

# The Effect of Social Media Advocacy Campaign on The Justice for Single Mothers: An Appraisal of Facebook Users in Akure Metropolis

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**Abstract-** *The aim of this paper is to examine the Effect of Social Media Advocacy Campaign on Justice for Single Mothers: An Appraisal of Facebook Users in Akure Metropolis. The paper adopted, Media Dependency Theory to justify the position of the study, moreover, survey design was considered appropriate for this research work and the population of the study which was 400 comprised of the entire population of the participants selected from the eight major axes in Akure metropolis. However stratified random sampling approach was adopted as 400 sampling size was considered appropriate for this research work. Hence, primary source of data collection was chosen and well-structured open-ended questionnaire was used as instruments for data gathering. This paper through the findings revealed that, promoting justice for single mother is the major impact of social media advocacy. From the findings, the study concluded that, social media advocacy have great impact on the campaign for the justice of single mothers and also that, social media especially Facebook through its advocacy campaign promote justice for single mothers. The study recommended that, media advocacy campaign should be constructive in other to curb provocative contents that can incite conflict in the society during campaign for social justice. It also recommended that, social media influencers should be more objective in projecting issues related to justice for single mothers in order to set agenda to change public behavior.*

**Keywords:** *Social Media Advocacy, Facebook Advocacy Campaign, Single Mothers, Social Justice, Public Behavior*

## I. INTRODUCTION

The growing rate of social injustice especially in Nigeria is one of the major topics that have captured researcher's attention across all board especially in the field of media practice or management. Basically, there are several social injustice within Nigeria society, but the most recent and commonest within immediate environment is social issues related to the injustice against single mothers because hardly will a

day pass by without a case injustice against single mothers being reported through the media especially on social media being the media that allow people to share their opinion without fear or favour.

The Nigerian state has recently been confronted with a deluge of social injustice-related threats; these issues are both traditional and non-traditional in their coloration, ranging from terrorism, human trafficking, kidnapping, ritual killings, banditry, and suppression of the poor among others (Moses & NGOMBA, 2017; Moses, 2018; Moses & NGOMBA, 2018).

In this 21st century, social media has become tools for several advocacy campaign especially in Nigeria where the ownership influence as contributed to the dysfunctional of media content (Dillon, 2015). Base on its powerful effect to serve large number of audience without any fear of ownership control, the general public found more confidence in adopting social media as a medium through which they express their opinions, perspective or idea concerning salient issues in the society (Obar, J. A. 2014).

However, this makes social media become the most powerful avenues for helping people especially the less privilege or minorities who advocate for their right whenever it's being violated (Oko, 2020). Hitherto, the mainstream media seem not to have been successful in evolving any new and ready platform that encourage most people to participate in advocating for social justice base on ownership control or government policies or influence (Dhaha, 2013). The emergence and adoption of social media has enhanced effective participatory communication especially on issues related to social justice in Nigeria (Olorunnisola, *et al*, 2012). However, a new dimension in advocating for social justice in Nigeria especially campaign for justice for single mother,

making it easier to organize and disseminate ideas, opinions and perception in order to achieve certain goal in the society.

Social media has played key roles especially as it serve as the only media that allows individual contribution and reaction to a particular social issues especially justice for single mothers (Ojigho, 2022). It could be noted that, on several occasions, issues related to justice for single mothers dominate social media. Some social media influencers often time, use social media especially Instagram and Twitter to project issues related to injustice against single mothers, some of the prominent social media influencers that engage in social campaign against injustice on single mothers are Iyabo Ojo, Bisi Omoologo etc (Ojigho, 2022). However, this study will focus on the effect of social media advocacy campaign on justice for single mothers with a study of Facebook Users in Akure Metro.

