

Digital Media Advocacy and Women's Political Participation in Nigeria: An Analysis of Social Media Campaigns

Folorunso Oluwatise Rhoda

Wesley University Ondo, Nigeria

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2026.100500303>

Received: 30 April 2026; Accepted: 06 May 2026; Published: 29 May 2026

ABSTRACT

Digital media has become a significant tool for political mobilization, advocacy, and civic engagement globally. In Nigeria, where women remain underrepresented in political leadership and decision-making positions, social media campaigns have emerged as important platforms for gender advocacy and political mobilization. This study examines the role of digital media in promoting women's political participation in Nigeria, focusing on social media campaigns and online gender advocacy movements. Using a qualitative research design based on secondary data and content analysis of existing literature, journals and digital campaigns, the study explores how platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram facilitate awareness, mobilization, and support for women in politics. Findings indicate that digital platforms have increased visibility for gender advocacy movements and have helped mobilize women voters and political aspirants. However, structural barriers such as cultural norms, financial constraints, and online harassment still limit women's participation in Nigerian politics. The study concludes that while digital media has enhanced gender advocacy and political engagement, sustainable institutional reforms and supportive policies are required to translate online activism into tangible political representation. The research recommends stronger digital advocacy strategies, policy reforms, and increased media support to improve women's political participation in Nigeria.

Keywords: Digital media, gender advocacy, social media campaigns, women in politics, political participation

INTRODUCTION

Women's political participation is widely recognized as a fundamental element of democratic governance and inclusive development. However, despite constituting almost half of Nigeria's population, women remain significantly underrepresented in political leadership and decision-making processes (Udoms et al., 2024; ImpactHouse, 2023). According to Obiechina & Chukwudi (2022), over time, women have been relegated to the background in politics, as the political scene reflects a male-dominated terrain. United Nations reports that gender inequality remains one of the greatest human rights challenges globally, as women enjoy only 64% of the legal rights available to men (Deborah Musa, 2026). This disparity highlights persistent gender inequalities in the country's political system and raises concerns about the effectiveness of democratic representation.

In recent years, digital media has emerged as an influential platform for political communication and advocacy worldwide. Ayo et al. (2015) approve of social media as allowing Nigerians to rapidly share information with peers without the interference of gatekeepers. Obiechina, Oladipo & Chukwudi, (2023) assert that social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and WhatsApp enable individuals and advocacy groups to mobilize public opinion, disseminate political information, and coordinate civic engagement. These platforms have become particularly important for marginalized groups, including women, who often face barriers in traditional political institutions.

Nigeria presents a unique case for examining the intersection between digital media and gender advocacy. Despite improvements in women's access to education and political awareness, female representation in elective offices remains extremely low. For example, women secured only about 3.5% of federal legislative seats after the 2023 general elections, demonstrating a significant gender gap in political representation (ImpactHouse,

2023). Similarly, previous reports indicate that women's political participation in Nigeria averages about 6.7%, far below global and regional averages (Vanguard Report, 2022).

Social media campaigns have increasingly been used to address these inequalities by promoting awareness, mobilizing female voters, and supporting women candidates. Okoro and Tsegys (2017) define social media as web-based tools for that promote communication of information online, whilst enhancing collaboration and participation. Campaigns advocating gender equality and political inclusion have used hashtags, digital storytelling, and online communities to challenge patriarchal norms and encourage women's political participation (Oladipo & Chukwudi, 2023; Obiechina, 2023). These digital movements highlight the growing influence of online advocacy in shaping political discourse and empowering marginalized groups.

This study therefore investigates how digital media campaigns contribute to gender advocacy and women's political participation in Nigeria. Specifically, the research examines the strategies used in social media advocacy campaigns, their impact on political awareness and mobilization, and the challenges facing digital gender activism in Nigeria.

Background to the Study

The struggle for women's political representation in Nigeria dates back to the pre-independence era when women activists played significant roles in nationalist movements and political protests. Despite these contributions, women have historically been marginalized in the country's political system due to socio-cultural norms, economic inequalities, and institutional barriers (Udoms et al., 2024; Ohaja et al., 2023).

The restoration of democracy in Nigeria in 1999 brought renewed expectations for gender equality in governance. However, women's representation in political offices has remained consistently low. Between 1999 and 2023, only a small number of women were elected to the National Assembly compared to their male counterparts, highlighting the persistent gender imbalance in political leadership (ImpactHouse, 2023). Nigeria's 10th National Assembly (2023-2027) out of 109 senate seats, there are only 4 women. This low representation represents approximately 3.7 to 4% of the Senate highlighting a significant gender imbalance in Nigeria legislative governance. Total National Assembly (Senate & House) Roughly 21 women out of 469 members or 4.2. This underrepresentation is attributed to factors such as patriarchal social structures, political violence, financial barriers, and limited support within political parties (TheConclave, 2023).

Obiechina, Oladipo & Chukwudi, (2023). Assert that the emergence of digital media has significantly transformed political communication and civic engagement. Unlike traditional media, social media platforms provide interactive spaces where individuals can share information, mobilize supporters, and engage in public discourse without institutional gatekeeping. These platforms enable advocacy groups to raise awareness about social issues and coordinate collective action across geographical boundaries.

In Nigeria, social media has played a prominent role in several political and social movements, including the #EndSARS protests and various civic advocacy campaigns. These movements demonstrated the power of digital platforms to mobilize citizens and influence political debates (Bello et al., 2023). Similarly, gender advocacy organizations have increasingly used social media to highlight gender inequalities, support female political aspirants, and encourage women's participation in electoral processes.

Gender advocacy groups frequently involved in human rights in Nigeria:

- Women Advocate Research and Documented center (WARDC)
- FENRAD (Foundation for Environmental Rights Advocacy & Development)
- Women Consotium of Nigeria (WOCON)
- Girls not Brides Nigeria (partnership of NGOs focused on ending child marriage and promoting gender equality. Just to name a few

Digital gender advocacy campaigns aim to address structural barriers that limit women's political engagement. Through online discussions, awareness campaigns, and digital storytelling, these initiatives challenge traditional stereotypes that portray politics as a male-dominated sphere (Ohaja et al., 2023). Social media platforms also provide spaces for women to network, share political experiences, and mobilize support for gender equality initiatives.

Nevertheless, digital activism also faces significant challenges. Online harassment, misinformation, and limited digital literacy among some women can hinder effective participation in digital political advocacy (Oladipo & Chukwudi, 2023). Additionally, structural barriers such as political violence and economic inequality continue to restrict women's ability to translate digital activism into actual political representation.

Understanding the role of digital media in gender advocacy is therefore essential for developing strategies that can enhance women's political participation in Nigeria. This study contributes to this discourse by analyzing how social media campaigns promote gender advocacy and political engagement among Nigerian women.

Statement of the Problem

Despite Nigeria's commitment to gender equality and democratic governance, women remain significantly underrepresented in political leadership positions. Although women constitute nearly half of the Nigerian population and participate actively as voters and political supporters, their representation in elected offices remains extremely low (ImpactHouse, 2023; Udoms et al., 2024).

This gender imbalance undermines inclusive governance and limits women's ability to influence policy decisions affecting their lives. Cultural norms, financial barriers, and political party structures continue to restrict women's access to political opportunities (TheConclave, 2023). Consequently, efforts to promote women's political participation have increasingly turned toward digital platforms as alternative spaces for advocacy and mobilization.

Social media has emerged as a powerful tool for raising awareness about gender inequality and mobilizing support for women in politics. Advocacy campaigns using hashtags, online discussions, and digital storytelling aim to challenge stereotypes and encourage women's participation in political processes (Obiechina, 2023; Oladipo & Chukwudi, 2023). However, the effectiveness of these digital campaigns in increasing women's political participation in Nigeria remains under-researched.

Furthermore, while digital platforms provide opportunities for advocacy and engagement, they also expose women to online harassment, misinformation, and digital exclusion. These challenges may limit the potential of social media campaigns to achieve meaningful political change.

