

'Everybody has to be accountable': calling out and dragging practice among university youths in Nigeria

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Sharon Damilola Oni¹, Usman Adekunle Ojedokun², & Adeyinka Abideen Aderinto³

¹ University of Ibadan, *Faculty of the Social Sciences*, Department of Sociology, Faculty of the Social Sciences, Ibadan, Nigeria. ORCID: 0009-0003-2151-2056, Email: sharonroseie@gmail.com

² University of Ibadan, *Faculty of the Social Sciences*, Department of Sociology, Faculty of the Social Sciences, Ibadan, Nigeria. ORCID: 0000-0002-0925-3675, Email: uaojedokun@gmail.com

³ University of Ibadan, *Faculty of the Social Sciences*, Department of Sociology, Faculty of the Social Sciences, Ibadan, Nigeria. ORCID: 0000-0003-0426-7549, Email: aderinto@yahoo.com

ABSTRACT: Calling out and dragging practice has emerged as one of the dominant popular cultures among Nigerian youths owing to the ubiquity of social media platforms. However, despite the growing acceptability of calling out and dragging among the youths, empirical research focusing on this online practice are generally rare. Therefore, this study investigated University of Ibadan undergraduates' conceptions and dispositions towards calling out and dragging on Twitter. The theory of reasoned action was employed as the conceptual framework, while data were primarily sourced from 318 undergraduates who were selected through the multistage sampling technique. Survey questionnaires and in-depth interview methods were strategically combined for the purpose of data elicitation. Results showed that the majority of the respondents (64%) conceived calling out and dragging as the tagging of the deprived members of society. Although the most significant single share (55.5%) identified celebrities as the category of people frequently called out and dragged on Twitter, most of them (55.9%) mentioned religious issues as the trending topic they usually consciously avoided. Calling out and dragging is an online practice that needs to be moderated because of its potential multiple social ramifications.

KEYWORDS: calling out and dragging, popular culture, social media, Twitter, online practices

INTRODUCTION

Calling out and dragging practice has emerged as one of the dominant popular cultures among Nigerian youths (Ebim, Fatuase, Okune, & Agbor, 2022; Udanor & Anyanwu, 2019). The increasing Internet interconnectivity, as well as the relatively easy access to smart phones, have contributed to the ubiquity in the use of different varieties of social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, Thread, Twitter (now known as X), amongst others which the youths are increasingly employing to call out and drag people online. In this context, calling out and dragging refers to the act of reporting the perceived misdeed of an individual or an organisation on a given social media network and the subsequent vilification of the accused by the accuser and their friends and acquaintances on such a platform. Although calling out and dragging is a commonly shared phenomenon across all the popular social media sites in Nigeria, this online practice is more dominant on Twitter (Ezeama & Umejiaku, 2022; Udanor & Anyanwu, 2019).

The growing popularity of Twitter as a veritable platform for discussing pressing social issues and analysing public affairs among the youths in Nigeria is simultaneously contributing to the pervasiveness of the practice of calling out and dragging (Dambo, Ersoy, Auwal, Olorunsola & Saydam, 2021). Although individuals resorting to the calling out and dragging of others on Twitter often get their desired redress after taking such a step, the overall outcome of such an action is sometimes catastrophic. Indeed, the practice tends to expose innocent individuals to lifelong devastating socio-economic consequences ranging from loss of employment to the deprivation of employment opportunities, forfeiture of rights, desertion by significant others, and strained interpersonal relationships, amongst others (Herzog, 2018; Ng, 2020; Palmer, 2020).

