

# **A**N ASSESMENT OF THE USE OF FACEBOOK FOR GENDER-BASED DOMESTIC VIOLENCE CAMPAIGN AMONG INTERVENTION GROUPS IN KADUNA METROPOLIS

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## **ABSTRACT**

*The study aims to assess the current status of adoption of Facebook by intervention agencies in metropolitan Kaduna in relation to the advancement of the Gender-based domestic violence cause, against the backdrop of presumed benefits or constraints of the medium. Available statistics from the office of the Commissioner of Human Services and Social Development under the Kaduna state Ministry of Women Affairs covering January to August 2020 indicated a total reported 437 incidents of gender-based domestic violence, with women being the highest victims. Guided by the research questions raised in relation to how Facebook can be deployed regarding this challenge, the study adopted Focus group Discussion to interrogate of the perceptions and opinions of the participant respondents study based on their shared*

## **Introduction:**

Domestic violence is a complex problem in Nigeria. It is a common phenomenon that people routinely live with, in their daily lives, and has been widely believed to occur in varying dimensions ranging from physical abuse, emotional abuse or psychological. On a broader context, domestic violence threatens peaceful coexistence and is made complicated where it is perpetrated by persons close to the victims, such as husbands, wives, sisters, brothers, uncles, etc. It may include battering of intimate partners and others, sexual abuse of

*experiences. Four major groups were purposively sampled with selection drawn based on their respective profiles as active partners to the development work of the Kaduna state Ministry of Women Affairs. The findings of the study indicated that, although, there is widespread adoption of Facebook among Gender-based domestic violence intervention groups in Kaduna, there are however some constraints with the adoption of the medium for engagement, especially restraint by victims for the fear of being stigmatized, where their identities are easily profiled. The study concludes by affirming the potency of the Facebook Medium for social awareness campaigns, and recommends that, the medium should be improved with enhance features which support groups and encourage anonymity by victim-users; while more active Gender-based violence groups in Kaduna should be encouraged to extend advocacy and campaign coverage to other areas outside the metropolis, where prevalence rates are proven to be high.*

***Keywords:*** *Assesment, Facebook, Gender-Based, Domestic, Violence.*

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**C**hildren, marital rape and traditional practices that are harmful to women. Thus, domestic violence is easily understood as an intentional and persistent abuse of anyone in the home in a way that causes pain, distress or injury (Aihie, 2009). It therefore suggests any abusive treatment (physically or psychologically) of a family member by another, therefore violating the law of basic human rights.

Particularly as it concerns marriage, abusive tendencies are made complicated because they are veiled in cultural beliefs or widely held stereotypes. For example, a husband forcefully having sex with his wife because he is the head of the family, keeping a partner away from friends and family, not allowing a partner to work to control their economic independence and using children as collateral to control a partner. For this reason, it has been described as a total violation of human rights beyond geographical, cultural, religious, social, moral and economic conditions (Fulu, Warner & Moussavi [2015](#)). According to the WHO data on domestic

violence, 36.1 in Americas, 45.6 in Africa, 40.2 in South East Asia, 36.4 in Eastern Mediterranean, 27.2 in Europe, 27.9 in Western Pacific, and 32.7 in High Income region, women have experienced domestic violence (World Health Organization, [2013](#)), hence, domestic violence occurs universally (Dahlberg and Krug, 2002, UNICEF, 2005).

Gender-based domestic violence in marriages can take many forms, with the memories or pains remaining with the victims, sometimes forever. However, the frequency of its occurrence may not be easily reported or determined. For instance, determining the extent of domestic violence in Nigeria might be a difficult task because the official statistics on violence in marriages are not properly documented in the country. In addition, incidents of domestic violence tend to go unreported (Amnesty International, 2007; Eze-Anaba 2006, 7; UK 25 May 2007, 96). Reasons cited for women not reporting violence in the home include: respect for tradition; lack of knowledge of rights (VOA, 2007); pressure from family members to not disrupt the family peace, fear of reprisals from the abuser; the belief that their complaint will not be taken seriously by the police; and fear of financial insecurity (Amnesty International, 2005).

In spite of these limiting influences, there appears to be a growing adoption of Facebook as a medium of exchanges among many people in this parts of the world, in the dissemination of everyday social realities including the incidence of Gender-based domestic violence. Apart from individual narratives, intervention agencies involved in Gender-based violence campaign initiatives may also find the opportunity presented by the popularity and adoption of Facebook, as a significant tool in advancing their causes, among other benefits. The extent of the adoption of Facebook by Gender-based domestic violence initiatives in line with the Sustainable Development Goals (number five) and the likely constraints identified with the adoption is therefore the focus of this research inquiry.