The aim of this study is to examine the effect of social media advocacy campaign on justice for single mothers with a study of Facebook Users in Akure Metro. However the study will explore relevant literature in order to enhance comprehensive knowledge of this study

#### Objectives of the Study

This study will explore;

1. The impact of social media advocacy campaign on justice for single mothers
2. The level of adoption of Facebook for the campaign against injustice on single mothers
3. The extent to which social media influencers make use of Facebook for justice campaign
4. The level of injustice against single mothers in Nigeria

#### Research Questions

1. What impact does social media advocacy have on the campaign for justice on single mothers?
2. What is the level of adoption of Facebook for the campaign against injustice on single mothers?
3. To what extent do social media influencers make use of Facebook for justice campaign?
4. What is the level of injustice against single mothers in Nigeria?

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Social justice is a major driver of equity of human rights which is important for any society concerned about development. Social justice advocacy “works for structural and enduring changes that increase the power of those who are most disadvantaged politically, economically, and socially” (LaMarche, 2009 as cited by Klugman, 2010:1). In a country like Nigeria where a lot of the social systems are ineffective (Dike, 2017), this is important as social justice system deals with discriminations and injustice especially for people that are underprivileged because of religion, sexuality, gender, age, disability, gender expression, nationality, economic status, or ‘sexual orientation’(Carlsen, *et al* 2018). Therefore, conversations focusing on social justice could ensure that awareness is brought on those pressing concerns (Torres-Harding, Steele, Schulz, Taha and Pico, 2014). Critical discussions around social justice concerns also could help promote awareness of social justice issues.

As a global medium, social media have proved vital in creating awareness for causes; for instance, the Arab Springs, *#BlackLivesMatter* and *#MeToo* campaigns. When the Arab Spring erupted in 2010, a lot of attention was focused on social media as means of collective activism to circumvent the bureaucratic-operated traditional media channels and a debate broke out about the relevance of the new technology for social justice. The “use of social media more than doubled in Arab countries during the protests, with the exception of Libya” (Wellman and Lee, 2014).

Historically, in Nigeria society there has always being reports on social injustice base on the level of unconscious and not adhering to the moral principle and conduct that govern human society especially with the level of immoral act that keep soaring higher in Nigeria society (Olaniyan, & Graham, (2014). However, there has being several social media movement protest against injustice in Nigeria, most prevalent are *#tagjusticeforMohbad*, *#tagLetthepoorbreath* defending justice and demanding for justice. Perhaps, most of the protest emerged as a result of victimization and injustice that prevail in Nigeria society.

However, the advent of social media in the late 19s and in this 21<sup>st</sup> century has reshaped and restructured the narrative base on the fact that the citizens now have access to media at the finger tips and this enable them to form platform for the discourse of society issues, especially those related to injustice in the society (Garba, 2015). However, it could be noted that, social media especially Facebook has helped to report several act of injustice especially during 2020 EndSars protest in Nigeria whereby the youths seeked for justice against SARS brutality (Akinpelu, 2020). The protest was accustomed with the strength of social media in advocating for cancellation of a particular sector of Nigeria Police Force knows as SARS. The co-conveners of the protest make use of social media especially Twitter to discuss, share, unveil their perception towards SARS and the general public to be fully aware of their grievances (Oluokun, 2020). Apart from the EndSars social media advocacy for justice, there are order social media campaign especially on issues related to child molestation, it could be recalled that November 2022, a case of a man accused 13 years old in Ado Ekiti went viral through the social media, and this generate several reaction as people called for justice for the victims. The case through social media captured the global attention and justice was achieved as the man was sentenced to 40 years of imprisonment (Olawoyin, 2022).

Advocacy efforts usually require an action of some sort, be it charitable contribution, raising awareness or mobilisation on the streets (Ojigho, 2022). As a result of their remarkable growth rate, social media could be used to tackle a problem as part of community initiatives. Social media also allow audiences to discuss causes that might be ignored or downplayed by the traditional media. Social media ensure a wide reach which allows two-way communication and enables participation in advocacy efforts. The popularity of social media also shows that they are increasingly necessary to reach demographics who are rapidly transforming their manner of interaction (Olorunnisola, and Martin, 2012). Since social media thrive on interactivity, users that realise that their contributions can have swift effects are more likely to participate in the advocacy because these collaborative efforts will encourage even more participation; making collaborative solutions possible (Obar, 2014).

