure of strong women's organisations wielding power to impose sanctions on individuals and groups to attain women's rights.

Tayo (2018) notes that Nationalists such as Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti advocated for the economic and political rights of women. He emphasised that she fought against price controls that were affecting market women negatively. She played an active part in abolishing separate tax rates for women. Also, in 1949, she famously led women's protests against the traditional ruler Alake of Egba land for abuse of power. This made the traditional ruler abdicate the throne for a few years.

A classification of Nigerian feminist movements has been attempted by Tayo (2018), who pinpoints 1975 as the year the “second wave” began in the country. Also, the United Nations declared 1976-1985 as the decade for women and, as Tayo (2018) explains, the country witnessed an increased drive for the education of the girl child, especially in the North. The year 1982 would witness the first self-acclaimed feminist movement in Nigeria with a national conference held at the Ahmadu Bello University in Zaria. Ayesha Iman, Bene Madunagu, Bilkisu Yusuf, Renee Pittin, Molar Ogundipe-Leslie and Therese Nweke addressed Nigerian women as a community who was finally represented by their peers. This iconic event preceded the establishment of Women in Nigeria, a female-run, not-for-profit organisation dedicated to positively affecting the socio-economic development of Nigeria through the empowerment of women (Tayo, 2018). With other feminist organisations springing up by the 80s, feminism in Nigeria focused on family planning, and feminists spoke against polygamy. Tayo (2018) explains that the second wave saw governmental contribution towards feminist causes with the Better Life Programme for Rural Women in 1987, and Family Support Programme in 1994. Within this period, safe sex, the eradication of harmful cultural practices, and awareness of HIV/AIDS were advocated.

Although largely unpopular, Tayo (2018) emphasises that the creation of the Nigerian Feminist Forum in 2006 marked the beginning of the third wave. Third-wave feminism is unpopular in Nigeria mainly because it focused on issues that feel still raw to many and are widely unaccepted in Nigerian society, such as abortion and LGBTQ rights. The fact that both, to this day, are illegal and carry a maximum sentence of 14 years imprisonment demonstrates the rejection of feminism in this era. This rejection is not farfetched: both topics challenge the beliefs of Nigeria’s now heavily Christian and Muslim population, as they stand against religious “ideals.” It may be surprising to note that, although women's marches are still very much adopted by Nigerian women, none of the subsequent marches have

recorded a clear-cut victory as the women's riots of 1929-1930. This may be an indication that the traditional socio-cultural collectivism of women and the respect of women's status and collective sanctions has become lost in the mix of neo-colonial realities and half-hearted western identity. In other words, it may well be that today's Nigerian feminists have identical issues and are perhaps embracing struggles they only partially feel their own. To buttress the above point, Terwase et al. (2015) stated that, despite the many protests and movements pioneered and mobilised by Nigerian women to stop the media's negative portrayal of Nigerian women and the unfair cultural norms that plague them, their struggles have not recorded much success.

To some extent, the country's neglect of women rights is part of its colonial baggage, as colonialism never encouraged the engagement, empowerment, or development of women; the same can be said of traditional media, which appears committed to maintaining the patriarchal status quo in place. (Guizzo et al., 2017). In this kind of scenario, it is safe to say that the collectivism of Nigerian women became lost in the mix of the country's complex neo-colonial reality, a reality where women were expected to ask for their husband's permission even to apply for a passport. A reality where women, until recent times, could not stand bail for criminal suspects. It can be said that the culturally based portrayal of women as dependants on their husbands creates a system where subjugating women is simple. To worsen the case, the media deliberately disregards tales of successful women and concentrates more on objectifying them (Tayo, 2018).

In such a context, evaluating how women in Nigeria managed to raise awareness about these stereotypes, break away from subordination, and increase their collectivism through social media and hashtag feminism, becomes imperative. They are effective tools to champion

women movements today (Baer, 2015). The uprising against feminism in Nigeria and the lack of traditional socio-cultural collectivism has not stopped like-minded, goal-oriented women from protesting, advocating, and championing Nigerian women's rights.

These women have adopted the power of social media to create networks that, sometimes, lead to offline action (Tayo, 2018).

That the internet and social media can be powerful in the country is well demonstrated by the case of the #BringBackOurGirls hashtag: Nigeria's comparatively high rate of internet users offered the possibility to make a nationally popular hashtag campaign internationally known. #BringBackOurGirls is a social media hashtag campaign to return 276 female students kidnapped from the Government Secondary School in Chibok in Borno State, Nigeria. The outrage turned into "retweets" and made the hashtag "Trend." This brought the attention of several notable people and organisations worldwide and subsequent international intervention, 162 of the girls were found while 176 remain missing.

#BringBackOurGirls shows the power that digital communities have in "setting the agenda" for mainstream media when it comes to life-changing issues for women and girls in Nigeria. Castells (2012) argues that the hashtag creates a public space for discussion, "which ultimately becomes a political space, a space for sovereign assemblies to meet and to recover their rights of representation" (Manuel Castells 2012:11). December 2018 saw the birth of another widely popular national feminist campaign, #MarketMarch, #MarketMarchYaba, "Nigerian Women Stood Up to Toxic Masculinity," dedicated to the protest against sexual harassment in markets. Though protests were met with further abuse by marketmen and disruption by local police, major news media discussed the protests extensively. In an interview with the women of all female-led breakfast talk show "Your

View,” CSP Dolapo Badmus of Lagos state Police Zone 2, committed to sensitising both police officers and market leaders about harassment, assault, and abuse in the markets, she made clear that the offence is punishable by up to 10 years imprisonment and advised that women should report instead of trivialising or internalising these crimes.

2.7. Conclusion

This chapter analysed the literature on the nature and evolution of feminism, both in the western world -- with particular attention given to the pivotal roles of the UK and the US -- and in Nigeria. Nigerian feminism has been contextualised, by offering a necessary overview of the nation’s history and how the image, role and socio-cultural position of women changed throughout the centuries. An accent was placed on the role of colonialism and on its still-living legacy in the country, a legacy which, it has been discussed, did not help women’s emancipation. Then, the history of feminist movements in the nation was explored, with the aim of understanding their evolution: this brought to the fore how original movements of the 20s and 30s were, if not more effective, certainly more heartfelt, with some scholars suggesting that modern Nigerian women do not feel modern feminist struggles as “their own,” perhaps because of centuries of subjugation and little awareness of the ancestral centrality and importance of women in Nigerian tribal society.

However, it seems that social media and hashtag feminism has been changing the status quo: as one of the countries in the world with the highest percentage of Internet users, Nigerian feminist hashtags like #BringBackOurGirls went viral across the world.

The next chapter will therefore focus on the history and nature of digital activism, and on the role of social media and the world wide web in the context of socially aware struggles.

Chapter 3: Digital Activism

3.1. Introduction

Due to the increasing popularity of online platforms and blogs, feminists have begun to embrace digital media as a critical area for action. In the digital age, feminist activism has evolved into a new iteration that provides feminists with new tools and techniques to raise awareness, disseminate information, and organise people. This chapter explores the purpose, usefulness, and possible effect of digital feminist activism by examining significant examples of social movements that have taken place via the use of digital technology (Jackson, 2018). In addition to providing helpful examples of a range of digital feminist initiatives, these studies also identify strengths and shortcomings in each campaign, intending to increase the effectiveness of future digital feminist campaigns. Also included is an examination of the relationship between digital feminist initiatives and offline organising to demonstrate different ways in which digital feminism may or may not have a long-term influence.

3.2. Digital Activism

Digital activism has been defined as the way digital technologies can further change in the political and social realms (Joyce, 2010; Earl and Kimport, 2011). Known also as “online activism” (Alshehri, 2016), and “web activism,” it has both benefits and disadvantages, but a global conceptualisation of it is crucial to the understanding of the opportunities and constraints for its development in Africa, especially Nigeria. Yang (2009) defined activism as an action for social, cultural, political, and nationalistic change. Digital activism has

benefited from its online discreteness, which allows for social discussions to informally escape government controls and censorships (Dahlberg, 2004). It has been pointed out (Payne, 1995), that intentional mobilisation forms a more significant part of any course of activism, and that is driven by culturally shared beliefs and understandings (Zald, 1996), and supported by economic participation (Leizerov, 2000).

Digital technologies have been used as an instrument for activism for a considerable length of time: while the setting of activism has been modified by digital innovations, for example, social media (Clark, 2015), it is arguable that digital media have not caused a total paradigmatic move in activism. Instead, "as new media were joined into the continuous acts of centre gatherings of activists, they diffused new elements of activism" (Clark, 2015: 231). Digital advances give new digressive channels or instruments for activists to make collectives and advance social change (Clark, 2015). Several studies have shown the increasing participation of upcoming generations in internet-based transnational advocacy (Nilan and Feixa, 2006; Pleyers, 2011). Activists are harnessing the power of modern alternative media, perhaps because, as stated by McLeod and Hertog (1999), traditional media take a middling stance in their coverage of social movements, potentially hurting the activists' mobilisation efforts. By ignoring ordinary voices, especially those of controversial and polarised views, conventional media structures have unintentionally allowed and open ways for digital activism to flourish (Cammaerts, 2012), leading to what Yang (2016: 45) has called "discursive protest on social media united through a hashtagged word, phrase or sentence."

Still, it would be wrong to assume activism, especially in Africa, is solely a product of newer media technologies that enabled democratised positions safely; activism has existed for as long as Africans have existed (Mutsvairo, 2016). Several struggles have led to critical changes in African society, the end of the slave trade is one, the “end” of colonisation being another: activism has been central in both confronting colonialism -- at least on paper -- and in opposing racism and other forms of gender or tribal discrimination. The availability of social media allows activists to post and share information anytime, anywhere (Hansen et al., 2011), with Twitter proving to be a handy platform for discursive activism and Facebook effective for collaborative networks (Ellison et al., 2007; Neumayer and Raffl, 2008). Not to be outdone, networks of like-minded/indigenous groups are also taking to YouTube, sharing common interests in a bid to advance politically- and socially related movements (Naim, 2007). Castells (2003) paints a detailed and vivid picture of digital optimism in which it states that “in other instances, the technological vulnerability of the internet offers the opportunity for individual or collective expressions of protest to disrupt the websites of the electronic networks of government agencies or corporations targeted as representatives of oppression or exploitation.”

A study by Ellison et al. (2007) described a preference for online-based activism among younger people. Given this, it is conceivable that there is an increasingly broad acceptance about participating in online activism, that it provides a basis for a healthy democracy, even though such an assumption cannot go unchallenged. For instance, it has been argued that participation tends to cripple democracy (Vowles 1995). In the same vein, a study by Best and Wade (2009) argues that the effects of the internet on political movements are limited in countries that are less developed and non-democratic. Yet, despite the attention that social

media has become a powerful tool for modern activism, others have more sceptical accounts on the internet's ability to encourage the registering of people's political interests but have also warned of the consequences if allowed to fester, explicitly warning about the ability for it to be used as a form of control and creating bias (Boas, 2006; Zittrain, 2008; Mozorov, 2009a).

3.2.1. Digital Activism in the African Context

Anduiza et al. (2009) have characterised activism in three different categories, distinguishing activities that are only possible online, those only conceivable offline, and offline activities that can also be carried out online. While other researchers conclude that offline activism would be rendered impossible without the availability of online means (Juris, 2005), in subSaharan Africa, where access to the internet is still deficient in comparison to other regions of the world, the online-offline connection has yet to become universally plausible. The reality is that there are pockets of evidence proving Gallagher's (2009) claim that online mobilisation is not only limited to raising awareness but also provoking people to act. In Malawi, for instance, the government's decision to shut down pirate broadcasters and popular websites forced Malawians to turn to Twitter and Facebook for information during the 2012 protests (Mutsvairo and Harris, 2016). Despite a series of studies showing online activism is increasingly difficult to avoid as it is fast becoming a global reality (Myers, 1994; McAdam, 1996; McCarthy, 1996; McPhail et al., 1998; Ribeiro, 1998; Zunes et al., 1999; Leizerov, 2000; Scott and Street, 2000; Trigg, 2000; Reilly, 2003; Vegh, 2003; Cardoso and Pereira, 2004; Kahn and Kellner, 2004; Van De Donk et al., 2004; Rolfe, 2005; Earl and Kimport, 2011; Harlow, 2011), perhaps the most challenging question to pose, is whether we are seeing the enhancement of feminist participation as a direct result of web-based activism.

Ignoring the power of digital technologies is no longer an option for those insensitive to this cause. Obadare (2005) is keen to remind us, especially at a time when participation has been defined as any activity influencing society at large (Esaiaasson and Westholm, 2006). Yet, it is easy to underestimate the importance of internet literacy in the technology-social issues matrix, a point also supported by Sciadas (2003) and Beardon (2004). When it comes to Africa, Nigeria more specifically, it is essential to note that not everyone who has access to social media is a feminist activist. Moreover, as noted earlier on, not everyone with access to the internet understands what it is and how to use it (Mutsvairo, 2016). Nonetheless, McAdam et al. (1996) have argued that it is no longer possible to study online democratisation of opinions without paying specific attention to digital information technologies.

Also, of interest in the context of activism is the connection between technology and democracy, more specifically, between democracy and the internet, which has been widely investigated (Fuchs, 2014). Some studies have shown that the two do, in fact, work hand-in-hand (Kedzie, 1997). Similarly, a 10-year study of 180 countries by Best and Wade (2009) confirmed “the existence of a positive relationship between democratic growth and Internet penetration” (Best and Wade, 2009:211). Fuchs (2014) has taken things a step further by suggesting the availability of social media, specifically Twitter, has provided a new arena for the public sphere of political communication, which carries emancipatory connotations. It is still doubtful whether and how Habermas’ suggestion that offline open talk and unhindered deliberations in a public sphere among citizens could lead to any movement solutions applies

to Africa's online domains (Mutsvairo, 2016). There is, here, an important point to make: the relationship between the internet, democracy and activism is alive and strong in countries where technology supports the use and capillary presence of internet connections, and where democracy exists, at least in its germinal nature (Mutsvairo, 2016): this, however, may not always be the case in Africa, a technologically crippled continent (Mutsvairo, 2016).

3.3. Feminism and Technology

Feminist theories of gender and technology have come a long way over the last two decades. While early second-wave feminism predicted a fatalism that emphasised the role of technology in reproducing patriarchy, during the 1990s cyberfeminist writers celebrated digital technologies as “inherently liberating for women” (Wajcman, 2007: 341). At the time, only a few scholars seemed interested in digital technologies. In fact, despite a few studies on social uses of ICTs by women (Kramarae, 1988; Cockburn and Fürst-Dilic 1994; Van Zoonen, 1994 and 2002; Jouët, 2003), research thrived when social media exploded during the first decade of the 21st century, with empirical studies about feminist uses of the web being more recent (Horeck, 2014; Fotopoulou, 2015; Mendes, 2015; Rentschler and Thrift, 2015; Baer, 2016; Keller et al., 2016). Hester Baer (2016) studied the global movement of the #YesAllWomen and the personal testimonies of victims of sexism. Jessalynn Keller, Kaitlynn Mendes, and Jessica Ringrose investigated the wide circulation of women's testimonies in the global #SlutWalk movement. These were all viral hashtag campaigns against sexual assault. Feminist scholarship has mapped how girls and women are creating online cultures of support for victims of sexual assault and violence, generating and circulating feminist discourse that counter patriarchal ones and interrupt rape culture through

a variety of creative interventions, such as the mobile phone app Not Your Baby and the organisation and participation in the global #SlutWalk (Keller et al., 2016).

The #MeToo hashtag, which became important in many countries following the revelation of series of sexual assaults perpetrated by Weinstein in October 2017, is now leading many feminist researchers to investigate digital feminism. The phenomenon is international: in France, several hashtags are used, #metoo, #moiaussi, #balancetonporc (out your pig), and several studies are presently being carried out. Hera Hussain (founder of Chayne), in her TEDx talk, expressed that, women are using information and technology to take back power and create a "global sisterhood of kindred spirits"(Hussain, 2016: online).

Last, but not certainly in importance, it should be said that the impact of globalisation, information, and technology on social change movements has been invaluable. Evans emphasizes that “globalisation from below allows ordinary citizens, especially in impoverished countries, to build lives that will not be possible in a more traditional world of bounded states” (Evans, 2000: 108).

3.4. The Language and Space of Digital Activism

We are now able to share information faster and broader than ever. Because of the extraordinary measure of research that has been directed towards digital advances and practices, there is a wide assortment of terms used to portray these exercises. It is crucial

to unload digital wording before thinking about digital women's activist writings. The expression "digital activism" gives a comprehensive structure to understanding practices that form the utilisation of digital networks (Clark, 2015).

This phrasing incorporates a broad scope of digital devices, from cell phones to disconnected digital gadgets. Some terms, for example "online activism" or "cyberactivism," allude just to web activism; others, for example, "e-activism," come from gadgets and consequently incorporate unimportant, obsolete gadgets, like VHS recording devices; the term digital recognises explicit advances. While positively different terms might be important, digital activism best captures all examples of social and political crusading practices that form a foundation for utilising digital networks (Clark, 2015). Directing aggregate activity in digital circles regularly includes less expense for a speedier spread on a bigger scale. While the valuable highlights of digital destinations draw in participants, activists additionally use digital advances for their networking capacities, as Papacharissi highlights (in Clark, 2015). The adaptability of online digital innovations licenses communication and relations among people in similar networks or across networks, an assortment of trades and ties, variable recurrence of contact and closeness, alliance with littler or bigger, and global or nearby networks conformed to common issues (Clark, 2015). When many residents can effectively interface more with each other to send and get unique substance and arrange an activity, they can make viable political developments (Clark, 2015). Moreover, activism is not simply constrained to one-off political tasks or messages; it also incorporates changing digital spaces themselves (Clark, 2015).

Battling for feminist design to advance increasingly liquid, transformative, and equivalent open spaces, shows that many comprehend how the web frequently replicates existing social imbalances in a digital setting. However, activists work to advance equity and balance through these digital spaces by showing that they can disturb power relations. This work implies that expanded digital uniformity could prompt expanded correspondence in other open spaces (Clark, 2015). So, it is not necessarily the case that nothing has changed with the invention of digital circles:

The networked structure of social media and versatile advancements make an extended opening by associating individuals and consequently motivating political office opposite shared information (...) Whether unremarkable or progressive, social media makes a dispersed network, not in its material culture, but in the imaginative acts of information sharing and the affirmation of that aggregate mindfulness. (Clark, 2015: 432).

This extended freedom prompts further collectivism, more conspicuous contribution of data, and interconnection through its "dissemination" of data across social networks. "Social media has reshaped the data and correspondence biological system" (Harris, 2012: 312). For instance, most US residents are continually associated with digital spaces – the number of individuals that live-tweet occasions, take pictures and transfer them to different platforms through cell phones, and update their social media statuses all the time is enormous. This

network and immediacy reflect an abundance of open doors for feminist activists to connect with a more extensive sphere (Harris, 2012).

For feminist activists, digital open circles cultivate women's activism to spread data about feminist causes and other social equity issues. and prepare participants for online and offline activism (Harris, 2012). Feminist activists have utilised digital spaces as venues of activism for a considerable length of time, however as the web's capacity extended from static pages to adaptable destinations -- for example, social media -- so did the potential for projecting feminist messages more prominently (Harris, 2012). It is essential to highlight that a few researchers consider digital activism to be rejuvenating women's rights, reviving women's activism through data sharing, discussion and exchange, and network building (McLean and Maalsen, 2001; Harris, 2012).

Similar to digital media, women's activism also differs in style, structure, and substance.

Digital feminist activists likewise utilise these diverse stages to promote their causes (Harris, 2012). Several researchers allude that social media feminist activists are mainly young, in their late twenty or thirties, belong to the middle or upper-low classes, and many have reached the first level of higher education. The President of Female Watchdogs, a former press officer who was 63 at the time, said in an interview: "Today digital media have become a must for feminist activism, and I had to learn everything by myself" (Flichy, 2010: 209). She goes further to explain that appropriation of digital skills is easier for younger women who have seized the tools of self-publication that have given rise to DIY (Do It Yourself)

practices and to amateur productions of texts and images (Flichy, 2010). Similar to other forms of offline activism, online activism also sees all collectives self-organise and activists engage in specific actions on an ad hoc or voluntary basis (Neveu, 1996; Kaufmann and Trom, 2010). Members of social movements rely on digital communication tools to coordinate, and they use the web as an alternative media to promote their cause (Granjon, 2001; Cardon and Granjon, 2010).

On the downside, Couldry notes that, as in all social movements, activism has become an intermittent engagement linked to specific actions: “Without doubt digital media fosters political mobilization, accelerated cycles of action, and some new forms of collectivity, the resulting acceleration of action encourages short-term loyalties and less stability in political socialization” (Couldry, 2014: 329). The explosion of collectives and blogs is, in a sense, inspired by the model of small start-ups in the digital world. The promotion of feminist activism is infiltrated by the logic of marketing and the values of entrepreneurship of “the new spirit of capitalism,” which in itself is patriarchal (Boltanski and Chiapello, 1999). However, online feminism is experienced as a form of self-realisation and collective empowerment. Digital practices and feminist engagement are, in some ways, constituted through assemblages bound up with global liberalism even though feminists criticise the principles of neoliberalism and the social inequalities it leads to (Mutsvairo, 2016). Feminist digital activism is moulded by the neo-liberal society in which it emerged, and all collectives are entirely part of the economy of visibility (Voirol, 2005) which contributes to the reconfiguration of the women’s movement.

Activists are keen to be visible, and they develop strategies to ensure that their posts are seen, read, and shared. They do so by having a continuous editorial production on their website and social media, and by appropriating the codes of digital culture. Younger feminists are seen to be experts in using the technical and narrative frames of digital media and in developing innovative discourses. Furthermore, on the web, there is no limit to editorial content. The enormous number of feminist materials provided, daily and on immediate and unrestricted access in cyberspace, appears to be one of the major changes between activism in the 70s and early 21st century (Mutsvairo, 2016).

3.5. The Digital Revival of Feminism

The common use of the “waves” metaphor in feminism does not merely refer to the passing of time, since it also hints that a significant change occurred not only in communicative practices but also in ideological and political agendas (Pavard, 2017). In their introduction of the special issue on intergenerational studies of Feminist Media Studies (2016), Alison Winch, Jo Littler, and Jessalynn Keller provide critical analysis of this metaphor: “It is regularly invoked to herald a ‘new kind of feminism that has broken with the old’ (Winch et al., 2016: 21). They show that younger feminists share the same goals as the existing feminist cause, like reproductive rights and gendered violence. However, they add that “Generation, used with nuance, is important because it helps to make sense of differences incurred by specific historical conditions, and which contribute to the formation of feminist and gendered sensibilities and their mediation” (Winch et al., 2016: 564). It is important to note that while feminism remains ideologically rooted in the same principles, waves did not only signify a change of its main aims but also in the methods and instruments utilised to reach them, including the way activists engage with and use the media (Winch et al., 2016). In fact, it has

been pointed out that the resurgence of feminism in countries such as France is not only due to political reasons but also to the advent of a new generation of digitally skilled women (Winch et al., 2016).

Despite the advancement made by feminists in the 1960s–1970s French society, like all societies, remains patriarchal, and sexism still shapes men's behaviour. Second-wave feminists have been very active in France, and they fought to gain many rights, like the right to abortion which was legalised in 1975 (Pavard, 2012). During the following decades, activists were still promoting women's rights, but their actions were not much publicised as there was a common belief that women had already achieved equality. The resurgence of the cause as a public issue took place at the beginning of the 21st century, in relation to relevant public events (Pavard, 2012). The presidential elections of 2007 were a source of misogynistic attacks against Ségolène Royal, who was the first female candidate to compete for Head of State. This strengthened the movement for male-female parity in political institutions which got attention in the media, and a law was finally passed in 2010 (Pavard, 2012). A year later, the Dominique Strauss Khan affair came as a shock, and men's assaults on women became a matter of public outcry encouraging women to express their anger online and speak up about rape. At the same time, the LGBT movement was very active in claiming the right to gay marriage which entailed lots of public debate about sex, gender, transgender, but also led to the rise of reactionary factions which organised massive street demonstrations to oppose this reform. The law recognising gay marriage was finally passed in 2013 (Winch et al., 2016).

The social issue of gender equality has been at the forefront of the French political scene, and it became a major public controversy that favoured the revival of feminism as a new wave. In fact, there was a “political opportunity structure” which, as Bart Cammaerts explains, met “the mediation opportunity structure” with the growth of digital media (Cammaerts, 2012). At the turn of the 21st century, third-wave feminism thrived with the emergence of a new generation of feminist digital natives (Cammaerts, 2012). However, some feminist groups which emerged during the second wave are still active, like the Movement for Family Planning, which promotes contraception and the right to abortion, the National Collective for Women’s Rights which is a coordination of associations, trade unions, and political parties struggling for equality, or Solidary Women which is linked to the communist party (Cammaerts, 2012). These well-known associations do fieldwork and offer many resources to women. They are also present on the web, but their sites are conceived on a top-down model and use the traditional format of militant releases while the iconography is minimal (Cammaerts, 2012). In some ways, their communicative practices are similar to the Fawcett Society in London. However, their recent Facebook or Twitter accounts are more interactive and alive due to the participation of a few younger members (Cammaerts, 2012).

Aristea Fotopoulou, who studied several women’s organisations in London, also stressed the heterogeneity of the groups and the gap existing between younger digital feminists and older feminists who prefer face-to-face meetings but are anxious to catch up with technology due to the dominant “social imaginary of networked feminism” (Fotopoulou, 2014). Activists may recognise the digital creativity of other militants, and, for instance, they occasionally share links to other collectives on their websites which is a sign of mutual appraisal. This behaviour is very similar to what was observed in the press community. On Twitter, Jouët and Rieffel

found that journalists spend a lot of time reading the tweets of peers belonging to rival media and may salute their publications online (Jouët and Rieffel, 2015).

It is important to point out that modern, young feminists do not want to become a member of a militant group since they are reluctant to follow a “political agenda,” to attend regular meetings, and they wish to engage in feminism on a strictly individual basis (Mutsvairo, 2016). While young feminists online write and discuss matters of political and social importance online, they tend not to be activists in the sense commonly intended and largely embodied by both first and second-wave feminists (Mutsvairo, 2016); however, this does not mean they are not committed to the cause, nor that they are not interested in changing the status quo. Perhaps, and this is central in the context of the online activism in Nigeria, and to the development of the #feminism phenomenon, they quite simply changed the instruments and the methods used to achieve their goals.

3.6. Social Networking

Although feminists and other social justice activists use various digital sites, mainstream activism primarily occurs on social media. The high level of visibility on social networking sites benefits activists; as of January 2014, 74% of adults online utilised social networking sites (Social Networking Fact Sheet, 2021); these figures do not include underage populations who widely engage in the use of social media. Furthermore, as social networking user populations have grown, more users engage with political or social issues via these sites (Clark, 2015). There are countless social networking sites, but activism most often occurs on the most popular platforms, including Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Tumbler, and other blog

sites. These are also the primary platforms for digital feminist activism, even though the creators or owners purport them to be politically neutral sites (Clark, 2015). Just as social media platforms work to connect individuals, they also intertwine with one another, facilitating cross-platform engagement among users (Clark, 2015). Facebook was initially created in 2004 to enhance social networks on college campuses, but it soon expanded to include anyone who chooses to create a profile; individual user profiles are the norm, but Facebook also allows for group pages and fan pages.

Facebook has become the leading social networking site, with 71% of adults online reporting use, and is also the primary social media channel used to learn about and participate in social issues (The 2014 Cone Communications Digital Activism Study, cited in Clark, 2015).

Launched in 2006, Twitter is the head microblogging webpage. Originating from conventional blogging, microblogging is a method for clients to communicate short messages to different users. On Twitter, clients post using "tweets," which can be posted by instant message, versatile applications, outsider applications, or the web utilizing 160 characters or less. Tweets may likewise be reposted or shared by other users as "retweets" (Clark, 2015). Even though this is not peculiar to Twitter, hashtags got mainstream through their use on Twitter; they sort tweets by a typical subject or thought. In addition, the utilisation of Twitter is profoundly entwined with other social media because of its interesting structure, "Twitter use might be a mechanical variety of agreement activation" (Clark, 2015: PAGE), as tweets can be shared by other users on the sites as well as on other social media sites; it is, in this manner, a typical stage for lobbyist commitment. Established in 2007, Tumblr is a blogging platform that, dissimilar to customary blogging stages, enables clients to "re-blog" posts from different clients (like retweets on Twitter). Like different online journals, Tumblr posts

frequently contain a blend of content and multimedia and consider different clients to remark on each post. Furthermore, clients can follow Tumblr web journals for new posts, which show up in a top Tumblr feed. Like Twitter, Tumblr is utilised basically to share data and give individual updates (Clark, 2015: 1109).

Instagram is a social media platform that deals primarily with images. A study carried out in April 2020 found that, despite the gender divide on Instagram being almost equal, 51% male, 49% female, women receive five times more engagement than men and men are more likely to comment on women's posts (Cronin, 2020): this raises a concern about its consumption being a largely neoliberal, post-feminist regime of beauty and self-regulation. Resisting this, Mahoney (2020) is carefully optimistic of Instagram's potential for feminist discourse, thanks to users whose position and privilege allow them to subvert and resist its neoliberal regime. With 10.5 million posts tagged #feminism and over 7.7 million tagged #feminist at the time of writing, Mahoney finds that Instagram provides a way for feminists to document themselves living and performing their feminist politics.

The utilisation of social media sites has significantly improved feminist activists' practice, for example, with Facebook and Twitter; feminist activists' battles on social media have become a stage for significant discussions that have a real and positive effect on the lives of women – on and offline. The structure of social media empowers them to develop strong relationships around their discourses (Gender and Social Media, 2009). Besides, a few researchers found that the use of social networking platforms helps reconfigure digital spaces. Digital women activists use social media to connect with a more extensive open audience, share data,

encourage networking, prepare constituents, and guarantee open space for women's activist praxis (Baer, 2015).