### **Statement of the problem**

The phenomenon of abusive marriages is prevalent and the awareness in this regard is relative to available data on specific societies. Whereas some

societies may encourage reporting, profiling and documentation of occurrences, the same cannot be said of other societies, like Nigeria, thus, limiting awareness about the problem. This has been affirmed in previous studies. For instance, Bakare, Asuquo & Agomoh (2010) in their empirical review of the state of domestic violence in Nigeria, acknowledged the dimensions of the phenomenon in relation to marriages. It also acknowledged particularly that, the magnitude of the problem in Nigeria might have been underestimated because studies are not available that determine prevalence of domestic violence across various ethnic groups and socioeconomic strata in the country. This assertion is instructive, particularly in a place like Kaduna, northern Nigeria, where awareness level may be lower due to sociocultural peculiarities, in spite of the growing adoption of social media.

While previous, existing studies may have focused on various dimensions of research inquiry on the subject matter of domestic violence and in specific terms, as it concerns women in marriages; there is however a dearth of inquiry specifically regarding the current status of adoption of Facebook by intervention agencies in metropolitan Kaduna in relation to the advancement of the Gender-based domestic violence cause, against the backdrop of benefits or constraints in the new medium, hence, the motivation for this study.

### **Objectives of the study**

The objective of this study is to assess the use of Facebook for Gender-based domestic violence campaign among intervention groups in Kaduna metropolis. However, the specific objectives are:

1. To assess the extent of adoption of Facebook for Gender-based domestic violence campaigns among intervention groups in Kaduna metropolis;
2. To find out the motivations and constraints regarding the adoption of Facebook as dissemination tool on Gender-based domestic violence campaigns among intervention groups in Kaduna metropolis;

3. To assess the measures that will enhance the choice of Facebook as major dissemination tool on Gender-based domestic violence campaigns among intervention groups in Kaduna metropolis.

### **Research questions**

This study is guided by the following research questions:

1. What is the extent of adoption of Facebook for Gender-based domestic violence campaigns among intervention groups in Kaduna metropolis?
2. What are the motivations and constraints regarding the adoption of Facebook as dissemination tool on Gender-based domestic violence campaigns among intervention groups in Kaduna metropolis?
3. What are the measures that will enhance the choice of Facebook as major dissemination tool on Gender-based domestic violence campaigns among intervention groups in Kaduna metropolis?

### **Theoretical framework**

This study relied on the propositions of the Technological Advancement Model (TAM).

The theory is credited to Fred Davis, in 1989. It illustrates how prospective or potential users of a new information system come to accept and use it. It postulates that, when a new information system (Like Facebook) is introduced, the likelihood of the target user's adoption is consequent upon two key factors; the perceived utilities and the perceived ease of application. In other words, it raises the questions: how will the technology be useful, and how simple or free from constraints will it be (Bargozzi, Davis & Warshaw, 1992). Thus, Davis presupposes that, there is a relationship between a user's propensity to adopt a new technology and the user's perception of the same technology. The reliance on this theory is based on the acknowledgement of the widespread adoption of Facebook as an emerging communication platform and how its adoption can impact on the perception of social work initiatives specifically championing the Gender-based Violence cause.

## Review of related literature

### *The Gender concept*

Gender refers to socially-constructed male-female roles in societies. Due to certain contradictions identified with the concept, Brannon (2000) differentiates gender roles and gender stereotypes. According to him, while the former is specifically related to behaviors, the former has to do with specific beliefs or attitudes about appropriate traits and activities of the respective genders. Dworkin (2005), while asserting the position of Brannon, explained that, the culturally accepted norms define the tasks for men and women, thereby creating conventional tendencies for women to be vulnerable to abuse by men, in societies generally, and specifically in marriages.

### *Women and incidence of domestic violence*

Over the years, a great deal of research focusing on the negative consequences of domestic violence in a society has been carried out. Golding (1999) found that 47.6% of the battered women suffer from depression and more than 17.9% of them have attempted suicide. The experience of intimate partner violence increases depressive symptoms (Campbell & Soeken, 1999; Hogben et al., 2001; Kennedy, Bybee, Sullivan, & Greeson, 2010; von Eye & Bogat, 2006) and suicidal ideation (Coker et al., 2002; Krishnan, Hilbert, & VanLeeuwen, 2001; Sansone, Chu, & Wiederman, 2007). Compared with non-abused women, battered women are more likely to have lower self-esteem and less life satisfaction