Marriage and motherhood in sub-Saharan Africa Marriage in the traditional African society was described by Evans Pritchard (Clark, 2013) as a “given”, there was no such thing as unmarried adult woman or one who was childless by choice; and 4 women could not choose a career instead of marriage” (Dillon, 2015). Most African societies had sanctions for childbearing outside marriage, in some East African communities, it was punishable by death, in other places in Africa it was abortion or infanticide (Guerra, 2017). There was no place for permanent singlehood except for religious celibates. (Isiugo-Abanihe 1994) confirmed this notion about marriage in his study of bridewealth and nuptiality patterns among the Igbos of Nigeria. In most societies in sub-Saharan Africa, marriage and motherhood still ascribe adult status on women and provides a source of prestige (Oko, 2020). Except in the matrilineal societies, women’s inheritance right is linked to their husbands and surviving sons (Isioma, 2016). Marriage is the acceptable setting for procreation and raising of children and people marry to raise valuable children who will support them in acquisition of economic resources and in old age (Caldwell and Caldwell 1987; IsiugoAbanihe 1998). However, in some cases, such as among the Mende in Sierra Leone when there is no husband in view, as observed by Bledsoe, 1990 women, particularly the educated are encouraged to have children, because a never married woman without a child is considered worse off than one with a child. However, forces of social change have continued to influence marriage and family in sub Saharan Africa, leading to transformations in the traditional nuptiality norms, individual sexual and marital behaviour (Clark, D 2013). There is a growing number of women who are never married in their late thirties and over (Antoine and Nanitelamio 1991; Pazvakawambwa et al. 2013). Alongside these changes is increasing proportion of women who are never married mothers by choice or circumstance. This category of women is on the increase in almost all countries in sub-Saharan Africa. (Guyer 2019) observed what she called polyandrous motherhood in Lagos, Nigeria where women have children with more than one man but are not married to any of them, to secure extended social and economic network with such men. Mandleni, (2018) reported that single motherhood in Zimbabwe was a deliberate decision by

some women who do not want to be under men's control.

Single parenthood is a social phenomenon that has always been in existence and is as old as mankind. According to Pollitt (2014), single parent family is a household in which only one parent lives with a child or children. Single parenthood as viewed by Achakpa (1999) is the taking of family responsibility (which includes caring for children) without the father's or mother's contribution. Recently, the numbers of single parents' families have increased drastically and it is gaining a global dimension. This wind of change has also affected the Nigerian society where the idea of single parenthood seems to be a norm, rather than an anomaly, and children born to such families are legitimized if there had ever been a father in the scene or neglected. According to Pollitt (2018), the percentage of white women with some level of education who has become mothers without marrying has more than doubled in the last decade. Among women with professional or managerial jobs, it has almost tripled. The suggestion therefore is that, may be, marriage no longer serves women interest. If women can support themselves, they do not need to marry.

Various reasons have been highlighted as to why people get into single parenthood. Akinrinde, O.O. (2020) revealed that several factors contributed to the growing numbers of single parents. Adepegba A. (2022) opined that divorce on its own makes the couples develop a negative attitude towards marriage and therefore lay the foundation for single parenthood. The reason commonly given by woman for leaving their husbands includes adultery, cruelty, and desertion, addiction to alcohol or drug husband or wife also causes single parenthood. Firstenberg (2004) posited that the raising rate of single parenthood was basically due to the rising rates of divorce, he said that about half of the marriages undertaken man end up divorced. Death of a partner: the death of a spouse or partner as husband and wife could lead to each one of the partners becoming a single parent most especially on the part of the mother there is an adverse effect. Economic Pressure Financing in a single-parenting world is a challenge since caring for the children will centre more on either of the partners. So, economic stress, imbalance and problems affect in raising

children in single parenting. Lack of social care It is widely believed that children in single-parent families are likely to be psychologically unhealthy. The public media such as radio, newspapers, magazines, films and TV also repeatedly play up the psychological health of the children in single-parent families.

