

# Social Media and Gender Equality: Knowledge, Attitude and Practice.

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## Abstract

Issues of gender representation and visibility on various social media platforms and access to specific roles, responsibilities, tasks, and privileges, as well as gender portrayal, have been on the international agenda since the 1990s, raising concerns about news media diversity and accessibility. Construction of gender goes on today through various technologies and individual discourses with the power to control the field of social meaning and thus produce, promote, and ‘implant’ representations of gender. Therefore, this study examined the influence of social media on the knowledge, attitude, and practice of gender equality among residents of Oyo State. The study is anchored on Technological Determinism Theory. The study adopts an analytical survey research design. The instrument of data collection for the study was a self-designed questionnaire. The findings of the study revealed that Residents of Oyo State became highly knowledgeable about gender equality through various social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, and LinkedIn,

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which means that they are familiar with all the necessary factors related to gender equality. Findings also highlight that Residents of Oyo State have affirmative attitudes towards gender equality. In line with the findings of this research and other studies reviewed, it is concluded that social media remains a platform that can go a long way to promote gender equality in Nigeria and the world at large. It is recommended that the Government, Non-governmental organisations, and international NGOs should tap into the opportunities by devising the use of social media, actionable programmes, and policies to promote equality between genders.

**Keywords:** Social Media, Gender Equality, Knowledge, Attitude, Practice, Technological Determinism.

## Introduction

The subject of gender has become a global phenomenon both within and outside international societies. Men and women both are entitled to inalienable rights and deserve equal treatment to the full protection of their rights and freedoms as human beings (Okagbue, 1996). However, the confirmation shows that women categorically as social beings in almost every place were subordinate to men, although the degrees of their subordination varied. The subordination of women predates the development of the cash economy, peasant agriculture, and more developed trade and industrial systems. Gender has become one of the “fault lines” running through the landscape of Nigeria. Since independence in 1960, Nigerian women have been challenging their role in society. The formation of the women’s movement in the country has lent an impetus to the struggle of women and helped put women’s issues on the front burner (Oyinade, Daramola & Ishola, 2013).

In Nigeria, the issue of gender inequality has become a recurring decimal because of the belief that womanhood is a mere infidel and a second-class citizen in the society, supposed to be best placed in the kitchen and the bedroom of their husbands. Gender equality is a position wherein the gender of a person will not decide their chances, possibilities, freedoms, and significance in life. Gender

equality promotes gender balance. Gender equality, according to UNESCO, means that men and women should have equal rights to realize their full human rights as well as contribute to, and benefit from, economic, social, cultural, and political development. Gender equality is therefore the equal valuing by society of the similarities and the differences of men and women, and the roles they play. It is based on women and men being full partners at home, in their community, and their allocated duties, assets, and decision-making power are equally distributed between men and women.

According to the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (2019), “There is no nation wherein women have equivalent or higher level of freedoms, opportunities and assets than men.” Only a few countries have made improvements toward gender equality. In September 2015, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) was officially accepted by the United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Summit. According to the United Nations General Assembly, the SDGs are an assortment of 17 goals intended to be a blueprint to accomplish a superior and more sustainable future for everyone. Achieving gender equality in our society is essential for propelling human advancement, as the ‘Sustainable Development Goal 5: Gender Equality.’ The main objective of this goal is to “achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.”

According to the United Nations (UN), the advancement of gender equality is critical to all spheres of a civilized society, from lessening poverty to advancing the education, protection, health, and well-being of young boys and girls. According to the Gender the World report (2023) by the World Economic Forum, Nigeria’s parity is at 63.7% (130th), 1% point lower than its 2013 level. Since then, parity on the political empowerment sub-index has ranged from 11.9% to 4.1%, due to a decline in parity in both parliamentary and ministerial positions. Further, parity on Educational Attainment has been fluctuating in recent years and has only marginally improved over the last decade; currently, its 82.6% parity is one of the lowest in

the world. Its absolute levels of women's literacy rates and enrolment rates across levels of education have also been lagging. Nigeria has perfect parity for sex ratio at birth, which has contributed to a 96.7% parity on the Health and Survival sub-index. Further, with a global ranking of 54th, its Economic Participation and Opportunity score (71.5%) has experienced both advances and setbacks over the last decade. Nigeria has more than 64% representation of women in senior positions, but women earn only 50% of the income earned by men.