Ground-breaking feminist research was conducted in the 1970s and 1980s which revealed that it has become common to claim that violence perpetrated against women by marital or opposite-sex cohabiting partners is so under-reported that domestic violence is best deemed a 'hidden' crime (Novisky and Peralta 2015). Hence, academic studies of women's help-seeking behaviours have tried to find reasons why women do not report to the police (Meyer 2010; Barrett and St. Pierre 2011; Jordan 2012; Novisky and Peralta 2015). As Walklate (2007) has pointed out, 'becoming a victim is neither a simple nor a straightforward act'. It is a highly complex



process encompassing the interaction between offender and victim, the victim's reaction to the offence (Dignan 2005; Walklate 2007) and, in some cases, further interactions between the victim and the criminal justice system. It is argued that 'hidden' violence against women increases women's isolation, as well as the power imbalance in their intimate relationships (Stark 2007) and that further efforts must be made to persuade women to disclose violence to the authorities.

Bazza(2010), in her study on domestic violence and prevalence factors in Nigeria, affirmed several conditions which encourage the problem to thrive, particularly in northern Nigeria, including loopholes in the existing legal framework. Similar studies have dwelt on prevalence factors. Catalano, Lind, Rosenblatt and Novaco, (2003) earlier observed that, high rate of unemployment increases the incidence of domestic violence, while in a separate study, Obi & Ozumba (2007) found that domestic violence was significantly associated with financial disparity in favor of the female, influential in-laws, educated women and couple within the same age group. In a recent study by Dataphyte, a media research and analytics organization, as cited by British Broadcasting Corporation, (Hausa), one in three married women in Nigeria suffer some form of abuse from their spouse. The report says pregnancy doesn't hinder the men from tormenting their wives and the women who suffer this the most are between the ages of 15-24, and mostly found in the northern part of the country. The report further stated that there has been an increase in domestic violence from 4.3 out of 100 in 2013 to 10.3 out of 100 in 2018. It also states that two third of married women are oppressed, while 17 million women in Nigeria between the ages of 15-49 have been sexually violated at some point in their lives and 16 out of 100 women in the Northern part of the country have been sexually molested (BBC Hausa, 2020).

### *Gender based violence and intervention groups*

Most persons who have been victimized marshal as much, possibly more, support over the long term from informal networks than from formal

services (Dobash and Dobash 1979; Kelly 1996). Hence, what is 'hidden' from the police and social services is rarely 'hidden' from abused women's circles of relatives and friends. Such research reveals the unequivocal importance of the responses that emanate from women's social networks. Yet, while such a position is often assumed to originate in feminist research, many feminist studies actually show the reverse (Klein 2012). Most women and girls who have experienced domestic violence first tell someone they trust in their social network.

Even if violence towards women in intimate partnerships with men occurs 'behind closed doors' (Straus *et al.* 1981), the violent acts are not isolated incidents taking place in a social vacuum. On the contrary, they take place in specific social contexts, formed by family, relatives, friends and neighbors, i.e. in social relations between people that form a social structure that can be viewed as a 'social network', hence, they can get to the knowledge or attention of intervention groups, even when not formally reported. This, coupled with the limitations in the capacity of government institutions to take action, makes the work of intervention groups imperative in relation to Gender-based violence incidences.

### *Situational analysis of Gender-based domestic violence in Kaduna state*

Available statistics from the office of the Commissioner of Human Services and Social Development under the Kaduna state Ministry of Women Affairs covering January to August 2020 indicated a total reported 437 incidents of gender-based domestic violence, with women being the highest victims (364). Among the victims, those aged between 6-15 years had the highest children category (107), while those in the age bracket of 26 years and older have the highest in adult category (197). According to the statistics, there are more vulnerable singles (215) than married or cohabiting couples (209), while physical assault ranked the highest form of abuse, and forced marriage or demands for resources ranked the least forms of abuse. In the distribution of incidents by local government areas, Jemaa has the highest reported incidents of 218, while Sanga, Kauru, Kuda, Kubau, Kajuru and Makarfi all have the least, with no record of reported cases. The



distribution of incidents in the focal metropolitan local government areas are as follows: Kaduna north (15), Kaduna South (18), Igabi (25) and Chikun (8) (Ministry of Women Affairs, Kaduna State, 2020). It is however instructive that, the state government has recently amended a legislation (Penal code amendment law, 2020), which prescribes surgical castration for male rapists and bilateral salpingectomy for females convicted of child rape.

