Social Media: Sustainable Communication Tool on Challenges Faced by Women

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Abstract. We examine the challenges faced by women for effective communication on social media. The majority of the data used in this study was primary, and it was gathered in the field using a questionnaire. The questionnaire utilized in this study was a written list of questions that had been carefully designed and selected to gather data. The questions were closed-ended and focused on women's issues and their use of social media. Cronbach alpha was used to test the dataset's validity, consistency, and reliability based on the obtained information. Cronbach's Alpha for all constructs or items was more significant than the minimum acceptable reliability coefficient of 0.5 to 0.9, indicating strong internal consistency.

Furthermore, Cronbach's Alpha for all constructs was more than the minimal permissible reliability coefficient, indicating that they were valid and trustworthy and hence suitable for use. We notice that the majority of respondents in this study reported that they had experienced social media harassment. Our findings show, in particular, that the majority of respondents in this study believe that women are usually overlooked when it comes to matters requiring social media opinions. From the preceding, we opined that information, education and communication are empowering tools. It is the challenge of women in leadership to dismantle the obstacles in the women's use of information media. No form of women empowerment will succeed until these challenges are met.

Keywords: social media; women empowerment; communication; gender equity.

INTRODUCTION

The essential role of media and communication in driving global change is remarkably missing as almost all of the declarations fail to mention it. Despite the emphasis on democracy and human rights, the seemingly apparent tools of achieving these goals – multiple media and functional public spheres – remain on the periphery of bilateral and international programs. Additionally, there is often a significant division within development agencies between 'media support' on the one hand and 'strategic communication' on the other, as if media and communication were opposing and even contradictory entities.

In recent years, the United Nations has paid considerable attention to using information and communication technology (ICT) as a development tool. Strategic partnerships with funders, the private sector, civil society, and working groups and task forces have been developed to increase interagency collaboration throughout the United Nations system. However, while ICT has been recognized as a tool for advancing gender equality and women's empowerment, a "gender divide" has been discovered, as indicated by fewer women accessing and utilizing ICT than males. Unless this incongruence is carefully addressed, there is a risk that ICT will intensify existing gender imbalances and create new forms of inequality.

Social media networks have aided in the fueling of social movements all around the world. The potential of social actors to challenge and adjust power relations in society has been proven to be strengthened by social media, which provides forums for debate, reflection, persuading and organizing individuals. Because of the rise of social media, many organization communicators may now communicate with the public in ways that traditional media and static websites cannot. People who use social media perceive that they have more power to create change than those who do not use social media to reach the public

[6]. The bundling of social media platforms has become an important way for organizations to manage their reputations and maintain relationships with the public [1, 9].

Scholars and activists from a wide variety of disciplines are eager to address the issue of women in the majority of developing countries. Understanding the female experience necessitates ongoing, meticulous research that focuses on past and contemporary events and conditions in these shifting contexts. Such a study requires an integrative approach. Though themes of gender equity may appear cliché at the turn of the century, facts and studies bear testament to the stark reality of the necessity to address a range of connected challenges. Scholars and activists from various academic fields are desperately needed to share their perspectives on how they interpret women's equality, constraints, overcome limitations, form personas, and shape their multiple roles through careers, family, and religious life, and how they do so through social media.

Social media has shown to be an essential mechanism for promoting women's rights concerns to a broader audience, mobilizing action on the cities throughout the world, and persuading policymakers to enhance their pledges to abolish discrimination. Recent events in Turkey and India illustrate how social media can help in bridging the gap between grassroots women's movements and policymaking processes. The emergence of social media and the unprecedented usage of new technologies by women represent a significant potential to bring gender equality and women's rights to the forefront of policymaking and public and media attention. The Beijing Platform for Action, published in 1995, recognized and forecasted the media's "potential to make a considerably greater contribution to women's advancement." This demand is repeated in the proposed targets for Goal 5 of the post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). However, using the media to combat discrimination, debunk gender stereotypes, and raise awareness of women's rights is difficult, just as it was in 1995. While women are more excellent social media users globally than men [3], many women, especially in developing countries, still do not have access to this technology due to infrastructure, costs, and discriminatory social norms. This brief research explores the effectiveness of social media in amplifying women's voices and suggests measures to promote their influence on decision-making processes. Over the past seven years, the OECD Development Centre's Wikigender platform has worked with a diverse spectrum of gender equality players, from civil society to governments, to boost women's voices in policymaking conversations. This paper will summarize critical topics raised in a recent Wikigender online discussion titled "Advancing Women's Rights Through Social Media: Which Strategies?" It will look at successful social media campaigns, as well as existing impediments. Finally, it will provide recommendations on how social media may successfully broaden the scope of action on women's rights and gender equality in the post-2015 agenda.