Online platforms offer great potential for openly propagating feminist thought, shaping new approaches to debates about gender and sexism, reaching diverse audiences, and allowing creative, innovative modes of activism to emerge (Baer, 2015). Bearing in mind that feminist movements around the world have different recorded histories with different causes, goals, and intentions depending on time, culture, and country, digital feminism is potentially the wave that makes feminism a systemic global movement. From #Aufschrei (outcry) in Germany to Nigeria's #BringBackOurGirls, from 16-year-old Jessica's feminist community Blog FBomb to #BlackGirlsRock, #HeforShe, #WhyIStayed, #SolidarityIsForWhiteWomen, #NotYourAsianSidekick, espousing age barrier, race, gender, and country lines, with no subject beyond deliberation and diverse modes of communication, feminisms in this space seem to have limited boundaries (Baer, 2015).

Acknowledging though, as Daniela Latina and Stevie Docherty (2014) have noted, structures of inequality prevent certain social groups from accessing it. Still, millions of us use social media every day, and statistics indicate that by 2018, 2.44 billion people would be using social media platforms (Guzman, 2016). However, in 2020, there are over 3.5 billion social media users (Oberlo, 2020). As millennials partake in global conversations, young women have a greater opportunity to participate in them. They do not have to break the glass ceiling to be offered a seat at the table. Hopefully, these opportunities and platforms help close the gender gap in the future (Anid et al., 2016).

Keller (2012) explores young women's contributions to global conversations around gender inequalities, discussing the case of 16-year-old Jessica who, in 2009, launched the FBomb (<http://thebomb.org>), a feminist blog community for teenagers (both female and male) who "care about women's rights and want to be heard." (Keller, 2012: 432) Keller (2012) also mentions Janelle, who at 18, conceived The Seventeen Magazine Project as a tongue-in-cheek response to stereotypical views on teenage femininity. Both ventures are followed by bloggers and readers from countries such as India, Canada, England, Iraq, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and the United States (Keller, 2012).

Jessica's platform creates a space for young people to explore contemporary feminism, articulating their experiences and perspectives on issues including "popular culture, violence, reproductive rights, transnational feminisms, racism, and sexuality" (Keller, 2012: 440). It should be noted that these forms of online activism have "significant implications for spreading feminist content to people who may otherwise not have come in contact with it" (Keller, 2012: 438) while challenging the traditional understanding of space: for those with internet access, this allows content to transcend borders with ease (Keller, 2012).

3.7. Feminist Concern of the Postfeminist Neoliberal Economy of Social Media Networks

In her book *The Aftermath of Feminism*, Angela McRobbie has described the active "undoing of feminism" that has occurred in neoliberal societies, which disavow feminism as unnecessary while offering women "a notional form of equality, concretised in education and employment, and through participation in consumer culture and civil society, in place of what

a reinvented feminist politics might have to offer” (McRobbie, 2009: 257). In contrast, Keller (2012) argues that girl bloggers show an impressive engagement with media criticism and critical thinking skills, which have been two critical components of feminist activism and are arguably increasingly crucial within a heavily mediated popular culture; Mahoney (2020) also finds that despite the neoliberal regime, online feminists still find a way through social media to carefully place themselves outside the narrow postfeminist neoliberal economy occurring on social media:

Because I was saying the same things as the people around me whose bodies were bigger, whose skin was darker, who were differently abled, who were outside the gender binary, whose bodies placed them further outside of our cultural standards of beauty than my own. But from my body, [...] that still fit several of those cultural standards, the message was more easily palatable. [...] My privilege made my voice louder than others. (Crabbe 2017: Online).

Mahoney (2020) concludes that it is their awareness and acknowledgement of their position and privilege that strengthens their efforts to subvert and resist it. In communicating their fears, experiences, and feminisms, they normalise and support others. They build a space in which alternative interpretations may be attributed to images of women’s bodies, dictated by the women themselves. As operators within social media’s postfeminist neoliberalist visual economy, they not only alter the consumption of women’s images in the way that they present and talk about their bodies, but they also invite others to do the same, thereby

endorsing an alternative vocabulary to speak about, consume and appreciate images of women in a neoliberal postfeminist visual economy.

Baer (2015) argued that in the context of neoliberalism's individualisation and privatisation of politics, its renovation of collective resistance into commodified private micro rebellions, activists are confronted with the necessity of doing feminist politics in the face of its impossibility. Baer explains further that online feminist protests should be understood as process-based political actions. According to Baer, Digital Feminism expands on the process of "searching for new political paradigms, languages, and symbols" that counter the "neoliberal reduction of the political to the personal" (Baer, 2015: 21). In other words, digital feminist activism is contentiously redoing feminism, deploying the precarious female body to make visible the contradictions of contemporary social reality.

In South Africa, this movement has manifested through the rise of black woman-centred collectives who bring newfound power and urgency to contemporary black feminisms. These collectives are crafting unapologetic spaces focused on the lives and lived experiences of black women; part of this experience is encouraging radical self-love and care as a community-building exercise. (Mahali, 2017) Thelandersson (2014) discusses the possibility of feminist solidarity emerging despite (or even because of) the often "toxic" environment in online spaces. It is hoped that through the findings gathered from this research project, we can unearth knowledge about this in relation to Nigerian women.

3.8. Hashtag Feminism

Media and its messages, including access to the creation of these messages, have long been a crucial concern of feminist scholars. Many studied the meanings and values of being a woman and its consequences in the twenty-first century in contrast to more than fifty years ago when second-wave figure Betty Friedan's (1963) *The Feminist Mystique* first addressed the power of mass media in defining gender roles. Indeed, there have been significant milestones toward gender equality. Notwithstanding, women today still face many problems, including marginalisation and misrepresentation in all kinds of media discourse (Byerly and Ross, 2006). Limited access to media systems and the limited ability to shape media content contribute to feminist scholars' concerns. Media sites are avenues of considerable ideological negotiation and contestation (Kearney, 2012), and gender negotiations are no exception. Exploring, understanding, and challenging the implications of gender have been at the core of feminist media studies. Feminist theorists, scholars, and researchers are exploring where societies stand regarding the politics of gender and media, what work is being done, and offer ideas for where it should be headed (Dow, 2006). These samples of feminist media scholarship reinforce the importance of the idea that gender is a mediated experience that takes on meaning through communicative practices such as those found in media content (Dow, 2006).

In feminist media studies, the focus is on how these issues are created, promoted, and normalised in one of the most critical institutional sites for communication— mass media. Given their scope and reach in public understandings of human experiences, this is no little

endeavour. Thus, feminist media theory goes beyond concerns and promotion of granting women certain rights and pays close attention to matters of power, culture, voice, agency, hierarchy, and representation in media practices and discourses (Cirksena and Cuklanz, 1992; Van Zoonen, 1994; Harp, 2008; Donovan, 2012; Loke et al., 2017).

In theorising gender, feminist media scholars regularly address the multiple dichotomies and dualisms that have served to justify women's subjugation, including the public/private divide and the concepts of reason/emotion, mind/body, and subject/object. While these notions are more interrelated than a dichotomous categorisation might suggest, they have proven to be persistent in media discourses. They are often presented as common-sense differences that serve to dominate and relegate women. Not to suggest that all women are the same or that their circumstances and experiences are identical everywhere. Quite the opposite, in their theorisation of "the woman question," and their acknowledgement of different influences, feminist theories understand that women are not a unified constituency and that their identities are diverse and multifaceted (Ross 2010; Steiner 2008; Van Zoonen 1994).

However, while being careful not to homogenise women's experiences or circumstances, feminist scholars assert that there are commonalities in women's status *regardless of their different circumstances* and that sexism results in substantial inequalities (Rakow and Wackwitz 2004). It is precisely the insight into inequalities and constructed, often symbolic, differences in media practices with real consequences in everyday life that form feminist media theory and research (Rakow and Wackwitz, 2004).

Hashtags have helped amplify many global crises. Through social media, the #ArabSpring 2011 saw human rights activists come together to sensitise the world about human rights violators and bring them to account (Guzman, 2016). Activists and scholars have referred to

this type of protest as “hashtag activism” (Caitlin-Gunn 2015). Digital spaces are contended to be “rich ground” for women's activism, primarily through blogging platforms and social media. A model can be found in the development of “hashtag feminism, a custom within the expanding field of online feminism that has become so predominant in recent years as to merit its own digital archive, hashtagfeminism.com (Clark, 2016). Hashtag Feminism shows how much the growing use of social media and online platforms has changed, influenced, and shaped feminism by allowing different methods of communication that encourage different types of conversations and new configurations of activism across the globe, both offline and online (Baer, 2015).

Hashtag feminism includes utilising hashtags to address women's recognised issues, essentially through Twitter, by sharing individual experiences of disparity, building counternarratives, and evaluating social figures and organisations, including themselves as individuals and activists. Unmistakable instances of hashtag feminism in the past few years have included #BringBackourGirls #NotBuyingIt, #YesAllWomen, #WhyIStayed, and #JusticeFor among others (Baer, 2015). While digitally mediated discourse is typically viewed as a cultural resource to be mobilized for political action offline, as opposed to being political in its own right, Clark (2016) noted that the “Organisations no longer structure communication within the feminist movement; rather, communication, itself, from blog posts to Twitter hashtags, has become an important organisational structure for the movement” (Clark, 2016: 790). Conley (2014: 1112) emphasised that “As digital artefacts, hashtags locate cultures across time and space. No matter the context— that is, grassroots, institutional, or corporate—hashtags compel us to act. They are political actors.” The recognition of how much hashtag feminism has become a powerful political tactic for fighting gender inequality around the world, several scholars have contributed to discussions surrounding the emerging field (Clark, 2014; Horeck 2014; Meyer, 2014), highlighting

hashtag feminists' ability to intervene on oppressive discourses produced by commercial, news, and entertainment media.

The exposed hashtag feminism's discursive power has been noted that it is of utmost importance for activism about violence against women, especially when, as Clark (2016: 800) noted, "Popular discourse enables a culture in which sexual violence is accepted as part of the norm." Hashtag campaigns such as #YesAllWomen, #MeToo, #SafetyTipsForLadies, and #StopStreetHarassment "have shed light on women's everyday encounters with rape culture and the victim-blaming discourse that sustains it." These campaigns are relevant "so we might give people a sense of the magnitude of the problem" (Santiago and Criss, 2017: online). However some of the campaigns, especially and most recently the #Metoo campaign has been heavily criticised (Strimpel, 2017), as "it just validates and entrenches a bitter rhetoric that pits women against men in a way that seems to be merely regressive rather than practical" (Strimpel, 2017: online). Strimpel also states that "#Metoo and its like are also futile – who exactly are these hashtags for?" (Strimpel 2017: online). Clark (2016), in her article, perfectly titled *Hope in a Hashtag*, concludes that "Hope, is created not only through digitally networked solidarity for otherwise alienated individuals, but also through hashtag activism's ability to circulate revised normative interpretations of social phenomena which in turn might produce alternative responses to those phenomena, such as media coverage that more accurately depicts the culpability of perpetrators" (Clark, 2016: 798). Although compelling, hashtag feminism has its risks and constraints. Cole (2015) uncovered the savagery women might face from anti-feminist trolls disgorging hate speech and threats online, while Woods (2014) and Khoja-Moolji (2015) warned hashtag feminists against over publicising vulnerable victims for the sake of political causes.

However, there are also positive outcomes: Akyel (2014), Higgs (2015), and Clark (2016) contended that the hashtag activism had unlocked new spaces for groups who are marginalised, side-lined or silenced in global feminist movements, as digital media have provided feminist from countries with less established feminist movements, feminists of colour and feminists working outside of formal organisations with a new, effective means of exposing their work and connecting with others (Clark, 2016). Indeed, Tayo (2018) confirmed that Nigerian feminists are now heavily reliant on social media hashtags and the internet to pass across their message. For Conley (2014: 1113) “Hashtags represented evidence of women and people of colour resisting authority, opting out of conforming to the status quo, and seeking liberation, all by way of documentation in digital spaces.” Baer affirms that by bringing together diverse feminist constituencies, digital platforms enable new kinds of intersectional conversations (Baer, 2015), but it should also be understood that, Importantly, while social media platforms are free, structures of inequality exclude some social groups from accessing them (Latina and Docherty, 2014). Clark's (2016) exploration of the features and significance of hashtag feminism through a case study of #WhyIStayed gives an insight into the workings of a successful hashtag: feminist hashtags develop into a transparent process, intending to “deepen our understanding of the meaning and significance of hashtag feminism” (Clark, 2016: 802). Clark (2016: 800) also argued that “A hashtag’s narrative logic—its ability to produce and connect individual stories—fuels its political growth.”

Citing Young (1997) and Shaw (2012), Clark (2016) also analysed hashtag feminism as *discursive activism*, explaining that while most research on social movement actors use of digital media focuses on the logistical organisation of protests, online discourse can be a “mode of activism capable of triggering socio-political change with or without the help of

collective action offline” (Shaw, 2012: 384). Clark (2016) quoted Young (1997), further explaining that, as Shaw (2012) asserted, feminist discursive activism is political action “directed at promoting new grammars, new social paradigms through which individuals, collectivises, and institutions interpret social circumstances and devise responses to them” (Young, 1997, in Clarke, 2016: 797).

To say it with Clarke (2016: 799), it can be stated that “hashtag feminism’s ability to initiate socio-political change depends upon the many contingencies between dramatic actors and their audiences.” However, and in spite of its limitations, hashtag feminism has an immense potential, that of making issues often lying at the margins of social interest central to the world community Olson (2016), Baer (2015) argued that feminist Twitter campaigns do just that, they “redo feminism” in a publicised context. Baer explains that hashtag feminist campaigns allow us to revisit longstanding feminist debates and actively renegotiate new paradigms for feminist politics. These actions emphasise the process of searching for new political paradigms, languages, and symbols that combat the neoliberal reduction of the political to the personal (Baer, 2015). The internet has progressively become a key site of political practice among youthful women's activists. It is nonetheless, to some degree, a hostile site; pundits question whether online feminism can effect social change, privileging the offline as an avenue for “genuine” legislative issues (Harris, 2008; Christensen, 2011). Then again, Baer (2016) proposed digital media offer incredible potential for (re)shaping women's activist talk and supporting new methods of women's activism. Following Baer, the limit of social media to gather support unequivocally sorted out around fomenting for change is presently settled and as reported in the prologue to this work, youthful women's activists have effectively prepared “networked public” spaces built through networked technologies”

that include the "envisioned network" (Bowles Eagle, 2015: 351) to accomplish social change through online petitions and crusades.

Even though there is increased writing about digital women activist practices, we know little about what such support implies for their feminism or feeling of self (Keller, 2015; Retallack et al., 2016). This is particularly so for young women whose commitment to feminism is astoundingly under-investigated (Taft, 2011). Drawing from a more extensive examination with secondary school women activists, there was a question of how young women utilise and create digital media as a component of their feminist practice. Following Boyd (2014), the on/offline dichotomy can be seen as two of the numerous different social settings that adolescents possess; the connection among them (and inside the web) is creaseless, and significantly encouraged by cell phone innovation (Hjorth and Cumskey, 2013).

3.9. Hashtag Feminism in Nigeria

Like in other parts of the world, Nigerian women activists progressively depend on social media and hashtags to pass their messages over. With the spread of social media, Nigerian women activists have had the option to feature various issues, for example, the assault of minors, sexual attack in colleges, conjugal assault, assault culture, rape, consent, , sexuality, and the disposal of male-centric society and sexism (Oyewumi, 2011).

Social media and hashtag feminism have opened pathways for Nigerian feminist activism and encourage young Nigerian women to speak out on online platform: it provides a "safe" outlet for Nigerian feminist activism to thrive. Without the relative freedom of and access to social media, public discussions held on the platform would be very different, or worse, there would be no discussions on feminist issues at all. By including and discussing a wider array

of the experiences of women with feminist hashtags, social media platforms enable greater inclusion and nuanced understanding of feminist activism (Orisadare, 2019). As seen with the #BBOG campaign, hashtag feminism offered a safe space for Nigerian women in the online sphere calling for the girls' rescue, while they aimed at getting the government and the world to intervene. This action increased awareness among many Nigerian women who identify as feminist activists or support feminist views. They then took further steps to take their campaign to the streets and get a rapid response from the government. With the #BBOG campaign, it is apparent how social media and hashtag feminism lends a voice to feminism of various kinds, thus helping to redefine how feminist activism is viewed today. Hashtag feminism creates a digital nest where victims of abuse and discrimination become connected in a space where their narratives, pain, and isolation are acknowledged (Afolabi, 2019). It ensures that various women from different feminist groups can legitimise their individual encounters by crafting their own unique messages. These spheres may have to remove other groups of women from the context sometimes to ensure true inclusion of the category of women who feel the impact of the event described by the hashtag (Okafor and Akokuwebe, 2015).

Historically, women have been taught to subject themselves to the superiority of men in society, and this can be traced to colonial practices (Oyewumi, 2011). Colonialism promoted this patriarchal system due principally to capitalism, that is, the mode of production based on genderism (Amoo-Adare, 2011), and the form of government adopted which was maledominated in Nigeria. The British colonial rule in Nigeria was structured around employing the service of chiefs and elders, who were mainly men. Awomolo (1997) added

that this form of government by the British subjugated influential women leaders in Yoruba land and

Northern Nigeria by enforcing a patriarchal system of government.

Therefore, women were excluded from the public space of society to private space of looking after their families and other domestic responsibilities (Freedman, 2001), as the premise of colonial gender ideology was grounded on the fact that women were to maintain a domestic profile and not engage socially and politically as men would do (Fadipe and Bakenne, 2020). Consequently, it can be argued that colonialism promoted gender differences in Nigeria, where men are perceived to be more rational in decision-making than women, thus the need to exclude women from the public space (Freedman, 2001). Public and societal matters became male-dominated (Awomolo, 1997) as women were discriminated against for participating in society's decision-making process. To Mikell (1995), the need to overcome this colonial oppression united both men and women to struggle for independence. Women were at the forefront of the struggle for independence, as witnessed in the Aba women's riot (Fatile et al., 2012). Mikell (1995), while buttressing this argument, holds that "African women took strength from the fact that their participation was essential if their countries were to end the colonial experiences and achieve independence." Nevertheless, at independence, there was an exclusion of women (Oyewumi, 2011); the paradox was that the new state continued to discriminate against women, as the public sphere is still considered a men's domain wherein women need permission to participate (Mama, 1995).

Awomolo (1997) stated that in post-independence Nigeria, the role of women was to be that of mothers and wives, and women who are involved in the public sphere were seen to be contributing to the degradation of society. Therefore, the idea that Nigeria continued to exhibit this perceived inherited genderism (Oyewumi, 2011). Similarly, socio-cultural practices further promote discrimination and oppression against women (Arndt, 2000;

Ezejiofor, 2011). Culture, generally seen as a way of life, influences or forms the basis of identity and practices in societies. Arndt (2000) argues that culture makes significant differences in people's attitudes and beliefs. It determines what should be done since society creates or defines social relations and realities of manhood and womanhood. Ezeilo (2006) suggests that Nigeria is highly culture-oriented, and in most cases, cultural beliefs and practices are infused into religion. As such, the intertwining of both culture and religion impacts the interpretation of womanhood in society. The perception of women's economic, political, and socio-cultural rights is determined by this fusion of culture and religion, thus making it difficult to ascertain the individual rights of women at any given time (Ezejiofor, 2011).

Culturally, some women are denied salient rights and discriminated against as they are perceived as second-class citizens and property of their husbands (Ezejiofor 2011). Let us consider the cultural practice of bride price, for instance: it positions women as property bought and paid for by men. Thus, men are free to subject women to their authority, which in most cases includes being discriminated against by being denied fundamental rights like education, work, and social status in society. Women are believed not to have a sense of being or identity as their identity is engraved into men's. Freedman (2001; online) also held that "men refuse to see women as a total, separate human being" because they have no control over their being, as men define them on the basis of the benefits they can bring. In addition, this situation is, in most cases, made possible because of religious beliefs. For instance, Adamu (2006) argues that certain human rights such as education or gender equality, both advocated for women in present-day Nigeria, can be seen as being opposed to people's religious beliefs. Notably, issues such as lack of education for young girls, early marriage, and male authority over women's freedom, are all justifiable practices within the various religions practiced in the country (Ezeilo 2006). For instance, Ezeilo (2006) and

Adamu (2006) argue that by using religion and culture as an excuse, some women/girls are denied an education because education is perceived to be for men.

The discussion from the previous section broaches issues of the impact of transnational exchange of ideas and the place of urban educated women in challenging normative concepts of womanhood in Nigeria. These issues are vital to assert that there is no one “single reading” of feminism and that the exchange of ideas by feminists is not always rooted in the West but in the needs of the local context in which such feminist movements exist. This argument is in line with Achebe's (2011) position: there are different ways to read and interpret the African world and, therefore, reading feminist movements in Nigeria within the prism of the Western notion of feminism is problematic, because it implies a level of homogeneity of gender and womanhood, and of needs, which is difficult to imagine.

It is, therefore, necessary to examine the extent to which modern, urban-elite women in Nigeria are the originators of their freedoms and fighting the cause of oppressed and marginalised women from rural areas, as evident in the #BringBackOurGirls hashtag; urban educated women have championed women's rights from historical times, and their struggle for women's rights is context-based, as they have not just transplanted Western ideas. These questions are essential as Mupotsa (2019) and Dosekun (2015) argue: within the feminist movement, there is the perception that African women are still backward, trapped, and waiting to be rescued by Western feminism. Dosekun (2015) extends this view by positing that the image of the global/Westernised girl is projected to the global south, but that even before Western feminists began the second wave of women's movements, feminists like Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti (FRT) had been advocating for gender equality in Nigeria (Johnson-Odim and Mba,1997). According to Johnson-Odim and Mba (1997), Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti (FRT) and other feminists like Tinubu, her mentor, were actively involved in

the struggle against injustice during the colonial era, until the postindependence era. FRT was renowned for fighting against taxation on women, women's voting rights, and the establishment of women empowerment organisations (Achebe, 2011).

Naasin (2016), while attesting to the contribution of FRT to feminism movements and ideology generation and exchange, held that she was not just a feminist but also a political figure who was at the forefront of women's rights, and wanted to achieve "greater educational opportunities for women and girls, provision of health care and other social services for women" (Achebe, 2011). Similarly, Achebe (2011) argues that in Eastern Igbo land, a female king called Ahebi Ugbabe redefined the reading of feminism and masculinity during her reign. These and many other examples of feminists and women leaders such as Margaret Ekpo, Gambo Sawaba, and Alimotu Pelewura amongst others, consequently made Nobel laureate Wole Soyinka posit that "I have always insisted that American or European feminism has little to teach most other societies. Here is proof in this portrait of a remarkable woman in remarkable times brought vividly to life in a work that explores the often-neglected crevices of history" (Johnson-Odim and Mba, 1997: 110). The above notion alludes to the fact that feminist ideas and movements are championed by those who have agency, education, and material capital. For instance, Mupotsa (2008) states that social status, education, and agency of societal instruments lead to empowerment, as educated women have the agency to challenge and fight the patriarchal structure of society. According to her, agency and awareness of injustice will prompt the decision to challenge normative cultural beliefs.

Moreover, in the history of Nigeria, it has been urban educated women that have always used their agency to expound these ideas to rural areas, as earlier shown. This argument is crucial as it relates to the #BringBackOurGirls movement, which was established by urbaneducated elites like Dr. Oby Ezekwesili and Aisha Yesufu, amongst others. These urban, educated women expounded neoliberal ideas of freedom as “they demonstrate the urgent need to re-invigorate and galvanize women’s movement for self-guarding girls’ right to education, self-determination and even life itself” (Njoroge, 2016: 317).

According to Daniels (2019), the emergence of information communication technologies and social media platforms has enabled women to catch up on the feminist discourse, wherever they had been uninformed or lagging behind. New media is widely considered as the alternative platform for women to counter and challenge the dominant gender discourse and promote alternative narratives, as these new media platforms can “develop freedom, equality and democracy” (Demirhan and Cakir-Demirhan, 2015: 309), as opposed to mainstream media, which are controlled by the state and promote dominant ideology. The emergence of counter-discourse and narratives like #MeToo, #BlackLifeMatters, #MenAreTrash, #ShePersisted amongst others within new media platforms have raised questions whether such movements are not just reactionary, but also show the transformation that has occurred within feminist movements (Demirhan and CakirDemirhan, 2015).

3.10. Conclusion

As Aune (2013) recommended, academic studies of gender and feminism are much more significant for the development of contemporary feminism. Catherin Redfern and Kristin Aune’s 2008/2009 survey underlined how positive experiences of feminism during education

and reading feminist books were significant contributors to young British women identifying as feminists. This research project is an opportunity to unearth the contributors to young Nigerian feminist identities, but also the sources of rejection of feminism, or indifference. The hope is to get involved academically in the Nigerian feminist space, as Aune states, the involvement and investment of students in feminism give cause for hope and optimism about feminism's future. But as Thornham and McFarlane rightfully explain, if we consider future directions of feminism and new media, we need to investigate these relations with the whole legacy of feminism in mind (Thornham and McFarlane, 2013). Feminist scholars need to discover, interfere, and invest in all forms of media, including social media, to become active participants in this new wave across nations, imputing rigorously researched thoughts, ideas and agendas into the movement; to say it with

Caroline Basset, feminists need to "retool and intervene in media studies" (Basset, 2013).

This research agrees with Rao and Sandler (2016: 231), who urge feminists to "get into spaces where individuals from different disciplines can develop partnerships to test innovative ways to unstick deep structures that hold gender inequality in place," especially in nations with less advanced feminist structures. They conclude that "Feminists in mainstream institutions who cross the imaginary bureaucratic line to bridge those spaces can contribute to progress for gender equality and women's rights for years to come" (Rao and Sandler, 2016: 231). In carrying out this research, an understanding of the impact of Nigeria's hashtag activism will be explored with the aim of contributing valuable research findings for the progress of gender equality, gender solidarity, and positive attitudes towards feminism, in a way that focuses on redoing rather than undoing feminism, especially in Nigeria.

Feminist digital activism displays the strength of an influential collective made up of brilliant, motivated, and enthusiastic women who are not scared to stand out for their beliefs.

However, much more has to be done to guarantee that this kind of activism is longlasting and

that it genuinely encourages a long-term commitment to fighting for women's rights. Such digital efforts must be firmly aligned with grassroots issues, communities, and activist movements to be effective. There is value in developing long-term plans that include a dynamic integration of digital and non-digital channels to champion the numerous problems that affect women and girls. As a social, physical fabric that supports its own growth and existence, activism has a core that must not be abandoned but must be grasped by digital activism for it to be effective. Digital activists must not become engulfed in a virtual vacuum that is cut off from the actual world of activism, as it has happened in some instances. There is a magnificent reality of grassroots action, performed by women all around the world, although their experiences are never told or caught on camera. Indeed, there are many disadvantaged and vulnerable individuals living in poverty and war who do not have access to the digital sphere, making it impossible for them to draw attention to their predicament and fight for equality.

In the next chapter, the methodologies applied to the research to investigate the role of

#feminism in a Nigerian context will be presented and discussed.

Chapter 4: Methodology

This chapter presents an overview of the research paradigm and methodology chosen to carry out the research: their selection is contextualised within the study, with an emphasis placed on how they contributed to a better understanding of the data collected. Participant selection, ethical issues, and limitations of the study are also discussed.

4.1. Research Paradigm

The concepts of “knowledge” and “truth” are essential in research, as they represent the philosophical backbone of every study: one researches seeking knowledge and with the aim of achieving truthful results. The very nature and meaning of these concepts lead the way researchers think, analyse, and envisage society and, ultimately, also their personal set of beliefs (Ling and Ling, 2016). When viewed in an academic or scientific context, this is called paradigm (Schwandt, 2001; Ling and Ling, 2016). The word -- and concept -- was introduced in association with two specific ideas (Kuhn, 1962): a way of thinking used by a group to solve problems in a specific research field, and to portray “commitments, beliefs, values, methods, outlooks and so forth, shared across a discipline” (Schwandt, 2001: 183-4).

Consequently, it can be said that a paradigm mirrors a researcher’s perspective on his or her environment and on the world at large and that such perspective is rooted in how the nature of reality is considered (ontology), how knowledge is gathered and achieved

(epistemology) and on ethical and principles and values (axiology) (Patton, 2002). Regardless of its field, research is deeply connected and guided by these ideas, which can influence not only the research questions asked but also the methods and approaches used to answer them (Patton, 2002). In other words, the research paradigm -- or the way a researcher’s philosophical standpoint affects his or her views on the world and on the research matter -- directly influences

the pattern used to understand and investigate reality, which is known in research as methodology. (Novikov and Novikov, 2013).

In the context of this study, an interpretivist paradigm has been adopted. Just like constructivism, interpretivism centres on people's perception of reality (Arthur et al., 2012), and owes much to Husserl's phenomenology, which focuses on human consciousness and awareness of the self, and Dilthey's hermeneutics, or the study or reality interpretation (Ling and Ling, 2016; Neuman, 1997).

It is, however, the ontology of interpretivism that, perhaps, appears most important in the context of this work, as it envisages reality as socially constructed, which means every person can have and live a different form of it, based on social and cultural habits and beliefs (Mertens, 2009). It is evident, therefore, that an interpretivist view of reality is strongly connected with personal and social parameters and relates very closely to the specifications of the context and sample taken into consideration (Ling and Ling, 2016): an interpretivist paradigm, in other words, allows for the development of a study based on a multifaceted truth, which is a mirror to the very multifaceted nature of the subject investigated (Lokesh, 2015). This work aimed to explore the role and significance of hashtag feminism among Nigerian women: so, by its very nature, a methodology was needed that offers and allows for the gathering of varied, diverse, and highly personal attitudes to the topic of each and every participant. The research aimed to gather women's personal perspectives and experiences, informed by factors that ranged from family values to education, from life experiences to their own attitude to and use of social media therefore an interpretive study was adopted.

However, the use of an interpretivist paradigm should not be considered a purveyor of a less than objective or less than accurate analysis, because of the very nature of the subject

investigated: a single, univocal view on participants' perceptions, with the aim of achieving a universal answer to the research question based on data, would fail to mirror the real, varied, nature of the phenomenon. This is very well explained in the interpretivist definition of epistemology, according to which knowledge is subjective because reality itself is, as it is founded on a construct that may change from person to person (Pathak, 2008; Novikov and Novikov, 2013). Even more decisive, perhaps, is Pathak (2008)'s acknowledgement that truth should be sought within human experience, and that only variation and diversity can come from this approach. In the specific context of this work, a Feminist epistemological approach -- which is concerned with the theory of knowledge related to how women experience and live in their own terms (Stanley and Wise, 2012) -- has been applied, with the aim of focusing on a knowledge of reality which is "focused on women" and "carried out by women who (are) feminist, for other women" (Stanley and Wise, 2012: 4).

