KADUNA RESIDENTS' PERCEPTION AND ATTITUDE TOWARDS FEMINIST POSTS ON SOCIAL MEDIA

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ABSTRACT: *Social media plays a crucial role in influencing the public conversation surrounding feminism. This research is focused on analysing Kaduna residents' views and attitudes toward feminist posts on social media. Anchored on Online Inhibition theory, the study adopted a survey research design to elicit data from 312 residents of Kaduna City using Google Forms as a questionnaire tool. Findings revealed that the majority of Kaduna residents see feminist posts on social media, and the platform with the most feminist posts is X. However, results showed that Kaduna residents see feminist posts as not aligning with their cultural and religious philosophies. Hence, the majority has a pessimistic attitude towards feminist posts on social media. Researchers recommend adequate education that can bring about mindset change and help people understand the real objectives of feminism.*

KEYWORDS: Attitude, Feminism, Feminist Posts, Perception, Social media.

INTRODUCTION

Social media platforms have redefined various human endeavours like business, public relations, advertising, health, and content creation and shaped several public discourses around activism, opposition, and feminism (Obiora, 2024; Obiora & Adikuru, 2024; Obiora & Uche, 2023; Obiora & Kenechukwu, 2021; Adikuru & Obiora, 2021; Dunu et al., 2017; Ojiakor et al., 2016; Uche et al., 2016). They have awakened human digital communication, thoughts sharing, experiences, and pictures, creating connections and bonds in relationships. Social media has become a vital avenue for promoting gender equality, and it is crucial in public life as it enables user interactions and content exchange (Hutchinson, 2019; Keller, 2019). The proliferation of social media platforms and technological advancements in recent years have led to the development and availability of mobile devices, making online connections nearly universal for many individuals all over the world.

The feminist movement in the West gave rise to the principles and concepts that make up feminism (He, 2024). The feminist movement gave rise to present-day feminism, propelling the discourse among women. Feminism is one of the world's radically activated women's movements, receiving various types of support, criticism, wide acceptance, and awareness. In the modern era, youthful feminist action has continually gained unprecedented media attention (Obiora, 2025; Adikuru, 2022; Adikuru & Nwammuo, 2022; Jackson, 2018). Contemporary feminism has faced massive activism and support, especially from the younger generation. The involvement of younger people in the feminist movement has given more momentum to the active movement through different social media platforms. Youths being active social media users (Ezeaka, 2024; Nwodu et al., 2022; Nwodu et al., 2021; Adikuru & Obiora, 2021; Uche & Obiora, 2016), integrate feminist discourse through their shared content, giving their active voices to the feminist movement.

Online expression of feminism has gained traction, raising questions about the extremism of the feminist movement. The United Nations (2022) states that true gender parity is still elusive despite growing changes in gender roles, the accomplishments of the women's rights movement over the past century, and the legalisation of equal treatment regardless of gender. Girls' and women's freedom is consistently restricted by poverty, violence, discrimination at work, and the disproportionate amount of work and family care that falls on them, as well as independence (Obiora & Uche, 2024; Henze et al., 2024).

The use of social networking sites and blogs by feminists to spread awareness of a wide range of topics on gender violence, misogyny, sexism, patriarchy, and inequality can be regarded as communication for social and behavioural change (Obiora, 2022). Hence, social media has created a strong advocacy platform to fight for different courses, including racism, feminism, political course, human rights, child rights, and justice over crimes. So, it can be said that social media has become a popular culture (Obiora & Nwafor, 2022). Social media sites have allowed people to voice their opinions, question social norms, and spread feminist ideas as well as emerged as a news outlet for current affairs and expression sharing through the use of emojis (Obiora et al., 2025; Obiakor et al., 2024).

Kaduna is the capital city of Kaduna state, and it is located along the Kaduna River. Located in north-central Nigeria, Kaduna has a diverse population, and it is one of the country's most populous and diverse states. The city of Kaduna, the state capital, has historically been a manufacturing centre for the region, drawing people from across the country and contributing

to the state's ethnic, cultural and religious diversity. Unlike neighbouring states in the north, the population of Kaduna is more evenly split between the predominantly Muslim groups from the north and Christian groups hailing from southern regions.