Social media has altered the landscape of global information flow and the relationship between citizens and governments [8]. Apart from its role as a social networking tool, social media enables anybody to share content and opinions with a global audience for the first time, circumventing traditional media and other modes of information transmission. Activists worldwide have utilized sites such as YouTube, Facebook, and Twitter to broadcast live events to a large online audience, most notably during the Arab Spring movement. Local issues morph into global ones and local campaigners into global citizens. Women's rights organizations have also seized the unique political and awareness-raising possibilities of social media. Participating in the Wikigender online debate stressed the importance of social media in enabling gender activists to communicate cheaply both inside and across borders. Female influencers have facilitated a younger generation of activists, a key audience for breaking down existing preconceptions and advancing gender equality.

Many issues raised in social conflict directly affect women, including female genital mutilation, polygamy, property succession rights, and more violent incidents like displacement, loss of loved ones and livelihoods, family disintegration, sexual assault, and other maltreatment against women and girls. It is worth noting that women's participation in the media in post-independence Nigeria has surged considerably in recent years. Following the civil war, modernization, coupled with the development of governments and increasing radio and television transmission, brought women into all male-dominated industries, even if the ratio of women in media remains relatively low. Nevertheless, women in the media in Nigeria continue to struggle with a male-dominated media culture that discrimi-

nates against women. Self-sufficient female journalists are considered threats to domestic authority or as sexual prey for the all-powerful men they interacted with within the workplace by the media culture. Likewise, social views suggest that unique women's perspectives will be overlooked when journalists seek authoritative commentary. The widely held belief is that women's difficulties are exploited to titillate and sell media goods, while more severe gender concerns are downplayed. In Liberia, it is common for women to buy advertising space in the country's newspaper to hear their concerns. In the meantime, female journalists have to fight so hard to develop and maintain a women's column.

METHODOLOGY

The majority of the data used in this study was primary, and it was gathered in the field using a questionnaire. The questionnaire utilized in this study was a written list of questions that had been carefully designed and selected to gather data. The questions were closed-ended and focused on women's issues and their use of social media. Cronbach alpha was used to test the dataset's validity, consistency, and reliability based on the obtained information. Cronbach's Alpha for all constructs or items was more significant than the minimum acceptable reliability coefficient of 0.5 to 0.9, indicating strong internal consistency. In addition, Cronbach's Alpha for all constructs was more than the minimal permissible reliability coefficient, indicating that they were valid and trustworthy and hence suitable for use.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents an analysis of the questionnaire administered and obtained from the respondents, from which our advice and conclusion are drawn, using both mathematical and statistical methodologies. A total of 70 questionnaires were sent out to the respondents for data generation, as shown in the table below.

Table 1 − Analysis of Questionnaire

Questionnaires	Copies	Percentage
Retrieved & validated	60	86
Un-retrieved	5	7
Unvalidated	5	7
Sent copies	70	100

According to the data above, 60 of the 70 questionnaires distributed were retrieved and validated. This accounted for 86% of the total Questionnaires sent, and it was this figure. Therefore, it was used for analysis in the following sections. However, the data also shows that 5 of the questionnaires were unable to be recovered and that five copies, or 7%, we're unable to be validated due to part of them being incomplete.