Crucial, therefore, in the context of this study, are the experiences and words of people, which, through analysis, become an important fragment of the truth as a whole, fragments influenced and shaped by culture history, society, religion (Ling and Ling, 2019). It is just as important, however, to underline that, common traits, in the form of patterns and themes, are identified in the data, and it is within their analysis that answers to the research questions have been sought.

This work's axiology rests well into an interpretivist paradigm, too. As discussed by Lichtman (2012), reality is constructed and its knowledge can be found only in experience and its understanding, which the researcher interprets, following his or her specific set of values and ethical principles. This should not be viewed as a type of bias, because the researcher openly presents a specific paradigm, thus fully disclosing all factors involved in

the analysis and contextualisation of research (Ling and Ling, 2019). Moreover, the work has been conducted applying essential ethical concepts such as objectivity, transparency, and openness about limitations and issues, throughout the research process, as advised in the literature (Ling and Ling, 2019; Lichtman, 2012).

4.2. Research Design

A qualitative research design was adopted for this research as it is appropriate for finding answers to a set of specific questions, within a specific context (Mills et al., 2010; Anastas, 1999). Gerring (2004) simplified this by saying that qualitative research focuses on the “hows” and “whys” of a phenomenon and that, for these reasons, it is centred on the subjectivity of reality. The essentiality of a research design is given by its very nature, as it wants to give structure and linearity to the various methods, instruments, and data used by a researcher so that research questions can be answered appropriately (DeVaus, 2001). As noted by Trochim (2006), it is a map of the research itself, through which unambiguous, data-supported answers can be found (Mills et al., 2010; Creswell and Creswell, 2018).

In quantitative design, the aim is to classify features, count them and construct statistical models to explain what is observed.

This work utilised a case study research design. A case study is defined as the analysis of a given research topic, which is led by a series of research questions (Vogt et al., 2012). The case study structure is usually applied when researchers want to narrow down and focus the scope of their work so that data are easier to collect and their analysis can be more detailed (Leedy and Ellis Omrod, 2013). Because of the specifications of this work, namely its geocultural aspect of it (Nigeria and Nigerian women), the source of information (social media) and the distinct phenomenon (hashtag feminism) taken into consideration, a case study was deemed to be the most adequate qualitative design, as it gives the opportunity to narrow the focus and concentrate on the in-depth views of the participants on their use of

social media and on hashtag feminism. The case study was chosen for its adaptability and potential to add significant knowledge to my topic.

Case studies can involve some problems. They are often based on small samples, which may make it more difficult to find reliability (Greenhalgh, 2015); however, participation in this study was wide, and the sample numerous enough to establish reliable results, at least when considered from a qualitative perspective. Similarly, other issues often associated with case studies, such as researcher bias, have been avoided by applying thoroughly basic ethical principles of research, as explained by BERA (2018), and which will be further discussed below, in a section fully dedicated to ethics.

4.3. Sample

The target population for this study was women of Nigerian descent, aged 18 or over, studying attending Babcock University and residing in Nigeria, with only a few attending classes online and being part of the Nigerian diaspora, and who were active on social media platforms.

Purposive sampling was adopted, to allow participants to be selected based on those appropriate to explore the aims and objective of the research and of the environment where recruitment took place (Daniels, 2011). Purposive sampling is usually utilised when research wants to obtain in-depth knowledge of a specific event or phenomenon (Daniels, 2011). In this study, it allowed focus on women of Nigerian descent who are active on social media, two fundamental characteristics to obtain meaningful data. Their online presence was assessed at baseline when searching for participants and an active social media presence was required to take part to the project. This sampling method was beneficial to this study because of the need to reach people (young women) within the Nigerian social media space who were interested in offering their views on specific experiences. The contacts made by the university staff member sparked interest in the student community, especially among young

104

women interested in this particular topic, possibly in name of their academic interests (the vast majority are law or political science students).

Participants were recruited with the collaboration of Babcock University's academic staff. University staff spread the word about the study among students and the response surpassed expectations. One hundred printed questionnaires were distributed, with 70 of them being returned to the researcher in class on the day, 58 of them completed sufficiently and used in the study, thus yielding a response rate of 58%.

4.4. Data Collection Methods

This study employs a qualitative approach as the basis for data collection. Lune and Berg (2017) point out that qualitative methods are suitable for measuring unquantifiable phenomena and focuses on understanding the "whys" and "hows" of the phenomenon under investigation. It involves the careful selection of methods within a specific conceptual framework to address the research questions effectively. In this study, data was collected through a survey and a focus group interview. Although conducting the focus group online limited the researcher's ability to capture specific physical behaviors and reactions to topics in more detail, the seven participants in the online focus group were proactive and vocal in expressing their views. Their confident articulation of opinions and thoughts contributed to the collection of a rich and diverse dataset.

To justify the sequence of data collection methods and ensure comprehensive data collection, it was important to gather a broader understanding of the whole sample's background in feminism, social media usage, and awareness of women's rights. Therefore, both surveys and interviews were employed in the data collection process. While surveys are traditionally used as quantitative research tools, their use within a qualitative study differs. In this study, the qualitative survey was designed to gather opinions and views, providing a description of the

topic. The survey and interview tools were merged to obtain a comprehensive picture of the topic, combining quantitative data collected through surveys or questionnaires with qualitative methods such as interviews or focus groups to explore specific relevant matters. The primary objective was to collect qualitative information.

Using a qualitative approach for this study offers several advantages. First, it allows for the integration of qualitative data into quantitative data, making the findings more reliable and replicable. It also facilitates a better understanding of the subject and enhances triangulation. The combined use of surveys and interviews provides flexibility and adaptability to various study designs, offering greater opportunities to obtain significant data. Most importantly, this approach enables the collection of rich and comprehensive datasets, as it combines both qualitative and quantitative materials, providing a more complete picture of the researched topic. In this study, both survey and interview findings were integrated (Lune & Berg, 2017). The questionnaires provided clear, quantifiable, and critical information about the participants' experiences, while the focus group interview yielded detailed information on the impact of hashtag feminism on the participants' views and opinions.

4.4.1. Questionnaires

The questionnaire explored how hashtag feminism impacted participants in their private, social, economic, and political lives, how they came across feminist knowledge and how their interaction with feminism online impacted them overall. The questionnaire used was drafted on the 19th of December 2019 and was approved for use by the University of Salford, Health Research Ethics Team on the 16th of January 2020. While it was formulated carefully, it was not tested in a pilot study before submission. The survey was submitted to students at Babcock University, Ogun State, Nigeria, in January 2020, to students of Law, Public Administration, Political Science and International Relation, copies of the questionnaire were

made available during classes. They were returned in class and given to the researcher on campus when in Nigeria to conduct fieldwork. This form of direct distribution helped reach a considerable number of interested students within a brief period and supported the dissemination of the questionnaire in other classes.

4.4.2. Focus Groups

Questionnaires were followed by an online focus group with seven participants, some of whom took part in the initial survey. Considering the unexpected participant interest in the survey, it was initially planned to carry out face to face focus group interviews, to which 20 women had already given consent. However, the plan was thwarted by the pandemic and by the impossibility of carrying out interviews *in situ* at the university. Due to the pandemic less women wanted to participate, possibly due to their own personal situation. However, one online focus group with seven participants was able to go ahead instead. The issue will be explained further below, in the section dedicated to this study's limitations. The focus group gave participants the opportunity to share their accounts of what they think about feminism in the Nigerian social media space and how they have been impacted by it in their private, social, economic, and political lives.

By definition, focus groups are a research method utilised to gather data via group interaction (Silverman, 2011). The group is usually formed by a small number of demographically similar participants (Watkins and Gioia, 2015) and the aim is to explore indepth their thoughts on specific subjects. Focus groups are a useful method of data collection because they add extra depth to existing quantitative data, in this case, collected through the survey.

Much like it happens with semi-structured interviews, which are carried out with a set of open questions prepared in advance by the researcher, this focus group was based on the interaction originated by a series of questions formulated on the basis of the most significant results of the survey, with the goal of deepening the understanding of specific themes (Punch and Oancea, 2009). In particular, the questions wanted to investigate the direct involvement of participants with hashtag feminism, their understanding of activism, as well as the changes feminism brought to their conception of womanhood socially, ideologically and personally. As suggested by the literature, questions were left open to encourage conversation among participants, so that further relevant data could be collected (Opdenaker, 2006) and they were developed after having conducted a small online pilot with two participants.

The focus group produced important data also through other forms of data collection: through observation of participants' interaction with one another, but also, however limited by the mode of meeting, of their body language and reaction to each question and each other's contributions (Guest et al., 2012). This allowed for a further understanding of the participant's attitudes towards offline activism and their opinion on the current feminist agenda.

As discussed earlier due to the Covid19 pandemic, the focus group could not be carried out in person; it took place online, on Zoom and involved 7 participants from various parts of Nigeria. All of them had taken part in the survey. The session was recorded, after consent had been given by all participants, who had signed a release form, prior to the focus group meeting, details of which will be given in the privacy and consent section of this chapter. As suggested by Silverman (2010) and Merriam (2009), the researcher took notes throughout the

session, both about the content of the discussion, as well as the attitudes, connections, and behaviour of the sample, with the aim of using them at the analytical stage to further the understanding of raw data.

4.5. Data Analysis

Data analysis in this study followed a thematic interpretivist approach, aiming to explore the rich qualitative data and identify key themes that address the research questions (REFS). To facilitate a systematic and comprehensive analysis, the qualitative data analysis software NVivo was utilized. NVivo played a pivotal role in managing, organizing, and analyzing the qualitative data collected from the survey responses. One of the major advantages of using NVivo is its ability to efficiently handle and manage large volumes of qualitative data (Cypress, 2019). The software served as a centralized database where all the survey responses, focus group transcripts, and other relevant textual data were imported and stored. This streamlined the data management process and ensured easy access to the data during the analysis phase.

NVivo's coding capabilities were instrumental in the analysis process. The software enabled the creation of a coding structure or codebook, which provided a systematic framework for labeling and categorizing segments of the qualitative data. Through NVivo, the researcher assigned codes to specific sections of the data, capturing the main themes, concepts, and ideas expressed by the participants. This coding process allowed for the organization and retrieval of data based on specific themes or research questions, facilitating a comprehensive exploration of the dataset.

NVivo also provided advanced tools for visualizing and exploring relationships within the coded data. The software allowed the researcher to map connections and patterns between codes, enabling the identification of associations and recurring themes across the dataset. This feature enhanced the researcher's ability to make meaningful connections and draw deeper insights from the qualitative data. NVivo offered powerful search and retrieval capabilities. The software allowed the researcher to perform complex searches and queries within the dataset, making it easier to locate specific data segments or patterns of interest. This functionality was particularly valuable when examining variations within themes, comparing responses across different participants, or exploring specific aspects of the data. Throughout the analysis process, NVivo supported the iterative nature of qualitative data analysis. The researcher could continuously review, revise, and refine the coding structure and thematic framework within the software. NVivo's flexibility allowed for the modification and reorganization of codes and themes as new insights emerged or as a deeper understanding of the data unfolded.

In addition to the NVivo analysis of the survey data, the focus group interviews were analyzed manually using an open coding approach. Open coding involved the careful examination of the focus group transcripts to identify patterns, processes, and recurring ideas that emerged from the data. During the open coding process, the researcher actively sought connections and insights within the focus group data. The transcripts were analyzed line by line, with relevant segments identified and selected for coding. This process allowed for the identification of codes that captured the essence and meaning of the participants' perspectives and experiences. Once the initial open coding process was completed, the researcher engaged in selective coding. Selective coding involved the integration and combination of open codes to develop a restructured understanding of the participants' experiences. Through this

process, the researcher refined and consolidated codes to create themes that represented broader concepts and ideas present in the focus group data.

The themes derived from the focus group analysis were reviewed and revised to ensure their coherence and meaningfulness in relation to the research questions. The researcher revisited the focus group transcripts, verified the alignment of the themes with the data, and ensured the integrity and accuracy of the analysis. Throughout the analysis process, the researcher actively engaged with the focus group data, constantly reflecting on the findings and discussing them within the research team. This collaborative approach enhanced the reliability and validity of the analysis and ensured that the interpretations were grounded in the participants' perspectives.

Combining the NVivo analysis of the survey data and the manual coding of the focus group transcripts provided a comprehensive understanding of the participants' perceptions and experiences. The integration of these two analytical approaches allowed for a triangulation of findings, strengthening the overall credibility and trustworthiness of the study's conclusions.

4.6. Ethical Considerations

This study was carried out in accordance with the British Sociological Associations ethical guidelines and followed the ethical principles of beneficence (doing good) and nonmaleficence (not causing harm) (Hammersley and Traianou, 2012; BERA, 2018) which have been respected throughout the researcher's interaction with participants and during the analytical work. In order to guarantee accuracy and lack of bias, all secondary sources have been referenced accurately and discussed objectively (Miller et al., 2012). A consent sheet and information sheet were given to each participant with the survey. The sheet was returned

signed, along with the completed survey. In the information sheet, the aims and objective of the study were accurately explained, along with the methods used to store data and the possible avenues of dissemination of the work once completed. The consent form underlined that all information was reserved, and anonymity was guaranteed throughout the research process; it also presented the possibility to give consent to the second phase of the research and take part in the focus group. Participants interested in extending the collaboration were contacted a second time via e-mail, and given another consent form, specifically formulated for the ethical and privacy necessities of interviews. In it, anonymity was reiterated, along with the right of withdrawing from the project at any time, provided notification was given to the researcher prior to the day of the focus group; it was also clarified that the focus group interviews were going to be recorded. In order to maintain anonymity, survey respondent's names have been represented by numbers while focus group participants are represented by alphabets unrelated to their real names. All collected data have been kept in a password protected file in the researcher's laptop computer, which is password protected. A copy of all data was saved on a USB key, kept in a locked drawer.

It is important to note that the research did experience a fair number of setbacks, mostly related to the global pandemic, however, the researcher was able to modify the design accordingly, in order to, protect the integrity of the research. Limitations of the research, modifications, reflections, and possible impacts are discussed further in the concluding part of this chapter (4.7).

4.7. Limitations of Research

A major limitation to the research has been the global pandemic and other pressing global occurrences. It was intended that the survey would not be limited to university students, a

few feminist, social media pages had agreed to survey their followers, however this could not happen. As the nature of engagement on social media is very much dependent on the right time to publish posts, there have been limitations. Social media pages and influencers rely heavily on the mood of their audiences to share posts. First due to Covid 19 and the resulting lockdown, then the sexual assault crisis (#JusticeforUwa #JusticeforTina) resulting from the lockdown which was then followed by #JusticeforGeorgeFloyd and #BlackLivesMatter and the more recent #EndSARS, It would be simplistic to say that the target audience, women of Nigerian descent on social media, had been preoccupied with these very significant issues, that putting out the survey would be in poor taste and might come across insensitive.

Whilst the survey was carried out physically, a few weeks before the first national lockdown, in Nigeria, due to the pandemic, it was impossible to replicate that sort of success with intended subsequent surveys. More specifically, social media groups which had previously signified their interest in informing their followers about the survey could not do so before the survey data had to be collated and subsequently analysed.

There are also limitations related to the sample and the way it has affected results. As mentioned, all participants of the survey were enrolled in university at the time, which means that some of the main points associated with #feminism in Nigeria, those associated with equal rights to education and with the role of education in women's emancipation may have been under-reported. Women who are actively enrolled in third level education are already aware of its importance and may, therefore, not include it among what #feminism has made them aware of. For this reason, it is important that future research is expanded to other groups of women, to obtain a more representative outlook.

Upon completion of the project and reflection on the work carried out, it emerged that some things could have been carried out differently to obtain potentially even more significant data to analyse. While the utilisation of focus group was a time effective and cheap qualitative data collection method, and while the focus group that took place offered a large number of interesting ideas to develop, organising more than one session and gathering more groups than one would have been beneficial: using one focus group only heightened the risk of bias on the researcher's behalf and while validity was sought through the analysis of relevant secondary sources and the surveys collected, it could be argued that the sample was too small and that one session only, carried out with one group of participants only, may not be sufficient to guarantee the strength necessary to validate the conclusions reached.

The original idea behind this project was, in fact, to involve more respondents and to carry out more focus groups, but plans were heavily disrupted by the coming of the Covid-19 pandemic, which, excluding the first survey, did not only remove entirely the possibility to carry out further research in person, but also limited the researcher's opportunities to travel, collect information and put together material. However, the data collated within the survey and follow up focus group have been sufficient to develop findings, analysis and follow up discussions which not only answered the research question but also established areas for further research.

The next chapter will present relevant findings from the survey and subsequent focus group carried out, whilst full data sets are presented below in the appendixes.

Chapter 5: Findings

This chapter presents the findings originated from the survey and the focus group carried out with the aim of understanding Nigerian women's perceptions of hashtag feminism and its impact on their lives. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the survey was carried out in January 2020, at Babcock University, Ogun State, Nigeria. The survey questions that were more relevant to provide an answer to the research questions will be presented in more detail in this chapter, with the complete results being available in Appendix 1.

The focus group interview took place online, via Zoom, in November 2020: this was necessary because of the social distancing requirements brought by the pandemic. Seven women took part in the session. Participants would signify their interest in answering by clicking the raise a hand icon. The questions flowed with the conversation and were relevant to contextualising the survey's responses. Data analysis led to the identification of four specific themes: *Nigerian women mostly learn about feminism on social media; #feminism raises awareness about women's issues among young educated Nigerian women; most young educated Nigerian women support and share feminist ideals, but they do not always identify as feminists; #feminism increased online participation and activism but, so far, not offline activism.*

Each theme will be presented and discussed in the second part of the chapter, where findings will also be contextualised within current relevant literature on the topic. A concluding paragraph will bring together and sum up the main concepts established in the chapter.

5.1. Presenting Findings

The most used social media among participants were Instagram and YouTube, while Facebook was the least used (Appendix 1: Table 2.1); all respondents (=58) were active on one or more platforms, even though the amount of time spent on them varies, with most spending 3 to 5 hours weekly checking and updating their pages. It can be easily deduced that social media are a common part of the life of our participants' demographic (Appendix 1: figure 3). This matches previous data collected and discussed in relevant literature (Balamurugan and Thanuskodi, 2019; Kim and Kim, 2017; Drouin et al., 2018).

A Vast Majority of Young Educated Nigerian Women in the Sample Learned about Feminism Online

Crucially, the vast majority of respondents (n=40 or 72.7%) declared to have learned about feminism online and, more specifically, on social media, followed by other sources such as school and books. Only a small number of the people surveyed (n=5) said to have discovered feminism at home. Considering this outcome, it was decided to investigate the matter further in the focus group; in particular, exploring the role of schools in creating awareness about feminism appeared of interest. When questioned about it, all seven members of the focus group declared their interaction with feminism in school was mostly through classmates and discussion among peers, but that little was derived from the actual curriculum. Respondent 45 stated that, however, the importance given to women figures, especially in history classes, could serve as a positive trigger to develop an interest in feminism and gender equality

Most Young Educated Nigerian Women in the Sample Identify as Feminists

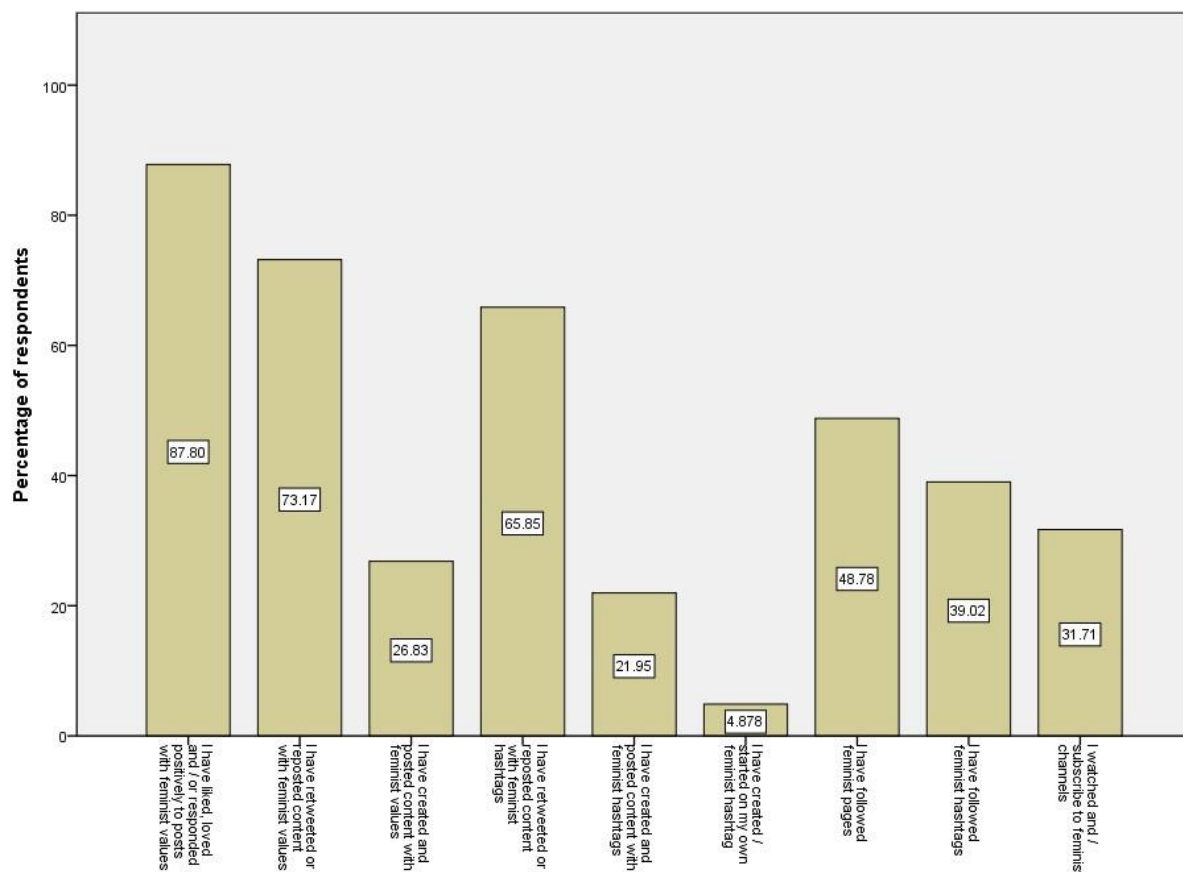
When asked in the survey whether they identify or support feminism, the vast majority (62.1%), of respondents revealed they do, but there were also others who did not (=10, 17.2%) or did only in part (=6, 10.3%). In the focus group, the idea was further unpacked, with a Participant saying that she was somewhat a feminist but “but I’m not an extreme feminist,” and others mirroring her view by showing they ultimately do agree with the main stances endorsed by Nigerian feminists (professional and educational equality, end of abuse, end of rape culture etc.). Indeed, Respondent 52 stressed that “No, I’m not a feminist, but, to a certain extent, I agree with some of the things being discussed.” Some raised conventional feminist debates: for instance, Respondent 35 said she largely agreed with traditional gender roles, and that was one of the reasons she did not consider herself a feminist: “I simply believe in the equality of both sexes but not negating the existence of certain duties which are peculiar to a particular gender.” Similar was the opinion of respondent 57, who said: “I believe that women should have equal rights, but there are just some things women can’t do.”

What is Feminism to Young Educated Nigerian Women, do they Identify as Feminists?

The meaning of feminism was different to different respondents (Appendix 1: Table 2).

Many of the respondents believed that feminism is the equality of both sexes, with some considered feminism a synonym for women’s rights, or for fighting for them. Perhaps more crucially, data -- those of the survey in particular -- showed that, regardless of its meaning to them, almost the totality of participants (=52, 89.7%) strongly believe that feminism is

relevant to them. This puts into context the data presented earlier, where “only” 62.1% of respondents wrote to identify with or support feminism, as it appears that a number of participants do consider feminism relevant yet refrain from supporting it or identifying with it. When discussed in the focus group, it emerged some may refrain from openly declaring themselves “feminists” because they still feel unconsciously oppressed, or for fear of being singled out. These factors may be also behind findings presented in Table 4 (Appendix 1) where participants answer questions about their online and offline engagement with #feminism. The vast majority of respondents to the survey did not participate actively in any #feminism debate on social media, yet they also declared they have been inspired by the connections they made and the interaction they witnessed online. However, the number of people who did not find #feminism inspiring was relatively high (=23, 39.7%), only a small fraction actually became active offline, by meeting other feminists or participating in events and marches. The subject was discussed in the focus group, where it emerged some participants did not participate actively because they were more interested in observing and sharing #feminism content across their social media, as they thought that was safer and more effective. Ultimately, it seemed that spreading the message was more important than actively participating in forums or marches. This is significant, because it shows, once more, that there is some reluctance to be recognised as a feminist and to take active initiatives: this will be further discussed in the thematic analysis of data, in the next section of the chapter.

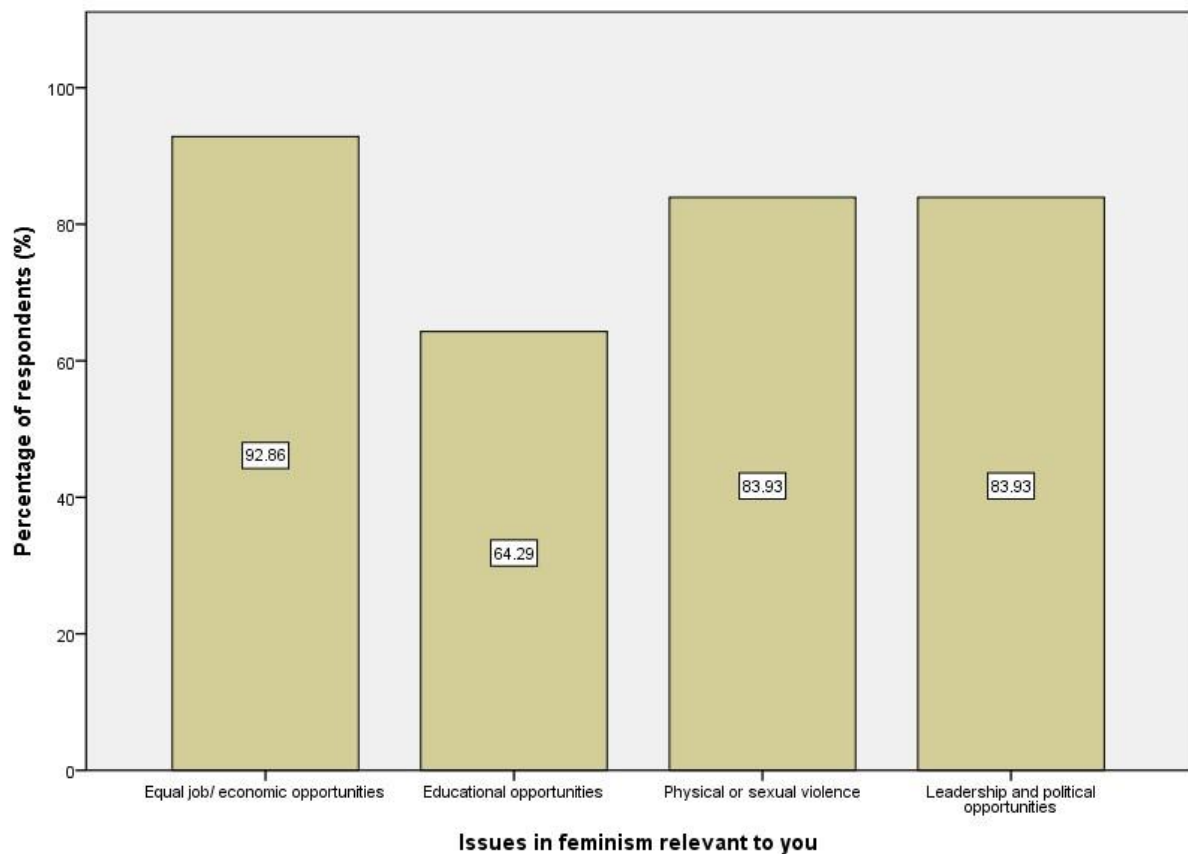


Overall, participants declared to have a positive response to #feminism content (Appendix 1: Figure 4), with over 70% having shared it on their social media. Again, however, it appears that things change drastically when it comes to actively creating content. Some of the things the respondents indicate they would do differently after engaging with feminist content on social media include, supporting existing feminist campaigns, engaging more in feminist topics, focusing more on speaking against sexual and domestic violence, working to be an independent woman, working to make policies and laws in women's favour, speaking against women discrimination, enlightening people about equal rights regarding women, supporting women in education, politics and life.

Interestingly, when asked what they would do to make #feminism more powerful in Nigeria, the highest number of participants to the survey mentioned they would avoid radical feminism in order for true feminism messages to be spread.

Both the survey and the focus group revealed the impact of engaging with feminist discussions on social media, how it shaped participants' attitudes to feminist issues, how it has changed their views or supported their views in 4 key areas: education, economic, social context, and political context. It emerged that #feminism helped most participants to understand the importance of education in the life of women, although this may be a biased result, as all participants are in third level education at the moment, thus showing they were possibly aware of it before encountering #feminism. Significant was also the number of women (26) who felt they could sponsor a girl's education. On the economic impact of feminist messages, almost 90% of the survey respondents mentioned they made them more aware of the importance of being financially independent and 70% expressed a desire to start working before getting married. It also appeared that participants were more interested in women-owned businesses and aware of the necessity to endorse professional and pay equality between men and women. Crucially when it comes to the social impact #feminism had on their lives, participants stressed how socio-cultural experiences impact the national gender gap and that #feminism is more likely to inform their personal decisions on marriage and relationships and to influence how they would raise and relate with younger girls. It also emerged that a majority of participants are more likely to speak up against negative socio-cultural norms. On the political impact of hashtag feminism, the survey revealed more awareness of what their rights are, 34 (64.2%) of the respondents are more aware of the lacuna in the Nigerian system that hinders women, 30 (56.6%) of the respondents are more

likely to speak up about systematic oppression of women in Nigeria, 19 (35.8%) of the respondents are more likely to support a public official who expresses an understanding of these systemic problems and 27 (50.9%) of the respondents are more likely to protest for or request changes in the law that help bridge the gender gap.