### ***Facebook as veritable social media tool for Gender-based domestic violence campaigns***

Social media are online communications that use special techniques that involve participation, conversation, collaboration and linkage (Dominick 2006). They are used to reach friends, generate new friends, share experiences, information and insights. Kietzmann (2011) have identified the gradual adoption of Social media for more uses and purposes including enhancing visibility of engagements. Among many of these platforms is Facebook, an American social media channel created in 2004 by Mark Zuckerberg and currently the largest social media network worldwide with 2.7 billion monthly active users as at the second quarter of 2020 (Clement, 2020). It occupies the enviable position of having 22% of the world's current population as subscribers, out of which an estimated 27.46 million are Nigerians, as at the second quarter of 2020, according to Facebook Analytics. This clearly presents Facebook as a veritable channel of engagement for the dissemination of Gender-based domestic violence campaigns.

### **Methodology**

#### ***Study area***

Kaduna metropolis is located in northern Nigeria. It is the major city area of the capital of Kaduna state. The state is located in North western Nigeria and serves as the gateway to the other parts of the region, and is also one of the nation's most populous states. Kaduna metropolis consists of four separate local government areas, namely, Kaduna north, Kaduna South and

parts of Chikun and The state has a population of over 1.3 million people, with the population of the study area estimated as follows: Kaduna north (492, 100) Kaduna South (543,600), Chikun (502, 500) and Igabi (581, 500). Igabi (Olisemeka & Salim, 2011).

### *Procedure*

The study adopted Focus Group Discussion (FGD) as appropriate. Kerlinger, (1986), as cited in Wimmer & Dominick (2006) explained that, a Focus Group Discussion is a qualitative research method and data collection technique in which a selected group of people discuss a given topic or issue in-depth, facilitated by a professional moderator. The choice of qualitative analysis for this study is informed by the reliability of the perceptions and opinions of the participant respondents to guide the assumptions of the study based on their shared experiences. Focus Group Discussions have proven reliable in extrapolating qualitative data from informed opinion, particularly where there are less number of data sources being interrogated.

The study relied on available data sourced from the office of the Commissioner of Human Services and Social Development under the Kaduna state Ministry of Women Affairs, under from which data sources (respondents) were drawn. A number of listed Gender Based Violence intervention agencies were purposively sampled with selection drawn based on their respective profiles as active partners to the ministry in development work. Among them are three major ones with greater footprints in metropolitan Kaduna, namely: VD Care, Women Rights Advancement and Protection Agency (WRAPA), Empowering Women for Excellence Initiative (EWEI). A fourth selection, Savannah Discourse, a Facebook forum of repute and following with consistent thematic focus on Gender-based domestic violence was engaged in the Focus group Discussion, in addition. Extensive interviews were scheduled and carried out with the intervention groups in line with the research questions developed for the study.

*Biographic data of intervention groups*

Intervention Group	Core focal area	Years of existence	Frequency of Intervention/campaigns	GBV
<b>Women Rights Advancement and Protection Agency (WRAPA),</b>	legal aid and access to justice, rights advocacy, empowerment,	Twenty one (21)	Regular, sustained	
<b>Savannah Discourse</b>	Gender equity, Sexual violence, Domestic abuse.	Ten (10)	Regular, sustained	
<b>Empowering Women for Excellence Initiative (EWEI)</b>	Women and women empowerment. Safe spaces women's rights, GBV	Twelve (12)	Regular, sustained	
<b>VD Care</b>	Women education, empowerment, SGBV	Three (3)	Regular, sustained	

*Source: Field work: 2020*

**Results**

RQ1. The extent that respondents have adopted Facebook for Gender-based domestic violence campaigns.

*Comments from first respondent:* Over the last 6-7 years, we have significantly deployed Information Technology for outreach, engagement with SGBV survivors and other stakeholders, particularly on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. Facebook in particular has earned us significant mileage.

*Comments from second respondent:* From the onset, Facebook has been a reliable medium in the deployment of our campaigns due to its huge attraction to young persons in particular. Even though it is our second adopted social media handle, it is more in use than the first

*Comments from third respondent:* To a very large extent. Through Facebook, we post all our activities. We even have an additional private group where women engage. Through Facebook, we have enjoyed a significant level of publicity through people and organizations with like minds.

*Comments from fourth respondent:* To a very significant level, because, particularly Facebook cuts across all segments of the society, and the comments we receive have been enlightening and provided us opportunity

to understand how men relate with issues such as this, through their contributions.

RQ2: The motivations and constraints regarding the adoption of Facebook as dissemination tool on Gender-based domestic violence campaigns.