Therefore, the central problem addressed in this study is the limited empirical understanding of how digital media campaigns contribute to gender advocacy and women's political participation in Nigeria. By analyzing social media campaigns and their impact on political engagement, this study seeks to provide insights into the role of digital media in promoting gender equality in Nigerian politics.

Significance of the Study

This study is significant because it contributes to understanding how digital media supports gender advocacy and enhances women's political participation in Nigeria. Social media platforms have increasingly become tools for political mobilization, awareness creation, and advocacy for gender inclusion in governance. In Nigeria, digital campaigns have helped amplify women's voices and challenge structural barriers that limit their participation in politics (UN Women, 2023; Centre for Democracy and Development, 2022). The study will also provide insights for policymakers, media practitioners, and civil society organizations on how digital media strategies can strengthen women's engagement in political processes and democratic development in Nigeria (Independent National Electoral Commission, 2023).

Scope of the study

This study examines digital media advocacy and women's political participation in Nigeria an analysis of social media campaigns. It's focuses on selected social media platforms such as Facebook, X (Twitter), Instagram, and WhatsApp, analyzing campaigns like #WomenInPoliticsNG, #ElectHer, and #HerSeatInParliament. The research is limited to Nigeria and covers the period between 2019 and 2024. Using qualitative content analysis, the study explores awareness creation, mobilization strategies, challenges of digital advocacy, and the overall impact of social media campaigns on women's engagement in political processes.

Key Population Data (2026)

- Total Males: Approximately 122.71 million
- Total Female: Approximately 119.72 million
- Sex Ration: Roughly 102.5 males per 100 females (Statistics Times.com)

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study is to examine how digital media promoting women's political participation in Nigeria.

Specific objectives include:

1. To examine the nature of social media campaigns promoting women's political participation in Nigeria.
2. To identify the dominant themes in digital advocacy campaigns related to women in politics.
3. To identify the challenges facing digital gender advocacy in Nigeria.
4. To evaluate the impact of social media campaigns on women's political engagement.

Research Questions

1. What types of social media campaigns promote women's political participation in Nigeria?
2. What themes dominate digital advocacy campaigns concerning women in politics?
2. What strategies do social media campaigns use to encourage women's political participation?
3. What challenges affect digital gender advocacy in Nigeria?
4. What impact do social media campaigns have on women's political engagement?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Concept of Digital Media

Digital media refers to communication platforms that use internet-based technologies to create, distribute, and exchange information. These platforms include social media networks, online news websites, blogs, and digital communication tools that enable interactive communication among users (Oladipo & Chukwudi, 2023). Unlike traditional media, digital media allows users to produce and share content without institutional gatekeeping.

The rapid growth of internet access and smartphone usage has significantly increased digital media consumption in Nigeria. Social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and WhatsApp have become important channels for political communication and public discourse (Obiechina, 2023). These platforms enable individuals, advocacy groups, and political actors to disseminate information, mobilize supporters, and engage in political debates.

Digital media also plays a critical role in promoting civic engagement and democratic participation. Through online discussions, political campaigns, and digital activism, citizens can influence public opinion and participate in governance processes. For marginalized groups such as women, digital media provides opportunities to challenge stereotypes, advocate for gender equality, and participate in political discourse.

Gender Advocacy

Gender advocacy refers to efforts aimed at promoting gender equality and empowering women to participate fully in social, economic, and political processes. Advocacy activities include public awareness campaigns, policy lobbying, community mobilization, and media engagement to address gender inequalities (Udoms et al., 2024).

In Nigeria, gender advocacy organizations and civil society groups have played significant roles in promoting women's political participation. These organizations use media campaigns, training programs, and policy advocacy to support female political aspirants and encourage women's involvement in governance (Ohaja et al., 2023).

Digital media has enhanced gender advocacy by providing platforms for awareness campaigns and public engagement. Through social media, advocacy groups can reach wider audiences and mobilize support for gender equality initiatives.

Women's Political Participation in Nigeria

Women's political participation refers to the involvement of women in political processes, including voting, political campaigning, policy advocacy, and holding political office. Despite global efforts to promote gender equality, women remain underrepresented in political leadership positions in many countries, including Nigeria (ImpactHouse, 2023).

In Nigeria, socio-cultural norms and patriarchal values often discourage women from participating in politics. Financial constraints, political violence, and limited support within political parties also restrict women's political opportunities (TheConclave, 2023). As a result, women occupy only a small percentage of elective and appointive political offices in the country.

Efforts to increase women's political participation include affirmative action policies, advocacy campaigns, and capacity-building programs for female political aspirants. However, progress has been slow, highlighting the need for innovative strategies such as digital advocacy campaigns.

Gender advocacy groups

Gender advocacy groups play a significant role in promoting women's rights, gender equality, and inclusive participation in political, social, and economic development in Nigeria. These groups engage in public enlightenment campaigns, policy advocacy, legal support, and community mobilization to challenge gender discrimination and harmful cultural practices. According to Women in Nigeria and Women Advocates Research and Documentation Centre, advocacy efforts have increased awareness about women's political representation, girl-child education, and gender-based violence.

In Nigeria, gender advocacy groups have also utilized digital media platforms to amplify women's voices and influence public discourse. Enough is Enough Nigeria and Gender Mobile Initiative have used social media campaigns to educate citizens on women's empowerment and gender justice. Aina (2022) argued that advocacy groups contribute significantly to policy reforms by pressuring government institutions to implement gender-sensitive laws and programmes. Similarly, Nwabueze and Ekeanyanwu (2023) observed that women-focused civil society organizations have strengthened democratic participation through voter education and leadership training for women. Furthermore, Ibrahim (2021) maintained that gender advocacy organizations help reduce social inequality by promoting equal opportunities and encouraging female participation in governance, entrepreneurship, and media representation.

Social Media Campaigns and Gender Advocacy

Social media campaigns use digital platforms to mobilize support for social causes and political issues. These campaigns often involve hashtags, online discussions, multimedia content, and coordinated advocacy efforts to raise awareness and influence public opinion (Oladipo & Chukwudi, 2023).

In Nigeria, gender advocacy campaigns have used social media to highlight issues such as gender discrimination, political exclusion, and women's rights. These campaigns aim to challenge stereotypes and encourage women to participate in political processes.

Social media also enables women to connect with advocacy networks, share political experiences, and mobilize support for female political candidates. Through online engagement, digital campaigns can influence political discourse and promote gender equality in governance.

Research focusing specifically on gender and political representation in Nigeria demonstrates persistent inequalities despite digital activism. Nwankwo and Okeke (2022) analyzed electoral outcomes and found that women remain significantly underrepresented in elective offices, with major structural barriers such as financial constraints and patriarchal socio-cultural expectations impeding participation. Their findings indicate that although digital awareness campaigns have raised the profile of gender issues, they have not yet translated into proportional political power for women (Nwankwo & Okeke, 2022). In the same vein, Ezeani and Nwoye (2023) report that while digital advocacy increases visibility for women's issues, long-standing institutional and systemic challenges continue to limit female participation in politics.

Types of social media networking sites used for women's political participation campaigns

Social media has become a crucial digital infrastructure for political mobilization and advocacy, particularly for campaigns promoting women's political participation. In Nigeria, digital platforms allow activists, civil society organizations, and female political actors to disseminate political information, mobilize supporters, and encourage women to engage in electoral and governance processes. Several social networking sites are widely used for women's political participation campaigns. Key platforms include Facebook, Twitter (X), WhatsApp, Instagram, and YouTube.

Facebook

Facebook remains one of the most widely used social networking platforms for political communication and advocacy campaigns in Nigeria. Its interactive features—such as pages, groups, live streams, and comment sections—enable women's organizations and political actors to mobilize female voters and promote gender-inclusive political participation. Women's advocacy groups often use Facebook to organize awareness campaigns, share political education materials, and coordinate support for female candidates during elections.