Furthermore, apart from the fact that the public shaming and cyberbullying that typically accompany the act of calling out and dragging can be emotionally and mentally damaging for some accused individuals, it can also lead to the onset of depression and/or suicide ideation in others. For instance, in January 2019, a Twitter user in the city of Lagos, *Michael Asiwaju*, who was called out and dragged for allegedly raping a lady, committed suicide in his hotel room by drinking a poisonous substance after posting a tweet debunking the allegation that was levelled against him (Hanafi, 2019). Similarly, a Nigerian entrepreneur, *Izuchukwu Madubueze*, committed suicide in July 2020 after he was called out and continuously dragged on Twitter for an alleged act of rape (Folarin, 2020).

Despite the growing acceptability of the practice of calling out and dragging among the youths in Nigeria and the evident deleterious impacts that are increasingly associated with the practice, there is a lack of empirical research on the phenomenon. Therefore, a study of this nature, which investigated the conceptions and dispositions of University of Ibadan undergraduates towards the practice of calling out and dragging on Twitter, is imperative because it has the potential for informing relevant policy decision(s) that would be specifically targeted towards tackling the potential dangers that are associated with the online behaviour in particular and by extension

the problem of cyberbullying on social media platforms in Nigeria in general.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The risks and negative consequences embedded in calling out and dragging on social media are increasingly being recognised globally (Ng, 2020; Palmer, 2020; Shackelford, 2016). Pickard and Yang (2017) state that the act of calling out and dragging emanated from a culture of online activism that social media platforms are fostering. Similarly, Shackelford (2016) laments that though the practice of calling out and dragging was birthed through Internet activism, it has nonetheless evolved into an unhelpful and counterproductive approach in which celebrities and other members of the online communities are frequently victimised and ostracised instead of being educated. Chiou (2020) also emphasises the double-edged nature of calling out and dragging when he contends that the practice serves as an avenue for holding people accountable for their misbehaviour while also becoming a source of digital vigilantism. Mueller (2021) observes that the people and the corporations who get called out or cancelled on social media are frequently accused of engaging in some form of transgressions ranging from bullying to sexism, racism, and homophobia, amongst others.

Mueller (2021) mentions that calling out and dragging people on social media is increasingly becoming a tool employed for silencing the marginalised as it has transformed into a form of censorship that is being consciously shaped by power relations. Manning (2020) likens the practice of calling out and dragging to the archaic acts of public stoning and executions. Equally, Norris (2020) links calling out and dragging to a 'mob rule' in which a group of people engages in a hastened collective judgement to oust an individual from their job and/or ruin their reputation. According to Herzog (2018), calling out and dragging practice typically limits any interactive discourse as it already brands the accused before s/he can explain their own side of the issue in contention. Pearson (2021) notes that the risk associated with the practice is exceptionally high because of the capacity of social media to make it go viral in terms of scope as well as to trigger a collective response from a massive audience in a short amount of time. Mitrofan (2020) identifies the after-effects of being called-out for dragging on victims as including triggering mass unfollows on social media platforms, rupturing of career relations, online harassment, doxing, and suicide ideation.

Roos (2020) maintains that people engaging in calling out and dragging on social media are 'justice warriors' whose primary goal is the policing of other people's behaviours while also forcing their own value system on them. Also, Dimitrakaki and Weeks (2019) claim that calling out and dragging dons an air of "ideological conflict" as its terminology is inherently negative. Equally, Chiou (2020) posits that calling out and dragging is firmly rooted in a kind of morally righteous mentality in which people cancelling others on social media see it as a necessary social obligation to denounce and vilify someone whom they consider to be morally inferior and consequently deserves to be subjected to public criticism. In his analysis, Norris (2020) submits that the legitimate criticism and good-willed incentives initially associated with calling out and dragging have significantly shifted to enforcing hate speech that is often aimed at

bringing down rather than providing constructive help. Hooks (2020) argues that the fact that calling out and dragging is typically tied to doxing and online harassment strips it of any intended good-will incentive. More so, Duchi (2019) notes that some individuals are ferociously engaging in needless callouts on social media to make a name for themselves. In the opinion of Mueller (2020), calling out and dragging is firmly entrenched in harmful acts of extortion, intimidation, blacklisting, and righteous indignation.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