According to the data represented in figure 3 (Appendix 1), issues vital to most of the respondents in this survey are equal job and economic opportunities, closely followed by issues of physical and sexual violence and leadership and political opportunities. Right to education was also high in their consideration. It is imperative to unpack this section. With regards to economic opportunities, some scholars have argued the stark lack of economic opportunities for women is only a reflection of the general scarcity of economic opportunities for young people in the country (Uduji et al., 2019). However, others recognise the general

limitations but emphasise that Nigerian women experience this more significantly than Nigerian men. Another notable highlight from this section is that the participants, being university students, seem to show less concern about limited educational opportunities when compared to other issues. However, it is important to note again, as Tayo, Thompson and Thompson (2015) highlight, the unequal access of Nigeria's uneducated to social media and unequal access to information.

In a qualitative study of 20 community members of low-income communities in Ibadan, Oyo state, they found that lack of internet access, affordability of computers and internet usage, poverty, lack of computer skills, and poor infrastructures contributed to the digital divide. This would signify the absence of these voices in Nigeria's social media space and, as this study shows, perhaps a depreciation of their concerns. As this finding highlights, these participants are least concerned about an issue which many scholars emphasise as one of the most critical issues for women's emancipation in Africa (Roberts, 1983; Sossou, 2006; Bitrus Dayil and Vickers, 2020; Alemika and Agugua, 2001). Furthermore, studies (Wilkinson and Kitinger, 1996) highlight the complications of representing others with ethnic, economic, or cultural experiences unlike one's own.

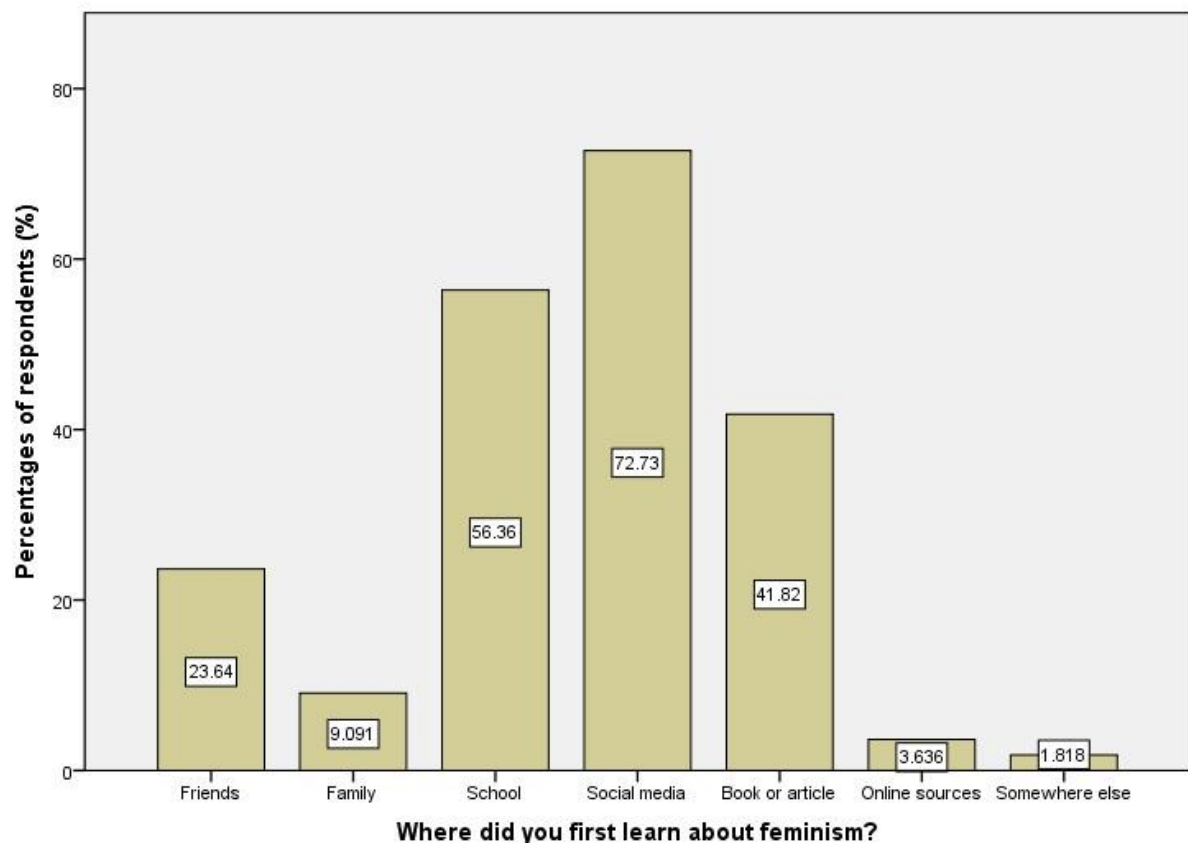
Findings on the interactions of survey respondents with feminist topics on social media revealed that most of the respondents in this study have observed feminist issues discussed on social media. These issues include equal job / economic opportunities for both sexes, educational opportunities, sexual and domestic violence, and leadership and political issues. Only 3 (5.2%) of the respondents have not seen any of the feminist discussions on social

media at all. Over 60% of the respondents have engaged with posts on social media relating to feminist discussions. Almost 60% of the respondents believe that their engagement with feminism on social media has increased their understanding of feminism, which means that social media interactions have greatly risen awareness on the topic, a factor that was also addressed in the focus group, where respondent FG1 was adamant her engagement with feminist issues increased as “social media amplifies everything.” Indeed, social media increases the opportunities for people to have a platform and to connect with politically conscious and active individuals, a thought that over 70% of participants stated.

5.2. Thematic Analysis

As mentioned in the chapter’s introduction, the analysis of data led to identifying four main themes in need to be discussed and addressed. This section will present and discuss each of the themes, contextualising them within the wider picture provided by literature discussed and presented in Chapter Two and Chapter Three. Finally, the two research questions proposed in Chapter One will be answered, based on the analysis of the four themes themselves.

Theme One: Young, Educated, Nigerian Women Mostly Learn about Feminism on social media



As the table above demonstrates the vast majority of respondents (=40 or 72.7%) declared to have learned about feminism online and, more specifically, on social media, followed by other sources such as school and books. Only a small number of the people surveyed (=5) said to have discovered feminism at home. Considering this outcome, it was decided to investigate the matter further in the focus group; in particular, exploring the role of schools in creating awareness about feminism appeared of interest. Where was this disjunction between feminist studies and online feminism coming from? What is the reality? And, importantly, what are the perceived implications? It is important to note that this is being discussed as the first theme since it recorded the most obvious results.

(Ampofo, Beoku-Betts, Njambi and Osirim, (2004); Omotoso, (2020); Gunawardena et al., (2004) When questioned about it, all seven members of the focus group declared their interaction with feminism in school was mostly through classmates and discussion among peers, but that little was derived from the actual curriculum. Respondent 45 stated that, however, the importance given to women figures, especially in history classes, could serve as a positive trigger to develop an interest in feminism and gender equality

Theme Two: #feminism Raises Awareness about Women's Issues among Young Educated Nigerian Women

Both the survey and the focus group revealed the impact of engaging with feminist discussions on social media, how it shaped participants' attitudes to feminist issues, how it has changed their views or supported their views in 4 key areas: education, economic context, social context, and political context. It emerged that #feminism helped most participants understand the importance of education in the life of women, although this may be a biased result, as all participants are in third level education at the moment, thus showing they were possibly aware of it before encountering #feminism. Significant was also the number of women (26) who felt they could sponsor a girl's education. On the economic impact of feminist messages, almost 90% of the survey's respondents mentioned they made them more aware of the relevance of being financially independent and 70% expressed a desire to start working before getting married. It also appeared that participants were more interested in women-owned businesses and aware of the necessity to endorse professional and pay equality between men and women. Crucially when it comes to the social impact #feminism

had on their lives, participants stressed how socio-cultural experiences affect the national gender gap and that #feminism is more likely to inform their personal decisions on marriage and relationships and to influence how they would raise and relate with younger girls. It also emerged that a majority of participants are more likely to speak up against negative socio-cultural norms. On the political impact of hashtag feminism, the survey revealed more awareness of what their rights are, 34 (64.2%) of the respondents are more aware of the lacuna in the Nigerian system that hinders women, 30 (56.6%) of the respondents are more likely to speak up about systematic oppression of women in Nigeria, 19 (35.8%) of the respondents are more likely to support a public official who expresses an understanding of these systemic problems and 27 (50.9%) of the respondents are more likely to protest for or request changes in the law that help bridge the gender gap.

According to the data represented in figure 3 (Appendix 1), issues vital to most of the respondents in this survey are equal job and economic opportunities, closely followed by issues of physical and sexual violence and leadership and political opportunities. Right to education was also high in their consideration. It is imperative to unpack this section. With regards to economic opportunities, some scholars have argued the stark lack of them for women is only a reflection of the general scarcity of economic opportunities for young people in the country (Uduji et al., 2019). However, others recognise the general limitations but emphasise that Nigerian women experience this more significantly than Nigerian men. Another notable highlight from this section is that the participants, being university students, seemed to show less concern about limited educational opportunities when compared to other issues. Tayo, Thompson and Thompson (2015) highlight the unequal access of Nigeria's uneducated to social media and unequal access to information.

A qualitative study of 20 community members of low-income communities in Ibadan, Oyo state, found that lack of internet access, affordability of computers and internet usage, poverty, lack of computer skills, and poor infrastructures contributed to the digital divide. This would signify the absence of these voices in Nigeria's social media space, and as this study shows, perhaps a depreciation of their concerns (Tayo, Thompson and Thompson, (2015; Okunola, Rowley and Johnson, 2017).

As discussed, participants are least concerned about an issue which many scholars emphasise as one of the most critical for women's emancipation in Africa (Roberts, 1983; Sossou, 2006; Bitrus Dayil and Vickers, 2020; Alemika and Agugua, 2001). Furthermore, studies (Wilkinson and Kitzinger, 1996) highlight the complications of representing others with ethnic, economic, or cultural experiences unlike one's own.

Findings on the interactions of survey respondents with feminist topics on social media revealed that most of the respondents in this study have observed feminist issues discussed on social media. These issues include equal job / economic opportunities for both sexes, educational opportunities, sexual and domestic violence, and leadership and political issues. Only 3 (5.2%) of the respondents have not seen any of the feminist discussions on social media at all. Over 60% of the respondents have engaged with posts on social media relating to feminist discussions. Almost 60% of the respondents believe that their engagement with feminism on social media has increased their understanding of feminism, which means that social media interactions have greatly risen awareness on the topic, a factor that was also

127

addressed in the focus group, where respondent 43 was adamant her engagement with feminist issues increased as “social media amplify everything.” Indeed, social media increase the opportunities for people to have a platform and to connect with politically conscious and active individuals, a thought that over 70% of participants stated.

Theme Three: Most Young, Educated, Nigerian Women Support and Share Feminist Ideals, but they do not Always Identify as Feminists

There seems to be some reluctance to be recognised as a feminist and to take active initiatives, the tension between their online feminist community, where they could share views and opinions and get support, contrasted strongly with experiences of dismissal by significant others in their everyday lives, which is well represented in this quote from Mendes, Ringrose and Keller, (2018):

Most of my offline friends wouldn't identify as [feminist]. I have been really surprised and disheartened, when talking to them about feminism, by their reluctance to acknowledge the socially constructed nature of femininity and the influence of culture on behaviours/practices that they consider entirely free choices. I have found this frustrating, and at times upsetting because I have come away from some conversations feeling as though the problem lies with me – as though I'm imagining things, that it's about my personal issues, that I'm over-sensitive and so on. This has encouraged me to get more involved with feminism online, where I have found support and realised that I'm not alone. (Emphasis added)” . Mendes, Ringrose and Keller, (2018: 165)

Theme Four: #feminism Increased Online Participation and Activism but, so far, not Offline Activism.

Whilst a majority (56.9%) of the respondents did feel inspired to join offline and online collective action, the percentage of people who were not inspired by #feminism to join offline collective action were relatively high (39.7%); a lesser percentage (20.7%) had gone further to set agenda online for offline action, and a significantly lower percentage (15.5%) actually became active offline, by meeting other feminists or participating in events and marches.

Jodi Dean examines the culture of activism that is heavily reliant on hashtags that do not translate to offline action: she terms this a “technology fetish” (Dean 2009:10), where the use of online activism can cultivate a semblance of solidarity with others, which may result in people believing that small online actions, for instance, posting or reposting, liking and sharing hashtags, in solidarity for a cause, have greater meaning than they do. This adopts the concept of “slacktivism,” which Lee and Hsieh (2013: 45) define simply as engaging in “low-cost, low-risk online activism”. Slacktivism has been applied to online activism generally, but in their chapter titled “‘Hashtag Feminism’: Activism or Slacktivism?”, Chen, Pain and Barner (2009) explore the concept further, through the lens of feminist theory in the specific area of hashtag feminism.

Dean (2009) theorises that several forms of hashtag activism are essentially passive, however posits that the illusory solitude on the internet amplifies the feeling and perception of solidarity associated with these online movements, making them feel more grandiose than they really are. Dean terms this a “technological fetish” or delusion where “technology covers over our impotence and supports a vision of ourselves as active political participants” (Dean 2009: 36). Subramanian, (2015) on the other hand, challenges Dean’s theory, explaining that slacktivism, is a disparaging means of depicting social media activism,

further emphasising that existing research tend to characterise activism as “concrete actions,” such as protests, marches and campaigns, and the ideals represented by such “concrete” actions (Subramanian, 2015: 324) Her position is that this characterisation disregards other basic components that constitute activism along with concrete actions and values, such as the debated issue taken up by action, fundamental principles constituting the formation of action, and the actors creating the activism (Subramanian, 2015; Sherrod, 2006). Furthermore, Subramanian, (2015) recommends that social media activism needs to be rethought and redefined as a form of activism in itself, not needing the backing of offline action, rather than being thought simply as complementary to offline activism.

Whilst it is valid to propose a redefinition of online activism as complete activism, independent of offline action, it is however crucial to analyse the respondents’ heavy reliance on online activism. Upon further investigation, this research sample paints a wider picture, which presents a deeper understanding of why young Nigerian women are more likely to participate in activism online rather than offline. Indeed, the topic needs to be discussed independently, from the four themes identified, because of its relevance, even though it did not recur sufficiently in the collected data to constitute a theme in itself. This research ultimately highlighted that, young educated Nigerian women believe that #feminism is “safer” and an “effective” tool for social change.

5.3. Young educated Nigerian women believe #feminism is a “Safer” and “Effective” tool for social change.

Whilst the survey presented a stark decrease in offline participation when compared to online participation in feminist activism, the subject of reduced involvement in offline activism was further analysed by participants in the focus group. Respondent FG2 affirmed their belief that

small online actions can make positive impacts: “This social media, it helps, it pushes people, it gingers people towards coming together, removes the barrier, helps people who think alike come together to corroborate on one matter.” AB’s view mirrors the conceptualisation of hashtag feminism purported by Dixon, when writing that it can be “a virtual space where victims of inequalities can coexist together in a space that acknowledges their pain, narrative and isolation” (Dixon, 2014: 34).

Lee and Hsieh (2013) also theorise women may be more likely to share a feeling of belonging to an organisation with others using and disseminating the same hashtag, a hashtag that created a union akin to that of a “in-real-life” movement.

However, they also include that a hashtag may turn out to be simply a tool of “slacktivism, a combination of slacker and activism,” which is more commonly applied to small acts online, such as “liking” or reposting a tweet for a political or social group, signing petitions online, and forwarding letters or videos about an issue (Lee and Hsieh, 2013). It is also important to note that the research survey found that 70.7% of respondents believed campaigns occurring through hashtags could make an impact towards achieving policy changes for women in Nigeria,

Upon deeper investigation, it was revealed that the majority of participants did not engage actively due to their greater inclination towards observing and sharing #feminism content on social media. They perceived this activity as being safer for them and more impactful in spreading their message.

5.4. Contextualising “Safety” of Social Media Activism

Whilst Respondent FG5 condemned that there was not enough activism going on offline, Respondent FG3 explained that she felt more confident advocating online: “I personally

make it a point of duty to respond online, I will drop at least one comment telling people to reconsider what they are saying or at least stating my views.”

Antunovic (2018), Dixon (2014) and Mendes, Ringrose and Keller (2018), amongst many others caution about the challenges of digital activism for women’s safety online, Mendes et al, specifically note that digital technologies make the distribution of online maliciousness “easy, persistent and vicious;” Jane (2017), Shaw(2014), and a range of other feminist research have also suggested that Twitter is a significantly “negative and toxic space” for women, with Dixon (2014) cautioning about the inability of “intimate publics” to decipher who is really passionate about the cause, leaving women vulnerable to online bullying, harassment, hate speech, or violence. However, this research uncovers that, despite the above-mentioned dangers, young, educated, Nigerian women believe that the relative anonymity of social media spaces provided them a sense of protection, they seem not to find offline.

Respondent FG3 goes further to explain why she feels safer and more confident online: “(...) On social media everyone is making their views known and I feel safe to do so, but offline, I personally will not put myself in harm’s way (...)” further emphasising that she has, “a very strong instinct for self-preservation (...) I’m not going to step in and get flogged or shot at.” It is worth noting that the focus group discussion was carried out barely a month after the #EndSARS protest which had gone viral worldwide (Busari, Sunday and Salaudeen, 2020) and led to offline protests. The offline movement was quieted when the military opened fire on young Nigerian citizens. This harrowing event is now known as the Lekki toll gate massacre (Busari, 2021).

Describing her thoughts on how a feminist campaign which trended using the #EndSARS was developed, Respondent FG3 discussed her views on how a woman was stopped on the

streets and flogged for dressing indecently by soldiers who were allocated to manage the #EndSARS protest (Akinkuotu, 2020). She noted: “What they’ve done (bystanders) is what they could, which is record it, knowing that they have a chance to get her justice, online, even if it is after the fact.”

Whilst it is inevitable that the fear created by the government and officials’ response to the #EndSARS protests would influence the respondents’ beliefs, it is important to note that the survey, which found that only 15.5% would participate in offline action, was carried out in January 2020, 9 months prior to the protests, which occurred in October 2020. It is then important to briefly unpack women’s experiences at offline marches, which could have influenced other women’s understanding of whether it was safe - or not - to go out protesting as a woman in Nigeria. Ekemimoh (2018) narrates her experience at the #MarkeMarch in Ogbete, one of a series of marches demanding an end to the normalised sexual harassment and bullying of women in some markets.

The market march reached its climax at the clothes section of the market, populated by predominantly male vendors. One man called us Lesbians, and others then pitched in to deliver a fervor-filled ‘Holy-Ghost fire!’. Repeatedly.

All the while making lewd remarks at us. In some other quarters of the market, we faced passive aggression. A man stroking the arm of a marcher holding a big ‘No Touching’ sign, all the while looking her directly in the eye, smug smile intact.

Or a wheelbarrow pusher deliberately and quickly driving his machine through our midst.

But it wasn’t only the men.

A woman queried us softly in Igbo ‘Are we not human beings too? Why should we not touch you?’ and another, still in Igbo lowly snarled

‘You should tell the girls to dress better when they are coming to the market’

But it was not all negative. We received thumbs-up signs from some female traders, quiet nods from the male vendors, and the occasional 'Well done' or 'Yes!'

Some, in solidarity, chanted back at us 'Nwanyi bu Ife' or 'Nwanyi Bu ike' which in its simplest translation means 'women matter'.

The market leaders, predominantly men, wore our shirts and marched with us. They led chants and spoke with the traders at different parts of the market, as they guided us to open spaces where we could address crowds. They largely acted as chaperones. (Ekenimoh, 2018).

Whilst the offline actions recorded many wins, including solidarity and support from traders and market leaders, Ekenimoh (2018) and Alake, (2018) amongst others, highlight the ironic harassment of the women who marched, while they marched against harassment. Alake highlights, "You could hear the needless catcalls of 'Ashawo' (prostitute)" (Alake, 2018: 69). On participating in feminist activism online and experiencing online bullying, however, Respondent FG3 noted, "(...) for social media, I believe we can make our views known, they don't have to agree with me, but one on one, especially if it's likely to turn violent, then no!" Ultimately, it seemed participants believed that spreading the message online was safer and more effective than actively intervening or participating in marches. Mendes et al. (2018) also found that, despite threats women and girls encountered on social media platforms, designed to challenge their rights to political participation in the online public sphere (Salter, 2016), the participants largely continued their digital feminist activities. Despite the risk and hostility, Twitter and other social media were still largely believed to be a safer space for women to engage in feminist discussions than any offline location (Mendes et al., 2018).

5.5. Contextualising the Effectiveness of Social Media Activism

Participants discussed the effectiveness of social media activism when answering the question. Being online and the idea of “going viral” is mentioned as a standard evaluative method to understand when an online campaign becomes “effective” as stated by FR: “It is only when things go viral that they do something about it.”

To the question, “Do you believe campaigns occurring through hashtags can make an impact towards achieving these policy changes?” A significant majority, 70%, answered they did believe feminist hashtags have a positive impact on achieving policy changes on feminist issues, like women empowerment and inclusion; equal job opportunities and reducing discrimination, equal rights; abolition of child marriage; domestic violence; policies on abortion; reducing rape and sexual crimes against women. In this section, the participant’s belief that hashtag feminism has been positively impactful is examined and critically analysed, statistical data from the survey is buttressed with findings from the focus group discussion to further understand reasons for the significantly occurring belief and examine with secondary data whether there is any validity to their belief, furthermore recommendations will be made to improve the study of activism and specifically feminist activism in Nigeria.

Respondent FG1 said, “It is only social media, it is only when issues go viral on social media that they pay attention to it”. Respondent FG3 affirmed, “... more importantly, we can actually drive action, ... at least in some cases, ‘cos I know that that soldier was found, and I know that another one that was flogging someone on a queue was also found,”. However, Respondent FG4 rejects the efficiency of hashtag activism, “To me social media is not real, whatever I see there, I don’t even take with a pinch of salt, I just wakapass (ignore it), the real people causing these problems are actually not even on social media” Respondent FG4 further explains that many women are harassed by security officials who have little or no

access to social media platforms, she highlights the struggles women go through “everyday” in northern Nigeria where she lives, women being harassed for “indecent” dressing, and also her personal experiences as a young educated hijabi woman, being discriminated against because people assume she’s an uneducated “child bride”, she emphasised, “imagine, if I was actually young uneducated Hausa girl, who was married off early, she was just going to treat me like a piece of dirt, and imagine how many grassroot women get treated like that every day”, Respondent FG3 advises on offline actions that can be taken, “write a letter, raise it to their bosses” other respondents also shared their experiences at government offices with clerical staff, revealingly, it became evident that the focus group were describing their experiences offline with the “educated”, “common” who go to “school but do not let school go through them” who are “religious and impose their beliefs on others”, Respondent FG1 concludes by saying “I feel like it’s the poor mentality” “educated amongst the illiterate”. This brings to question the class and economic conditions in Nigeria, and how it relates to the reach of the impact of #activism in Nigeria, (Abidemi Olabode, 2018).

Respondent FG4 cautioned that the issues that had gone viral did not covers issues concerning underprivileged Nigerian women who weren’t on social media, Respondent FG3 further advises on the need to use every tool/resources available to advocate, she “we can only do what we know something about”, “Is social media THE way, no, but it’s a way”, “we should use any tools and any resource we find, is how I feel about this”

In conclusion, some scholars posit other safer avenues, ‘Jallov describes how community radio has allowed women in rural areas of Mozambique to organise themselves, discuss education, leadership, and self-confidence, and “to ensure the inclusion of women’s experiences and viewpoints” (2004).

5.6. Conclusion

This chapter presented in detail, the data gathered through both surveys and the focus group that involved seven participants to the research. The quality and quantity of data collected served well to answer the two main research questions that led this work: whether Nigerian women consider #feminism an instrument of feminist activism, and whether and how they believe #feminism influenced their perception of their rights and position as women in the Nigerian society. The answer to both questions are, in fact, emerging already from the raw material presented in this section, and could be summarised as follow: through this research it does emerge #feminism does support Nigerian women activism, but perhaps not in the most classical attestation of the term, that is, one that involves a physical presence and demonstrative action that requires a physical place of gathering and action. It does, however, support a deeper, more subtle version of activism, one that is based, as it will be discussed in the next two chapters, on the creation and development of a feminist conscience that leads individuals to finally orient their thinking and their actions towards a more conscious feminist stance.

In addressing the second research question, “how does #feminism affect their own perception of women’s rights and womanhood in Nigeria? “: it emerged that participants, by becoming more aware of what feminist thought was, and by feeling more engaged through #feminism, developed a better understanding and a stronger communion with the idea of defending women rights in their country more actively. This was also mirrored in the way they perceived themselves in the more intimate way, as an independent being whose womanhood has been constructed through society, neglecting their most basic rights of self-determination, of equality and respect.

Along these two significant topics, a third one emerged, connected to them but not directly necessary to answer the research questions proposed: the idea of being a feminist, and of

“safe activism:” this, along with the answers to the two research questions, will be discussed in detail in the next chapter.

Chapter 6: Discussion

This chapter will extend the discussions introduced in the previous pages. In chapter 5, we analysed the

role of #feminism campaigns on social media in the development of Nigerian women's feminist activism and discussed how does it affected participants perception of women's rights and womanhood in Nigeria, based on the data collected via the survey and the focus group. As mentioned in its conclusion, data were sufficient and rich enough to provide clear answers to the research questions posed, and to introduce another topic of interest, which needs to be briefly explored here as an introduction, and perhaps could be considered for further research, “safe activism” will be considered and discussed in this Chapter. The first part of this chapter therefore focuses on whether Nigerian women consider themselves feminists and on the meaning of feminism to them and how strictly it may be associated to the idea of safe activism. Then, both research questions proposed are answered with further considerations gathered from previous research propositions.

6.1. Are we feminists?

Before discussing how findings contribute to answering the proposed research questions, it is necessary to understand and analyse what emerged in the focus groups and surveys about the idea of feminism embraced by young Nigerian women and what their relationship with feminism as a movement and as an instrument of self-assertion is considered.

Data collected showed that participants do agree with feminism, but within specific, clear connotations: they embrace feminism when it comes to the struggle for equality in education, work, for the end of abuse and rape culture, that is, when it comes to factors widely acknowledged as basic human rights. There is, however, a reluctance among participants to identify fully and decidedly with feminism and with “being a feminist.” Indeed, statements such as “I am not a feminist, but I share some of their values,” or “I would not define myself a feminist, but I support the movement” were often repeated by participants and emerged often both in the surveys and during the focus groups.

This is an important aspect of the research, a part of the findings that, while not involved directly in providing an answer to the research questions, it is key to understand women’s frame of mind when it comes to feminism, to their rights and to the idea itself of activism.

Here, the relevance of Nigeria’s social history, in particular, of the evolution and change of the female ideal during and after colonialism, becomes key. As explored in Chapter Two and underlined in the works of Kim (2007), Mama (2003) and Aina (2014) among others, the socio-cultural constructs superimposed by colonial values and capitalist expansion upon the African social reality are to be considered the very core of the difficult position of women in African society still today. The subject is complex, but worthy of discussion, in light of the above presented results. Many African tribal societies of pre-colonial times had a strongly matriarchal structure, with female figures, both historical and associated with the realm of spirituality,

taking centre stage, and holding high symbolic and factual power (Sharma, 1989). However, this status quo was to change with the coming of Western powers into the continent: with their rule, malecentric socio-cultural constructs were imported into African nations (Okeke-Ihejirika, Moyo & Van Den Berg, 2019); with them came also the idea of women as subdued to patriarchal power, and relegated to a position largely associated with motherhood and the care of the home, a view that differed from that of a tribal societies where women were not only considered central to the community, but often elected to rule them, protect them and lead them (Marwa Abdul et al., 2011).

The superimposition of western values and social habits upon the African substratum lasted well after the end of colonialism (Igiebor, 2011) and is to be considered the root of the ideological and cultural hegemony of the male in contemporary African societies: it is not surprising, then, that feminists are seen as negative examples of womanhood. To say it with Garba Kangiwa (2015), women kept on being depicted through the lenses of the patriarchal and religious ideals of neo-colonialism, where their subaltern, submissive social role was emphasised.

It has to be understood that this was not only true for men, who expected women to be socially and personally dependent on the male, but also for women, who found themselves entangled in a cultural and social image of womanhood and femaleness that was accepted and perpetrated by women themselves. If, as underlined by Igiebor (2021), such state of things did not change even after the ratification of the

Nigerian constitution, nor after the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women came into force (Garba Kangiwa, 2015), then it should not surprise that, even today, even among educated and somehow socially active women, the idea of embracing feminist ideals in toto and unashamedly can result difficult.

If key female figures in the lives of young women somehow embody an image and idea of womanhood that is, at least in part, opposed to that endorsed by modern feminist ideals, the relative reluctance of some participants to embrace fully the “feminist” tag is more understandable. Because full-fledged feminism was not accepted and the role of women was not emancipated even after the end of the colonial era – nor was, perhaps, the ancient cultural connotation of womanhood proper of tribal Africa resurrected in full (Lewis and Baderoon, 2021) – younger generations found themselves torn between two realities: the first represented by their national and often familial culture, where women remain subdued to the patriarchy and another, embodied by a more modern, more globalised view of womanhood, where gender equality, women rights and open debate in support of women are not only accepted but very much required to define a civilised society (Tamale, 2020).

This is not to say, of course, that contemporary Nigerian women accept inequalities: previous literature and this very research show they are strongly vocal about achieving equality in education, in employment and in working actively towards the end of misogynist attitudes and culture, however, there is a limit to the type of involvement they are willing to accept, there is a line that, it quite seems, many still do not want to cross.

As it will become more evident through the development of this chapter, this ideal line seems to be very much that of factual, “offline” activism, which is also largely associated with defining oneself “a feminist:” it is a very complex, very delicate subject to discuss and research, but perhaps one that is not solely associated to African women. Even in the West, where “being a feminist” went through periods when it was a sine qua non condition for women with a social conscience, strict association with the most extreme ideals of the movement is not as openly expressed today as it was thirty years ago (LeGates, 2001; Oren and Press, 2019), in spite of the acute rising of worrying gender-based violence and feminicide across the Western world

(Oren and Press, 2019). While this is not the place to discuss the reasons behind Western dualism towards feminist ideals, it is nevertheless important, and quite telling, to highlight that it is not only African women who have been walking this path.