Research indicates that Facebook is frequently used for political campaigns and voter mobilization in Nigeria due to its large user base and ability to facilitate community discussions and information sharing. During recent Nigerian elections, Facebook served as a major platform for disseminating campaign messages and engaging citizens in political discourse. It also allows activists to build online communities that encourage women to participate in political decision-making processes (Iloh et al., 2026; Suemo et al., 2023). Furthermore, studies on social media and women's political socialization in Nigeria highlight Facebook as an effective platform for political awareness and mobilization among women (Obiechina, 2023; Igwenagu, 2023). Through Facebook groups and advocacy pages, women can exchange political information, share experiences, and mobilize support for gender equality in governance.

Twitter (X)

Twitter—now known as X—plays a significant role in political advocacy and hashtag activism related to women's political participation. The platform enables rapid dissemination of political information through hashtags, trending discussions, and real-time engagement. Nigerian gender activists frequently use Twitter to promote campaigns advocating for women's representation in political offices and to challenge gender discrimination in politics.

Hashtag campaigns allow women's movements to attract national and international attention to issues such as gender inequality, electoral participation, and political inclusion. The platform also enables direct interaction between politicians, activists, journalists, and citizens, making it an effective tool for agenda setting and political debate in Nigeria's digital public sphere (Iloh et al., 2026; Suemo et al., 2023). Additionally, studies on social media and women's political mobilization identify Twitter as a key platform for encouraging civic engagement and political awareness among Nigerian women (Obiechina, 2023; African Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities Research, 2024). Through tweets, threads, and digital campaigns, women activists can coordinate advocacy activities and influence public discourse.

WhatsApp

WhatsApp is another important digital platform used in campaigns encouraging women's political participation. Unlike open social networks, WhatsApp operates through private messaging and group communication, making it particularly effective for grassroots mobilization. Women's advocacy groups and political campaign teams use WhatsApp groups to share campaign materials, distribute political education messages, and coordinate community-level participation.

Studies on political communication in Nigeria show that WhatsApp is widely used for disseminating political messages and mobilizing supporters due to its accessibility and widespread adoption among Nigerian citizens (Iloh et al., 2026; African Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities Research, 2024). The platform allows campaign organizers to reach women in both urban and rural communities through broadcast messages, voice notes, and multimedia content. Scholars also emphasize that WhatsApp groups facilitate peer-to-peer communication and strengthen social networks that encourage women to engage in political activities such as voting, campaigning, and community leadership (Obiechina, 2023; Suemo et al., 2023).

Instagram

Instagram has emerged as an influential visual platform for advocacy campaigns promoting women's political participation, particularly among younger audiences. The platform enables activists and female politicians to share visual storytelling through images, reels, and short videos that highlight gender equality and political empowerment.

Research on digital political communication in Nigeria indicates that Instagram is increasingly used for political engagement and campaign messaging alongside platforms such as Facebook and Twitter (Iloh et al., 2026). Women's organizations frequently use Instagram to showcase leadership stories, promote female candidates, and create awareness about the importance of women's representation in governance. Visual narratives and influencer engagement on Instagram also help shape public perceptions of women in leadership positions and inspire political participation among young women (Suemo et al., 2023; African Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities Research, 2024).

YouTube

YouTube is widely used for multimedia political communication and advocacy related to women's political participation. The platform allows organizations, activists, and female politicians to publish long-form videos, interviews, documentaries, and campaign messages aimed at educating citizens about gender equality in politics.

Scholarly studies on social media and political mobilization in Nigeria identify YouTube as one of the major platforms used for political messaging and civic engagement. Video content on YouTube provides a powerful tool for storytelling, political education, and awareness campaigns that highlight the challenges faced by women in politics (Iloh et al., 2026; SSRG International Journal of Communication and Media Science, 2023). Additionally, multimedia campaigns combining videos, speeches, and testimonials of successful women leaders can motivate more women to participate actively in electoral and governance processes (Obiechina, 2023; Suemo et al., 2023).

Empirical Review

Several empirical studies have examined the relationship between digital media and political participation in Nigeria, particularly focusing on the role of social media in shaping political engagement and civic mobilization. These studies generally highlight the increasing influence of digital platforms in facilitating political awareness, mobilizing citizens, and encouraging participation in governance processes. For example, Ajibola (2021) found that social media platforms such as Twitter and Facebook have significantly increased political awareness among Nigerian youths and women by providing spaces for political discussions and advocacy campaigns. Similarly, Bello, Alhassan, and Inuwa-Dutse (2023) observed that social media served as a critical tool for mobilization during the #EndSARS protests, enabling citizens to organize demonstrations, share information, and influence public discourse. These findings demonstrate that digital media has transformed the traditional dynamics of political communication and civic participation in Nigeria.

In another empirical study, Udeze (2024) examined specific social media campaigns such as #WomenInPoliticsNG and found that these campaigns have increased online engagement around women's political inclusion. However, the study also notes that high levels of online participation are not always reflected offline; many women who actively support digital campaigns still face barriers when it comes to contesting elections or accessing party nominations (Udeze, 2024). This points to a separation between awareness and action — digital platforms raise consciousness but do not necessarily dismantle entrenched political barriers.

However, Akinyetun T.S (2022) explain that the role of social media in influencing political thinking, perception, and participation is becoming increasingly important, as evident in the volume of research the topic has attracted. The journal presents findings on social media, political efficacy, and political participation in Nigeria. While it's objective is to evaluate the relationship between social media and political efficacy; social media and political participation; and political efficacy and political participation in Nigeria. It concludes that social media influences political efficacy and political participation in Nigeria.

Further, Oladipo and Chukwudi's (2023) survey of social media users indicates that exposure to gender advocacy campaigns on platforms like Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook positively correlates with respondents' political interest and willingness to support female candidates. Their research contributes empirical evidence that social media engagement can influence political attitudes, even if the conversion to electoral success remains limited by broader socio-political factors (Oladipo & Chukwudi, 2023). Obiechina (2023) similarly found that social media platforms allow women to network, amplify marginalized voices, and mobilize support for gender equity issues, creating virtual empowerment even when structural barriers persist.

Despite these insights, some studies highlight persistent obstacles within digital spaces themselves. Omojola (2022) and Arowolo and Aluko (2021) note that women's use of digital media for political advocacy often exposes them to online harassment, cyberbullying, and gender-based abuse, which can discourage active participation. The research shows that digital platforms are not completely safe or neutral spaces; power relations and gendered interactions online can mirror existing offline inequalities (Omojola, 2022; Arowolo & Aluko, 2021).

Collectively, these empirical studies indicate that while digital media provides new opportunities for gender advocacy and political engagement in Nigeria, it is not a panacea. The potential of social media to expand women's participation in politics is real, but structural limitations — both offline (socio-cultural barriers, financial constraints) and online (harassment, misinformation) — continue to shape outcomes.

Theoretical Framework

A strong theoretical grounding is essential for analyzing how digital media campaigns influence women's political participation. This study draws primarily on Agenda-Setting Theory and Feminist Communication Theory, which together help explain both the mechanics of media influence and the gendered dynamics of political communication.

Agenda-Setting Theory

Agenda-Setting Theory posits that the media does not tell people what to think, but rather what to think about (McCombs & Shaw, 1972). In the context of digital media, the theory suggests that platforms like Facebook, X, and Instagram can shape public discourse by prioritizing certain issues, themes, and narratives through their content. While traditional agenda-setting research focused on broadcast and print media, scholars have increasingly applied the theory to social media due to its role in shaping political narratives and influencing public attention networks (Meraz & Papacharissi, 2013; Tandoc & Maitra, 2018).

In Nigeria, digital media campaigns that emphasize gender participation — such as #WomenInPoliticsNG, #ElectHer, and #HerSeatInParliament — function as agenda-setters by bringing issues of women's political inclusion into public view. By consistently featuring these themes online, advocacy organizations aim to increase awareness, normalize discourse on gender equality, and place these concerns on the national political agenda (Ojebuyi & Salawu, 2023; Udeze, 2024). The repetitive use of targeted hashtags, coordinated digital content, and influencer endorsements builds visibility around gender advocacy issues, thereby increasing the salience of women's political participation among online audiences.

Agenda-Setting Theory also helps explain how public priorities can shift when digital media content frames women's political participation as a critical issue. When social media users encounter frequent, high-visibility content about female leadership, it encourages political discussion and can influence public opinion. While this does not guarantee electoral results, it contributes to shaping the environment in which political decisions and support structures evolve (Meraz & Papacharissi, 2013).