The table 2 shows the responses of the respondents as it relates to the research question. From the table, we observed that, on average, 54 respondents agreed that they had experienced abuse on social media. This represented about 90% of the total respondents. This shows that many respondents in this study concurred that they had experienced abuse on social media. Similarly, about 6 of the respondents reported that they had not experienced abuses on social media. This represented about 10% of the entire respondents.

Also, from the table, we observed that, on average, 48 respondents agreed that Women are often neglected on issues bothering on opinions through social media. This represented about 80% of the total respondents. This shows that the vast majority of respondents in this research consented. Women are often neglected on issues bothering on opinions through social media.

Table 2 − Responses to Research Question

No	Questions	Responses						Total	
		Yes	%	Undecided	%	No	%	Response	%
1.	I have experience abuses on social media	54	90	0	0	6	10	60	100
2.	Women are often neglected on issues bothering on opinions through social media	48	80	0	0	12	20	60	100
3	I have participated in various campaigns against women victimization on social media	53	89	0	0	7	11	60	100

Similarly, about 12 of the respondents disagreed that Women are often neglected on issues bothering opinions through social media. This represented about 20% of the entire respondents. We also find that, on average, 53 respondents participated in various campaigns against women victimization on social media. This represented about 89% of the total respondents. This implies that most of the respondents in this study participated in various campaigns against women victimization on social media. Similarly, about 7 of the respondents did not participate in various campaigns against women victimization on social media representing 11%.

The emergence of social media, most notably Facebook, but also emerging video–sharing sites like as YouTube and Vimeo, messaging services such as WhatsApp and Snapchat, photo–sharing sites such as Instagram and Pinterest, and microblogging tools such as Twitter, has mirrored the transition to mobile media. These services are offered by a small number of large technology corporations with solid positions in the digital media landscape, such as Google, which owns YouTube, and Facebook, which owns WhatsApp and Instagram. Social media platforms are commonly used for purposes beyond sharing experiences and communicating with friends and family. They are also becoming more relevant as news sources, as an increasing number of people find news on these platforms. According to the findings of this study, the respondents have been subjected to abuse on social media. Our findings specifically demonstrated that most participants feel that women are usually overlooked on matters affecting public opinion via social media. Development communication programs that address the knowledge gap seek to educate and enlighten individuals about a specific habit while ignoring the sociopolitical contexts that promote that behaviour. The evolution of a more digital, mobile, and social media-enabled environment benefits more than only the large technology companies that have most successfully produced products and services for its use. Furthermore, it broadens opportunities for digital media consumers to interact with news by commenting on articles, sharing them, debating them with others, or even generating their material through user–friendly platforms such as blogs or social networking. The news industry has made involvement easier by allowing readers to comment on stories, and social media platforms offer multiple opportunities for uploading, sharing, and discussing content.

CONCLUSIONS

The political winds that swept over Europe and Africa in the 1980s wrought a much-needed change in the polities of African and other developing countries, as they sought to investigate issues of concern to women and to make required efforts to address gender inequities. The bulk of the material in this study came from primary sources and was acquired on the field using a questionnaire. The questionnaire utilized in this study was a written list of questions that had been carefully designed and selected to gather data. The questions were closed-ended and focused on women's issues and their use of social media. Cronbach alpha was used to test the dataset's validity, consistency, and reliability based on the obtained information. Cronbach's Alpha for all constructs or items was more significant than the minimum acceptable reliability coefficient of 0.5 to 0.9, indicating strong internal consistency. In addition, Cronbach's Alpha for all constructs was more than the minimal permissible reliability coefficient, indicating that they were valid and trustworthy and hence suitable for use. We conclude that the highest number of respondents in this study acknowledged having experienced social media abuse. Notably, our findings demonstrate that the bulk of respondents in our study agree that women are frequently neglected when it comes to issues affecting public opinion via social media. From the preceding, we opined that information, education and communication are empowering tools. It is the challenge of women in leadership to dismantle the obstacles in the women's use of information media. No form of women empowerment will succeed until these challenges are met.

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