It is in this context that one needs to look at online activism and #feminism in Nigeria, a context where women are eager to rise and defend their rights to equality, safety and respect and to empower themselves, but also where history and society have been, for longer than in other areas of the world, keeping women under the thumb of patriarchy, so much so that even when understanding and sharing the message of feminism, many still refrain from defining themselves as such. #Feminism becomes, in this context, a safe opportunity to express ideals that many women may not feel to express through offline action quite yet: while the vast majority of women involved stated that online activism inspired them to join offline action, the percentage of them who refrained from doing so is still significant, as discussed in the previous chapter; the number of women who actually did engage in offline feminist protests and action is very low, yet another sign of how true to life the considerations made in the previous pages are. But there is more to unpack here because it is not solely and simply a matter of cultural attitude, based on decades of gendered submission, it is also a matter of how activism and, crucially, safety, are perceived. Dean (2009) discussed widely the idea of online activism as a form of involvement that gives an idea of what socio-political involvement can be, but that is ultimately far from actual, significant activities, an idea also supported by others (Lee and Hsieh, 2013). However, such conception seems rather superficial, when viewed through the lenses of this work's findings: in truth, none of the participants appeared to focus on online, rather than offline, activism because they felt it was "easier," rather, they focused on the idea of "safety" and on that of "outreach:" in a country such as Nigeria, which is deeply rural in essence and where activism mostly takes place in large centres, online activism can become both a way to participate without being physically presence to the protest, but also, perhaps

even more importantly, a way to disseminate ideals, to share points of view and to involve more women. Subramanian (2015), as mentioned in the previous chapters, did underline this aspect of online activism, one that Dean (2009) bypassed quite completely, and while it can be certainly argued that physical, offline involvement perhaps makes more noise and tends to be noticed more, online feminism should not be discounted, especially in contexts as specific and complex as that Africa.

Here, perhaps, is the idea of safety that takes centre-stage: indeed, safety has been mentioned in more than one occasion by participants as one of the reasons why they engage in online activism but refrain from participating actively, in real life to protests. In part, the idea of safety women refer to may be associated with the previous discussion on social acceptance and on the ongoing inner turmoil any woman likely goes through when brought up in a country with profoundly patriarchal values, where femaleness is considered inferior to maleness and the role of women is strictly tied to their ability to procreate and care for children and husbands; online activism gives the undecided, the more timid, an opportunity to get involved, to try the waters, so to speak, and get an idea of what activism is. But the online feminist community is also a great place to learn and to get acquainted with feminism, as it has been demonstrated by answers given by the participants to this study: it is a place to confront and share ideas, to develop opinions and to disseminate information; it is a place which, crucially, is accessible to many, even to those who are not in university, or cannot travel to access socially and political relevant activities in urbanised areas of the country, or wherever they take place. Of course, in this context, one cannot forget there are also issues of digitalisation at stake, and of the actual reach into the deeper heart of the country – and the continent – of internet technology, as presented in Chapter Two and Three, to which the author directs the reader for further information.

The idea of safety, which has emerged quite often in the research, is one in need of further exploration, and that will be discussed in more detail in the last chapter of this work, dedicated to new avenues of work. May it suffice here to underline again that, for many women, online feminism may be a steppingstone, but also a first step into the world of gender equality and women rights, a step that they may have not taken, should they have engaged in offline activities, where their anonymity and privacy could not be preserved.

This is not, it needs to be stressed, a matter of shame: participants do not speak of shame, but safety, because, while being educated, active in an academic context and therefore more open to certain ideas, they remain widely and deeply aware of the social stigma that may still be associated with being an activist for women in a country where feminism was associated with only negative connotations up to a very recent past (Kim, 2007; Oren and Press, 2019). Far from being a platform to hide something considered shameful, the online world is a locus where Nigerian women can spread their metaphorical wings and get ready, if they wish, to take the leap into offline, in-real-life activism, but where they can also safely remain to disseminate a right message of equality, and to keep on learning.

On the basis of these considerations, then, and as an opening statement to the further, in-depth analysis of this study's findings, would it be correct to say that young Nigerian women are feminists? The answer is yes, but with some reservations, mostly related, as explained in these pages, to the socio-cultural baggage they all share and that is common not only to Nigeria, but to the post-colonial world, as a whole. A baggage that goes, however, hand in hand with a newly developed awareness of women rights and need for equality, as well as a strong, powerful call to end gender-based violence, which is often rooted in cultural practices. Awareness that belongs to Nigerian women just as it belongs to women everywhere, because injustice, rape culture, abuse, inequality in education and in the professional world are still the problem of many, in many parts of the world. It is in this global context of unrest and search for a righteous,

unbiased position in society and culture that Nigerian women look at #feminism as a platform to inform and get informed, as an instrument that can be at once a weapon against inequality and a shield to protect them from social exclusion, as it will emerge more clearly through the discuss that follows.

6.2. Research Question One: What is the role of #feminism campaigns on social media in the development of Nigerian women's feminist activism?

Data collected from both the survey and focus group show that the vast majority of participants learned about feminism and feminist activism online, more specifically, on social media. Moreover, discussion in the focus group showed that participants' attitude towards feminist activity and knowledge about feminist principle was developed greatly thanks to online interaction with peers, especially on social media platforms. More specifically, it has emerged that online activity related to feminism helped participants grow an awareness and developed or changed their views on key aspects of feminist debate, education, economy, social and political context. The importance of #feminism was particularly strong when it came to creating awareness about education and how achieving equality in it is an essential starting point to direct change in all other directions. Participants also underlined how interacting with other feminists on social media helped them become aware of the problems at stake and how they themselves can make a difference; a specific accent was placed on, once more, education equality, job opportunities, misogyny and domestic violence, just to name a few.

To sum up, then, #feminism, that is, the online presence, especially on social media, of feminist-oriented activity, had a relevant weight on the development of feminist issues' awareness

among the women of the sample, especially when it comes to education, social issues, political issues and rights to equality.

So far, it is clear, the key term associated with participants' online engagement with feminist issues is "awareness." Undoubtedly, their knowledge about feminist ideologies has increased thanks to #feminism and their participation, both active through sharing and creation of posts, and passive through simple gathering of information, has augmented. But this does not equal being an activist: as noted by Mutsvairo (2016) but also identified by Beardon (2004) earlier, engaging with feminist content online does not equal being an activist, and this seems to be very much the status quo among the women who participated to this research.

This is not, it needs to be stressed, a matter of whether digital activism is activism or not, a topic which has been discussed extensively in Chapter Three, but of whether Nigerian women involved with #feminism perceive and consider themselves activists, and whether they engage in offline activism. On the basis of findings, the answer is: only in part, and depending on what it is intended by "activism."

While mostly supporting – some of them with strength – feminist ideas, the majority of participants not only refrains from defining themselves feminists, but they do not engage in offline activism, nor do they create feminist content, but rather only share what they already find available online. The idea of passive activism, which is exactly what participants do when sharing content under the #feminism, is not to be underestimated, especially as an instrument of proselytism and information distribution, which has been taking place for decades, on a plethora of platform and through many an avenue.

As discussed in Chapter Three, digital technologies have been a powerful instrument for the active dissemination of feminist messages for quite a while. Digital technologies, and social media in particular, did not change the way activism works, but rather, they added an array of

choices and possibilities for activists to communicate, to disseminate ideas and to gather (Clark, 2015). Crucially, it has been underlined (Nilan and Feixa, 2006; Pleyers, 2011), younger generations have been taking to social media as an activism platform at an international level, perhaps bringing together for the first time, in real time, activists from every corner of world in support of significant hashtags and initiatives (Clark, 2015).

Thanks to social media and to #feminism, thanks to the way it allowed them to take part in the global discussion about women rights and to apply it to the specific context of their country, Nigerian women became more actively involved in the growth of the modern feminist movement at national level. As shown by this study, they have met other, like-minded individuals online, they have shared ideas and hashtags, they have learned about women rights and women rights history. Very importantly, through social media and #feminism, Nigerian women also managed to raise awareness globally about national issues of injustice and abuse against women, as in the case of the #bringbackourgirls hashtag. Of course, this is not to say that, prior to the rise of the social media phenomenon, feminism did not exist in Africa and Nigeria, for the many reasons discussed in Chapters Two and Three and also in the previous section of this one but denying their importance and key centrality would be a mistake.

It is, however, a different type of activity, one that, some may argue, is not activism at all. Is participating through sharing being an activist? And is gaining conscience about feminist issues, embracing them in daily commitment and daily life a form of activism, even if not in the stricter sense?

Activism does involve, in today's idea of it, some type of physical mobilisation: events, debates, gatherings (Naples and Bojar, 2013), but in its essence, it primarily involves the birth and nurturing of a feminist consciousness (Wilson, 2021; Mendes et al., 2019; Swank and Fahs, 2017), which does not depend on factual activities, but rather on an inner, personal journey and

epiphany. Now, such moment of enlightenment can and should be shared with others (Mendes et al., 2019) and, in this, women become “active” representatives and vessels of the feminist message, through their own life choices, their own example and, indeed their own sharing of feminist ideals (Hawkesworth, 2006; Mendes et al., 2019) on and offline.

Earlier waves of feminist activism were notably based on university campuses and ideals were transmitted via fanzines, publications and discussion groups (Schrupp, 2017; Freedman, 2007; LeGate, 2001), an image of feminist activism that became part of the collective imagination related to women rights; but even looking back further into the history of the feminist movement, into the very inception of women rights activism, one cannot but notice the importance and, it should be stressed, power, of silent, passive activity: the mother of feminist philosophy, Mary Wollstonecraft, never demonstrated in a street, nor did she took the stage and incited to action; she wrote and disseminated her ideas through the art of literature, eloquence and elevated thought (Moore, 2017). She recognised the key role of education and the inherent intellectual equality between men and women, an extraordinarily subversive idea for those times (Moore, 2017; Goodwin, 2014); she rose a child who was to become one of the first successful women novelists in a genre, gothic literature, and touching upon themes – the evolving and somehow unknown relationship between Man and Technology – that were pioneering for those years, inaugurating a fortunate season for novels and tales of horror, with a much deeper hidden meaning (Bennet et al., 2000; Schor, 2003). It is also thanks to the non-manifest, but powerful effort of those early feminists, who continued nevertheless to live a life profoundly affected by patriarchal values, that today’s feminists found the righteous strength to walk down the streets and make their voices heard, also literally.

The particular connotation of African feminism, and Nigerian feminism in particular, has been discussed in the previous section, but it needs to be reiterated here: open activism, offline activism, may not be the right option for all women yet, for a series of historical and cultural reasons that find their roots in the history itself of the country, but this does not mean they cannot make their voice heard and embrace the struggle towards rights, freedom and equality.

Indeed, it all comes down to one matter: whether online activism on its own, that is, sharing of idea, thoughts, philosophies, the dissemination, and discussion of the ideology, can be considered actual active participation to its development. Many consider online activism a form of “slacktivism,” as proposed in Chapter Three, but considering the above-mentioned core meaning of feminist activism, that is, developing a feminist consciousness, and the actual power of dissemination offered by online platforms, such a negative tagline seems rather unjust. While being active online to purport and defend ideals may not be as, blatantly effective, and “in-your-face” as participating to a march, it is nevertheless a powerful action to take and one that embodies a key aspect of feminist – and more in general, ideological – activism: sharing of ideas, sharing of concepts, mutual support, dissemination. It was mentioned when discussing early feminists: without any pragmatic, physical manifestation of union with the ideal, they managed, through the sole power of words and ideology, to create, lead and grow the movement.

Nigerian women of today are, in many a way, comparable to those enlightened, early feminist à la Mary Wollstonecraft: they live within a society where the power of the male is generally still accepted and where gender-based inequality is still thrive; they still have limited access to education when compared to their male peers, and violence against them is still often hidden under the all-encompassing blanket of domesticity. Many of them, live in areas where access to any form of cultural event, reading or talk focusing on women and their rights is limited, if

available at all. Many more, perhaps, are surrounded by women of older generations who do not know and, perhaps, do not understand, the importance of obtaining equality and refusing subjugation not because they are unable to cognitively understand it, but rather because they belong to a socio-cultural world imbued with misogyny, where inequality has been normalised. In these conditions, then, the digital world becomes an open window on a realm of rights, of empowerment and knowledge that takes up where schools or families may have lacked (Mendes et al. 2019); social media in particular, thanks to their interactive nature and their immediacy create equality and represent place where everyone on the same level, giving the opportunity to interact and learn (Wilson, 2011).

Participants to the study also underlined they found social media a welcoming place to interact and that they tend to prefer #feminism to its offline counterpart, because it is considered “safer,” an aspect already discussed in the first section of this chapter; indeed, these considerations fit well into findings of previous research, where online-based activism tends to be particularly welcomed and widely preferred by younger people (Ellison et al., 2007), perhaps also in name of how natural their interaction with technology is, when compared to previous generations. While not all sociologists and not all research appear to find online platforms a positive outlet for effective activism (Boas, 2006; Zittrain, 2008; Mozorov, 2009a), it seems that, at least in the context investigated by this work, social media have provided a functional way for many women to develop a feminist conscience, to share feminist ideas and to become acquainted with feminist activism. What remains to be decided, which is crucial, because it represents the very answer to one of the questions leading this research, is whether online activism, in the form of #feminism, can be considered true feminist activism and whether it influenced the rise of activism among Nigerian women.

As discussed at length in the previous pages of this chapter, participants largely admitted that #feminism and being active on social media helped them develop a better, deeper awareness of feminist issues, of their rights as women and also of how and why women keep on suffering in their country. In other words, #feminism helped participants develop a feminist conscience, and understand the value of their womanhood, their femaleness, and the absolute relevance of their rights. Developing a feminist consciousness is a key aspect of activism, as mentioned in the literature (Wilson, 2021; Hawkesworth, 2006; Naples and Bojar, 2013; Mendes et al., 2019). In this, then, it can be said that #feminism did help Nigerian women actively engage with feminism and become aware of their rights.

But there is more, because through #feminism Nigerian women found an international platform to communicate and share, to learn and inform, thus becoming part, in the virtual world, of the global feminist movement, a factor that empowers and strengthens communities across the world: it is the traditional, somehow romanticised idea of “sisterhood” that returns, a sense of mutual and continuous support multiplied and strengthened by joining an international community. In this sense, then #feminism does help Nigerian women get in touch with activism, because it helps them develop a feminist conscience and to become part of a larger community that share the same aims.

Some argue that #feminism, that is, online feminist activism cannot be strictly considered the same as offline activism, but questions about this aspect can be raised: #feminism does help the dissemination of feminist ideals among Nigerian women and does offer a platform to support and bring to international attention what Nigerian women perceive as injustices, inequalities, dangers: in this way, then, online activism can be compared to offline activism. Moreover, the cultural and political situation of the country should not be discounted: in this context, it is important to underline the idea of “safety” that so many women underlined, too,

because for some of them, perhaps, taking up offline activity could be unsafe, or impossible for personal, geographical, or practical reasons.

Lastly, the image of those early, pivotal feminist figures like Mary Wollstonecraft and her daughter Mary Shelley, should not be discounted: far from being “active” in the street to demonstrated and protests for the rights of women (in a way that was to become normal in the 20th century with the Suffragettes movement), they nevertheless created through their words and the dissemination of their work, the very heart of what feminism is, and means. Just like them, it seems, Nigerian women are using #feminism to pass on an important message, to open minds, and to describe and explain, even before defending, what women rights are to their fellow Nigerians. This is, indeed, activism.

6.3. Research Question Two: How does #feminism affect Nigerian women’s perception womanhood in society, and women rights?

The matter of how #feminism affects Nigerian women’s perception of their own femininity and of their own rights is complex, but fully based on the discussion developed in the previous section, related to the role of online activism in developing a feminist conscience and in bringing Nigerian women together with one another, as well as with an international community oriented towards achieving the same aims.

The surveys but especially the focus group that developed within this study proved how young Nigerian women found in social media a place of personal, social, and political expression they consider “safe” and effective for the spreading of an important message of equality and justice, as widely discussed in the previous sections. Because their presence online supported the development of feminist awareness and of a feminist conscience, through which the

dissemination of feminist content and ideology became important to participants, it has been concluded that #feminism, at least in the specific context of Nigeria, does represent an important form of feminist activism, even if it does not often reverse itself offline, in the streets. The second research question that guided this work wanted to know how and how much #feminism shaped participants' perception of their own being women and their own role as women within their sociocultural context. One specific aspect emerged powerfully through the research: young, educated Nigerian women find #feminism and online activism powerfully liberating, a way not only to develop social awareness of women rights, but also to understand oneself in depth. This fits well into a socio-cultural narrative that has emerged already in the literature, where #feminism managed to create a space, albeit fully virtual, where women can express themselves, can coexist and share experiences and also examples of inequality and injustice (McCann, 2019; Jackson, 2018). By doing so, women carved a space for themselves where their struggle, pain or isolation is not only acknowledged, but shared, where common experiences of inequality, abuse or injustice become the starting point for a process of growth and personal development and of self-realisation as a woman (Jackson, 2018). By stressing the important role of social media as a platform to decompress, as well as discuss #feminism, participants clarified a key aspect of social media as a feminist activism platform: they help create a sense of community (Zaslow, 2009; McCann, 2019) and to define their actions as women as "feminist" and significant in the struggle for equality. As noted by Jackson (2018) and also Andrews and MacNamara (2014), social media activism becomes a communitarian endeavour, which at once helps the individual become part of a greater whole, thus providing ideological meaning to their actions, as well as understanding better their inner needs, wishes and personal struggles; for women, feminism teaches us, personal struggle or personal pain can often be affected by gender struggles and gender pain (Mousli and Roustang-Stoller, 2009), in a powerful merging of social and intimate, of group and individual.

Nigerian women, it transpired from this study, are coming of age online, when it comes to the development of their feminist consciousness: sharing opinions, objectives and goals means also making them very practical, very tangible, very real. When mirrored in that of another, a personal gendered struggle is no longer solitary, but communal; when experienced and shared by many, one's injustice becomes a group's injustice. And this is when a conscience of gender is born, when Nigerian women stopped being single individuals fighting against local, personal segregation or perceived inequality, to become the tassel of a nation- and world-wide mosaic. This is key for the development and perception of one's idea of self because it postulates the birth of a social self, that is, of one's presence in society, in this case, in specific relation to their gender. #Feminism, then, is not only an instrument to disseminate and inform, to be active and to learn, it is also an instrument of self-discovery. This is particularly important in the context of developing countries, because feminism has been historically articulated as a western ideology and a western endeavour (McCann, 2019; Zaslow, 2009). Even when dealing with injustice and inequality in developing countries, it was always the "western feminists" to instruct and "save," with non-western women relegated to the passive role of powerless victims; but #feminism changed that, because it finally placed women from countries like Nigeria at the heart of the feminist action; Nigerian women, just like women from other parts of the developing world – which is, truth to be told, where the feminist struggle is most needed to achieve equality and justice – found themselves at the heart of the action, and finally able to bring to the world's attention their very own struggle as women, as exemplified by the #bringourgirlsbackhome hashtag. This view supports a postmodernist and postcolonial perspective of feminism where the movement is no longer centred on one perspective, that of the West, but it is varied and multi-faceted and where more truths and realities can be accepted (Jackson, 2018). More crucially even, it allows marginalised women realities, such as those of

women from developing countries, to create a reconceptualization of feminism that fits their own experiences and their own needs (Zaslow, 2009; Jackson, 2018).

#Feminism also has an impact on the way women consider their rights, an aspect that emerged especially during the focus group. The use of social media has certainly supported the development of a new frontier in the way women disseminate and inform others about their struggles (Flores et al., 2020) but also in the way they handle the diffusion and the support of women rights' campaigns: one of the main points emerged from the focus group is that #feminism highlighted women's solidarity and sharing experiences online became a symbolic moment of union for a greater good. In large part, the importance of such virtual union has been discussed in the sections earlier, but there are still some considerations to make, in particular, about the connection between #feminism and women's perception and knowledge of their own rights. As underlined in the literature (Andrews and McNamara, 2014; Dixon, 2014; Munro, 2013) modern feminism had become, just like the society in which it developed, highly individualistic in the past two decades; this also meant that, in large part - and especially in areas such as the West, where feminist struggles for equality and rights are, albeit still very much necessary, perhaps less felt on a large scale and less pressing than in countries where primary of women are trampled upon on a daily basis – feminists tackled feminist issues on their own and for themselves (Crossley, 2015). The inception of #feminism brought about again the idea of union and communion among all women, and of an inherent connection of all women in name of gender rights, regardless of the place of origin, the social status, the level of education. As mentioned already, #feminism brought back the idea of “sisterhood” that was so much part of feminism' second wave, perhaps a naïve and stereotyped concept, but certainly very effective to describe the sense of unity and common goals that feminist women feel they share with one another (McCann, 2019; Andrews and MacNamara, 2014).

Participants to this study did understand the unifying power of social media and they understood the role #feminism can have in bringing together people for a cause, including key aspects of women's struggle for equality and equal rights: by bringing together in a sole place, accessible and easy to manage and consult, hundreds of people sharing and discussing, awareness is risen, facts become known, and action can be planned. The real key aspect of #feminism when it comes to women rights is, therefore, information. Information as sharing of events that stress a specific aspect of society that must be changed (as in the case of the #metoo movement or, in Nigeria, of the #bringourgirlsbackhome movement) but also to raise awareness among women about what they must expect from society: equality of education, equality of pay, freedom of choice, the end of male social and cultural domination (Nunez Puente, 2011). More than a simple place to organise offline action, then, the online feminist community seems to be a locus to build minds and the feminist conscience, as widely discussed further above, and not only because here women rights are presented in their specificity, but also because minds are formed, trained, educated to understand the reasons behind the righteousness of the rights women demand (Cochrane, 2013). This may seem superfluous in a western context, where feminist ideas and women studies are part of the curriculum even in secondary schools nowadays, but it is absolutely key in developing countries such as Nigeria, where a nationwide feminist conscience is still in the making.

Conclusion

This chapter brought together and discussed in more depth the findings gathered through surveys and the focus group, with the aim of answering the two main research questions posed: what the role of #feminism is in the development of Nigerian women's feminist activism and how it effects their idea of womanhood and women rights in Nigeria.

On the basis of the findings analysed, it can be concluded that Nigerian women's use of #feminism has been useful to the development of a more aware, more active feminist movement and that it also supported a rise in awareness among women about their rights and how to achieve equality. Of course, the discussion is complex, as part of the current academic literature tends to consider online activism not as efficient as offline activism, but this is not necessarily true depending on the context. In countries such as Nigeria, where gathering in urban areas can be difficult for many, and where rural existence is still preponderant, the dissemination of feminist ideas through a means as ubiquitous as the internet can be, in fact, key for the creation of a real feminist network. Of course, the fact technology has not, as of today, reached every corner of the country cannot be forgotten, yet, the socially charged presence of women online should be considered key to spread the message, to inform and to ensure that a more capillary diffusion of feminist ideals is reached. Key, it has emerged, is a wider definition of activism, that includes not only activities per se, but also the idea of creating and developing a feminist conscience among women, which is exactly what #feminism has been doing in Nigeria, according to respondents.

Online activism had the same central role in rising awareness about women's rights: the rise of key hashtags, both national and international, on social media, helped women across the nation understand the importance of equality and respect, especially when it comes to key aspects of life such as education and work, as well as the essentiality of ending gender-divisive, abusive cultural practices. Online activism, therefore, has a largely positive influence and role in the nurturing and development of feminism in Nigeria, because online platforms enable a large number of women not only to understand and learn about feminism, but also to disseminate ideas; it offers an opportunity to local women to confront themselves and join forces with feminists from all over the world, bringing to international attention key feminist issues in their country and, at the same time, gathering inspiration from the work of others. Crucially, it has

157

emerged from research, online activism is also seen as “safe” by women, a concept most definitely in need to be further explored, as it will be seen in the next chapter. The idea of safety is key for a country where feminism, albeit present and relatively widespread, is often met with a negative attitude by the public, in name of a highly patriarchal, highly misogynistic attitude inherited from colonialism, which remained even after Nigeria finally reached its independence.

All in all, it can be concluded that #feminism does have a positive effect on Nigerian feminism and represents a powerful instrument in the hands of Nigerian women to further their projects of gender equality and justice, an instrument that can help reach more and more women across the country and increase awareness of their rights and potential role in Nigerian culture, politics, society.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

7.1. Overview of the Study

The use of hashtags and, more in general, of social media platforms has been widely considered a powerful means of communication, able to give voice to the voiceless and to create a sense of community among people who could be otherwise alone: as underlined by Isike and Uzodike (2011), it does not come as a surprise, then, that feminists embraced social media as an important means of communication and activism. Indeed, research shows that the rise of social media benefited the appearance of a new wave of feminism, known commonly as #feminism (Chen et al., 2018); #feminism made the movement accessible to “all”, and in many ways simpler to understand, making traditional feminist struggles such as women rights, equality, fighting against sexism and misogyny a strong part of the social media discourse. There is no doubt that social media in all their iterations made the dissemination of feminist thought easier and global by breaking down all distances and geographical barriers (Swann, 2019), giving to the feminist community a truly international, globalised nature (Cammaerts, 2015). Social media, in other words, made feminist ideas more available to the masses, more than they have ever been in earlier decades and, for this reason, feminists across the world, Nigeria included, have been using online platforms more and more often to disseminates ideas, thoughts and to support campaigns.

Women in Nigeria, for instance, have been using online platforms to create awareness across the world about serious national problems such as rape culture, sexual molestation in universities, sexual assault, gender issues, domestic violence, the pay gap and more. The use of online platforms has been particularly useful for raising awareness of feminist issues in Nigeria, a country, albeit not the only one, where women have been facing profound inequality, rooted into historical and social factors that have been characterising the country’s life for over a century. The status of the country as a developing hub means that, in large parts of it, women

159

are still very much tied to oldfashioned, post-colonial ideals of womanhood, where freedom of expression, equality, and selfdetermination are not part of their rights. These issues, which, as mentioned, are widely considered an inheritance of the colonial era (Beckman, 1982; Isike and Uzodike, 2011) and, in fact, of a westernised, capitalistic social structure where women are largely excluded from meaningful positions of responsibility outside the home (Akinola, 2018). While Nigerian pre-colonial history is filled with key female figures of power and leadership and, as it is the case in other areas of Africa, matriarchal societies were common, the coming of colonisation left an inheritance that transcended deeply the economic real of the country: it touched deeply also the life and future of women, of their children and of Nigerian society, as a whole.

Understanding therefore, of how Nigerian women of today have been associating with feminism and the role of #feminism and online platforms in the knowledge and dissemination of feminist ideals and in activism, as well as the role of it in the development of their own perception of the self and their being women was at the heart of this research. Through social media and #feminism Nigerian women finally found a place of expression and self-representation, a place which is unique in the national context, where media are largely dominated by a male-led discourse. This is why, exploring how such a powerful means of liberation and independence affected their perceptions of womanhood and activism was important: because through #feminism and social media use as an instrument of feminist activism and dissemination, Nigerian women can potentially reshape their own place within the nation, taking back, in a way, the leading role their original, ancestral culture gave them. The research findings align with existing studies, indicating that Nigerian women, particularly young women, have been using social media as a space for gathering, sharing thoughts, ideas, and information, thereby strengthening their feminist ideologies. Importantly, social media has also allowed these women to

challenge male dominance and reclaim their rightful place at the forefront of societal discourse, representing a symbolic step towards equality.

While numerous studies have explored how social media and #feminism have elevated female-centered issues in national and international discussions, such as the impactful #BringBackOurGirls hashtag (Akpojivi, 2019), this study aimed to delve into the personal and individual effects of #feminism on Nigerian women. Specifically, it examined how #feminism influenced their understanding and practice of activism, as well as their perceptions of womanhood and feminism within the Nigerian societal context.

Understanding, therefore, how Nigerian women today associate with feminism and the role of #feminism and online platforms in the knowledge and dissemination of feminist ideals and activism, as well as the influence of these factors on their perception of self and womanhood, were central to this research. By exploring the power of social media and #feminism as instruments of liberation and independence, this study aimed to uncover how Nigerian women can potentially reshape their place within the nation, reclaiming the leading role bestowed upon them by their ancestral culture.

The study, conducted among university students, shed light on the impact of #feminism in empowering young Nigerian women with knowledge about feminism and women's rights, while also facilitating the dissemination of feminist ideas through various online platforms.

The participants highlighted the accessibility and user-friendliness of social media platforms, which have facilitated communication, organization, and learning about #feminism. Although the participants showed enthusiasm in sharing #feminism content online, their engagement in offline activities was limited. However, it is crucial to recognize that the concept of activism has evolved alongside feminism, and online activism plays a significant role in raising awareness, fostering feminist consciousness, and promoting social change.

If it is true that, traditionally, activism takes place “in the streets,” the preponderant role of the virtual world and the internet in the lives of people today cannot and should not be discounted. Social media are just another instrument to perpetuate and support feminist action, especially when considering the idea of “activism” in its wider sense, which also includes the creation and

development of a feminist conscience, of an attention and awareness of the issues and struggles of women in a male-dominated society. Without a doubt, and as largely discussed in the previous chapter, #feminism supported participants in their discovery of feminism and in the rise of their awareness towards feminist issues, therefore, it created or nurtured further their feminist conscience. In this sense, undoubtedly, it became an integrant part of their way of being activists.

Although some critics label online activism as 'slacktivism' due to its deviation from traditional forms of activism, it is essential to embrace the changes brought by the digital age. Online social engagement and the impact of #feminism cannot be evaluated solely based on outdated parameters. It is crucial to acknowledge that online activism plays a vital role in fostering feminist consciousness, raising awareness, and providing a platform for marginalized voices. The power of social media lies in its ability to amplify voices that have historically been marginalized or silenced. Through hashtags and online campaigns, individuals can share their stories, experiences, and demands for justice, reaching a global audience and challenging existing power structures.

#Feminism is a new form of activism and while it may not function the same way as offline action, it still remains an important and, for some groups of women, the only, way of expression and education.