However, the adoption of social media for effective social communication of issues related to single mother has several social media influencer consider social media especially Facebook as the best medium of fighting for injustice against single mother Document Women (2022). In Nigeria, several social injustice on single mother flooded social media and this always attract public reaction especially in the case of a particular single mother named Modupe in Ibadan, her case generated several reaction on Facebook as the woman was captured where she was engaging in hard labour to feed her three children, her story garnered reaction when the social influencer, Bisi Omologo a facebook social influencer covers the story noting that her husband who is a commercial driver in Ibadan become so irresponsible and decided not to catered for the children. The case becomes so notable and her case was made known to civil organisation for justice. Hence, this shows the social responsibility of the media in reporting social issues as stated by (Kareem 2019) that social media have been used to disseminate information and invite participation in advocacy causes that seek to redress social injustice.

### III. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

#### Media Dependency Theory

Melvin DeFleur and Sandra Ball-Rokeach introduced the Media Dependency Theory (MDT) in 1976. The MDT, also known as the Media System Dependency theory, is an addition to or an extension of, the Uses and Gratifications Theory. MDT is one of the first theories that recognises that the audience is an active part of the communication process. At the core of this theory, the basic assumption is that if a person relies on specific media to meet certain needs (such as information, education, and entertainment), the media will be more significant media in the life of such a person, and consequently that media will have more effects on the said person. Littlejohn (2002:325) explains that "If a person finds a medium that provides

them with several functions that are central to their desires, they will be more inclined to continue to use that medium in the future”.

Media dependency theory mentions some situations where people’s media needs, and thus their dependency on media and the potential for greater media effects, are increased. The first one is when the number of media and centrality of media functions in a society is high. For instance, the media in Nigeria act as a fourth branch of government, a gatekeeper especially during crises, and tool for entertainment. So, the media have a better chance to serve the needs and affect their consumers. The second condition happens when a society is undergoing social change and conflict. For instance, when there is a public protest, acrisis, a natural disaster, or during elections, people turn to the media to help them make sense of these events. Thus, the media have a greater opportunity to exert effects during these times of social change and conflict (Ball-Rokeach and Jung, 2009).

Media dependency theory is useful for analysing social media as it provides a framework for the many relationships through which information can flow in a social media environment. Understanding MDT is important because social networking sites have become an integral part of daily life. In a study by Thadani and Cheung (2011), they anchored their study on the MDT and investigated the structure and dimensionality of the social network sites. They also evaluated the extent to which students are dependent on the online social network. Lee (2012) investigated the role of social networking sites in facilitating emotional expressions. Using MDT, he performed a qualitative content analysis of comments generated by users of YouTube. Brough and Li (2013) also used MDT to analyse how global human rights advocates leverage web 2.0 video networks.

Social media are currently being used for information, entertainment, and social relationships and at the core of the MDT are the needs to explain how individuals use the media to satisfy their needs, discover underlying motives for individuals’ media use and identify the positive and the negative consequences of media use. This study finds the above-mentioned theoretical assumptions in MDT particularly relevant

since it would capture the motivations for the use of social media, social media practices, frequency of use, and charitable contributions, from the perspectives of advocacy groups and the intended audience of advocacy efforts.

Since the theory concurs with the notion that audiences rely on the media for information determining their decisions, the media should help individuals develop certain attitudes regarding issues such as advocacy on social media. Hence, it is worth investigating if the assumptions of MDT are consistent with the perceptions of social media users, social media influencers and advocacy groups towards social justice advocacy in Nigeria. This theory does not touch on the characteristics/features of the social media, which is why the theory of media richness was additionally considered in this study.