*Comments from first respondent:* We have gained increased visibility Facebook working with key social media influencers. The clientele base of the organization has increased due to the case reporting facility. However, there are some constraints on turn-around time on processing complaints, limitations in extending the right to fair hearing to accused parties. It is also perceived as unaffordable thereby excluding high percentages of low income SGBV survivors. Facebook is so far the easiest and cost effective mass interactive platform for Nigerians because even without data, network providers have made it possible to use Facebook with limited access where pictures and videos are disabled. This has enabled many survivors and sympathizers to anonymously share and report stories to the public and gain support and rally opinion.

*Comments from second respondent:* Facebook has been of immense help, so we are motivated to keep using it for campaigns due to its vast reach. There is however a fear of backlash, so people are restrained from offering full disclosure on incidents.

*Comments from third respondent:* Facebook has a very wide reach, low income people are found mostly on Facebook as against other Apps. So when we post on Facebook, we get more engagement. However, Facebook does not secure privacy, so, people do not discuss problems as sensitive as Gender-based domestic violence. People are not really keen on sharing details on Facebook because they are not anonymous, family members, friends etc can see.

*Comments from fourth respondent:* Facebook has been of great help in gathering responses and feedbacks from audiences. This has impacted on the numbers. We believe there is a decline on these rape cases because the perpetrators know they are being reported online. We get responses from sympathizers, but rarely from the victims mostly because of the stigma. There was a lady from Kano who shared her experience of rape and the backlash was heartbreaking. So anyone wanting to share gets discouraged. But we get messages from victims' inbox, many leading to arrests.

RQ 3: The measures that will enhance the choice of Facebook as major dissemination tool on Gender-based domestic violence campaigns

*Comments from first respondent:* Facebook analytics has helped us to tracks performance and engagement. However, Facebook should provide a community similar to the Facebook marketplace that will be managed by Facebook itself where agencies and NGOs that are working to put an end to GBV can join to drop their hotlines, post solution tailored resources etc to give survivors easy access to timely support.

*Comments from second respondent:* It will not be easy for people to oblige full disclosure on Facebook on sensitive matters, particularly here in the north. Perhaps gradual innovation will modify the application to make it easier for intervention organs to interface with affected victims with more assurance of anonymity.

*Comments from third respondent:* Facebook can enable the collation of hotlines, for Nigeria, so that, if victims want to place a distress call, they could click a particular button and their location can be tracked, so they can be contacted.

*Comments from fourth respondent:* It is encouraging that, we keep track of our digital imprint on Facebook through a data analyst, but, we would want Facebook to join in taking the advocacy lead to put the word around the globe not just SGBV but everything about women.

## Discussion

The findings of the study has shown that, there is widespread adoption of Facebook among Gender-based domestic violence intervention groups in Kaduna. The motivation for its adoption among the groups include, greater visibility, access to target groups and interactivity. The respondents of the study however identified some constraints with the adoption of the medium for engagement. Some of these include, restraint by victims for the fear of being stigmatized, where their identities may be profiled when they report or content concerning them is shared, including the propensity for backlash, as one of the respondents reported from shared practical experience. The respondents identified specific relative benefits of tracking content and commentary.

They however suggest ways by which the application can be modified to suit their campaign needs, including solution-tailored resources to complement access and use, enhanced features to encourage anonymity, hotlines for distress calls as part of the application as well as the platform leading in championing the advocacy as part of its social responsibility.

## Conclusion

The necessity and extent of adoption of Facebook for the purpose of Gender-based domestic violence has been affirmed by the study. The theoretical propositions advanced has been validated, while some of the assumptions guiding the research questions raised have been supported by the findings. In spite of the shortcomings identified with the adoption of the medium, the study has acknowledged the popularity of Facebook as a social campaign tool, and the propensity for it to be enhanced to complement the campaign for gender-based domestic violence.

## Recommendations

The study recommends the following, in line with its findings

1. The Facebook medium, having been affirmed as useful for Gender-based domestic violence campaign, should be improved with enhance features which support groups and encourage anonymity by victim-users;
2. Facebook as a corporate entity can encourage campaign groups by advancing their causes through complementary advocacy as part of its corporate social responsibility
3. There is a need for more active Gender-based violence groups in Kaduna to extend advocacy and campaign coverage to other areas outside the study area, particularly where prevalence rates are proven to be high, like Jemaa local government area.
4. The overall GBV policy framework of the state should be strengthened to cover other forms of abuse or Gender-based domestic violence, beyond the recently amended penal code. This will encourage reporting by victims and prosecution by authorities
5. Finally, more research efforts should be embarked on other related areas identified with this study.

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