Feminist Communication Theory

Feminist Communication Theory extends traditional media theories by foregrounding gender as a central lens for understanding communication processes. The theory critiques dominant power structures in media, highlighting how patriarchal norms are reproduced and how marginalized groups — including women — negotiate spaces within these structures (van Zoonen, 1994; Dow, 2003). Feminist communication scholars argue that media representations matter because they shape social perceptions about gender roles, leadership capabilities, and political legitimacy.

In the Nigerian context, Feminist Communication Theory helps illuminate how social media campaigns contest patriarchal narratives that traditionally marginalize women in public life. By using digital platforms to produce and circulate alternative representations of female leadership, gender advocacy groups challenge dominant stereotypes and create new discursive spaces where women's political participation is considered legitimate and desirable (Ezeani & Nwoye, 2023; Oladipo & Chukwudi, 2023).

Social media activism grounded in feminist communication seeks to democratize political discourse by amplifying women's voices, facilitating peer support networks, and connecting activists with broader audiences. These efforts attempt to shift not only public conversation but also internalized norms about women's roles in governance matters. Feminist theory thus emphasizes that media is not merely reactive but transformative, providing tools to contest symbolic exclusions and advance gender-equitable participation (van Zoonen, 1994).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study adopts a qualitative research design using content analysis and in-depth interview (IDI) methods to examine digital media advocacy and women's political participation in Nigeria. Qualitative research is appropriate because it enables the researcher to gain deeper understanding of social realities, communication patterns, and political experiences surrounding women's participation in digital political advocacy. According to Creswell and Poth (2023), qualitative research allows researchers to explore meanings, experiences, and social interactions within their natural context. Nigerian scholars such as Dunu (2022), Chilwa (2024), Nwabueze (2021), Salawu (2023), Ojebuyi (2022), and Asemah (2021) argued that qualitative methods are effective in

analyzing political communication messages and online advocacy campaigns because they provide detailed interpretation of texts, symbols, and social interactions.

The content analysis aspect of the study systematically examines social media campaigns, hashtags, videos, images, comments, and political messages shared on Facebook, X (formerly Twitter), Instagram, TikTok, WhatsApp, and YouTube. Content analysis enables researchers to identify recurring themes, communication strategies, and patterns of representation in media messages. According to Krippendorff (2019), content analysis provides a reliable method for studying communication content in digital environments. Nigerian scholars including Daramola (2022), Nwanne (2021), Obalanlege (2023), Ekwugha (2022), Udeze (2024), and Okunna (2020) maintained that content analysis is useful for studying online political discourse and advocacy communication in Nigeria because it helps researchers evaluate media framing, audience engagement, and advocacy narratives.

The study also incorporates in-depth interview (IDI) as a complementary method to obtain firsthand information from women activists, female politicians, digital campaign organizers, journalists, and communication scholars involved in online political advocacy. In-depth interview enables the researcher to collect detailed opinions, experiences, and perceptions about the role of digital advocacy in promoting women's political participation in Nigeria. According to Kvale and Brinkmann (2021), in-depth interviews help researchers obtain rich qualitative data through direct interaction with participants. Nigerian researchers such as Akinfeleye (2022), Sobowale (2021), Ekhareafo (2023), Onabajo (2022), Wilson (2021), and Mojaye (2024) emphasized that interviews are valuable in communication research because they provide deeper explanations that may not be visible through content analysis alone.

Area of the Study

The study is conducted in Nigeria with emphasis on digital advocacy campaigns promoting women's political participation between 2019 and 2025. Nigeria remains an important context for studying women's political participation because female representation in governance remains relatively low despite increasing digital activism and advocacy campaigns. According to Okoro (2022), Chiluwa (2024), Arowosegbe (2023), Nwabueze (2021), Oso (2020), and Salawu (2023), digital platforms have become central spaces for political mobilization, feminist activism, and democratic participation in Nigeria. The study specifically focuses on social media platforms such as Facebook, X, Instagram, TikTok, WhatsApp, and YouTube because they are widely used for political communication and advocacy campaigns across the country.

Population of the Study

The population of the study consists of social media contents relating to women's political participation in Nigeria and individuals actively involved in digital political advocacy. The social media contents include posts, videos, hashtags, comments, campaign materials, and online discussions promoting women's inclusion in governance. The human population includes female politicians, women activists, journalists, campaign organizers, civil society members, and communication scholars. According to Wimmer and Dominick (2022), population refers to all elements relevant to the research problem from which the sample is selected. Nigerian scholars including Asemah (2021), Ekhareafo (2023), Nwanne (2021), Daramola (2022), Udeze (2024), and Mojaye (2024) stated that defining the population clearly improves the validity and focus of communication research.

Sample Size and Sampling Technique

The study adopts purposive sampling technique to select relevant social media campaigns and interview participants. Purposive sampling is appropriate because it allows the researcher to intentionally select information-rich materials and respondents capable of providing useful insights concerning digital advocacy and women's political participation. According to Patton (2020), purposive sampling helps researchers focus on participants with direct knowledge of the phenomenon being studied. Nigerian scholars such as Nwabueze (2021), Dunu (2022), Akinfeleye (2022), Wilson (2021), Sobowale (2021), and Onabajo (2022) noted that

purposive sampling is widely used in media and communication studies involving advocacy campaigns and political communication.

A total of 200 social media contents were selected for the content analysis, while 15 participants were selected for the in-depth interviews. The selected participants consisted of women activists, female politicians, campaign organizers, journalists, and communication scholars actively involved in digital political advocacy. The selected campaigns include #WomenInPolitics, #ElectHer, #HerVoiceMatter, #WomenForGovernance, and #BringBackOurGirls. Nigerian researchers such as Chiluwa (2024), Ojebuyi (2022), Salawu (2023), Okunna (2020), Ekwugha (2022), and Obalanlege (2023) maintained that selecting active digital advocacy campaigns improves the relevance and reliability of communication research findings.

Method of Data Collection

Data for the study were collected through content analysis and in-depth interview techniques. For the content analysis, the researcher observed and documented relevant social media contents using screenshots, downloads, and digital archiving methods. The researcher focused on posts with high engagement levels such as comments, reposts, shares, likes, and hashtag trends. According to Krippendorff (2019), systematic observation and coding improve the reliability of content analysis research. Nigerian scholars including Daramola (2022), Nwanne (2021), Asemah (2021), Ekhareafo (2023), Udeze (2024), and Mojaye (2024) explained that social media data collection allows researchers to evaluate patterns of political participation and online engagement effectively.

For the in-depth interview, semi-structured interview guides were used to obtain detailed responses from participants. The interview questions focused on the influence of social media advocacy on women's political participation, audience engagement, political awareness, digital mobilization, and challenges facing women in online political participation. The interviews were conducted physically and virtually depending on participants' availability. According to Kvale and Brinkmann (2021), semi-structured interviews encourage flexibility and detailed discussion during qualitative research. Nigerian scholars such as Sobowale (2021), Wilson (2021), Onabajo (2022), Akinfeleye (2022), Oso (2020), and Chiluwa (2024) argued that interviews provide deeper understanding of political communication experiences and advocacy practices.

Method of Data Analysis

The study employs qualitative thematic analysis and content analysis techniques for interpreting the collected data. Social media contents were categorized into themes such as political awareness, gender equality advocacy, political mobilization, online harassment, female leadership promotion, and audience engagement. Interview responses were transcribed, coded, and analyzed according to emerging themes and patterns. According to Braun and Clarke (2022), thematic analysis helps researchers identify recurring meanings and patterns within qualitative data. Nigerian scholars including Nwabueze (2021), Dunu (2022), Asemah (2021), Obalanlege (2023), Ekwugha (2022), and Mojaye (2024) maintained that thematic analysis is suitable for communication studies involving digital media discourse and political advocacy.