The theory of reasoned action (TRA) propounded by Martin Fishbein and Icek Ajzen in 1967 was employed to explicate the University of Ibadan undergraduates' conceptions and dispositions towards calling out and dragging practice on Twitter. TRA is interested in explaining the connection between attitudes and behaviours within human action. It assumes that individuals are rational beings who almost always act the way they intend (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980). In essence, a person who thinks that engaging in a given behaviour would result in a mostly positive outcome would hold a favourable attitude towards performing such behaviour. In contrast, an individual who believes that performing the behaviour would lead to primarily adverse outcomes would maintain an unfavourable attitude towards it. Therefore, TRA assumes that people's behavioural intentions are usually determined by the concrete information and belief they have about the likelihood that performing a particular action would lead to a specific outcome (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). TRA also posits that the attitudinal (personal) and normative (social) factors are the two major determinants of people's behavioural intentions. The attitudinal factor is seen as the product of the salient (behavioural) beliefs about the perceived consequences of performing the behaviour and the person's (outcome) assessment of the associated consequences. In contrast, the normative factor reflects an actor's conceptions of the crucial specific referent individuals or groups think they should do (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980). Furthermore, TRA opines that although stronger intention usually leads to increased effort to engage in a particular behaviour, the extent of the influence of both the personal (attitudinal) and social (normative) components in determining the intention is most likely to vary according to the behaviour, the situation, and the personality differences of the actors involved (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980). The dispositions of University of Ibadan undergraduates towards calling out and dragging on Twitter are likely to be determined by their conceptions of the possible outcome and the potential consequences attached to engaging in it.

METHODOLOGY

This research was conducted among the University of Ibadan undergraduate students in southwest Nigeria. The institution was the first university to be established in Nigeria. The student's enrollment at the University of Ibadan at undergraduate and postgraduate study levels for the 2018/2019 academic year was 40.348 (University of

Ibadan Pocket Statistics, 2020). As the oldest and first federal university in Nigeria, the University of Ibadan was considered to be an appropriate location to carry out a study of this nature because its students are from diverse socio-economic backgrounds and are very active on Twitter and other social media platforms (Adebayo & Ojedokun, 2018; Aileru, 2016). Therefore, the University's male and female undergraduate students constituted the study population.

Also, the descriptive cross-sectional design was employed for the research, while the survey questionnaire and in-depth interview methods were systematically combined for data elicitation from undergraduate students. Specifically, 300 copies of a semi-structured questionnaire were distributed, and 18 in-depth interviews were conducted. The multistage sampling method was employed to select the undergraduate students who participated in the research. Stage one involved a random selection of six faculties out of the 13 faculties in the University. The ones chosen were Faculty of Agriculture, Faculty of Arts, Faculty of Education, Faculty of Science, Faculty of the Social Sciences and Faculty of Technology. Stage two entailed the clustering of the six selected faculties along departmental lines. In the third stage, undergraduate students were selected across their departments and academic levels of study using stratified and simple random sampling techniques. Concerning the analysis of the elicited data, descriptive statistics involving charts, frequency distributions and simple percentages were employed for the quantitative data, while for the qualitative, the tape-recorded data yielded by the in-depth interview method were subjected to manual content analysis involving careful transcription, painstaking description and systematic interpretation. The manual content analysis essentially involved exploring and interpreting the emerging themes from the generated data.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATION

The procedures adopted for this study conformed with the prescribed international ethical standard for the conduct of social research. The project topic and the instruments for data elicitation were verified, scrutinized and approved by the Department of Sociology, University of Ibadan, before the commencement of data gathering. Equally, the respondents were fully briefed about the project's objectives and their consent was also unequivocally sought and obtained before they were involved in the research. Generally, the rights and integrity of the respondents were respected throughout the study. Participation was purely voluntary, and respondents were not exposed to any harm due to participating in the research.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The significant findings from this research are thematically presented, discussed and interpreted in this section. Table 1 showcases the socio-demographic characteristics of the study participants. It indicates that male respondents were in the majority (63.3%) while females constituted 36.7%. Regarding age distribution, most (59.7%) were in the age bracket of 21-24 years, while those in the 16-20 years category were

also substantially represented (29.3%). Students of all the six selected faculties were equally represented, with 16.6% each.