Social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and WhatsApp offer great opportunities to understand public awareness and serve as information access regarding gender equality (Saha, Weber, Birnbaum, & De Choudhury, 2017). There are more than 2.1 billion users on Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, or Messenger every day on an average and with the continuous expansion of technology and other factors influencing social media, they are emerging as powerful tools in spreading awareness and education of various socially relevant concepts and conducting activities, online courses, and classes more effectively than the face-to-face direct communication. With the lack of knowledge, attitude, and practice of gender equality, one of the various alternative ways to address gender inequality is through creating awareness, which can be done through social media platforms.

Making gender equality known to people can lead to how women and girls are treated in society. With a high presence of people on various social media platforms, it has become a more effective way to reach out to people. Social media is a predominant element where human beings are involved, and it is a space to connect people with common interests (Sharma, Kilian, & Leung, 2014). Therefore, it is rational to focus on knowledge, attitude, and practice towards gender equality through social media. Knowledge is the insights of people about certain topics, such as SDG: gender equality. Attitude is what they feel, and practice can result from the feelings and what they tend to do about it.

## **Objectives of the Study**

The aim of this study is to investigate the influence of social media on the knowledge, attitudes, and practices of gender equality among residents of Oyo State. Specific objectives are to:

1. Identify social media platforms that expose youths to gender equality.
2. Determine the extent to which social media promotes the knowledge and attitudes of youths about gender equality.
3. Evaluate gender equality practices taken by youths.

## **Theoretical Review**

### **Technological Determinism Theory**

The theory of Technological Determinism or Media Ecology was conceived by Marshal McLuhan in 1964. According to this theory, the technology of mass media not only shapes the attitudes and behaviour of people but also brings a revolution in the mode of operation of a social system. The theory further proposes that the functioning of a social fabric changes accordingly with the emergence of every new technology. The basic principle of media ecology theory is that human survival on the globe is molded according to variations in the system of human communications.

According to McLuhan growth of technologies of mass communication ensures cultural diffusion in a society, which in turn helps change human behaviour. Here goes McLuhan's famous quote, "We shape our tools and they in turn shape us," to fit in the discourse (West & Turner, 2010). This means that we have a symbolic relationship with mediated technology, we create technology, and technology in turn re-creates who we are". The historical perspective of the theory proposes that revolutions in technology from time to time have brought corresponding changes in society. The theory seeks to explain that society is influenced and

shaped by technological development. It has to adjust and adapt to new technologies and innovations. Any social changes are controlled by technology, technological development, communications technology, and media. The modern information society arises as a result of the development of innovations, new technologies, and their social and political implications. The technological determinism theory is particularly relevant to this study, as it provides insight into how social media, as a technological force, shapes human perceptions, behaviors, and attitudes toward gender equality. This theory suggests that technology, in this case, social media, plays a significant role in influencing societal norms, values, and practices. In the context of gender equality, technological determinism Theory helps to explain how social media can perpetuate or challenge existing power dynamics and social structures.

By investigating the influence of social media on gender equality through the lens of technological determinism theory, this research highlights the need for a critical understanding of the ways in which technology can both reflect and shape societal values. This understanding can inform strategies for promoting more inclusive and equitable representations of gender on social media, ultimately contributing to a more equitable society.

## **Concept of Social Media**

Social media is the term often used to refer to new forms of media that involve interactive participation. Often, the development of media is divided into two different ages, the broadcast age and the interactive age. In the broadcast age, media were almost exclusively centralized; here, one entity, such as a radio or television station, a Newspaper Company, or a movie production studio, distributed messages to many people. With the rise of digital and mobile technologies, interaction on a large scale became easier for individuals than ever before, and as such, a new media age was born where interactivity was placed at the centre of new media functions. One individual could now speak to many people, and instant feedback was a

possibility. As Manning (2014) put it, where citizens and consumers used to have limited and somewhat muted voices, now they could share their opinions with many. The low cost and accessibility of new technology also allowed more options for media consumption than ever before, and so instead of only a few news outlets, individuals now can seek information from several sources and dialogue with others via message forums about the information posted. At the core of this ongoing revolution is social media.