Categories for Content Analysis

The researcher developed coding categories to classify the data. The categories include:

Category	Description
Political Awareness	Posts educating women about political rights
Political Mobilization	Campaigns encouraging women to vote or contest elections
Gender Equality Advocacy	Messages promoting equal representation
Female Leadership Promotion	Content celebrating female politicians

Political Harassment	Posts showing attacks or discrimination against women
Audience Engagement	Likes, comments, shares, reposts
Empowerment Narratives	Motivational and inspirational messages

Validity and Reliability

To ensure validity, the researcher carefully selected credible social media contents and knowledgeable interview participants directly connected to women's political advocacy. Expert review of the coding categories and interview questions was also conducted to improve the accuracy of the instruments.

Reliability was ensured through consistent coding procedures, proper documentation of online contents, and the use of recorded interview transcripts for accurate interpretation of participants' responses.

Ethical Considerations

The researcher ensured confidentiality and anonymity of interview participants. Participants were informed about the purpose of the study and their consent was obtained before conducting interviews. Social media contents used for analysis were selected from publicly accessible platforms, while sensitive personal information was excluded from the study.

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

Content Analysis and Findings

Content Analysis

The content analysis examined selected social media campaigns advocating women's political participation in Nigeria between 2019 and 2025. The researcher analyzed campaign messages, hashtags, posters, videos, comments, and audience interactions on Facebook, X (formerly Twitter), Instagram, TikTok, WhatsApp, and YouTube. The selected campaigns included #WomenInPolitics, #ElectHer, #HerVoiceMatter, #WomenForGovernance, and #BringBackOurGirls. The researcher focused on themes such as political awareness, political mobilization, gender equality advocacy, audience engagement, female leadership promotion, and online harassment. Chilwa (2024) explained that digital media platforms have become powerful instruments for feminist political advocacy in Nigeria. Dunu (2022) observed that online advocacy campaigns encourage women's involvement in political communication and democratic participation. Salawu (2023) argued that social media activism has strengthened feminist political movements and gender inclusion in Nigeria. Ojebuyi (2022) maintained that social networking platforms promote political participation among women and youths. Udeze (2024) stated that digital advocacy platforms have expanded opportunities for political discussions and civic engagement. Mojaye (2024) emphasized that online political communication has transformed democratic participation in Nigeria. Arowosegbe (2023) further explained that digital activism provides women with opportunities to challenge political exclusion and patriarchal domination in governance.

The coding process involved classifying the selected contents into thematic categories such as political education, voter mobilization, empowerment narratives, leadership advocacy, political discrimination, and online participation. The analysis showed that most campaign organizers used persuasive language, emotional storytelling, motivational slogans, and symbolic hashtags to attract audience engagement and encourage women's political participation. Several posts also used images of successful female politicians and activists to inspire women and promote leadership aspirations. Krippendorff (2019) explained that content analysis helps researchers identify communication patterns and symbolic meanings in media messages. Nwabueze (2021) argued that thematic coding improves the interpretation of communication contents in media research. Asemah (2021) maintained that systematic categorization of media contents enhances research reliability and validity. Daramola (2022) noted that content analysis is effective for examining political communication messages and advocacy strategies. Obalanlege (2023) observed that digital media campaigns often rely on symbolic

communication and persuasive narratives to mobilize audiences. Ekwugha (2022) explained that online political communication encourages public engagement and participation in democratic discourse. Wilson (2021) further emphasized that digital communication platforms have increased interactive participation within Nigerian political environments.

Table 1: Distribution of Social Media Contents by Platform

Platform	Frequency	Percentage
Facebook	100	33.3%
X (Twitter)	100	33.3%
Instagram	50	16.7%
TikTok	50	16.7%
Total	300	100%

The table shows that Facebook and X were the dominant platforms used for women’s political advocacy campaigns, accounting for 66.6% of the total sampled contents. This suggests that political advocacy in Nigeria heavily relies on interactive discussion platforms with broader political audiences.

Table 2: Dominant Themes in Advocacy Campaigns

Theme	Frequency	Percentage
Political Mobilization	90	30%
Gender Equality	70	23.3%
Leadership Advocacy	60	20%
Women Empowerment	50	16.7%
Voter Education	30	10%
Total	300	100%

Political mobilization emerged as the most dominant theme with 30%, indicating that many campaigns encouraged women to contest elections, vote, and participate in governance processes. Gender equality advocacy also appeared prominently, reflecting persistent demands for equal political opportunities for women in Nigeria.

Table 3: Tone of Advocacy Messages

Tone	Frequency	Percentage
Positive	180	60%
Neutral	80	26.7%
Negative	40	13.3%
Total	300	100%

Most campaign messages adopted a positive tone by encouraging inclusion, empowerment, and participation. Negative messages mainly reflected online harassment, gender stereotypes, and criticism directed at female politicians. Research shows that Nigerian women in politics often face hostile digital narratives and stereotypical portrayals online.

Table 4: Audience Engagement Level

Engagement Level	Frequency	Percentage
High	140	46.7%
Moderate	110	36.7%
Low	50	16.6%
Total	300	100%

The findings indicate high audience engagement with women-centered political campaigns. This demonstrates that digital advocacy campaigns are increasingly attracting public attention and stimulating political conversations around women’s representation in governance.

The in-depth interview Findings

The in-depth interview findings supported the content analysis results by providing firsthand explanations from women activists, journalists, female politicians, digital campaign organizers, and communication scholars. Most participants explained that social media platforms have become alternative political spaces where women can express political opinions, mobilize support, and participate in democratic discussions without depending solely on traditional media institutions. Some participants further stated that digital advocacy campaigns improved women’s political confidence and encouraged more female youths to participate in electoral discussions and political movements. Kvale and Brinkmann (2021) explained that in-depth interviews provide rich qualitative data for understanding social experiences and communication practices. Akinfeleye (2022) maintained that interviews are useful for examining media-related experiences and political communication issues. Sobowale (2021) argued that interviews provide deeper insights into social and political phenomena. Onabajo (2022) observed that qualitative interviews help researchers understand audience perceptions and communication experiences. Oso (2020) explained that democratic participation in Nigeria is increasingly influenced by digital communication technologies. Ekhareafu (2023) stated that online advocacy has expanded public participation in political communication. Salawu (2023) further emphasized that women now use social media spaces to challenge political marginalization and promote gender equality in governance

To avoid direct identification of the participants in accordance with ethical guidelines, all participants have been anonymised, they are replaced with alphabets “A” “B” “C” ‘D”

Table 5. list of the participants for in-depth interview

Interview lists	Respondents
Participant A	Women activist
Participant B	Female politicians
Participant C	Digital campaign organizer
Participant D	Journalist and Communication scholars

Table 6. Themes

Themes
Theme one: Political Awareness and Democratic Education
Theme two: Promotion of Women's Political Representation
Theme three: Audience Engagement and Political Mobilization
Theme Four: Online Harassment and Gender Discrimination

Political Awareness and Democratic Education

The findings revealed that digital media advocacy campaigns significantly promoted political awareness and democratic education among Nigerian women. Many analyzed posts educated women about voter registration, electoral participation, civic responsibilities, and constitutional rights. Campaign organizers frequently used infographics, short videos, educational captions, and motivational messages to simplify political information and encourage women's participation in governance. The hashtags #HerVoiceMatter and #WomenInPolitics were repeatedly used to promote political consciousness and civic engagement among women and youths. Interview participants explained that social media became a major source of political education because it allowed users to access political information instantly and participate in political discussions from different parts of the country.

PA says, "Social media makes it easy to organize quickly across borders"

PB "Social media lowers cost and access barriers, lets women organize and set agendas outside traditional spaces, shift public norms, and helps females candidate reach voters, she continues, the impact is strongest when internet access is wide and election are fair"

Chiluwa (2024) explained that digital advocacy campaigns have transformed political education and participation in Nigeria. Salawu (2023) observed that feminist online activism has increased awareness about women's rights and political inclusion. Ojebuyi (2022) argued that social media platforms enhance political mobilization and democratic participation among women and youths. Udeze (2024) maintained that digital communication platforms have increased citizens' access to political information and civic engagement opportunities. Dunu (2022) noted that online campaigns improve women's political awareness and encourage participation in electoral processes. Mojaye (2024) emphasized that digital communication technologies have strengthened public participation in democratic discourse. Asemah (2021) further stated that political communication campaigns contribute significantly to civic education and democratic development.