Characteristics	Categories	Frequency (N=300)	Percentage (%)
Sex	Male	190	63.3
	Female	110	36.7
	Total	300	100
Age	16-20years	88	29.3
	21-25years	179	59.7
	26-30 years	30	10
	31years & above	3	1
	Total	300	100
Faculty	Agriculture	50	16.6
	Arts	50	16.6
	Education	50	16.6
	Science	50	16.6
	Social Science	50	16.6
	Technology	50	16.6
	Total	300	100
Ethnic Group	Yoruba	243	81
	Igbo	21	7
	Hausa	3	1
	Others	33	11
	Total	300	100
Religion	Christianity	238	82.7
	Islam	40	13.3
	Others	12	4
	Total	300	100
Level of study	100	48	16
	200	82	27.3
	300	64	21.3
	400	71	23.7
	500	35	11.7
	Total	300	100

Table 1. Socio-Demographic Profiles of the Respondents

Source: Field Survey, 2021

Also, the distribution of the respondents according to their levels of study indicates that the single largest share (27.3%) was in the 200 level, followed by those in the 400 level with 23.7%. Students in the 300 level accounted for 21.3%, while those in the 100 level constituted 16%. Furthermore, most respondents were Christians (82.7%) and

belonged to the Yoruba ethnic group (81%).

THE CONCEPTIONS OF CALLING OUT AND DRAGGING ON TWITTER AMONG THE RESPONDENTS

Investigation was conducted into respondents' conceptions of the practice of calling out and dragging as a way of gaining insights into their understanding of the phenomenon. Table 2 depicts the output of the analysis.

Conception of calling out and dragging	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Tagging of depraved people	160	64
Catching cruise	21	8.4
Criticism of bad behaviour	69	27.6
TOTAL	300	100

Table 2. Respondents' Conceptions of Calling Out and Dragging

Source: Field survey, 2021

As evident in Table 2, of the 250 respondents who answered this particular question, the majority (64%) conceived calling out and dragging as the tagging of the depraved members of the society. Also, a substantial proportion (27.6%) viewed the practice as a criticism of bad behaviour, while less than 9% claimed it is all about catching a cruise (making jest of other people). The results of the qualitative data also aligned with the survey. One of the undergraduate students interviewed stated that:

Calling out or dragging is when you publicly humiliate someone for the nonsense or stupid thing you think they have done or what you consider stupid behaviour. You bring up the issue online so as to show everyone that it is stupid behaviour (IDI/Male/200L/Faculty of the Social Sciences).

In the words of another one:

Basically, it means taking action when there is an error in someone's behaviour or when there is something controversial which is against one's belief. Something that is contrary to what I believe in or what is against the normal morality of the society (IDI/Male/300level/Faculty of Science).

A respondent viewed the practice this way:

I feel calling out and dragging means tagging some certain sets of people based on what they have done, either misbehaviour or misconduct. It is like getting them to correct things that they have done that are not too good or things that are considered unacceptable by the norms of the society (IDI/Male/200L/Faculty of the Social Sciences).

In the opinion of another:

When people are being insulted online for something they might have said or

done. Dragging is like insulting people whether they deserved it or not for something they did or failed to do. Calling out is like calling someone out for the purpose of letting them know that what they have done was wrong (IDI/Male/200L/Faculty of Arts).