Oyeniyi (2022) noted that Kaduna comprises many distinct ethnic groups like Fulani, Hausa, Gwari, Abinu, Ada, Adara, and others. The people of Kaduna are known for their peculiar cultures, languages, and traditions. The people of Kaduna comprise majorly Muslims, but there are also Christians. Sharia is a valid system in Kaduna. Based on the culture and beliefs of the people of Kaduna, it is important to explore how they view and react to feminist posts on social media since users' opinions and reactions to feminist posts on social media vary, displaying a range of opinions and viewpoints. This study, therefore, analyses Kaduna residents' perceptions and reactions to feminist content and the engagements it attracts on social media.

Statement of Problem

Feminist movements have used social media to fight against patriarchal systems, promote gender equality, and carry out activities that cut across national borders; these fora have also become contentious spaces where opinions on feminism are frequently held. This is because social media platforms have become vital platforms for the expression and spread of ideas in the era of digital media. Therefore, there is a need to ascertain how feminism is conveyed online and how it is interpreted by various audiences using a variety of metrics of the users' attitudes and perspectives of feminist expression on social media. In order to fill these gaps, this study looks at how feminism is portrayed on social media and how people perceive and respond to feminist content on the platform. It seeks to understand how the general public interacts with feminist narratives and examine what influences neutral, oppositional, or supportive sentiments. To create more inclusive and effective strategies for online feminist action. So, this research aims to:

1. Determine whether Kaduna residents come across feminist posts on social media.

2. Ascertain Kaduna residents' perception of feminist posts on social media

3. Find out Kaduna residents' attitudes towards feminist posts on social media

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Social Movement

Social movements are group interactions centred on a shared identity and viewpoint to resolve cultural or political disputes. Social media has proven to be the most beneficial platform for core actors who need to interact with each other more regularly and reliably (Yates, 2015) since the regulation of social media seems active as users claim not to be aware of online communication laws or do not just bother to adhere to them (Obiora & Onyeka, 2022; Onyeka & Obiora, 2021).

Social media users participate in online movements in several ways, such as reading and learning, taking action on posts (liking, commenting, sharing, and retweeting), and creating content: words and images on social media, including videos (Yang, 2016). The #MeToo movement is a well-known hashtag that has gained international traction. The movement has

also given rise to other related movements, like #BelieveSurvivours, which addresses societal incredulity regarding women's sexual victimisation; #ChurchToo, which addresses victims of sexual assault in religious communities; #blacklivesmatter in the United States of America, and #EndSARS movement in Nigeria.

Social Media

Online activism can spark offline change and sustain movement debate (González-Malabet et al., 2023; Adikuru & Obiora, 2021). Social media can propel a course or movement through its dynamic changing algorithm where trivia topics are made salient. The utilisation and ongoing development of algorithmically computed recommender systems have made popular material more visible than public concerns. Crowdsourcing, which involves combining content from various users, including through social media platforms, has become increasingly popular since the emergence of Web 2.0 (Idi & Adikuru, 2023; Ng, 2015). Social media can engage people who might not be able to interact in person while linking them with others outside their immediate area. According to Odhiambo (2016), social media can significantly influence gender equality by using digital platforms to help expand feminist spaces, allowing for more open and diverse involvement and the promotion of feminist concepts. Despite the popularity, feminism around the world has not yet balanced gender equality, implying that the platforms that engage higher feminist content are consistently being backlashed. However, social media serves as a platform for discussion and has the radical potential to increase awareness of issues like sexism, equality, misogyny, rape culture, and other everyday issues.

Feminism in Nigeria

Feminism began as a philosophical movement in the 18th century in both the United States and the United Kingdom. Nutsukpo (2020) asserts that experiences such as colonialism and emphasis on female education have helped many women focus on their lives and personal experiences, creating a desire to fight for their equality in society.