Promotion of Women's Political Representation

The findings showed that many digital advocacy campaigns focused on promoting women's political representation and encouraging female leadership in Nigeria. Campaign messages consistently emphasized the importance of gender equality, inclusive governance, and women's participation in decision-making processes.

Fig 1. Advocacy for Special Seats for Women in National Politics



The picture explains the Implementing structural mechanisms that guarantee increased participation of women in governance.

Several campaign contents celebrated successful female politicians and portrayed them as symbols of inspiration and empowerment for younger women. Interview participants noted that social media campaigns challenged patriarchal beliefs that politics is exclusively for men and encouraged women to contest elections and seek leadership positions.

PC says, “We are trying to correct the imbalance of the population, diversity in our governance system and in our political process, to make sure that women are represented men are represented we are not in competition”

Participants D further explained that online advocacy helped create public conversations about gender inclusion and women’s rights within Nigerian politics. Dunu (2022) observed that media advocacy campaigns promote positive representations of women in politics and leadership. Arowosegbe (2023) explained that women’s political inclusion is essential for democratic development in Nigeria. Nwabueze (2021) maintained that communication campaigns influence public perception and political behavior. Okunna (2020) argued that media representation plays a significant role in shaping societal attitudes toward gender and leadership. Wilson (2021) explained that digital communication has expanded women’s participation in public discourse and governance debates. Ekhareafó (2023) observed that online political advocacy has strengthened women’s visibility within Nigerian politics. Oso (2020) further argued that democratic development requires inclusive participation from marginalized social groups, including women.

Audience Engagement and Political Mobilization

The findings indicated that audience engagement was high across most of the analyzed campaigns. Several advocacy posts generated thousands of likes, comments, reposts, and hashtag interactions, particularly during election periods and national political debates. The campaigns attracted active participation from women groups, youths, journalists, civil society organizations, and political supporters.

Fig 2. The National Women Mega Empowerment & Rally 2026



The National Women Mega Empowerment & Rally 2026 is a nationwide mobilization initiative aimed at engaging 10 million Nigerian women in political participation, policy advocacy, and grassroots economic inclusion.

Themed “The Power of 10 Million: One Voice, One Movement, One Choice,” the rally is positioned as a strategic intervention rather than a symbolic gathering. It seeks to strengthen and consolidate women’s participation in organized influence across Nigeria’s governance and economic systems.

The findings also revealed that emotionally appealing posts and videos addressing gender discrimination and political marginalization received the highest audience engagement. Interview participants explained that hashtags created online communities where women exchanged political opinions, shared experiences, and mobilized support for advocacy movements. Ojebuyi (2022) explained that audience interaction on social media strengthens political mobilization and democratic participation. Salawu (2023) observed that feminist digital campaigns encourage collective action and online solidarity among women. Udeze (2024) argued that online engagement promotes civic participation and democratic interaction. Mojaye (2024) maintained that social media platforms facilitate communication between political actors and citizens. Chilwa (2024) explained that hashtags function as symbolic tools for mobilization and advocacy within digital political environments. Asemah (2021) observed that audience participation enhances the effectiveness of communication campaigns. Obalanlege (2023) further stated that digital communication technologies have transformed political interaction and collective participation in Nigeria.

Online Harassment and Gender Discrimination

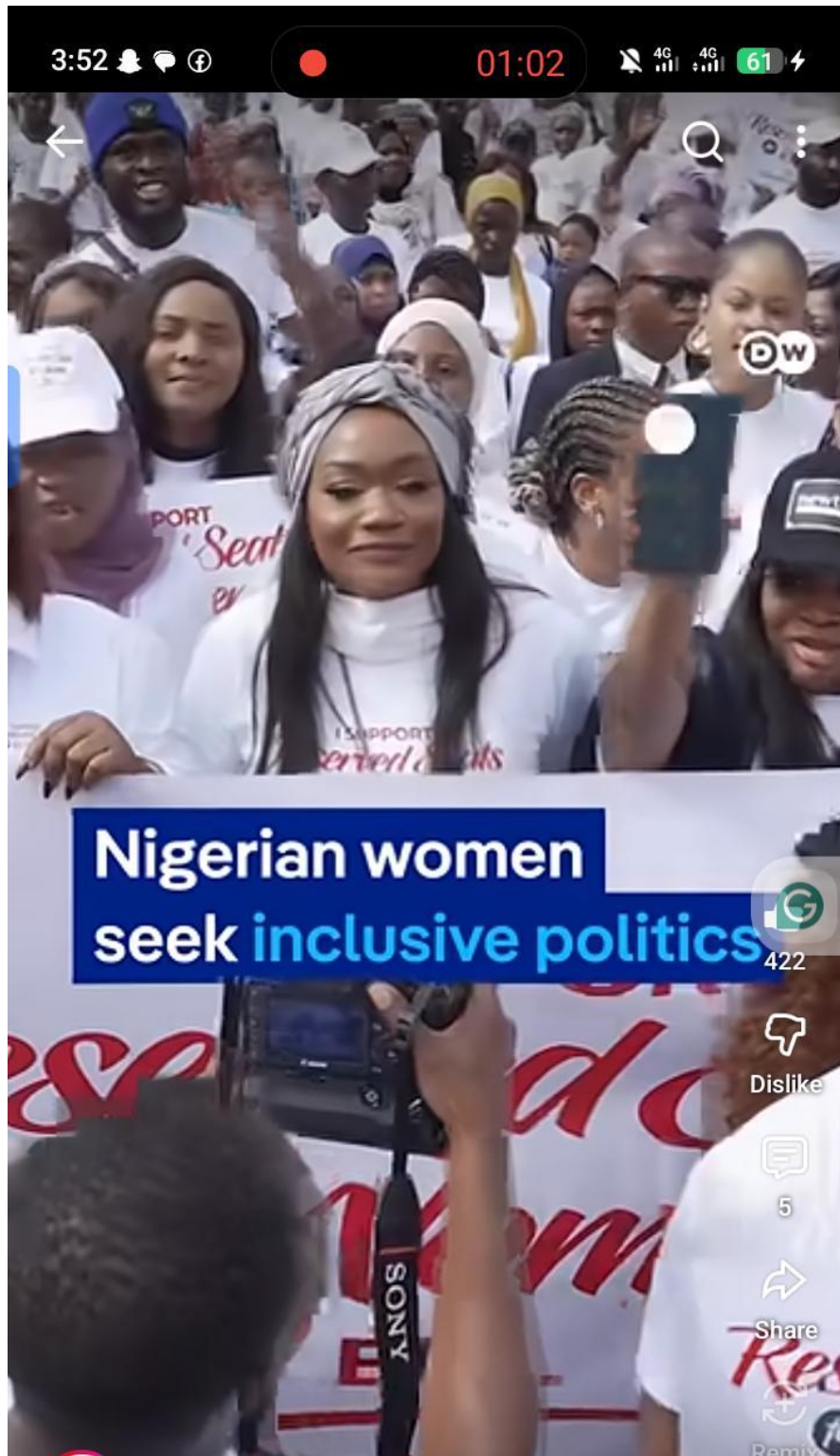
The findings further revealed that female politicians and women activists experienced significant levels of online harassment, cyberbullying, and gender discrimination during political discussions and advocacy campaigns. Several comments analyzed during the study contained sexist remarks, insults, stereotypes, and derogatory statements questioning women’s competence in leadership positions. Interview participants stated that online harassment discourages many women from active political participation because of fear of intimidation, public ridicule, and character assassination. Some participants also argued that female politicians often receive harsher criticism than male politicians in digital political spaces. Ekhareafu (2023) explained that digital political spaces in Nigeria often reproduce societal gender inequalities and discriminatory practices. Salawu (2023) observed that women activists frequently experience cyberbullying and online hostility during advocacy campaigns. Dunu (2022) argued that patriarchal attitudes continue to shape political communication and media discourse in Nigeria. Wilson (2021) explained that digital participation exposes women to various forms of political intimidation and discrimination. Mojaye (2024) maintained that online harassment negatively affects women’s willingness to participate in political discussions. Oso (2020) noted that democratic participation becomes limited when marginalized groups experience discrimination within public communication spaces. Arowosegbe (2023) further emphasized that patriarchal structures continue to hinder women’s full participation in Nigerian politics despite increasing digital advocacy efforts.