It can be inferred from the outputs of both the survey questionnaire and the qualitative data that undergraduates of the University of Ibadan saw calling out and dragging as a means of exposing and humiliating people for their alleged wrongdoings. Equally, it can be inferred from the results that the practice of calling out and dragging essentially has a moralistic undertone with the primary aim of vilifying and making jest of people while making little or no attempt at correcting them for their alleged transgressions. This result is in accordance with the position of Ditung (2014), who argues that calling out is a kind of theatre or a performative spectacle of ritual blood-letting that makes those engaging in it feel morally good.

RESPONDENTS' DISPOSITIONS TOWARDS THE PRACTICE OF CALLING OUT AND DRAGGING

Information on their opinions about online behaviour was sought to gauge respondents' dispositions towards calling out and dragging. The analysis of their responses is depicted in Table 3.

Dispositions towards calling out and dragging	Frequency	Percentage
It helps people behave well	28	9.3
It can be fun	86	28.7
It can be bad for the victim	74	24.7
Indifferent	112	37.3
TOTAL	300	100

Table 3. Respondents' Dispositions Towards Calling Out and Dragging

Source: Field survey, 2021

Analysis presented in Table 3 indicates that the most significant single share (37.3%) claimed to be indifferent, while 28.7% stated that calling out and dragging could be fun. However, about 25% mentioned that the experience can be bad for people who got called out and dragged. Less than 10% believed the practice could help people behave well. The mixed opinions expressed by the respondents, as seen in the survey analysis, were also evident in the result of the in-depth interview. A 300level student said that:

Well, it is very good (calling out and dragging). Although it has its negative impact too in that we get to misinterpret people's opinions about issues. At times, people just engage in dragging a person without viewing things from that person's viewpoint or without looking at the matter contextually. There are some people who love to drag without viewing the matter at hand contextually. These people are called the *draggers* (IDI/Male/300L/Faculty of Science).

A respondent stated that:

Well, sometimes I feel it is a foolish thing to do because we all have different opinions and we should not impose our opinions on people. So, I believe it is somehow foolish and savage (IDI/Male/400L/Faculty of the Social Sciences).

In the view of another respondent:

I think it is the best because everybody has to be accountable for his or her own actions. So, trying to use words to influence people in a disorderly manner is something that should not be tolerated in an online space (IDI/Male/400L/Faculty of the Social Sciences).

However, a respondent expressed his own opinion this way:

I am kind of indifferent to it. It all depends on what the trending topic is but I am kind of indifferent to it. Sometimes, I feel good about it and at another time I keep mute because I do not want to make comments about it (IDI/Male/200L/Faculty of the Social Sciences).

It is clear from the findings yielded by the survey and the in-depth interview that undergraduate students recognised the double-edged nature of the practice of calling out and dragging in the sense that its impacts can be both positive (helping people to behave well) and negative (it has the potential for promoting wrongful allegations against people and for causing traumatic experiences for the accused). Also, the high percentage (37.3%) of respondents who claimed to be indifferent to the practice implies that this category of individuals is unlikely to see the dangers associated with the practice and are more likely to take to it whenever they feel their interests are being threatened. This outcome corroborates Norris's (2020) observation that the legitimate criticism and good-willed incentives initially associated with calling out and dragging have significantly shifted to enforcing hate speech that is often aimed at bringing down rather than providing constructive help. It also supports a proposition of TRA that a person who thinks that engaging in a given behaviour would result in a mostly positive outcome would hold a favourable attitude towards performing such behaviour. In contrast, an individual who believes that accomplishing the behaviour would lead to primarily negative outcomes would have an unfavourable attitude towards it.

CATEGORIES OF PEOPLE WHO FREQUENTLY GET CALLED-OUT AND DRAGGED ON TWITTER

Information was also sought from the respondents on the categories of people frequently called- out and dragged on Twitter to identify the individuals who are mainly at risk of becoming the targets of those engaging in the online practice. The outcome of the analysis is shown in Table 4 below.