The second research question investigated in this study had to do with personal perceptions of self and womanhood, as well as awareness of women rights, and the way in which #feminism affected participants. Results were significant in this context, too, because it became clear how online activism supported a growth of awareness in women about their position in society, about what they can and should expect and how to achieve. Issues of equality in education and work, to begin with, but also delicate issues such as sexuality, gender identity, but also the ongoing struggle of women in Nigeria to live in a safer environment, have all been touched upon online by this study's participants. Engaging with feminist content online, then, enabled

them to focus on their identity as women and individuals; to recognise their personal limits and those imposed by the patriarchal system in which they grew up; to liaise with others who have been going through the same discoveries and reaching the same conclusions. In many a way, it has emerged from this research, #feminism has been an epiphany for young Nigerian women: not because they did not have knowledge nor conscience of what feminism was, but because they had never truly interacted with it, they had never used it as a framework to understand what they could obtain and what fight they could fight. In this sense, #feminism has been liberating, because it showed women their rights, it guided them towards protests for a just cause, ultimately empowering them, making them braver and more prone to act.

There is one last key aspect that emerged from this study, which does not directly relate to its main research questions but is of great interest, especially as a subject for further research on the subject of feminism in Nigeria: the concept of safety and of #feminism as a safe option to be activists in the country. The theme appeared on more than one occasion both in the surveys and in the focus group, which is evidence of how important the issue of being safe is among young Nigerian women, when it comes to feminist activism, as it will be briefly discussed in the section below.

7.2. Further Avenues for Research

Two main avenues for further research have been identified in this work: the first is the one just mentioned, that is, the concept of safe activism among Nigerian women, what they mean with it and the role of online media in its implementation. The second connects to the digitalisation of Nigeria and to the role of the internet as a whole, as an instrument for feminist thought to develop and to be disseminated further, through the creation, as purported by Magenya (2020), of a “feminist internet”.

Many of the women who participated to this study mentioned they considered online activism a better option than offline activism, because it was “safer.” The concept is important, especially when keeping in mind that, for many women, especially in the more rural parts of the country, being an activist may be reason enough to be singled out and isolated within the local community; in this sense, safety means being able to disseminate an important message and keep oneself informed, but without engaging in first person, in the offline world. It also means, as a consequence, being able to support a cause considered just and developing a strong personal voice within the (online) community, while maintaining a lower and safe profile offline without the risk of being ostracised. This is not often the case, as social isolation has been named as one of the first consequences of feminist activism among African women (Mikell, 2010). But safety is often also a matter of physical protection from potential aggression, from judgement and, indeed, from discrimination (Lewis and Baderoon, 2021). The connection between online activism and safety should also be explored as a corollary to the idea on online activism itself, more specifically, in the context of what its critics think about the issue of safety brought about by young Nigerian women in this work.

It is crucial to acknowledge that this study's focus on Nigerian university students presents a limited perspective on the experiences and viewpoints of women in Nigeria. While the insights gained from this particular group are valuable, it is important to recognize that women across different regions in Nigeria may have diverse perspectives shaped by varying socio-economic backgrounds, cultural contexts, and lived realities. To gain a more comprehensive understanding of the impact of #feminism and digital activism on women's empowerment and feminist movements in Nigeria, future research should aim to extend the study beyond university students. By including women from various regions and socio-economic backgrounds, we can capture a wider range of experiences, challenges, and aspirations. This broader scope of research would provide a more nuanced understanding of how #feminism and digital activism intersect with diverse contexts, allowing for a more inclusive and representative analysis of feminist movements in the country. By exploring the diverse voices and perspectives of Nigerian women, we can better address the complex

dynamics of gender, class, ethnicity, and geographic location in relation to digital activism and feminism in Nigeria.

APPENDIXES

Appendix One: Figures and Charts

Table 1: The baseline for the socio-demography data for this study

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Female	58	100
Male	0	0
Non-binary	0	0
Prefer not to say	0	0
Age groups		
18 – 24 years	58	100
25 – 34 years	0	0
35 – 44 years	0	0
45 – 54 years	0	0
55 – 64 years	0	0
65 – 74 years	0	0
167		

75+ years	0	0
-----------	---	---

Table 2: Baseline for the use of social media and concept of feminism

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Are you on any social media?		
Yes	58	100
No	0	0
How much time spent on these sites		
1 – 2 hours	5	8.6
3 – 5 hours	21	36.2
6 – 10 hours	16	27.6
Over 10 years	15	25.9
No response	1	1.7
Do you identify as feminist or support feminism?		
Yes	36	62.1
No	10	17.2
Somewhat	6	10.3
No response	6	10.3
What does feminism mean to you?		

Women's rights	10	17.2
Equality of the sexes	25	43.1
Liberation of women	2	3.4
Hatred of men	1	1.7
Fighting for women's opportunities	3	5.2
Means nothing	1	1.7
Fighting for women's rights and equality of sexes	8	13.8
Fighting for women's rights and empowerment	5	8.6
Personal assistance	1	1.7
No response	2	3.4
Do you think feminism is relevant to you?		
<hr/>		
Yes	52	89.7
No	4	6.9
No response	2	3.4

Table 3: Baseline of the study of interaction with feminism on social media

Variables	No
	No response
Do you find feminist issues discussed on social media	Have you engaged with posts on social media relating to question 10?
Yes	

Yes	54	93.1
-----	----	------

No	3	5.2
----	---	-----

No response	1	1.7
-------------	---	-----

Has your engagement with feminism on social media increased your understanding?

Yes	38	65.5
-----	----	------

No	18	31
----	----	----

No response	2	3.4
-------------	---	-----

Would you agree that social media gives you a platform to connect with politically conscious feminists?

	38	65.5
--	----	------

Yes	18	31
-----	----	----

No	2	3.4
----	---	-----

Somewhat

No response	44	75.9
-------------	----	------

Frequency	Percentage (%)	7	12.1
-----------	----------------	---	------

	3	5.2
--	---	-----

	4	6.9
--	---	-----

Table 4: Baseline for respondents' actions, following interaction with feminist discussions on social media

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1) Have you participated in any feminist debates on social media?		
Yes	18	31
No	37	63.8
No response	3	5.2
2) Has your interaction with feminism on social media inspired you to join other women offline or online		
Yes	33	56.9
No	23	39.7
No response	2	3.4
3) Have you communicated with people through social media to set an agenda for offline action?		
Yes	12	20.7

No	39	67.2
No response	7	12.1
4) Have you participated in any marches that were started or conceived on social media		
Yes	9	15.5
No	47	81
No response	2	3.4
5) Has your engagement with hashtag feminism on social media influenced your opinion or action in any way?		
Yes	36	62.1
No	17	29.3
No response	5	8.6
6) In your opinion, has hashtag feminism had any impact on policy changes for women in Nigeria?		
Yes	27	46.6
No	11	19
Somewhat	17	29.3
No response	3	5.2

7) What specific policy changes would you like to implemented for women in Nigeria?		see
Empowerment of women	6	10.3
Equal paying jobs and no discrimination	8	13.8
Equal rights and opportunities	16	27.6
Abolition of child marriage	3	5.2
Laws against domestic violence	4	6.9
Policies about abortion	1	1.7
Policies against rape	1	1.7
No response	19	32.8
8) Do you believe campaigns occurring through hashtags can make an impact towards achieving these policy changes?		
Yes	41	70.7
No	5	8.6
Somewhat	5	8.6
No response	7	12.1
9) What are you most likely to do differently since have been engaging with feminism online?		you

Support existing feminism campaigns	1	1.7
Engage more in feminist topics	2	3.4
Focus more on speaking against sexual and violence	2	3.4 domestic
Work to be an independent woman	6	10.3
I will work to make policies and laws in women's	2	3.4 backing
Speak against discrimination	3	5.2
Enlighten people about equal rights regarding women	6	10.3
Advocate for girl child education and speak up when violated	3	5.2
Be part of offline actions like rallies and marches	2	3.4
I do not engage with feminism online or offline	3	5.2
Support for women in education, politics, and life	4	6.9
No response	24	41.4
10) What would you like to see improved in the Nigerian feminist social media space?		
Do away with the aged mentality of patriarchy from feminist discussions	1	1.7
More dedication to social media space and offline on feminism	3	5.2

Avoid radical feminist revolution for true feminist messages to be spread	9	15.5
More awareness of the rights of the girl-child	2	3.4
Men should have respect for women, and women should engage more in the use of the hashtag	1	1.7
Implementation of political laws and more engagement from the men	1	1.7
Educating women on who they are as said by the bible	1	1.7
Women should stop attacking other women on different views of feminism	1	1.7
Do more actions than posting to get followers and likes on social media	1	1.7
I don't really care	1	1.7
Yes, I would love policy changes	1	1.7
No response	30.5	60.3

Table 5: Impacts of feminist discussions on the respondents in key areas

The educational impact of feminism

I understand more the importance of education for women and the girlchild

I am more likely to go into gender studies I am more likely to further my education

I am more likely to study a STEM course I am more likely to sponsor/inspire a girl's education

The economic impact of feminism

Increased my understanding of being financially independent

I am more likely to set up a business or get a job before marriage

I am more likely to apply for STEM jobs

I am more likely to request/reward both genders equal pay for equal work

I am more likely to invest in women-owned businesses

Social impact of feminism

I have an increased understanding of how women's socio-cultural experiences impact the national gender gap

This is more likely to inform my personal decisions on marriage and relationships

This informs how I raise/relate with younger girls

I am more likely to speak up against negative socio-cultural norms

The political impact of feminism

I am more aware of my political choices and alignments impact on closing the gender gap

I am more aware of what my rights are

I am more aware of lacuna's in the Nigeria system that hinders women

I am more likely to speak up

about the systematic

oppression of women in Nigeria	25	46.3
--------------------------------	----	------

Frequency	Percentage (%)
-----------	----------------

24	35.3	35	68.6
----	------	----	------

7	10.3	40	78.4
---	------	----	------

11	19.1	32	62.7
----	------	----	------

6	8.8	37	72.5
---	-----	----	------

18	26.5		
		28	52.8

48	88.9	44	83
----	------	----	----

38	70.4	34	64.2
----	------	----	------

5	9.3	30	56.6
---	-----	----	------

30	55.6		
----	------	--	--

I am more likely to support a public official who expresses an understanding of these systemic problems	19	35.8
---	----	------

I am more likely to protest for / request changes in the law that help bridge the gender gap	27	50.9
--	----	------

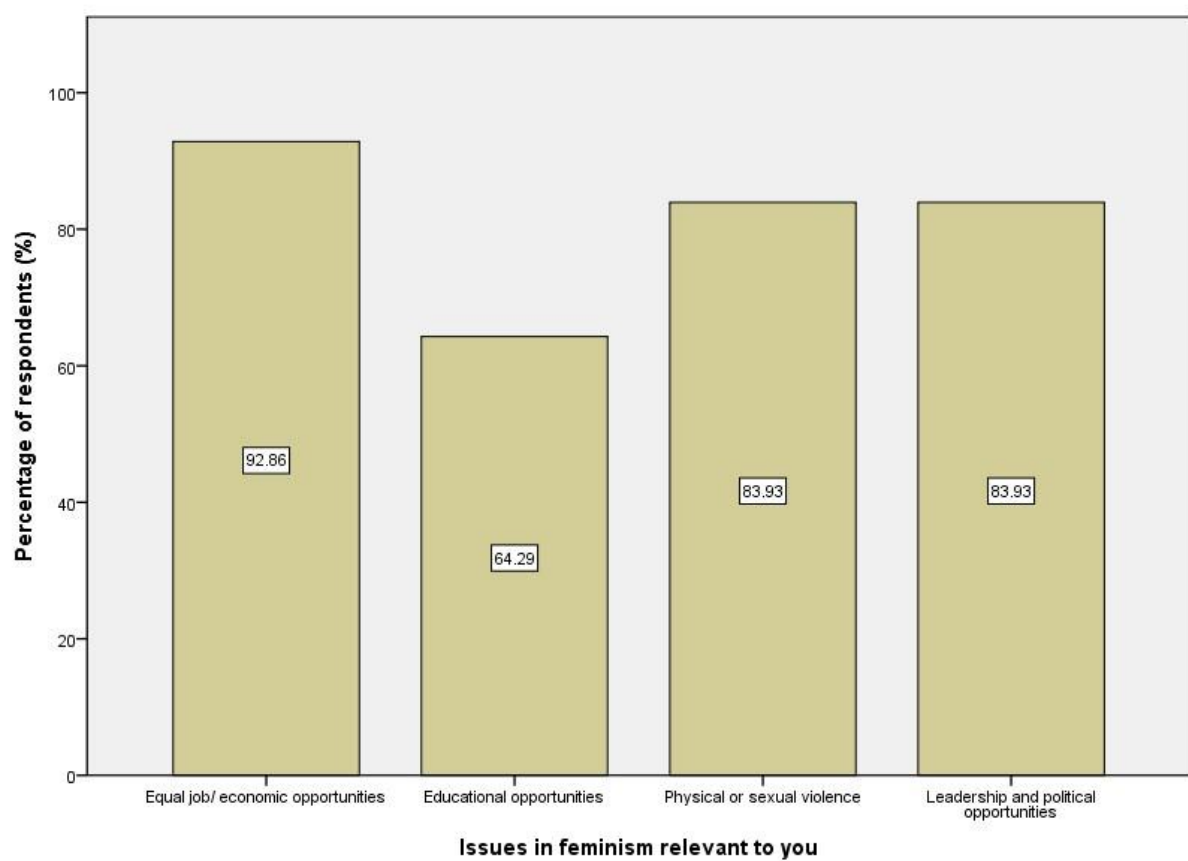


Figure 1

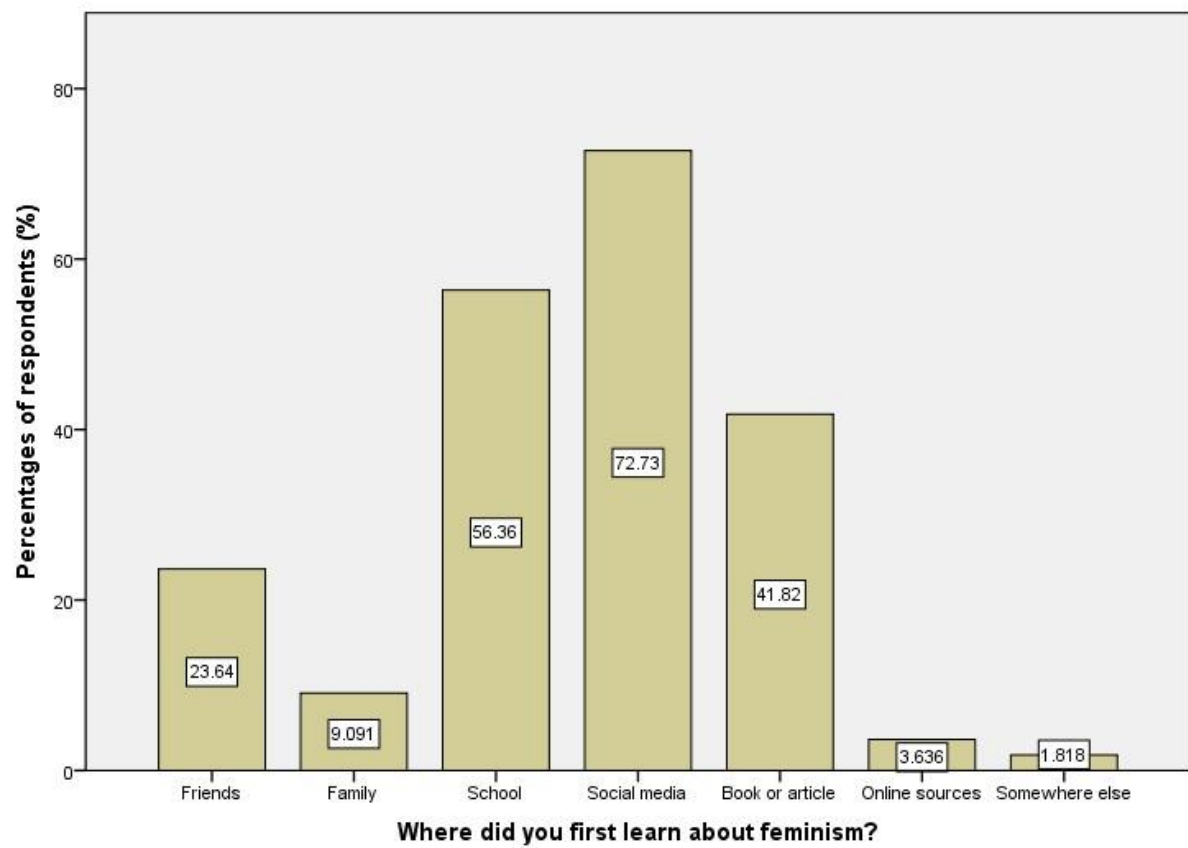


Figure 2

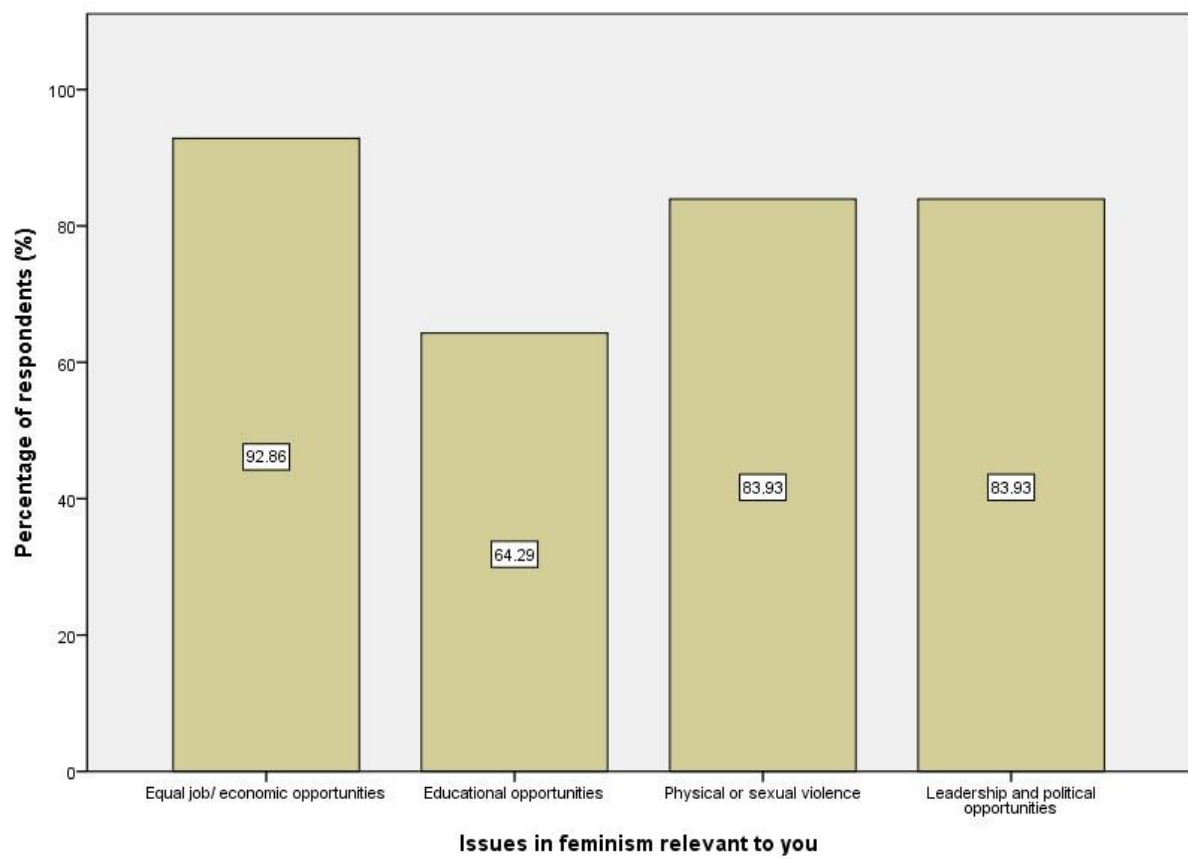


Figure 3

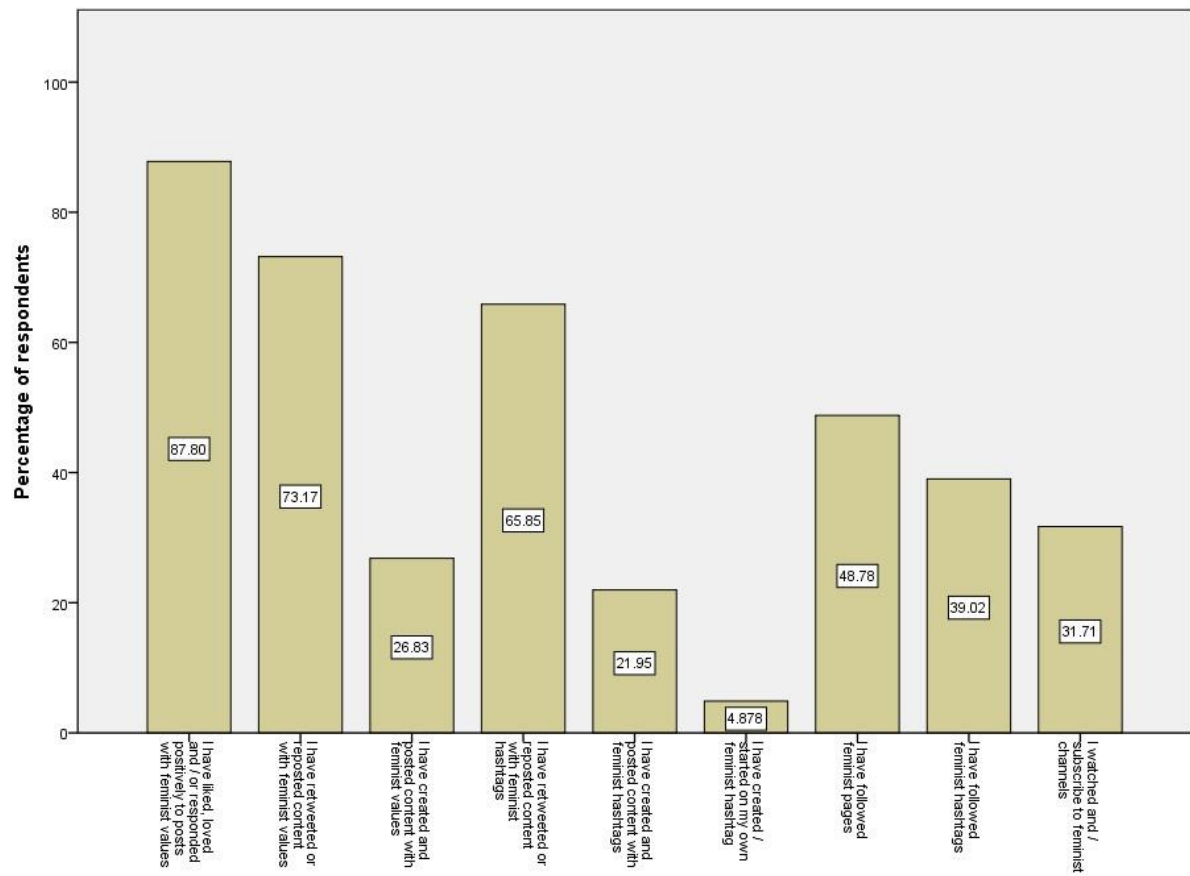


Figure 4

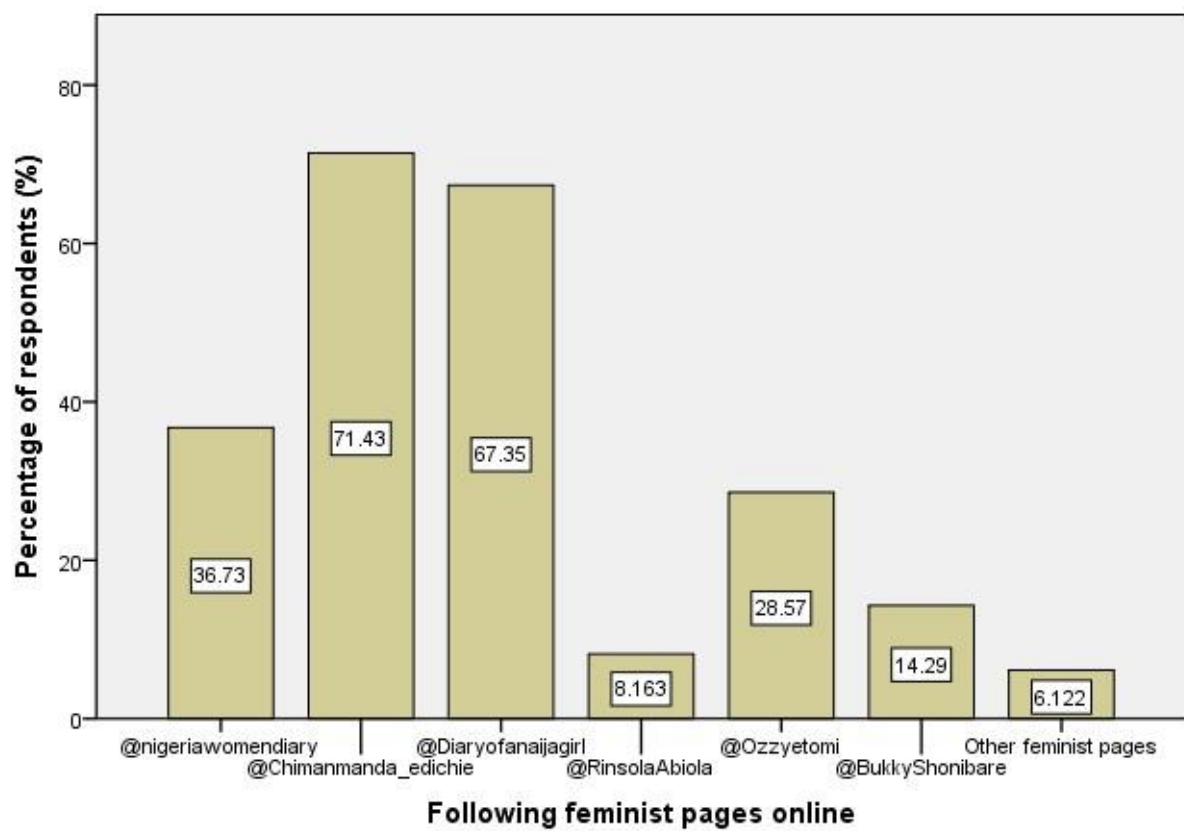


Figure 5

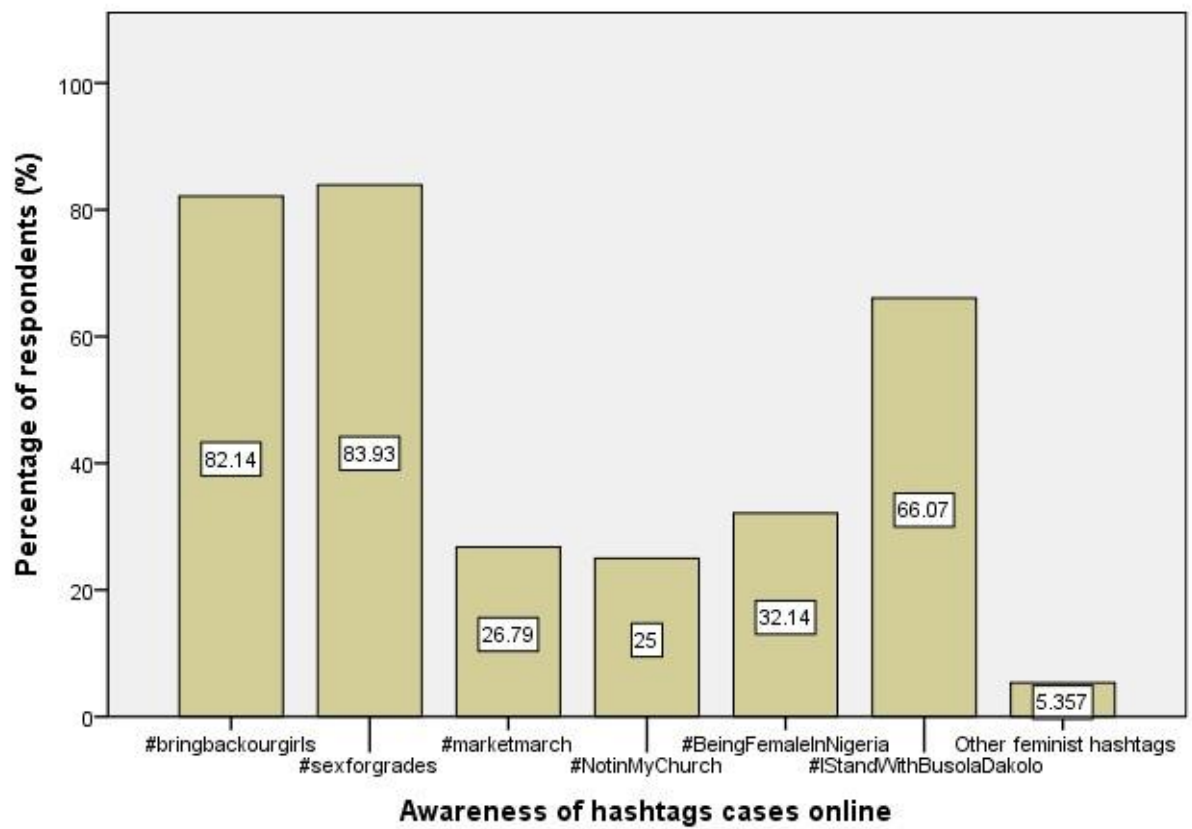


Figure 6

Bibliography

Abrams, L. (2018). Ideals of Womanhood in Victorian Britain. (Online). Available at:

https://www.bbc.co.uk/history/trail/victorian_britain/women_home/ideals_womanhood_01.shtml. (Accessed 6th October 2021).

Adamu, F. (2006). Women's Struggle and the Politics of Difference in Nigeria. *African Gender Institute*. (Online). Available at: http://www.fu-berlin.de/sites/gpo/tagungen/tagungfeministperspectives/fatima_1_adamu.pdf?1361540682
http://www.fu-berlin.de/sites/gpo/tagungen/tagungfeministperspectives/fatima_1_adamu.pdf?1361540682. (Accessed 5th October 2021).

Adebayo, S. and Fahrmeir, L. (2005). Analysing Child Mortality in Nigeria with Geospatial Discrete-Time Survival Models. *Statistics in Medicine* 24(5): 709-728.