Influence of Digital Advocacy on Women’s Political Participation

The findings demonstrated that digital advocacy campaigns positively influenced women’s political participation by increasing political awareness, civic engagement, leadership confidence, and public discussions on gender inclusion. Most interview participants agreed that social media campaigns encouraged more women to participate in online political discussions, support female candidates, attend political meetings, and engage in advocacy activities. However, the findings also revealed that structural challenges such as political violence, financial limitations, cultural discrimination, and weak institutional support continue to hinder women’s full participation in Nigerian politics.

PB submitted that “The barriers that are against women who are participating in politics is structural, it's financial, it's religion, even cultural. So when women who have the capacity come out to vie, they are usually sidelined because of these structural barriers”

Fig 3. Below picture shows a campaign by Nigerian women seeking for Reserve seats



Participants C emphasized that although digital advocacy has improved visibility for women in politics, sustainable political inclusion requires stronger institutional reforms and societal support. Chilwa (2024) explained that digital advocacy has expanded opportunities for women's participation in political communication and public discourse. Ojebuyi (2022) argued that social media platforms encourage democratic participation and political mobilization among marginalized groups

PD confirm that "Everything has changed now. Let me just start from the House of Assembly now. You know, we are going for election for House of Assembly. Our woman are there. About eight of them are among the House of Assembly. So everything I've changed. But before, there is nothing woman can do. And is we the woman that we have the campaign and the voters"

Arowosegbe (2023) observed that women's political participation remains constrained by institutional and cultural barriers despite increasing advocacy efforts.

PA says "The barriers to entry for female participation in politics is numerous. It's structural, it's financial, it's cultural, it's religious, and the list goes on and on. Because we do not have a legal provision in our constitution"

Nwabueze (2021) maintained that communication campaigns influence political awareness and participation patterns within society. Udeze (2024) explained that digital communication technologies have strengthened citizens' involvement in governance and political activism. Salawu (2023) stated that feminist digital movements have contributed significantly to women's visibility and participation in Nigerian politics. Dunu (2022) further argued that sustained advocacy and institutional reforms are necessary for achieving meaningful gender inclusion in governance.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings from this study reveal that digital media plays a significant role in promoting gender advocacy and women's political participation in Nigeria. Social media campaigns such as #WomenInPoliticsNG, #ElectHer, and #HerSeatInParliament have increased awareness of gender disparities in political representation and provided platforms for engagement and mobilization. The campaigns' success in creating visibility for women's leadership aligns with Agenda-Setting Theory, which emphasizes the media's ability to influence public discourse by highlighting specific issues (Meraz & Papacharissi, 2013; Ojebuyi & Salawu, 2023). By prioritizing women's political participation in online conversations, these campaigns have placed gender equality firmly on the digital political agenda.

The study also demonstrates the importance of interactive and participatory strategies in digital advocacy. Campaigns that employed storytelling, live webinars, polls, and social endorsements achieved higher levels of engagement and visibility. These findings confirm previous research suggesting that social media can be a powerful tool for mobilization when combined with participatory approaches (Adeyemi & Olanrewaju, 2023; Udeze, 2024). Through digital platforms, women receive information, mentorship, and social support, which can motivate them to pursue political leadership roles, even when structural barriers persist.

However, the analysis highlights persistent challenges to digital gender advocacy. Online harassment, cyberbullying, and the digital divide limit the effectiveness and reach of social media campaigns. As noted by Omojola (2022) and Arowolo and Aluko (2021), these challenges reflect the reproduction of offline inequalities in online spaces, where patriarchal norms and systemic biases continue to influence engagement. Additionally, financial and resource constraints constrain smaller advocacy organizations from sustaining impactful campaigns, creating a gap between well-resourced national campaigns and grassroots digital activism.

Despite these challenges, social media campaigns have created a virtual empowerment effect for women in Nigeria. Users exposed to gender advocacy messages report increased interest in civic engagement, political education, and supporting female candidates. However, converting digital engagement into tangible electoral outcomes remains limited due to structural issues, including party politics, financial constraints, and entrenched patriarchal systems (Nwankwo & Okeke, 2022; Ezeani & Nwoye, 2023).

From a theoretical perspective, these findings illustrate the synergy between Agenda-Setting Theory and Feminist Communication Theory. Social media campaigns set the public agenda for gender inclusion while simultaneously challenging patriarchal norms by amplifying women's voices in political discourse (van Zoonen, 1994; Oladipo & Chukwudi, 2023). Together, these frameworks provide a robust explanation for how digital advocacy both shapes public attention and empowers marginalized groups in Nigeria.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that digital media is an increasingly vital platform for gender advocacy and promoting women's political participation in Nigeria. Social media campaigns raise awareness, mobilize audiences, and provide networking and mentorship opportunities for women aspiring to participate in politics. These campaigns

have contributed to public discourse around gender inclusion and challenged traditional narratives that limit women's political roles.

However, structural barriers persist. Online harassment, misinformation, the digital divide, financial constraints, and entrenched patriarchal norms continue to limit women's full participation in both digital and offline political spaces. While campaigns have achieved notable visibility and engagement, translating digital activism into substantive electoral outcomes remains a challenge.

Overall, digital media advocacy has the potential to significantly enhance women's political representation in Nigeria, but this potential is contingent upon supportive policies, increased digital literacy, and sustained, inclusive advocacy efforts.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are proposed:

Strengthen Digital Literacy Programs: Government agencies, civil society organizations, and advocacy groups should provide digital literacy training for women, particularly in rural areas, to ensure equal access to online political advocacy platforms (Adeyemi & Olanrewaju, 2023; Udeze, 2024).

Combat Online Harassment: Omojola, 2022; Arowolo & Aluko (2021). Assert that policymakers and platform administrators should implement stronger mechanisms to prevent cyberbullying and gender-based harassment, creating safer digital spaces for women engaging in political discourse

Support Grassroots Campaigns: Funding and resources should be allocated to smaller organizations to sustain local-level digital advocacy, ensuring broader reach and representation of diverse voices (Ezeani & Nwoye, 2023; Oladipo & Chukwudi, 2023).

Integrate Online and Offline Advocacy: Digital campaigns should be complemented with offline activities such as civic workshops, mentorship programs, and party-level engagement to convert online awareness into actual political participation (Nwankwo & Okeke, 2022; BusinessDay, 2023).

Policy Reform for Gender Inclusion: Nigerian political parties and institutions should adopt policies promoting gender parity, including quotas, campaign support for female candidates, and targeted mentorship programs (Udeze, 2024; Ojebuyi & Salawu, 2023)

By implementing these recommendations, Nigeria can leverage digital media advocacy more effectively to improve women's political participation and create a more inclusive democratic process.

REFERENCES

1. Adeyemi, T., & Olanrewaju, A. (2023). Social media and political participation in Nigeria's democratic process. *Journal of African Media Studies*, 15(2), 145–160.
2. Adebajo, A. A., Oloruntoba, S., & Yusuf, A. (2024). Young women's political participation and gender depoliticization in Nigeria. *Jurnal Studi Pemerintahan*, 15(1), 34–49.
3. *African Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities Research*. (2024). Social media and political communication in Nigeria. AB Journals.
4. Ajayi, A., & Adesote, S. (2021). Social media activism and democratic engagement in Nigeria. *African Journalism Studies*, 42(3), 85–101.
5. Akinfeleye, R. A. (2022). *Contemporary issues in Nigerian mass media*. University of Lagos Press.
6. Akinyetun, T. S. (2022). Social media, political efficacy and political participation in Nigeria. *Plaridel Journal*, 19(2), 67–89.
7. Akporue, C., & Efebeh, V. (2025). Social media and political participation: A study of the 2023 presidential election in Nigeria. *International Journal of Research in Social Sciences*, 12(2), 91–108.