People frequently called out and dragged	Frequency	Percentage
Celebrities	166	55.5
Religious leaders	14	4.7
Politicians	57	19.1
Athletes	4	1.3
Celebrities & Politicians	58	19.4
TOTAL	299	100

Table 4. Categories of People Who Frequently Get Called-Out and Dragged

Source: Field survey, 2021

The distribution in Table 4 shows that the majority of the respondents (55.5%) identified celebrities as the category of people that are frequently called-out and dragged on Twitter, while 19.4% mentioned celebrities and politicians. Furthermore, 19.1% saw politicians as the category of people frequently called-out and dragged, while 4.7% claimed it was religious leaders. Only 1.3% of the respondents mentioned athletes. A major deduction that can be made from this result is that popular people and individuals who are in the spotlight are at a higher risk of being called out and dragged than other groups of people in society. This finding corroborates the submission of Tucker (2018) that celebrities are usually the targets of those engaging in calling out and dragging on social media. Another major implication of this finding is that people who got called out and dragged online may not necessarily have any direct interpersonal relationship with their accusers. Pyzalski (2012) has similarly submitted that online spaces allow for bullying of strangers, the vulnerable, celebrities, and specific groups.

FACTORS MOTIVATING RESPONDENTS' INVOLVEMENT IN CALLING OUT AND DRAGGING

Human behaviours are typically motive-driven (Ryan, 2012). Therefore, it was important to probe the respondents' reasons for their involvement in calling out and dragging. The analysis presented in Table 5 shows that the desire to address the perceived social ills in society was the major factor identified by most respondents (52.1%) as motivating their involvement in calling out and dragging.

Motivating factors	Frequency	Percentage
To address social ills	137	52.1
To expose corrupt acts	33	12.5
Fun seeking	93	35.4
TOTAL	263	100

Table 5. Factors Motivating Respondents' Involvement in Calling Out and Dragging

Source: Field survey, 2021

However, a substantial proportion (35.4%) linked their involvement in the act to

fun-seeking, while about 13% attributed their involvement in calling out and dragging to the desire to expose the corrupt acts in society. The survey outcome was also supported by the data yielded by the in-depth interview. A student explained the reason behind his involvement in calling out and dragging this way:

I once dragged the President of Nigeria after last year's (2020) shooting incident at the Lekki tollgate because he made no reference to it online or in his broadcast to the nation. He just acted like nothing of such happened and he also gave a direct warning to protesters (IDI/Male/200L/Faculty of the Social Sciences).

An interviewee claimed that:

I once participated in the dragging of a Twitter feminist. She alleged that a guy raped her, and it turned out to be false but the guy already killed himself. It really like enraged me and a lot of other people. So, we ended up dragging her but nothing happened to her eventually (IDI/Male/300L/Faculty of Technology).

Another submitted thus:

I dragged *Bobrisky*, and it was more because I saw people dragging him. I did not know why. I also do drag some of our politicians because they are very bad leaders. I will not lie; they truly (politicians) deserved it (IDI/Male/200L/Faculty of Arts).

In the opinion of another respondent:

I once called out my secondary school management because they are fond of helping students cheat their way through external examinations. Why would I write examinations and I would not be able to defend my results? How bad can that be? It was annoying, actually, very annoying. They were too desperate about their students' examination results (IDI/Female/100L/Faculty of the Social Sciences).

These findings demonstrate that the decision of most of the respondents to engage in calling out and dragging was primarily informed by the desire to expose and/or address the perceived social ills in Nigerian society, such as corruption, examination malpractices, rape, extrajudicial killings, police brutality amongst others. However, a significant implication that also emanated from the result is that the fact that some of the respondents engaged in calling out and dragging for the sole purpose of seeking fun is capable of promoting the spread of rumours, fake news, and misinformation all of which tend causing people wrongly accused to suffer dire and/or irreparable consequences. Scholars have similarly observed that though the practice calling out and dragging provides the avenue for the underrepresented groups to seek justice by holding those in power accountable, it has also transformed into a form of digital vigilantism where certain groups of people punish others that contain a set of values that is different from theirs (Clark, 2020; Chiou, 2020; Ng, 2020). Furthermore, this result affirms the submission of TRA that attitudinal factors (i.e., personal factors) and normative factors (i.e., social factors) are the two major determinants of people's behavioural intentions.