Adedine, S., Odimegwu, C., Imasiku, E., Ononokpono, D., and Ibisomi, L. (2014). Regional Variations in Infant and Child Mortality in Nigeria: a Multi-Level Analysis. *Journal of Biosocial Science* 47(2): 165-187.

Adi, H. (2020). *British History in Depth: Africa And The Transatlantic Slave Trade*. (Online).

Available at:

http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/abolition/africa_article_01.shtml#:~:text=The%20transatlantic%20slave%20trade%20began,they%20enslaved%20back%20to%20Europe. (Accessed 26th November 2020).

Adichie, C. (2014). *We Should all be Feminists*. New York: Fourth Estate.

Afolabi, C. (2019). The Invisibility of Women's Organizations in Decision Making Process and Governance in Nigeria. *Frontiers in Sociology* 3.

Agbasiere, J. T. (2015). *Women in Igbo life and thought*. routledge. Dogo, S. A. (2014). The Nigerian patriarchy: when and how. *Cultural and religious studies*, 2(5), 263-275.

Ajir, I. (2002). *Women Empowerment and Work: The Challenges of the 21st Century*. Abuja: Aborts Press.

Akanle, O., Adesina, J. and Ogbimi, A. (2015). Men at Work Keep-off: Male Roles and Household Chores in Nigeria. *Gender and Behaviour* 14(3): 7833 - 7854.

Akpojivi, U. (2019). I Won't Be Silent Anymore: Hashtag Activism in Nigeria. *Communication* 45(4): 19-43.

Akyel, E. (2014). #Direnkahkaha (Resist Laughter): Laughter is a Revolutionary Action. *Feminist Media Studies* 14(6): 1093-1094.

Alemika, E.E.O. and Agugua, A.O. (2001). *Gender Relations and Discrimination in Nigeria Police Force*. Lagos: CLEEN.

Ali, S., Mahmood, A., Moel, J., Hudson, C., and Leathers, L. (2008). A Qualitative Investigation of Muslim and Christian Women's Views of Religion and Feminism in their Lives. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology* 14(1): 38-46.

Alidou, O. (2002). *Gender, Narrative Space, And Modern Hausa Literature*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Allanana, G. M. (2013). Patriarchy and Gender Inequality in Nigeria: The Way Forward.

European Scientific Journal 9(17): 115-144.

Amnesty International (2019). *Police Must Release #ArewaMeToo Activist Maryam Awaisu Immediately*. (online). Available at:

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2019/02/nigeria-police-must-releasearewametoohttps://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2019/02/nigeria-police-must-releasearewametoo-activist-maryam-awaisu-immediately/activist-maryam-awaisu-immediately/>.
(Accessed 19th February 2019).

Anastas, J. W. (1999). *Research Design for Social Work and the Human Services*. Columbia University Press.

Anderson, B. (2015). The F-Word: Do We Still Need Feminism in 2016. *ESSAI* 13(8).

Anderson, E. (2020). Feminist Epistemology and Philosophy of Science. In Nalta, E. (ed.) *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Spring 2020 Edition)*. (Online). Available at:
<https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2020/entries/feminism-epistemology/>. (Accessed 11th November 2020)

Andrews, M. and McNamara, S. (2014). *Women and the Media: Feminism and Femininity in Britain, 1900 to the Present*. London: Routledge.

Anid, N., Cantileno, L., Morrow, M., and Zafar, R. (2016). *The Internet of Women: Accelerating Culture Change*. Copenhagen: River Publishers.

Anthony, D., and Horne, C. (2003). Gender and Cooperation: Explaining Loan Repayment in Micro-Credit Groups. *Social Psychology Quarterly* 66(3): 293-302.

Arthur, J., Hedges, L.H., Waring, M. & Coe, R. (2012). *Research Methods and Methodologies in Education*. Sage.

Auerbach, C. and Silverstein, L.B. (2003). *Qualitative Data: an Introduction to Coding and Analysis*. New York University Press.

Aune, K. (2013). Third-Wave Feminism and the University: on Pedagogy and Feminist Resurgence. In Thornham, W. and Weissmann, E. (eds.) *Renewing Feminisms: Radical Narratives, Fantasies and Futures in Media Studies*. London: I.B. Tauris: 216-231.

Aune, K. and Holyoak, R. (2017). Navigating the Third Wave: Contemporary UK Feminist Activists and ‘Third-Wave Feminism.’ *Feminist Theory* 19(2): 183-203.

Ayers, M.D. (2003). *Cyberactivism*. London: Routledge.

Baer, H. (2015). Redoing Feminism: Digital Activism, Body Politics, and Neoliberalism. *Feminist Media Studies* 16(1): 17-34.

Baker, A., and Ryalls, E. (2014). Technologizing Feminist Pedagogy: Using Blog Activism in the Gender Studies Classroom. *Feminist Teacher* 25(1): 23–38.

Baklouti, I. (2013), Determinants of Microcredit Repayment: the Case of Tunisian Microfinance Bank. *African Development Review* 25: 370-382.

Bassett, C. (2013). Feminism, Expertise and the Computational Turn. In: Weissman, E. and Thornham, H. (eds.) *Renewing Feminism's Radical Narratives, Fantasies and Futures in Media Studies*. London: I.B. Tauris: 199-214.

- Beckman, B. (1982). Whose State? State and Capitalist Development in Nigeria. *Review of African Political Economy* 9(23): 37-51.
- Bem, D. (1995). Writing a Review Article for Psychological Bulletin. *Psychological Bulletin* 118(2): 172-177.
- Bennet, W. and Segerberg, A. (2013). *The Logic of Connective Action*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Bennett, B.T., Curran, S., Gregorian, V. (2000). *Mary Shelley in Her Times*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- BERA (2018). *Ethical Guidelines for Academic Research*. (Online). Available at:
<https://www.bera.ac.uk/publication/ethical-guidelines-for-educational-research-2018>.
 (Accessed 5th October 2021).
- Berents, H. (2016). Hashtagging Girlhood: #IAmMalala, #BringBackOurGirls, and Gendering Representations of Global Politics. *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 18(4): 513-527.
- Berg, M. (1991). Women's Work and the Industrial Revolution. *Refresh; Recent Findings of Research in Economic & Social History* 12(Spring): 1-4.
- Bird, R. (1996). Land rights and Deep Colonising: the Erasure of Women. *Aboriginal Law Bulletin* 3(85).
- Boltanski, L., and Chapiello, E. (1999). *Le Nouvel Esprit du Capitalisme*. Paris: Gallimard.

Bonilla, Y., and Rosa, J. (2015). #Ferguson: Digital Protest, Hashtag Ethnography, and the Racial Politics of Social Media in the United States. *American Ethnologist* 42(1): 4–17.

Bortolot, A. (2013). *Women Leaders in African History: Idia, First Queen Mother of Benin*.

(Online). Available at: https://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/pwmn_3/hd_pwmn_3.htm.

(Accessed 5th October 2021).

Bowles Eagle, R. (2015). Loitering, Lingerin, Hashtagging: Women Reclaiming Public Space Via

#BoardtheBus, #StopStreetHarassment, and the #EverydaySexism Project. *Feminist Media Studies* 15(2): 350-353.

Brimacombe, T., Kant, R., Finau, G., Tarai, J., and Titifanue, J. (2018). A New Frontier in Digital

Activism: an Exploration of Digital Feminism in Fiji. *Asia & The Pacific Policy Studies*, 5(3): 508-521.

Bruyn, S. (1966). *The Human Perspective in Sociology: The Methodology of Participant Observation*. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall Sociology Series.

Butalia, U. (2014). *December 16th, 2012 – A Rape, A Murder, and a Movement*. New Delhi:

Heinrich Boll Stiftung.

Byerly, C. M., and Ross, K. (2006). *Women and Media: A Critical Introduction*. Malden:

Blackwell.

Cammaerts, B. (2012). Protest Logics and the Mediation Opportunity Structure. *European Journal of Communication* 27(2): 117–134.

Cammaerts, B. (2015). Social Media and Activism. In Mansell, R. and Hwa, P. (eds.). *The International Encyclopedia of Digital Communication and Society* London: Wiley.

Cardon, D., and Granjon, F. (2010). *Médiactivistes*. Paris: Presses de Sciences Po.

Cardoso, G., and Pereira Neto, P. (2004). Mass Media-Driven Mobilization and Online Protest:

ICTs and the Pro-East Timor Movement in Portugal. In Van De Donk, W., Loader, B.D., Nixon, P.G. and Rucht, D. (Eds.), *Cyberprotest: New Media, Citizens and Social Movements*. London: Routledge. 147-163.

Carter Olson, C. (2016). #BringBackOurGirls: Digital Communities Supporting Real-World

Change and Influencing Mainstream Media Agendas. *Feminist Media Studies* 16(5): 772-787.

Casas, L., and Vivaldi, L. (2013). La Penalización del Aborto como una Violación a los Derechos

Humanos de las Mujeres. In Vial, T. (ed.). *Informe Anual Derechos Humanos 2013*. Santiago:

Universidad Diego Portales. 69–120.

Chaudhuri, E. (2015). *Unrecognised Sexual Abuse and Exploitation of Children in Child, Early and Forced Marriage* (Ebook). Available at: <https://www.ecpat.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/Child>

[Marriage_ENG.pdf](https://www.ecpat.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/Child%20Marriage_ENG.pdf) (Accessed 12th August 2021).

Chegwe, E. (2013). A Gender Critique of Liberal Feminism and its Impact on Nigerian Law.

International Journal of Discrimination and the Law 14(1): 66-78.

Chen, G.M., Pain, P. and Barner, B. (2018). "Hashtag Feminism:" Activism or Slacktivism? In Harp, D., Locke, J. and Bachmann, I. (eds.) *Feminist Approaches to Media Theory and Research*.

London: Palgrave MacMillan.

Chigbu, U., Paradza, G., and Dachaga, W. (2019). Differentiations in Women's Land Tenure Experiences: Implications for Women's Land Access and Tenure Security in Sub-Saharan Africa. *Land* 8(2): 22.

Chilisa, B. and Ntseane, G. (2010). Resisting Dominant Discourses: Implications of Indigenous, African Feminist Theory and Methods for Gender and Education Research. *Gender and Education* 22(6): 617-632.

Cirksena, K. and Cuklanz, L. (1992). Male is to Female as is to: a Guided Tour of Five Feminist Frameworks for Communication Studies. In Rakow, L. (ed.) *Women Making Meaning: New Feminist Directions in Communication*. New York: Routledge. 18-44.

Clark, R. (2015). #NotBuyingIt: Hashtag Feminists Expand the Commercial Media Conversation.

Feminist Media Studies 14(6): 1108-1110.

Clark, R. (2016). "Hope in a hashtag": the Discursive Activism of #WhyIStayed. *Feminist Media Studies* 16(5): 788-804.

Cochrane, K. (2013). *All the Rebel Women*. London: Guardian Books.

Cockburn, C., and Fürst-Dilic, R. (1994). *Bringing Technology Home. Gender and Technology in a Changing Europe*. Buckingham: Open University Press.

Cole, K. (2015). "It's Like She's Eager to be Verbally Abused": Twitter, Trolls, and (En)Gendering Disciplinary Rhetoric. *Feminist Media Studies* 15(2): 356-358.

Collins, F. (2017). *Soft Targets: Missing Women, Insidious Violence and Proxy Performance*. *Continuum* 31(5): 637-647.

Conley, T. (2014). From #RenishaMcBride to #RememberRenisha: Locating Our Stories and Finding Justice. *Feminist Media Studies* 14(6): 1111-1113.

Conley, T. (2017). Decoding Black Feminist Hashtags as Becoming. *The Black Scholar* 47(3): 22-32.

Couldry, N. (2014). The Myth of 'Us': Digital Networks, Political Change and the Production of Collectivity. *Information, Communication & Society* 18(6): 608– 626.

Crabbe, M.J. (2017). *An Apology to All of the Fat People I've Hurt with My Account*. (Online).

Available at: https://www.instagram.com/meganjaynecrabbe/?utm_source=ig_embed. (Accessed 6th November 2019).

Crenshaw, K. (1989). Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory, and Antiracist Politics. *Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics* 8.

Creswell, J. W. & Creswell, J.D. (2018). *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*. London: Sage.

Creswell, J.W. (2003). *Research Design. Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Methods Approaches*. Sage.

Cronin, N. (2020). *A Simple Guide to Influencer Marketing in 2020*. (Online). Available at: <https://www.hopperhq.com/blog/Instagram-influencer-marketing-2020/>. (Accessed 20th July 2020).

Crossley, A.D. (2015). Facebook Feminism: Social Media, Blogs, and New Technologies of Contemporary US Feminism. *Mobilization: An International Quarterly* 20 (2).

Cuklanz, L. (2016). Feminist Theory in Communication. *The International Encyclopedia Of Communication Theory And Philosophy* (Online). Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118766804.wbiect157>. (Accessed 5th October 2021).

Curtis, N. and Cardo, V. (2017). Superheroes and Third-Wave Feminism. *Feminist Media Studies* 18(3): 381-396.

Cypress, B. S. (2019). Data analysis software in qualitative research: Preconceptions, expectations, and adoption. *Dimensions of critical care nursing*, 38(4), 213-220.

Dahlberg, L. (2004). Net-Public Sphere Research: Beyond the “First Phase.” *Javnost Ljubljana* 11(1): 27–44.

Darian-Smith, K., Gunner, E. and Nuttall, S. (2005). *Text, Theory, Space*. London: Routledge.

Davies, R. (2014). *What Can South Africa Learn From India's Response to Sexual Violence?* (Online). Available at: <https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2014-07-10-analysis-what-can-south-africa-learn-from-indias-response-to-sexual-violence/south-africa-learn-from-indias-response-to-sexual-violence/>. (Accessed 5th October 2021).

Dayil, P. and Vickers, J. (2020). Bring Back Our Girls: Girls Education and Women's Security in Northern Nigeria. In Vickers, J., Grace, J., and Collier, C. N. (eds.) *Handbook on Gender, Diversity and Federalism*. London: Edward Elgar Publishing. 338-350.

Dayil, P.B. (2018). Seeking Accountability, Nurturing Empowerment: Lessons from the BBOG's Movement in Nigeria. *Utafiti Sera Research Brief Series*. Nairobi: PASGR.

De Kosnik, A., and Feldman, K. (2019). *#Identity: Hashtagging Race, Gender, Sexuality, and Nation*. (Ebook). Available at: <https://library.oapen.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.12657/24497/9780472901098.pdf?sequence=1>. (Accessed 12th August 2021).

De Vaus, D. A. (2011). *Research Design in Social Research*. London: Sage.

Dean, J. (2010). *Rethinking Contemporary Feminist Politics*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Dehmiran, K. and Cakir-Dehmiran, D. (2015). Gender and Politics: Patriarchal Discourse on Social Media. *Public Relations Review* 41(2): 308-310.

Delamont, S. (2012). *Handbook of Qualitative Research in Education*. Edward Elgar Publishing.

DeMarco, A. (2017). What Is Third Wave Feminist Movement? (Online). Available at:

<https://viva.media/what-is-third-wave-feminist-movement>. (Accessed 26th September 2018).

Denmark, F. and Paludi, M. (2008). *Psychology of Women*. 1st ed. Westport: Praeger.

Denscombe, M. (2010). *The Good Research Guide for Small Scale Research Projects*. Open University Press.

Development. *Journal of African Marxists* 5: 77-92.

Dewey, C. (2014). #Bringbackourgirls, #Kony2012, and the Complete, Divisive History of 'Hashtag Activism.' *The Washington Post*. 8 May. Available at:

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-intersect/wp/2014/05/08/bringbackourgirls><http://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-intersect/wp/2014/05/08/bringbackourgirls-kony2012-and-the-complete-divisive-history-of-hashtag-activismkony2012-and-the-complete-divisive-history-of-hashtag-activism>. (Accessed 5th October 2021).

Dixon, K. (2014). Feminist Online Identity: Analyzing the Presence of Hashtag Feminism. *Journal of Arts and Humanities* 3 (7).

Donovan, J. (2012). *Feminist Theory. The Intellectual Traditions of American Feminism*. 4th ed. New York: Continuum.

Dougherty, K. D. and Andercheck, B. (2014). Using Facebook to Engage Learners in a Large Introductory Course. *Teaching Sociology* 42(2): 95–104.

Dow, B.J. (2006). Introduction to Gender and Communication in Mediated Contexts. In Dow, B.J. and Wood, J. (eds.). *The Sage Handbook of Gender and Communication*. London: Sage. 263–272.

Downes, J. (2008). "Let Me Hear You Depoliticise My Rhyme": Queer Feminist Cultural Activisms and Disruptions of Conventional Protest." In Davy, Z.,

Downes, J., Eckert, L., and Gerodetti, N. (eds.). *Bound and Unbound*. Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Press. 181-200.

Dryden, C., Erlank, N., Haffeejee, Y., Hardy, K., Nhlapo, S., Tonkin, S. and Tshamano, H. (2002).

The Many Voices of Feminism. *Agenda: Empowering Women for Gender Equity* 54: 113-21.

Durosomo, D. (2018). *Nigerian Women Stood Up to Toxic Masculinity During the*

#MarketMarch In Lagos. (online). Available at: <https://www.okayafrica.com/nigerian-womenhttps://www.okayafrica.com/nigerian-women-toxic-masculinity-market-march-protest-yaba-lagos-feminism/toxic-masculinity-market-march-protest-yaba-lagos-feminism/>. (Accessed 5th October 2021).

Earl, J., and Kimport, K. (2011). *Digitally Enabled Social Change. Activism in the Internet Age*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Earl, J., Maher, T. V., & Elliott, T. (2017). Youth, activism, and social movements. *Sociology Compass*, 11(4), e12465.

Eboiyehi, F. A., Muoghalu, C. O. and Bankole, A. O. (2016). In Their Husbands' Shoes: Feminism and Political Economy of Women Breadwinners in Ile-Ife, Southwestern Nigeria. *Journal of International Women's Studies* 17(4): 102-121.

Economic and Political Weekly 52(3).

Edwards, R., and Mauthner, M. (2012). Ethics and Feminist Research: Theory and Practice. In Mauthner, M., Birch, M., Jessop, J. and Miller, T. (eds.) *Ethics In Qualitative Research*. London: Sage. 15-31.

Ejituwu, N. and Gabriel, A. (eds.) (2002). *Women In Nigerian History: The Rivers and Bayelsa States Experience*. Port Harcourt: Onyoma Research Publications.

Ekechi, F. and House Midamba, B. (1995). *African Market Women And Economic Power*.

Westport: Greenwood Press.

Emecheta, B. (1979). *The Joys of Motherhood*. London: Alison and Busby.

Eniola, B., & Akinola, A. O. (2019). Cultural practices and women's land rights in Africa: South Africa and Nigeria in comparison. *Trajectory of Land Reform in Post-Colonial African States: The Quest for Sustainable Development and Utilization*, 109-123.

Ette, M. (2017). Where are the Women? Evaluating Visibility of Nigerian Female Politicians in News Media Space. *Gender, Place & Culture*, 24(10): 1480-1497.

Evans, E. and Chamberlain, P. (2015). Critical Waves: Exploring Feminist Identity, Discourse and Praxis in Western Feminism. *Social Movement Studies* 14(4): 396-409.

Evans, P. (2000). Fighting Marginalization with Transnational Networks: Counter Hegemonic Globalization. *Contemporary Sociology* 29(1): 230.

Fadipe, I., and Bakenne, N. (2020). BBC Sex-for-Grades-Report: Nigeria Tertiary Institutions 'Crisis Management Strategies and Stakeholders' Reactions. *The Journal of Society and Media* 4(1): 156-179.

Falola, T. (2007). *The Role of Nigerian Women*. (online). Available at:

<https://www.britannica.com/topic/role-of-Nigerian-women1360615>. (Accessed 16th January 2019).

Fernandez, M. and Wilding, F. (2003). Situating Cyberfeminisms. (Online). Available at:

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/242513097_Situating_Cyberfeminisms. (Accessed 5th October 2021).

Few-Demo, A., and Allen, K. (2020). Gender, Feminist, and Intersectional Perspectives on Families: A Decade in Review. *Journal Of Marriage And Family* 82(1): 326-345.

Flichy, P. (2010). *Le Sacre de l'Amateur*. Paris: Seuil.

Flores, P., Gómez, N. R., Roa, F. A., and Whitson, R. (2018). Reviving Feminism through Social

Media: from the Classroom to Online and Offline Public Spaces. *Gender and Education* 32(6):

751-766.

Flores, P., Gomez, R., Roa, A.F. and Whitson, R. (2020). Reviving Feminism through Social Media: From the Classroom to Online and Offline Public Spaces. *Gender and Education* 32 (6).

Fonow, M. (1991). *Beyond Methodology*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Fotopoulou, A. (2014). Digital and Networked by Default? Women's Organisations and the Social Imaginary of Networked Feminism. *New Media & Society* 18(6): 989–1005.

Freedman, E. (2006). *Some Definitions of Feminism - No Turning Back*. (online). Available at: <http://ntb.stanford.edu/quotes.html>. (Accessed 24th September 2018).

Freedman, E. (2007). *No Turning Back: The History of Feminism and the Future of Women*. London: Random House.

Garba Kangiwa, A. (2015). Gender Discrimination and Feminism in Nigeria. *International Journal of Economics, Commerce and Management* 3(7).

George, A. (2018). Saving Nigerian Girls. *Meridians* 17(2): 309-324.

Gerring, J. (2004). What is a Case Study and What is it Good for? *American Political Science Review* 98: 341-354.

Gibson, A. (2019). Free Speech and Safe Spaces: how Moderation Policies Shape Online Discussion Spaces. *Social Media + Society* 5(1).

Gill, R. (2007). Postfeminist Media Culture. *European Journal of Cultural Studies* 10(2): 147-166.
199

Gorard, S. (2013) *Research Design: Creating Robust Approaches for the Social Sciences*.

London:

Sage.

Grady, C. (2018). *The Waves of Feminism, and why People Leep Fighting over Them, Explained*. (Online). Available at: <https://www.vox.com/2018/3/20/16955588/feminism-waveshttps://www.vox.com/2018/3/20/16955588/feminism-waves-explained-first-second-third-fourthexplained-first-second-third-fourth>. (Accessed 5th October 2021).

Granjon, F. (2001). *L'Internet Militant. Mouvement Social et Usages des Réseaux Télématiques*.

Rennes: Apogée.

Greenlagh, T. (2015). *Case Study Evaluation: Past, Present and Future Challenges*. London:

Emerald Group Publishing.

Griffin, B. (2012). *The Politics of Gender in Victorian Britain*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Guest, G., Namey, E.E. and Mitchell, M.L. (2012). *Collecting Qualitative Data: a Field Manual for Applied Research*. London: Sage.

Guillard, J. (2016). Is Feminism Trending? Pedagogical Approaches to Countering (SI)activism. *Gender and Education* 28(5): 609–626.

Guillard, J. (2012). Potentialities of Participatory Pedagogy in the Women's Studies Classroom.

Feminist Teacher 23(1): 50–62.

Guizzo, F., Cadinu, M., Galdi, S., Maass, A., and Latrofa, M. (2017). Objecting to Objectification: Women's Collective Action against Sexual Objectification on Television. *Sex Roles* 77(5-6): 352365.

Guzman, A. (2016). *6 Ways Social Media is Changing the World*. (online). Available at: <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2016/04/6ways-social-media-is-changing-the-world/>. (Accessed 27th April 2017).

Guzzetti, B.J. (2008). Identities in Online Communities: A Young Woman's Critique of Cyberculture. *E-Learning* 5 (4), 457-474.

Hammersley, M. (1992) On Feminist Methodology. *Sociology* 26(2): 187–206.

Hammersley, M. and Traianou, A. (2012). *Ethics in Qualitative Research*. London: Sage.

Harp, D. (2008). News, Feminist Theories and the Gender Divide. In Poindexter, P., Meraz, S., and Schmitz Weiss, A. (eds.) *Women, Men, and News: Divided and Disconnected in the News Media Landscape*. New York: Routledge. 267-279.

Harris, A. (2008). Introduction. In Harris, A. (ed.) *Next Wave Cultures: Feminism, Subcultures, Activism*. New York: Taylor & Francis. i-xxi.

Hawkesworth, M.E. (2006). *Globalization and Feminist Activism*. London: Rowman and Littlefield.

Hawkins, K. (2018). *The Warrior Queen who Led Men into Battle*. (Online). Available at:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/av/world-africa-> (Accessed 5th October 2021).

HeforShe. (2021). *Stand Together*. (Online). Available at: <https://www.heforshe.org/en>.

(Accessed 5th October 2021).

Hermida, A. (2013). #journalism: Reconfiguring Journalism Research about Twitter, One Tweet at a Time. *Digital Journalism* 1(3): 295–313.

Higgs, E. (2015). #JusticeforLiz: Power and Privilege in Digital Transnational

Hinderer, A. (1872). *Seventeen Years in the Yoruba Country: Memoirs of the Wife of David Hinderer*. London: The Religious Tract Society.

Hokulani, A. (2007). Between Wind and Water: Thinking About the Third Wave Metaphor and Materiality. In Hokulani, A., Erickson, K., and Pierce, L. (eds.) *Feminist Waves, Feminist Generations: Life Stories from the Academy*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. 123140.

Horeck, T. (2014). #AskThicke: “Blurred Lines,” Rape Culture, and the Feminist Hashtag Takeover. *Feminist Media Studies* 14(6): 1105-1107.

Hughes, C. and Cohen, R., 2013. *Feminism Counts: Quantitative Methods And Researching Gender*. London: Taylor and Francis.

Hussain, H. (2016). *How Women Survivors are Taking back the Power Through Technology*. (Video). Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iJGAgQzmG3E>. (Accessed 27th April 2017). III-7.

Isike, C. and Uzodike, U.O. (2011). Towards an Indigenous Model of Conflict Resolution: Reinventing women's Roles as Traditional Peacebuilders in Neo-Colonial Africa. *African Journal on Conflict Resolution* 11(2): 32-58.

Iwendi, O. (2016). Intergroup Relations in Nigeria: the Dynamics and Complexities. *International Journal of Development and Management Review* 11(June): 162-163.

Jackson, S. (2018). Young Feminists, Feminism and Digital Media. *Feminism & Psychology* 28(1): 32-49.

Jackson, S. (2018). Young Feminists, Feminism and Digital Media. *Feminism and Psychology* 28 (1), 32-49.

Jaiyeola, E. O. (2020). Patriarchy and colonization: The "brooder house" for gender inequality in Nigeria.

Jeremiah, D. (2016). State-Sponsored "Feminism" and Women Empowerment in Nigeria: the Case of the Better Life Programme, 1987 - 1993. *Lagos Historical Review* 16(1): 1-28.

Johnson-Odim, C. and Mba, E.N. (1997). *For Women and the Nation: Funmilayo Ransom Kuti of Nigeria*. Chicago: University of Illinois Press.

Jouët, J. (2003). Technologies de Communication et Genre: des Relations en Construction.

Réseaux 120: 53–86.

Kahn, R., and Kellner, D. (2004). New Media and Internet Activism: From the “Battle of Seattle” to Blogging. *New Media & Society* 6(1): 87–95.

Karlyn, K. (2006). Feminism in the Classroom: Teaching towards the Third Wave. In: J. Hollows and R. Moseley (eds.) *Feminism in Popular Culture*. Oxford: Berg. 57-76.

Kaufmann, L., and Trom, D. (2010). *Qu’est-ce qu’un Collectif? Du commun au politique*. Paris: Éditions de l’EHESS.

Kearney, M.C. (2012). Introduction. In Kearney, M.C. (ed.) *The Gender and Media Reader*. New York: Routledge. 1-20.

Keller, J. (2012). Virtual Feminisms. *Information, Communication & Society* 15(3). 429-447.

Keller, J., Mendes, K., and Ringrose, J. (2016). Speaking “Unspeakable Things:” Documenting Digital Feminist Responses to Rape Culture. *Journal of Gender Studies* 27(1): 22–36.

Kemi, A. and Jenyo, O. (2016). Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and Girls in Nigeria: the Way Forward to National Security. *Open Journal of Social Sciences* 04(07): 230-240.

Khoja-Moolji, S. (2015). Becoming an “Intimate Publics”: Exploring the Affective Intensities of Hashtag Feminism. *Feminist Media Studies* 15(2): 347-350.

Kourany, J. (1998). *Philosophy in a Feminist Voice*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Kramarae, C. (1988). *Technology and Women's Voices. Keeping in Touch*. London: Routledge.

Kuhn, T. S. (1962). *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Langer, Ana (2002). El embarazo no Deseado: Impacto Sobre la Salud y la Sociedad en América Latina y el Caribe. *Revista Panamericana de Salud Pública/Pan American Journal of Public Health* 11(3): 192–205.

Latina, D. and Docherty, S. (2014). Trending Participation, Trending Exclusion? *Feminist Media Studies* 14(6): 1103-1105.

Leedy, P. D. and Ellis Ormrod, J. (2013). *Practical Research: Planning and Design*. London: Pearson.

LeGates, M. (2001). *In Their Time: A History of Feminism in Western Society*. London: Psychology Press.

LeGates, M. (2012). *In Their Time*. Hoboken: Taylor and Francis.

Lewis, D., Baderoon, G. (2021). *Surfacing: On Being Black and Feminism in South Africa*. New York: NYU.

Lichterman, P. (1998). What Do Movements Mean? The Value of Participant Observation. *Qualitative Sociology* 21(4): 401-418.

Lichtman, M. (2012). *Qualitative Research in Education*. London: Sage.

Ling, L. and Ling, P. (2019). *Emerging Methods and Paradigms in Scholarship and Education Research*. London: IGI Global.

Literat, I., and Brough, M. (2019). From Ethical to Equitable Social Media Technologies: Amplifying Underrepresented Youth Voices in Digital Technology Design. *Journal of Media Ethics* 34 (3).

Lofland, J. (2009). *Analyzing Social Settings*. 2nd ed. Belmont: Wadsworth.

Loiseau, E. and Nowacka, K. (2015). *Can Social Media Effectively Include Women's Voices in Decision-Making Processes?* (Online). Available at:
https://www.oecd.org/dev/development-gender/DEV_socialmedia-issuespaper-March2015.pdf
https://www.oecd.org/dev/development-gender/DEV_socialmedia-issuespaper-March2015.pdf. (Accessed 6th October 2021).