#### Methodology

The research design of this study is survey method. Survey design is considered appropriate for this paper and it focuses on Facebook Users in Akure South Local Government of Ondo state. However, the population of the study which is 400 was derived through a stratified random sampling technique from the total population of Akure Metropolis in which 50 participants comprised of Facebook Users from the selected Axis in Akure Metropolis. Primary source of data collection is considered appropriate for this study and a well structured open ended questionnaire is designed for relevant data collection. However, out of the 400 respondents attested, 392 were duly attested and recovered while 6 cases of negative responses is recorded and 2 none attestation was also recovered respectively, however, the 392 recovered is presented using simple percentage data analysis method. The population of the study stated below:

Location / Axis	Frequency
Oba Adesida Axis	50
Ijoka Axis	50
Shagari Village Axis	50
Oke Aro Axis	50
Arakale Axis	50
Ondo Road Axis	50

Location / Axis	Frequency
Orita Obele Axis	50
Arakale Axis	50
Total	400

IV. DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS  
 OF VARIABLE SAMPLED

Index: Personal Data Distribution

Table 1: What impact does social media advocacy have on the campaign of justice for single mothers and what is the level of adoption of Facebook for the campaign against injustice on single mothers?

Items Variable	No of respondents	Percentage
1 Do you have access to Social Media?	Yes – 392	98%
	No – -	-
	Total – 392	100%
2 What impact does social media advocacy have on the campaign for the justice of single mothers?	Raising Awareness – 15	4%
	Promoting Justice for single mothers – 179	46%
	Advocating for change – 67	17%
	All of the Above – 131	33%
	Total – 392	100%
3 Do you participate in Facebook advocacy on justice for single mothers?	Yes – 217	55%
	No – 175	45%
	Total – 392	100%
4 What is the level of adoption of Facebook for the campaign against injustice on single mothers?	Very High – 301	77%
	High – 7	2%
	Very low – 12	3%
	Low – 72	18%
	Total – 392	100%

From the above table, item (1), 392 respondents representing 100% which is the total number of respondents admit that, they have access to social media. Item (2), shows that, 15 respondents representing 4% admit that, Raising Awareness is the impact that social media advocacy have on the campaign for single mothers' justice, 179 respondents representing 46% admit that, promoting justice is the impact that social media advocacy have on the campaign on justice for single mothers, 67 respondents representing 17% admit that, advocating for change is the impact that social media advocacy

have on the campaign on justice for single mothers while the remaining 131 respondents representing 33% admit that, all the listed options are the impact that social media advocacy have on the campaign for single mothers. Moreover, in item (3) the same table 217 respondents representing 55% admit that, they participate in Facebook advocacy on justice for single mother, while the remaining 175 respondents representing 45% have contrary opinion. Finally, in item (4) the same table 301 respondents representing 77% admit that, the level of adoption of Facebook for the campaign against injustice on single mothers is

very high, 7 respondents representing 2% admit that, the level of adoption of Facebook for the campaign against injustice on single mothers is high, 12 respondents representing 3% admit that, the level of adoption of Facebook for the campaign against injustice on single mothers is very low, while the remaining 72 respondents representing 18% admit that, the level of adoption of Facebook for the campaign against injustice on single mothers is low.

Table 2: To what extent do social media influencers make use of Facebook for justice campaign and what is the level of injustice against single mothers in Nigeria?

Variable	No of respondents	Percentage
1. Do you follow social justice campaign for single mothers on Facebook?		
Yes	278	71%
No	114	29%
Total	392	100%
2. To what extent do social media influencers make use of Facebook for justice campaign?		
To a greater extent	176	45%
To some extent	213	54%
On rare occasion	3	1%
Total	392	100%
3. What is the level of injustice against single mothers in Nigeria?		
Very High	176	44%
High	132	34%

Variable	No of respondents	Percentage
Very low	61	16%
Low	23	6%
Total	392	100%

From the above table 2, item (1), 278 respondents representing 71% admit that, they follows social justice campaign for single mother on Facebook while the remaining 114 respondents representing 29% have contrary opinion. Moreover, item (2) in the table 2 above revealed that, 176 respondents representing 45% admit that, social media influencers make use of Facebook for justice campaign to a great extent, 213 respondents representing 54% admit that, social media influencers make use of Facebook for justice campaign to some extent, while the remaining 3 respondents representing 1% admit that social media influencers make use of Facebook for justice campaign on rare occasion. In item (3) of the same table, 176 respondents representing 44% admit that, the level of injustice against single mothers in Nigeria is very high, 132 respondents representing 34% admit that, the level of injustice against single mothers in Nigeria is high, 61 respondents representing 16% admit that, the level of injustice against single mothers in Nigeria is very low while the remaining 23 respondents representing 6% admit that, the level of injustice against single mother in Nigeria is low.