8. Aina, I. O. (2022). Gender advocacy and women's political participation in Nigeria. *Nigerian Journal of Gender Studies*, 14(2), 45–58.
9. Arowosegbe, J. (2023). Women, politics and democratic participation in Nigeria. *African Political Review*, 11(2), 66–81.
10. Arowolo, D., & Aluko, O. (2021). Women's political participation and representation in Nigeria's democracy. *Journal of African Elections*, 20(1), 45–63.
11. Ayo, C., Oluranti, J., Duruji, M. & Omoregbe, N. (2015). Credible elections and the role of social Media: The case of Nairaland in the 2014 Osun gubernatorial election. *Proceedings of the 15th European Conference on eGovernment 2015: ECEG 2015*. <http://eprints.Covenantuniversity.edu.ng/5536/#.YicTkzhKjIU>
12. Bello, S., Alhassan, M., & Inuwa-Dutse, I. (2023). #EndSARS protest: Discourse and mobilisation on Twitter. *African Journal of Media Studies*, 14(1), 77–92.
13. Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77–101.
14. BusinessDay Research Unit. (2023). Gender inclusion and female candidates in Nigerian elections. *BusinessDay Policy Report*.
15. Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2018). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (4th ed.). Sage Publications.
16. Danjuma, K. J., Onimode, B. M., & Onche, O. J. (2015). Gender issues and ICT for development: Prospects and challenges for women in Nigeria. *International Journal of Information and Communication Technology Research*, 5(3), 65–73.
17. Deborah Musa. (2026, March 11). Gender inequality still major global challenge – UN. *The Punch*.
18. Dunu, I. (2022). Media advocacy and women's political communication in Nigeria. *Nigerian Journal of Communication*, 19(1), 44–58.
19. Ekhareaf, D. O. (2023). Digital communication and democratic participation in Nigeria. *Journal of Media and Society*, 8(3), 75–91.
20. Ekwugha, U. (2022). Journalism practice and political communication in Nigeria. *Nigerian Journal of Media Studies*, 14(1), 33–49.
21. Kvale, S., & Brinkmann, S. (2021). *InterViews: Learning the craft of qualitative research interviewing* (3rd ed.). Sage Publications.
22. Ekwueme, A., & Asemah, E. (2018). Social media and political mobilization in Nigeria. *Journal of Mass Communication and Journalism*, 8(2), 112–125.
23. Ezeani, E., & Nwoye, L. (2023). Gender equality and political inclusion in Nigeria. *African Journal of Political Science*, 18(2), 101–118.
24. Ibrahim, M. A. (2021). Civil society organizations and gender equality campaigns in Nigeria. *Journal of African Social Development*, 9(1), 77–89.
25. Iloh, M. C., Saint, E. J., Maiwada, A. A., & Onyejelem, T. E. (2026). Social media and political communication in the 2023 campaign in Nigeria. *BIRCI-Journal*.
26. ImpactHouse. (2023). Addressing declining participation of Nigerian women in politics.
27. Independent National Electoral Commission. (2023). Report on the 2023 general elections. INEC.
28. International IDEA. (2022). Women's political participation in Africa: Trends and challenges. International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance.
29. Krippendorff, K. (2018). *Content analysis: An introduction to its methodology* (4th ed.). Sage Publications.
30. Kvale, S., & Brinkmann, S. (2021). *InterViews: Learning the craft of qualitative research interviewing* (3rd ed.). Sage Publications.
31. Luka, J., & Ugondo, P. (2025). Gendered framing in political campaign coverage: A content analysis of Nigerian newspapers. *Asian Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities*, 14(1), 56–70.
32. Meraz, S., & Papacharissi, Z. (2013). Networked framing and social media: Agenda-setting in the digital era. *New Media & Society*, 15(5), 739–757.
33. Mojaye, E. M. (2024). Political communication and online activism in Nigeria. *African Communication Research Journal*, 12(2), 87–103.
34. Moh'd, I. A., & Samu, M. O. (2025). The role of social media on youth political participation in Nigeria. *FUDMA International Journal of Social Sciences*, 7(2), 120–134.

35. National Bureau of Statistics. (2023). Gender statistics report for Nigeria. NBS.
36. Nnabuiwe, C. O., Nwolu, O. J., & Ugochukwu, C. C. (2022). Intersection of Facebook usage and women participation in politics. *Unizik Journal of Gender Research*, 6(1), 112–128.
37. Nwajiuba, C. A., & Ukwandu, E. (2021). Female ICT participation in South-Eastern Nigerian tertiary institutions: Inhibiting factors. *Journal of African Gender Studies*, 9(1), 44–58.
38. Nwabueze, C., & Ekeanyanwu, N. T. (2023). Digital activism and women empowerment in Nigeria. *International Journal of Communication and Media Studies*, 15(3), 102–118.
39. Nwankwo, B., & Okeke, C. (2022). Gender and political representation in Nigeria's democratic governance. *Journal of Public Administration and Governance*, 12(4), 233–248.
40. Obalanlege, M. (2023). Digital media and advocacy communication in Nigeria. *Journal of Communication Research*, 10(2), 59–73.
41. Obiechina, C. K. (2023). Using social media to promote women's socialization and political participation in Nigeria. *Nasarawa Journal of Multimedia and Communication Studies*, 5(1), 88–103.
42. Ojebuyi, B., & Salawu, A. (2023). Digital activism and civic engagement in Nigeria. *Media, Culture & Society*, 45(5), 921–937.
43. Ohaja, E. U., Nwogbo, V. C., Akata, U. C. M., & Caius, P. C. (2023). Mass media mobilisation and representation of women in Nigerian politics.
44. Okoro, N., & Nwafor, K. (2013). Social media and political participation in Nigeria during the 2011 elections. *Journal of Communication and Media Research*, 5(1), 35–46.
45. Okunna, C. S. (2020). Teaching mass communication: A multi-dimensional approach. New Generation Books.
46. Onabajo, O. S. (2022). Introduction to broadcast media. Gabi Concepts.
47. Oladipo, V. O., & Chukwudi, C. E. (2023). Social media and women's political participation in Nigeria. *Journal of Propulsion Technology*, 44(4), 2255–2263.
48. Omojola, O. (2022). Social media and public discourse in Nigeria. *Communication Research and Practice*, 8(3), 241–255.
49. Onyebadi, U. (2018). Music, social media and global mobility: My heart will go on. Springer.
50. Oso, L. (2020). Media and democratic development in Nigeria. *Journal of Communication and Media Research*, 12(1), 21–35.
51. Patton, M. Q. (2015). Qualitative research and evaluation methods (4th ed.). Sage Publications.
52. Salawu, A. (2019). Social media and democratic participation in Africa. *African Journalism Studies*, 40(2), 1–15.
53. Sobowale, I. (2021). Scientific journalism. John West Publications.
54. Suemo, J. S., Kusugh, T., & Okonkwo, B. (2023). Influence of ideological themes in social media political campaigns on voters' education and participation in Nigeria's 2023 general elections. *Journal of Basic and Applied Research International*.
55. TheConclave. (2023). Why women lose elections in Nigeria – NAN survey.
56. Udeze, S. (2024). Online advocacy and women's political mobilization in Nigeria. *Journal of African Communication Research*, 17(1), 55–73.
57. Udoms, B. E., Atakpa, O. E., & Ndaeyo, E. A. (2024). Women political participation and democratic development in Nigeria (1999–2023). *AKSU Annals of Sustainable Development*.
58. United Nations Women. (2022). Women's political participation and leadership in Nigeria. UN Women.
59. Vanguard News. (2022). Only 6% women are active in Nigerian politics — Report.
60. van Zoonen, L. (1994). Feminist media studies. Sage Publications.
61. Wasserman, H., & Madrid-Morales, D. (2019). How influential are African media? *African Journalism Studies*, 40(1), 1–16.
62. Wilson, D. (2021). Political Communication and Digital Participation in Nigeria. *Nigerian Communication Review*, 7(1), 41–57.