Lune, H., & Berg, B. L. (2017). *Qualitative research methods for the social sciences*. Pearson.

Loke, J., Bachmann, I. and Harp, D. (2017). Co-Opting Feminism: Media Discourses on Political

Women and the Definition of a (New) Feminist Identity. *Media, Culture & Society* 39: 122–132.

Loken, M. (2014). #BringBackOurGirls and the Invisibility of Imperialism. *Feminist Media Studies* 14(6): 1100-1101.

Lokesh, K. (2015). *Methodology of Educational Research*. London: Vikas Publishing House.

Long, J. (2001). "A Certain Kind of Modern Feminism": Memory, Feminist Futures and
206

“Generational Vleavage” in Historical Perspective. *Outskirts* 8

Long, J. (2012). *Anti-Porn: The Resurgence of Anti-Pornography Feminism*. London: Zed Books.

Losh, E. (2014). Hashtag Feminism and Twitter Activism in India. *Social Epistemology Review & Reply Collective* 3: 10–22.

Mackay, F. (2014). Political Not Generational: Getting Real About Contemporary UK Radical Feminism. *Social Movement Studies* 14(4): 427-442.

Mackay, F. (2015). *Radical Feminism: Feminist Activism in Movement*. London: Palgrave.

Mahali, A. (2017). Without Community, There is no Liberation: on #BlackGirlMagic and the Rise of Black Woman-Centred Collectives in South Africa. *Agenda* 31(1): 28-41.

Mahoney, C. (2020). Is This what a Feminist Looks Like? Curating the Feminist Self in the Neoliberal Visual Economy of Instagram. *Feminist Media Studies*. AHEAD-OF-PRINT: 1-17.

Mama, A. (1995). Feminism or Femocracy? State Feminism and Democratization in Nigeria. *Codesria* 20(1): 37-59.

Manuel, C. (2012). Networks of Outrage and Hope - Social Movements in the Internet Age. *International Journal of Public Opinion Research* 25(3): 398-402.

Maxfield, M. (2015). History Retweeting Itself: Imperial Feminist Appropriations of “Bring Back Our Girls.” *Feminist Media Studies* 16(5): 886-900.

McAdam, D. (1996). Conceptual Origins, Current Problems, Future Directions. In McAdam, D.,

McCarthy, J.D. and Zald, M.N. (eds.) *Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements: Political Opportunities, Mobilizing Structures, and Cultural Framings*. New York: Cambridge University Press. 23-40.

McCann, H. (2019). *Queering Femininity: Sexuality, Feminism and the Politics of Presentation*. London: Routledge.

McCarthy, J.D. (1996). Constraints and Opportunities in Adopting, Adapting, and Inventing. In D. McAdam, J. D. McCarthy, and M. N. Zald (Eds.) In McAdam, D., McCarthy, J.D. and Zald, M.N. (eds.) *Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements: Political Opportunities, Mobilizing Structures, and Cultural Framings*. New York: Cambridge University Press. 141-151.

McFarland, D. (2004). Resistance as a Social Drama: a Study of Change-Oriented Encounters. *American Journal of Sociology* 109(6): 1249-1318.

McPhail, C., Schweingruber, D., and McCarthy, J. (1998). Policing Protest in the United States: 1960–1995. In Porta, D.D. and Reiter, H. (eds.) *Policing Protest: the Control of Mass Demonstrations in Western Democracies: Social Movements, Protest, and Contention*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. 123-139.

McRobbie, A. (2004). Post-Feminism and Popular Culture. *Feminist Media Studies* 4(3): 255-264.

McRobbie, A. (2009). *The Aftermath of Feminism: Gender, Culture, and Social Change*. London: Sage.

Media Studies"? *Feminist Media Studies* 16(4): 557–572.

Mendes, K. (2015). *Slutwalk*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Mendes, K., Ringrose, J. and Keller, J. (2019). *Digital Feminist Activism: Girls and Women Fight Back Against Rape Culture*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Merriam, S.B. (2009). *Qualitative Research: a Guide to Design and Implementation*. London: John Wiley and Sons.

Mertens, D. (2009). *Transformative Research and Evaluation*. London: The Guildford Press.

Meyer, M. (2014). #Thevagenda's War on Headlines: Feminist Activism in the Information Age. *Feminist Media Studies* 14(6): 1107-1108.

Meyers, M. (1997). *News Coverage of Violence Against Women: Engendering Blame*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Mikell, G. (2010). *African Feminism*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Miles, M.B., Huberman, A.M., and Saldana, J. (2014). *Qualitative Data Analysis: a Method Sourcebook*. London: Sage.

Miller, T. Birch, M., Mauthner, M. & Jessop, J. (2012). *Ethics in Qualitative Research*. London:

Sage.

Mills, A. J., Durepos, G. and Wiebe, G. (2010). *Encyclopedia of Case Study Research*. London:

Sage.

Moore, J. (2017). *Mary Wollstonecraft*. London: Routledge.

Morely, J. (2016). *The Need for #ShesforShe in the workplace – Ammal—Hear the Girl Effect Roar – Medium*. (Online). Available at: <https://medium.com/ammal-io/the-need-for-sheforshehttps://medium.com/ammal-io/the-need-for-sheforshe-in-the-workplace9dc4b1d5bf73in-the-workplace9dc4b1d5bf73>. (Accessed 27 Apr. 2017).

Morgan, J. (2002). *Social Change and Betty Friedan's The Feminine Mystique: a Study of the Charismatic 'Author-Leader.'* Unpublished PhD.

Morgen, S. (2002). *Into Our Own Hands*. London: Rutgers University Press.

Mousli, B. and Roustang-Stoller, E. (2009). *Women, Feminism, and Femininity in the 21st Century: American and French Perspectives*. London: Springer.

Mullaly, R. (1997). *Structural Social Work*. 1st ed. Don Mills, Ontario: Oxford University Press.

Munro, E. (2013). Feminism: a Fourth Wave? *Political Insight* 4 (2), 22-25.

Murphy, E. (2017). *#BringBackOurGirls: Solidarity or Self-Interest? Online Feminist Movement and Third World Women*. (Ebook). Available at: <https://ir.canterbury.ac.nz/bitstream/handle/10092/14517/Murphy%2C%20Emma%20MA%20Thesis.pdf?sequence=1>. (Accessed 12th August 2021).

- Mutsvairo, B. and Harris, S. (2016). Rethinking Mobile Media Tactics in Protests: A Comparative Case Study of Hong Kong and Malawi. In Wei, R. (ed.). *Mobile Media, Political Participation, and Civic Activism in Asia*. London: Springer. 215-231.
- Myers, J.D. (1994). Communication Technology and Social Movements: Contributions of Computer Networks to Activism. *Social Science Computer Review* 12: 251–260.
- Myheplus.com. (2018). *History of the Feminist Movement in Britain / HE+*. (Online). Available at: <http://www.myheplus.com/subjects/sociology/historyfeminist-movement-britain>. (Accessed 25th September 2018).
- Naim, M. (2007). The YouTube Effect. *Foreign Policy* 158: 104.
- Naples, N.A. and Bojar, K. (2013). *Teaching Feminist Activism: Strategies from the Field*. London: Routledge.
- National Bureau of Statistics (2018). *2017 Statistical Report on Women and Men in Nigeria*. Lagos: National Bureau of Statistics.
- Ncse.ac.uk. (2018). *NCSE: English Woman's Journal (1858-1864)*. (online). Available at: <http://www.ncse.ac.uk/headnotes/ewj.html>. (Accessed 11th September 2018).
- Neuman, W.L. (2013). *Social Research Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*. London: Pearson Education.
- Neveu, E. (1996). *Sociologie des Mouvements Sociaux*. Paris: La Découverte.

Ngowu, R., Larson, J. and Kim, M. (2008). Reducing Child Mortality in Nigeria: A Case Study of Immunization and Systemic Factors. *Social Science & Medicine* 67(1): 161-164.

Nigeriagallery.com. (2017). *Inikpe Statue Kogi State: Nigeria Information & Guide*. (Online)

Available at: https://www.nigeriagallery.com/Nigeria/States_Nigeria/Kogi/Inikpe-Statuehttps://www.nigeriagallery.com/Nigeria/States_Nigeria/Kogi/Inikpe-Statue-Kogi.htmlKogi.html. (Accessed 8th October 2021).

Njoroge, N. (2016). Broken Silence: #BringBackOurGirls and the Feminism Discourse in Nigeria.

In Mutsvairo, B. and Wasserman, H. (eds.). *Digital Activism in the Social Media Era*. London: Springer. 311-325.

Nnaemeka, O. and Korieh, C., 2011. *Shaping Our Struggles*. Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press.

Norindr, P. (1996). *Phantasmatic Indochina: French Colonial Ideology In Architecture, Film, And Literature (Asia-Pacific, Culture, Politics, And Society)*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Novikov, A.M., and Novikov, D.A. (2013). *Research Methodology*. London: CRC

Nwachukwu, C. and UnekeEnyi, A. (2015). *Matriarchy and the Feminist Agenda: Deconstructing the Logocentric Tenets and Posture of Nigerian Critics /Writers on Feminism*. (online). Available at: <http://journals.aiac.org.au/index.php/IJCLTS/article/view/1696/1597>. (Accessed 8th October 2018).

Nwokeafor, C. (2020). Examining the Impact of Patriarchy on the Development and Advancement of Yoruba Women in Southwest Nigeria (Doctoral dissertation, Bowie State University).

Obadare, E. (2005). The GSM Boycott: Civil Society, Big Business and the State in Nigeria. *Civil Society Working Paper Series*. 23 London: Center for Civil Society, London School of Economics and Political Science.

Obasi, N. (2018). *EASO Country of Origin Information Report Nigeria Security Situation*. (Ebook).

Available at:

https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/2018_EASO_COI_Nigeria_SecuritySituation.pdf.(Accessed 9th August 2021).

Ofori-Parku, S., and Moscato, D. (2018). Hashtag Activism as a Form of Political Action: a Qualitative Analysis of the #BringBackOurGirls Campaign in Nigerian, UK, and U.S. Press. *International Journal of Communication* 12 (23).

Ogbogu, C. O. (2011). Gender Inequality in Academia: Evidences from Nigeria. *Contemporary Issues in Education Research*, 4(9), 1-8.

Ogbomo, O.(2005). Women, Power and Society in Pre-colonial Africa. *Lagos Historical Review* 5(1): 49-74.

Ogundipe-Leslie, M. (1993). African Women, Culture and Another

Ojo, A. (2002). "Socio-Economic Situation. In *Africa Atlases (Nigeria)*. Paris: Les Editions J.A. 126127.

Okafor, E. and Akokuwebe, M. (2015). Women and Leadership in Nigeria: Challenges and Prospects. *Developing Country Studies* 5(4).

Oladele, E.G.(2020). *A Feminist Analysis of the Global Adoption of the Hashtag*

#BringBackOurGirl. Unpublished Masters Thesis. (Online). Available at:
<https://library2.smu.ca/handle/01/29495>. (Accessed 8th October 2021).

Omojola, O. and Darlynton, Y. (2016). *Neo-Patriarchy, Feminism and Dialog Theory in Nigeria*.

(online). Available at:

<http://journals.covenantuniversity.edu.ng/index.php/cjoc/article/view/374/258>. (Accessed 3rd October 2018).

Omolewa, M. (2002). Education. In *Africa Atlases (Nigeria)*. Paris: Les Editions J.A.: 115-118.

Omvedt, G. (1986). "Patriarchy": The Analysis of Women's Oppression. *Insurgent Sociologist* 13(3): 30–50.

Opdenakker, R. (2006). Advantages and Disadvantages of Four Interview Techniques in Qualitative Research. *Forum: Qualitative Social Research* 7(4).

Oren, T. and Press, A. (2019). *The Routledge Handbook of Contemporary Feminism*. London: Routledge.

- Orisadare, M. (2019). An Assessment of the Role of Women Group in Women Political Participation, and Economic Development in Nigeria. *Frontiers in Sociology*, 4.
- Oxford Dictionaries | English. (2017). *Feminism - definition of feminism in English* (Online). Available at: <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/feminism> (Accessed 24th April 2017).
- Parker, A. and Sedgwick, E. (2013). *Performativity and Performance*. Hoboken: Taylor and Francis.
- Parris, P. (2020). “Glowing up ain’t Easy” How #BlackGirlMagic Created an Innovative Narrative for Black Beauty Through Instagram. *Dearcadh: Graduate Journal of Gender, Globalisation, and Rights* (1): 50-65.
- Pathak, R.P. (2008). *Methodology of Educational Research*. New York: Atlantic Publisher.
- Patton, M.Q. (2002). *Qualitative Research and Evaluation Methods*. London: Sage.
- Pauwells, A. (2003). Linguistic Sexism and Feminist Linguistic Activism. In Holmes, J. and Mayerhoff, M. (ed.) *The Handbook of Language and Gender*, 1st ed. Maiden: Blackwell Publishing. 550-570.
- Pavard, B. (2012). *Si je Veux, Quand je Veux. Contraception et Avortement dans la Société Française (1956–1979)*. Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes.
- Pavard, B. (2017). Faire Naître et Mourir les Vagues: Comment s’Écrit l’Histoire des Féminismes. *Itinéraires* 2.

Pew Research Center (2012). *Social Networking Popular Across Globe*. (Online). Available at: <http://www.pewglobal.org/2012/12/12/social-networking-popular-across-globe>. (Accessed 8th October 2021).

Pierce, J., Aikau, H., and Erickson, K. (2007). *Feminist Waves, Feminist Generations*.

Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Poell, T., and Sudha, R. (2015) *Connecting Activists and Journalists*. Journalism Studies 16: 719– 733.

Poth, C.N. (2018). *Innovation in Mixed Methods Research*. London: Sage.

Pouramin, P., Nagabhatla, N., and Miletto, M. (2020). A Systematic Review of Water and Gender Interlinkages: Assessing the Intersection with Health. *Frontiers in Water* 2.

Pruchniewska, U. (2019). *Everyday Feminism in the Digital Era: Gender, The Fourth Wave and Social Media Affordances*. (Ebook). Available at: <https://scholarshare.temple.edu/bitstream/handle/20.500.12613/3428/TETDEDXPruchniewska-temple-0225E-13676.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>. (Accessed 12th August 2021).

Puente, S.N. (2011). Feminist Cyberactivism: Violence against Women, Internet Politics, and Spanish Feminist Praxis. *Continuum* 25 (3).

Punch, K.F. and Oancea, A. (2009). *Introduction to Research Methods in Education*. London: Sage.

Rakow, L. F., and Wackwitz, L. (eds.) (2004). *Feminist Communication Theory: Selections in Context*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Rampton, M. (2015). *Four Waves of Feminism* / Pacific University. (online). Available at: <https://www.pacificu.edu/about-us/newsevents/four-waves-feminism>. (Accessed 19th October 2017).

Rao, A. and Sandler, J. (2016). Beyond Binaries: Strategies for a 21st-Century Gender Equality Agenda. In Harcourt, W. (ed.) *The Palgrave Handbook of Gender and Development*.

Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan. 106-115.

Reger, J. (2017). Finding a Place in History: The Discursive Legacy of the Wave Metaphor and Contemporary Feminism. *Feminist Studies* 43(1): 193.

Rentschler, C. (2015). #Safetytipsforladies: Feminist Twitter Takedowns of Victim Blaming. *Feminist Media Studies* 15(2): 353-356.

Rentschler, C., and Thrift S. C. (2015). Doing Feminism: Event, Archive, Techné. *Feminist Theory* 16(3): 239– 249.

Rodino-Colocino, M. (2014). #YesAllWomen: Intersectional Mobilization Against Sexual Assault is Radical (Again). *Feminist Media Studies* 14(6): 1113-1115.

Rooney, P. (2011). The Marginalization of Feminist Epistemology and What That Reveals About Epistemology “Proper.” *Feminist Epistemology And Philosophy Of Science*, 3-24.

Ross, K. (2010). *Gendered Media. Women, Men, and Identity Politics*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield.

Roy, Anupama. (2014). Critical Events, Incremental Memories and Gendered Violence: the “Delhi Gang Rape.” *Australian Feminist Studies* 29: 238–254.

Salami, M. (2014). *The Coming of (Digital) Age: how African Feminists are Using the Internet to Change Women's Lives*. (online). Available at:
<https://www.genderit.org/articles/coming-digital-age-how-african-feminists-are-using-internet-change-womens-lives> (Accessed 22nd February 2019).

Santiago, C. and Criss, D. (2017). *An Activist, a Little Girl, and the Heartbreaking Origin of “Me too.”* (online). Available at: <http://edition.cnn.com/2017/10/17/us/me-too-tarana-burke-origin/index.html>. (Accessed 20th October 2017).

Sardelis, S., Oester, S., and Liboiron, M. (2017). Ten Strategies to Reduce Gender Inequality at Scientific Conferences. *Frontiers In Marine Science*, 4.

Sauro, J. (2015). *Measuring: 4 Types of Observational Research*. (online). Available at: <https://measuringu.com/observation-role/>. (Accessed 16th January 2019).

Schalkwyk, J. (2000). *Culture*. 1st ed. Quebec: Prepared for the Canadian International Development Agency (Cida).

Scharff, C. (2016). *Repudiating Feminism*. London: Routledge.

Schmidt, A., Fink, C., Barash, V., Cameron, C., and Macy, M. (2018). *Using Spectral Clustering of Hashtag Adoptions to Find Interest-Based Communities*. 2018 IEEE International Conference on Communications (ICC).

Schor, E. (2003). *The Cambridge Companion to Mary Shelley*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Schrupp, P.A. (2017). *A Brief History of Feminism*. Boston: MIT Press.

Schwandt, L.T. (1999). *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous People*. London: Zed Books.

Seely, M. (2007). *Fight like a Girl*. 1st ed. New York: New York University Press.

Segato, R. (2003). *Las Estructuras Elementales de la Violencia: Contrato y Status en la Etiología de la Violencia*. Brasília: Universidade de Brasília.

Shaka, F., (2005). The Colonial Legacy. *Third Text* 19(3): 297-305.

Sharma, K. (1989). *Women of Africa: Their Role and Positions in Society*. Mittal Publications.

Sharma, R. (2014), Social Media as a Formidable Force for Change Huffington Post, 12 November (Online). Available at: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/ritusharma/power-of-social-media-dem_b_6103222.htmlmedia-dem_b_6103222.html. (Accessed 8th October 2021).

Shaw, F. (2012). "Hottest 100 Women." *Australian Feminist Studies*

Silverman, D. (2010). *Qualitative Research*. London: Sage.

Silverman, D. (2011). *Interpreting Qualitative Data*. London: Sage.

Slideshare.net. (2013). *The Other Second-Wave: Women of Color*. (online). Available at: <https://www.slideshare.net/cbeggs76/other-secondwave>. (Accessed 20th October 2017).

Sossou, M. (2006). *The Meaning of Gender Equality in Ghana: Women's Perceptions of the Issues of Gender Equality: Implications for Social Work Education and Practice in Ghana*.

(Online). Available at: [http://www.freepatentsonline.com/article/Women-](http://www.freepatentsonline.com/article/Women-in-WelfareEducation/165971629.html)

[inhttp://www.freepatentsonline.com/article/Women-in-](http://www.freepatentsonline.com/article/Women-in-WelfareEducation/165971629.html)

[WelfareEducation/165971629.html](http://www.freepatentsonline.com/article/Women-in-WelfareEducation/165971629.html) [WelfareEducation/165971629.html](http://www.freepatentsonline.com/article/Women-in-WelfareEducation/165971629.html). (Accessed 27 Apr. 2017).

Spencer-Wood, S. M. (2016). Feminist theorizing of patriarchal colonialism, power dynamics, and social agency materialized in colonial institutions. *International Journal of Historical Archaeology*, 20, 477-491.

Stanley, L (ed.) (2012). *Feminist Praxis (RLE Feminist Theory): Research, Theory, and Epistemology in Feminist Sociology*. London: Taylor & Francis.

Steiner, L. (2008). Critiquing Journalism: Feminist Perspectives Relevant to Contemporary Challenges. In Poindexter, P., Meraz, S., and Schmitz Weiss, A. (eds.). *Women, Men, and News: Divided and Disconnected in the News Media Landscape*.

Strimpel, Z. (2017). *I've Had Enough of MeToo "hashtag feminism" and its Intellectual Laziness*.

(online) The Telegraph, 17 October 2017. Available

at: <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/women/life/had-enough-metoo-hashtag->

feminism<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/women/life/had-enough-metoo-hashtag-feminism-intellectual-laziness/intellectual-laziness/>. (Accessed 8th October 2021).

Suleiman, I. (2017). The role of women towards political participation in Nigeria. *American Economic & Social Review*, 1(1), 15-44.

Swank, E. and Fahs, B. (2017). Understanding Feminist Activism among Women: Resources, Consciousness, and Social Networks. *Socius: Sociological Research for a Dynamic World* 3.

Swann, P. (2019). *Cases in Public Relations Management: the Rise in Social Media and Activism*. New York: Routledge.

Tamale, S. (2020). *Decolonization and Afro-Feminism*. Daraja Press.

Tayo, A. (2018). *The 4 Waves of Advocacy of Women's Rights Explained in 1,000 words*. (online). Available at: <https://www.pulse.ng/gist/feminismthe-4-waves-of-advocacy-ofhttps://www.pulse.ng/gist/feminismthe-4-waves-of-advocacy-of-womens-rights-explained-in-1000-words/pjkt7qhwomens-rights-explained-in-1000-words/pjkt7qh>. (Accessed 22nd February 2019).

Tayo, O., Thompson, R., and Thompson, E. (2015). Impact of the Digital Divide on Computer Use and Internet Access on the Poor in Nigeria. *Journal of Education and Learning* 5(1): 1.

Teltumbde, A. (2017). Justice or Revenge in 'Nirbhaya' Verdict?

Terwase, I., Abdul-Talib, A., Zengeni, K., and Terwase, J. (2015). The Psychological Trauma on Boko Haram Victims in Nigeria: Conflict Resolution Perspective. *Mediterranean Journal Of Social Sciences* 6(6S4): 1-7.

The British Library. (2018). *Timeline of the Women's Liberation Movement*. (Online). Available at: <https://www.bl.uk/votes-for-women/articles/womens-suffrage-timeline>. (Accessed 8th October 2021).

Theixos, H. (2018). Feminist Perspectives on the Apology of Louis CK and the #MeToo and #TimesUp Movements. *Media Watch* (9)3: 267-277,

Thornham, H. and McFarlane, A. (2013). Articulating Technology and Imagining the User: Generating Gendered Divides across Media. In Thornham, H. and Weissmann, T. (ed.)

Renewing Feminisms: Radical Narratives and Futures in Media Studies. London: I.B. Tauris.

Thrift, S. (2014). #YesAllWomen as Feminist Meme Event. *Feminist Media Studies* 14(6): 10901092.

Tiffin, C. and Lawson, A. (1994). *De-Scribing Empire*. London: Routledge.

Toller, P., Suter, E. and Trautman, T. (2004). Gender Role Identity and Attitudes Toward Feminism. *Sex Roles* 51 (1/2): 85-90.

Tomchak, A-M. (2014). *#BBCTrending: how a Million People Called to #BringBackOurGirls* BBC

News, 6 May 2014. (Online). Available at: <http://www.bbc.com/news/blogs-trending><http://www.bbc.com/news/blogs-trending-27298696>27298696. (Accessed 8th October 2021).

Trigg, R.H. (2000). From Sand Box to “Fund Box:” Weaving Participatory Design into the Fabric of a Busy Non-Profit. *Proc. of PDC*: 174–183.

Trochim, W.M.K. (2006). *Research Methods Knowledge Base*. (Online). Available at: from: [www.socialresearchmethods.net /kb/](http://www.socialresearchmethods.net/kb/). (Accessed 8th October 2021).

Turner, V. (1982). *From Ritual to Theatre*. New York City: Performing Arts Journal Publications.

Udoh, O., Folarin, S., and Isumonah, V. (2020). The Influence of Religion and Culture on Women’s Rights to Property in Nigeria. *Cogent Arts & Humanities* 7(1): 175-244.

Uduji, J., Okolo-Abassi, E. and Asongu, S. (2019). Does CSR Contribute to the Development of Rural Young People in Cultural Tourism of Sub-Saharan Africa? Evidence from the Niger Delta in Nigeria. *Journal of Tourism and Cultural Change* 17(6): 725-757.

UNDP (n.d.) *Gender Inequality Index (GII)*. (Image). Available at:

<<http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/gender-inequality-index-gii>> (Accessed 17th November 2020).

United Nations. (2021). Nigeria adopts Violence Against Persons (Prohibition) Act. Retrieved from <https://www.ilo.org/dyn/natlex/docs/ELECTRONIC/104156/126946/F-1224509384/NGA104156.pdf>

UNODC. (2017). *Gender Dimensions of Ethics* (Ebook). Available at:

[http://teachinglegalethics.org/sites/default/files/2018-11/MODULE%209%20-](http://teachinglegalethics.org/sites/default/files/2018-11/MODULE%209%20-%20Gender%20Dimensions%20of%20Ethics%2020181015.pdf)

[%20Gender%20Dimensions%20of%20Ethics%2020181015.pdf](http://teachinglegalethics.org/sites/default/files/2018-11/MODULE%209%20-%20Gender%20Dimensions%20of%20Ethics%2020181015.pdf). (Accessed 9th August 2021).

Van Zoonen, L. (1994). *Feminist Media Studies*. London: Sage.

Van Zoonen, L. (2002). Gendering the Internet. *European Journal of Communication* 17(1): 5–23.

Vanguard. (2019). *World Population hits 7.7bn as Men Outnumber Women in Nigeria*. (Online). Available at: <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2019/06/world-population-hits-7-7bn-as-men-outnumber-women-in-nigeria/outnumber-women-in-nigeria/>. (Accessed 12th August 2021).

Vogt, W. P., Gardner, D.C. & Haeffele, D.F. (2012). *When to Use What Research Design*. London:

Guilford.

Voirol, O. (2005). Les Luttres pour la Vsibilité. Esquisse d’une Problématique. *Réseaux* 129/130: 89–121.

Wajcman, J. (2007). From Women and Technology to Gendered Technoscience. *Information, Communication and Society* 10(3): 287–298.

Walby, S. (2011). *The Future of Feminism*. Cambridge: Polity.

Walter, N. (1998). *The New Feminism*. London: Little, Brown and Company.

Wang, Amy B. (2016). This is Rape Culture: After Trump Video, Thousands of Women Share

Sexual Assault Stories. *The Washington Post*, 8th October. Available at:

https://www.washingtonpost.com/gdprhttps://www.washingtonpost.com/gdpr-consent/?next_url=https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/wonk/wp/2016/10/08/this-is-rape-culture-after-trump-video-thousands-of-women-share-sexual-assault-stories/consent/?next_url=https%3a%2f%2fwww.washingtonpost.com%2fnews%2fwonk%2fwp%2f2016%2f10%2f08%2fthis-is-rape-culture-after-trump-video-thousands-of-women-share-sexualhttps://www.washingtonpost.com/gdpr-consent/?next_url=https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/wonk/wp/2016/10/08/this-is-rape-culture-after-trump-video-thousands-of-women-share-sexual-assault-stories/assault-stories%2f
(Accessed 8th October 2021).

Wang, Q., Huay L.W. , Choon L. Q., Yuqin Y., and Mei L. (2012). Using the Facebook Group as a Learning Management System: An Exploratory Study. *British Journal of Educational Technology* 43 (3): 428–438.

Watkins, D. and Gioia, D. (2015). *Mixed Methods Research*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Watson, J. and Lalu, V. (2014). *Rupturing the Norms: The Social and Political Response to the Rape of Anene Booysen*. New Delhi: Heinrich Boll Stiftung Report.

Wilding, F.. (1998). Where is the Feminism in Cyberfeminism? In Wilkinson, S. and Kitzinger, C.

(eds.) *Representing The Other: A Feminism & Psychology Reader*. London: Sage. , pp.24-25.

Williams, A. (1993). Diversity and Agreement in Feminist Ethnography. *Sociology* 27(4): 575–589.

Williams, S. (2015). Digital Defence: Black Feminists Resist Violence with Hashtag Activism.

Feminist Media Studies 15(2): 341–344.

Winch, A., Littler, J., and Keller, J. (2016). Why “Intergenerational Feminist

Witt, C. (2006). Feminist Interpretations of the Philosophical Canon. *Signs: Journal Of Women In Culture And Society* 31(2): 537-552.

Women's Rights Activism. *Feminist Media Studies* 15(2): 344-347.

Woods, H. (2014). Anonymous, Steubenville, and the Politics of Visibility: Questions of Virality and Exposure in the Case of #OPRollRedRoll and #OccupySteubenville. *Feminist Media Studies* 14(6): 1096-1098.

Woodward, K. and Woodward, S. (2009). *Why Feminism Matters*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Woolf, V. (1989). *A Room of One's Own*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.

World Bank, The (2020). *Female Population of Nigeria*. (Online). Available at:

<https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.TOTL.FE.ZS?locations=NG>. (Accessed 8th October 2021).

World Economic Forum. (2017). *6 Ways Social Media is Changing the World*. (Online).

Available at: <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2016/04/6-wayssocial-media-is-changing-the-world/>.

(Accessed 25th April 2017).

Www3.weforum.org. (2017). *The Global Gender Gap Report 2017*. (Online). Available at: http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GGGR_2017.pdf. (Accessed 20th January 2019).

Yalley, A. and Olutayo, M. (2020). Gender, Masculinity and Policing: an Analysis of the Implications of Police Masculinised Culture on Policing Domestic Violence in Southern Ghana and Lagos, Nigeria. *Social Sciences & Humanities Open* 2(1): 100077.

Young, C. (2014), HarassMap: Using Crowdsourced Data to Map Sexual Harassment in Egypt. *Technology Innovation Management Review* (3): 7–13.

Young, S. (1997). *Changing the Wor(l)d*. New York: Routledge.

Yu, S. (2009). Third-Wave Feminism: a Transnational Perspective. *Asian Journal of Women's Studies* 15(1): 7-25.

Zaslow, E. (2009). *Feminism, Inc.: Coming of Age in Girl Power Media Culture*. London: Springer.

Zunes, S., Kurtz, L., and Asher, S. (eds.). (1999). *Nonviolent Social Movements: a Geographical Perspective*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.