African feminism is a complex movement rooted in the continent's historical, cultural, and social settings. African feminism addresses concerns on colonial legacies, economic injustices, gender-based violence, and institutional patriarchy, placing more emphasis on communal advancement than Western feminism, which is sometimes accused of emphasising individuality. Over time, feminist researchers from Nigeria and other areas of the world agree in their well-informed views that women in Nigeria, where patriarchy is predominant, are subject to dealing with injustices like tyranny, repression, subordination, and so forth daily. Therefore, feminism is typically seen as a movement fiercely dedicated to opposing the current patriarchal status quo to achieve the needed changes in subordination experienced by Nigerian women in our society. Promoting gender equality regarding social, economic, and political opportunities is a priority for Nigerian women (Dibia, 2020). Despite these developments, feminism in Nigeria is occasionally opposed due to deeply rooted patriarchal perceptions and inaccurate impressions of the movement (Odhiambo, 2016). Nigerian feminism is actively working to dismantle societal barriers and improve the lives of women, as seen by organisations and movements like the African Women's Development Fund and the Stand to End Rape (STER).

Religion is one of the most influential forces shaping societal norms in Africa. It has played a complex role in defining gender roles. Traditional religions often reinforce patriarchal

ideologies. In many communities, men are regarded as the spiritual leaders, the intermediaries between the divine and the human. Women, in contrast, are often excluded from sacred rituals and leadership roles within religious spaces. Christianity and Islam, introduced to Africa through colonisation and trade, further entrenched male dominance. Both religions were construed in manners that vindicated the suppression of females, often using holy citations to standardise patriarchal practices. For instance, biblical and Quranic teachings were frequently used to confine women to domestic roles, emphasising their submission to male authority. All these practices are prevalent in Kaduna, a city situated in Africa (Awopetu et al., 2023).

Tonsing and Tonsing (2019) also noted that African culture and Nigerian inclusiveness have been found to legitimise patriarchy and preserve male supremacy by embracing and promoting hegemonic masculinity, a configuration of gender practices which guarantees the dominant position of men and the subordination of women.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this study is the online inhibition theory, which explains that people are more likely to express themselves freely and openly online due to a perceived sense of anonymity and a lack of social cues. This includes both positive and negative behaviours, including increased empathy and self-disclosure, hate speech, and cyberbullying. Individualistic traits determine people's expression online. However, cultural and personal values determine what is deemed to be the "true" aspects of a person's personality (Suler, 2004).

In relation to this study, the online inhibition theory provides insight into how social dynamics in virtual spaces might alter feminist ideas' expression and reception. According to the theory, people may conduct themselves differently in online settings than in person because of the perceived anonymity and distance that digital platforms provide.

METHODOLOGY

To further analyse Kaduna residents' perceptions and attitudes to feminist posts on social media, the study focused on survey design using a combined approach of purposive and simple random techniques in distributing the Google questionnaire. The population of residents in the Kaduna metropolis used for this study is 1,023,000 (Kaduna, Nigeria Metro Area Population 1950-2024, n.d.). The Krejci and Morgan Sample table was utilised to determine the sample size of 384 given the estimated population. In order to reach a wide array of respondents, questionnaires were distributed in the form of Google Forms; links to the Google Form were shared via various WhatsApp groups.

RESULTS

Three hundred twelve (312) residents filled out the online form, which is about 81.3% of the sample size. Consequently, this is a satisfactory result.

Table 1: Respondents' Observation of the Presence of Feminist Posts on various Social Media

Respondent	Frequency	Percentage
X	214	68.59
Facebook	72	23.07
Instagram	14	4.49
Others	12	3.85
Total	312	100

Source: *Field survey, 2024*

Table 1 shows that all respondents have come across feminist posts on social media. X has the highest number of respondents who indicated that they saw feminist posts on X, followed by Facebook and Instagram.

Table 2: Respondents' Perception of feminist posts on social media.