TRENDING TOPICS THAT RESPONDENTS USUALLY AVOIDED ON TWITTER

Respondents were probed on the trending topics they usually avoided on Twitter to identify the issues that tend to expose people to the risk of being called out and dragged. Table 4 contains the distribution of the respondents' responses.

Trending topics which respondents usually avoided	Frequency	Percentage
Politics	57	19.8
Sports	19	6.6
Entertainment	19	6.6
Relationship matters	32	11.1
Religious issues	161	55.9
TOTAL	288	100

Table 6: Trending Topics Respondents Usually Avoided

Source: Field Survey, 2021

Close to 60% identified religious issues as the trending topic they usually avoided, while politics was mentioned by 19.8%. The distribution of the remaining responses was relationship matters (11.1%), entertainment (6.6%), and sports (6.6%). Like the output of the survey analysis, the religious issue was the trending topic, which most interviewees also usually claimed to avoid on Twitter. One of them stated:

I always avoid any trending topic bordering on religious matters because there are sometimes that one would see some views about one's religion and one would be so disappointed (IDI/Male/300L/Faculty of Science).

In the words of another interviewee:

Generally, I always avoided religious topics and this is because as a Christian it is clearly stated in the Bible that we should honour people that are called of God. So, I feel that it is sensitive. Therefore, I do not want to get involved in such a discourse (IDI/Male/200L/Faculty of the Social Sciences)

Another interviewee submitted thus:

Rape. It is a very controversial issue. I do not comment on it but I always follow the trend. Then, entertainment, when they say your fav. was rude it is mainly like dragging celebrities who feel like they are on top of the world. Because sometimes they feel they are popular so they have the urge to be speaking unguardedly. This should not be (IDI/Female/100L/Faculty of the Social Sciences).

In the opinion of another respondent:

I do avoid religious topics as much as possible because my father said I should not engage in such. Moreover, a lot of people can be very fanatical, and dealing with religious topics can also lead to something that you are not interested in pushing because of the ways some people react to such things (IDI/Male/300L/Faculty of Technology).

The survey's outcome and the interviews' narratives clearly show that undergraduate students were strategic and selective in their approach to calling out and dragging on Twitter. They consciously avoided trending topics that they felt could expose them to the risk of being bullied. Furthermore, the fact that close to 56% stated that they usually avoided religious issues echoes its volatile nature in Nigeria. Indeed, the multi-religious composition of the country has frequently thrown up interreligious conflicts owing to the deep-seated rivalry among people from different religious faiths. This result is in tandem with the view of Bakher (2021) that calling out and dragging has become a form of online harassment which instils fear and threatens certain groups from speaking up and participating in open debates. TRA opines that although stronger intention usually leads to increased effort to engage in a particular behaviour, the extent of the influence of both the personal (attitudinal) and social (normative) components in determining the intention is most likely to vary according to the behaviour, the situation, and the personality differences of the actors involved (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980).

BENEFITS WHICH RESPONDENTS ASCRIBED TO CALLING OUT AND DRAGGING ON TWITTER

To predict respondents' future dispositions towards calling out and dragging, the investigation was conducted into the benefits they ascribed to the online practice.