#### V. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This paper examined the impact of social media advocacy campaign on justice for single mothers: an appraisal of Facebook users in Akure metro.

Research Question 1; What impact does social media advocacy have on the campaign for justice on single mothers? It was discovered in table item (2), table 1, that promoting justice is the major impact that social media advocacy have on the campaign for single mothers justice with the total highest number of 179 respondents representing 46%. Hence, it can be deduced from the above attestation that, social media

advocacy have great impact on the campaign for single mothers justice and also that, promoting justice is the major impact that social media advocacy have on the campaign for single mother justice.

Moreover, Research Question 2, what is the level of adoption of Facebook for the campaign against injustice on single mothers? It was discovered in item (3) table 1 the majority number of 217 respondents representing 55% participated in Facebook advocacy on justice for single mothers. Moreover, item (3) revealed that, the level of adoption of Facebook for the campaign against injustice on single mothers is very high. From the above attestation, it can be deduced that, participated in Facebook advocacy on justice for single mothers and also that, the level of adoption of Facebook for the campaign against injustice on single mothers is very high as attested by the total highest number of respondents.

Research Question 3; to what extent do social media influencers make use of Facebook for justice campaign? However, it was discovered in item (2) table 2 that, social media influencers make use of Facebook for justice campaign to a great extent with the total highest number of 176 respondents representing 45%. It can be deduced from the above attestation that, social media influencers make use of Facebook for justice campaign to a great extent.

Finally, Research Question 4 examined the level of injustice against single mothers in Nigeria. It was however discovered in item (3), table 2 where the total highest number of 176 respondents representing 44% attested that, the level of injustice against single mothers in Nigeria is very high. Therefore, it can be deduced from the above attestation that, the level of injustice against single mothers in Nigeria is very high as attested by the highest number of respondents.

## VI. Summary and Conclusion

Advocacy efforts usually require an action of some sort, be it charitable contribution, raising awareness or mobilization on the streets. As a result of their remarkable growth rate, social media could be used to tackle a problem as part of community initiatives. Social media also allow audiences to discuss causes that might be ignored or downplayed by the traditional media. The emergence of social media has ensure

prompt and easy flow of communication especially on salient issues or event in the society, thereby giving the general public the privilege to share opinions on such issues especially domestic violence in order to reshape people attitude on such issues. However, this paper examined the effect of social media advocacy campaign on justice for single mothers: an appraisal of Facebook users in Akure metropolis. The paper adopted, Media Dependency Theory to justify the position of the study, moreover, survey design was considered appropriate for this research work and the population of the study which is 400 comprised of the entire population of participants selected from the eight major axes in Akure Metropolis. However stratified random sampling approach was adopted as 400 sampling size was considered appropriate for this research work, hence, primary source of data collection was chosen and well structured open ended questionnaire was used as instruments for data gathering. This paper through the findings revealed that, promoting justice for single mothers is the major impact of social media advocacy. From the findings, the study concluded that, social media advocacy have great impact on the campaign for single mothers justice and also that, social media especially Facebook through its advocacy campaign promote justice for single mothers.

## Recommendations

In view of the above conclusion, the following recommendations are made:

- Media advocacy campaign should be constructive in other to curb provocative contents that can insight conflict in the society during campaign for social justice.
- Social media influencer should be more objective in projecting issues related to justice for single mothers in order to set agenda to change public behavior.
- There should be evaluation of social media projection of issues related to justice for single mothers in other to curb fake posts.
- Government agency in-charge of media regulation e.g (NBC) should seek to regulate social media especially during campaign for social justice in order to preserve classified contents from the general public

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