Response	**Frequency**	**Percentage (%)**
Persuasive	54	17.31
Annoying	8	2.56
Interesting	11	3.53
Educative	22	7.05
Biased	14	4.49
Indifferent	19	6.09
Non-cultural	137	43.91
Anti-religious	47	15.06
Total	**312**	**100**

Source: *Field survey, 2024*

Table 2 shows the opinions of Kaduna residents on feminist posts on social media. The majority of the respondents see feminist posts as non-aligning with their culture. Those who also view the feminist posts as anti-religious are also more. The total number of those who find feminist posts on social media intriguing, educative, and persuasive, 88 (28.21%) did not match up with only those who see it as non-cultural.

Table 3: Respondents' Attitude towards Feminist posts on social media

Respondent	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
Comment in support of it	82	26.28
Uninterested	141	45.20
Indifferent	26	8.33
Comment against it	63	20.19
Total	312	100

Source: *Field survey, 2024*

Table 3 reveals that the majority of the respondents have pessimistic attitudes toward feminist posts on social media. Most respondents indicated that they are not interested in feminist posts, and quite a number, 20.19%, expressed that even when they engage with a post, they give negative comments about it to show they are not in support of it.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The study explores the frequency with which users encounter feminist posts on various social media platforms. The result reveals that the X platform has the highest frequency, which means it is safe to assert that feminist posts are more prevalent on X. This finding aligns with Xiong et al. (2019) as well as Adikuru and Obiora, 2021 studies that noted that social media platforms are instrumental in defining activists' roles, reflecting on the success of social movements, and recommending actions to the public. Similarly, Kunst et al. (2018) found that such movements are often polarising, with some perceiving them as being misused, particularly by men. The results of this study further demonstrate that X is an effective platform for disseminating feminist expression.

The study also reflected the perception of respondents on feminist posts on social media, as the majority of the respondents see feminist posts on social media as not in alignment with their culture and religion. This finding confirms the study of Awopetu et al. (2023) and the assertion of Tonsing and Tonsing (2019), where they stressed the influence of Nigerian culture on teaching women that the men are superior to them as well as the major religions in Kaduna; Christianity and Islam, also teach their followers that women are to be submissive and being directed by men. For example, Biblical and Quranic teachings were frequently used to confine women to domestic roles, emphasising their submission to male authority. All these practices are prevalent in Kaduna, a city situated in Africa.

The attitude of respondents towards feminist posts on social media is more pessimistic as the majority do not engage with such posts, and out of those who even engage in it, would give negative comments against it. This could be due to the cultural and religious beliefs of the Kaduna people, who are mostly Christians and Muslims and still indulge extensively in their cultural practices. Going by the stances of Odhiambo (2016), Tonsing and Tonsing (2019) as well as Awopetu et al. (2023), it may take a lot of education to propagate feminism to the people of Kaduna as they sternly believe in the patriarchal dominance as biblical and Quranic teachings have frequently been used to make women submissive to men.

CONCLUSION

Social media's potential as a weapon for feminist advocacy is constantly changing. Therefore, we should utilise this potential to promote gender equality by comprehending and addressing users' attitudes and perceptions. These research findings provide an explanatory understanding of feminism in the digital space, creating a means for inclusive and articulating online discussions on feminist topics. The researchers recommend the following:

1. Future research should consider longitudinal studies or specific platforms to capture evolving attitudes.

2.   There is a need for more substantive cultural and religious education to help with perception change and a better understanding of cultural and religious teachings to enable the people of Kaduna to understand that feminism is all about fair dealing.

3.   Relevant authorities should take action to shield feminists from hate speech and defamation in online spaces, where opinions are frequently expressed more freely than in person, given the unfavourable views of feminism in these settings.

4.   Nigeria's rich diversity calls for feminists to design inclusive posts that address various aspects of feminism, such as race, ethnicity, class, and disability. These posts should use an inclusive hashtag to broaden engagement and encourage participation from diverse communities.

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