Benefits ascribed to calling out and dragging	Frequency	Percentage
Public shaming	72	25.1
Feeling of satisfaction	37	12.9
Awareness creation	160	55.7
Ensure justice	18	6.3
TOTAL	287	100

Table 7. Benefits Respondents Ascribed to Calling Out and Dragging

Source: Field Survey, 2021

Out of the 287 respondents who answered the question, the majority (55.7%) believed that calling out and dragging helps create awareness about different antisocial behaviours and misdeeds of members of society. Also, 25.1% of the respondents claimed that the practice serves as a means of publicly shaming individuals who engaged in one form of misconduct. About 13% maintained that engaging in calling out and dragging satisfies victims of wrongdoings, while 6.3% mentioned that it helps victims of wrongdoings get justice. The narratives of the interviewees also corroborated the survey. A 200level student explained the benefit which calling out and dragging offers this way:

I just feel that as a citizen, it is part of my fundamental rights to be free to express myself and Twitter gives me the platform. So, I think the concerned au-

thority may actually get to hear about what we have talked about in the course of calling them out and dragging them. It usually gets to their trending table (IDI/Male/200L/Faculty of the Social Sciences).

Another interviewee aired his own opinion this way:

First of all, I can say that it (calling out and dragging) is a way of letting out my steam whenever I dragged someone. When you drag someone on Twitter, it is a way of letting out your steam (IDI/Male/200L/Faculty of the Social Sciences).

However, a respondent viewed it this way:

It is a two-way thing. It can have both positive and negative effects. In terms of positive, you get a brand that is guilty of a malpractice exposed, and as a result of this step, safe other people from falling victim. However, it can also be negative in the sense that one cannot really know if those who are being dragged are actually being dragged for a right cause or if they are just being called out for clout chasing so as to get followers and audience (IDI/Female/400L/Faculty of the Social Sciences).

It is evident from these findings that most respondents considered calling out and dragging a veritable means where awareness can be created about perceived misdeeds, where parties involved in misconducts can be publicly shamed and where victims of wrongdoings can publicly seek justice. This result indicates that undergraduate students view the practice of calling out and dragging in a good light and are more likely to continue to be favourably disposed to it. Equally, it validates a fundamental assertion of TRA that people's behavioural intentions are usually determined by their concrete information and belief about the likelihood that performing a particular action would lead to a specific outcome (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). O'Donnell and Sweetman (2018) have also posited that the fact that technology mirrors the society that creates it is reflected in how people's access to technologies is impacted by essential socio-demographic characteristics, including gender, ethnicity, age, social class, geography, and disability.

CONCLUSION

This study centred on University of Ibadan undergraduates' conceptions and dispositions towards calling out and dragging on Twitter. It established that the majority of the students (64%) conceived calling out and dragging as the tagging of the depraved members of society. The desire to address social ills was the major reason behind most respondents' involvement. Celebrities were mentioned by the most significant single share (55.5%) as the category of people that mainly was called out and dragged. Most respondents (55.9%) usually avoided issues bordering on religion.

The results of this study demonstrated the double-edged nature of the practice of calling out and dragging as it has both advantages and disadvantages that are associated with it. Therefore, there is a need to moderate it strategically. Undergraduate students need to be consistently counselled and enlightened on the potential dangers

that are associated with the indiscriminate use of Twitter platforms to abuse and bully other people, all in the name of engaging in calling out and dragging. The media can champion this task, as can the National Orientation Agency (NOA) and the Federal Ministry of Communications and Digital Economy. Also, a stipulated penalty should be attached to spreading fake news and unsubstantiated rumours about people and brands on Nigeria's Twitter and other popular social media platforms. This step can go a long way in stemming the tide of cases of wrongful accusations of people by Twitter influencers and their followers, which, more often than not, usually have devastating impacts on targeted victims. For instance, the Twitter accounts of people found culpable of calling out and dragging without concrete proof to support their allegations should be permanently suspended. They should be compelled to compensate victims adjudged wrongly called out and dragged under false accusations. Finally, victims who got wrongly called out and dragged should be encouraged to seek professional therapeutic assistance to help cushion the harmful effects of the chaotic situations which they had been forced to undergo.

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