## **Concept of Gender**

The meaning of gender varies across cultures, social groups, and time because nothing about the body, including women's reproductive organs, determines univocally how social division could be shaped when talking about gender stratification. According to Dickson, Aloba & Inyang (2014), gender can be generally referred to as the array of socially constructed roles and relationships, personality traits, attitudes, behaviours, values, influence, and relative power that society ascribes to the two sexes on a differential basis. It is an acquired identity that is learned, and it could change over time. It varies where biological sex is determined by genetic and anatomical characteristics, widely within and across cultures, which is embedded in all social processes of everyday life and social organisations. It is the range of characteristics pertaining to, and differentiating between, masculinity and femininity that depends on biological sex (i.e., the state of being male, female, or an intersex variation which may complicate sex assignment), sex-based social structures (including gender roles and other social roles), or gender identity.

Gender refers to the social relations between men and women. It refers to the relationship between men and women, boys and girls, and how this is socially constructed. It refers to human traits linked by culture to each sex (Haralambos & Holborn, 2004). Within a society, males are socialized to be masculine, as females are taught to be feminine. Thus, gender is the difference that sex makes within a society, guiding how we are to think of ourselves, how we interact

with others, the social opportunities, occupations, family roles, and prestige allowed to males and females. Gender is an explicit issue in women's history. Across the world, most women do not have an equal share of land, credit, education, employment, and political power in comparison to men in their societies.

## **Concept of Gender Equality**

According to UNDP (2021), gender equality is ending all discrimination against women and girls is not only a basic human right, but it is crucial for a sustainable future; it's proven that empowering women and girls helps economic growth and development. Gender equality is all about the following:

- End all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere
- Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation.
- Eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early, and forced marriage, and female genital mutilation.
- Recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure, and social protection policies, and the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and the family as nationally appropriate.
- Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic, and public life.
- Ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights as agreed in accordance with the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome documents of their review conferences.
- Undertake reforms to give women equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to ownership and control over land and other forms of property, financial services, inheritance, and natural resources, in accordance with national laws.



- Enhance the use of enabling technology, in particular information and communications technology, to promote the empowerment of women.
- Adopt and strengthen sound policies and enforceable legislation for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls at all levels.

According to UNICEF (2017), gender equality is the concept that women and men, girls and boys have equal conditions, treatment, and opportunities for realizing their full potential, human rights and dignity, and for contributing to (and benefitting from) economic, social, cultural, and political development. Gender equality is, therefore, the equal valuing by society of the similarities and the differences of men and women, and the roles they play. It is based on women and men being full partners in the home, community, and society. Equality does not mean that women and men will become the same, but that women's and men's rights, responsibilities, and opportunities will not depend on whether they are born male or female.

## **Empirical Review**

The study by Etumnu, Onyebuchi, Chima, Jumbo, Ukpung, Edikan, Okpongkpong & Imaikop (2023) investigated the influence of social media in promoting gender equality in Nigeria. This paper examined how social media can be leveraged to promote gender equality in Nigeria. Several concepts that have to do with social media and gender equality were extensively discussed in this paper. The discussion gave insight into how social media can be applied to the issue of gender equality, and also on the challenges of using social media to promote gender equality. The study concluded that social media has proven to be a powerful vehicle for addressing gender equality. A study by Okafor Jennifer (2010) examined the role of mass media in promoting gender equality. The study adopted the survey research method using a questionnaire to gather data from 110 respondents. The study discovered that the mass media are found

wanting in fostering development for gender equality in politics, social, and economic life in Nigeria. The study recommended, leaders must provide political developmental programmes that will propel women in economic, political, and social development.

Desmond Ekeh (2018) in his paper investigated the role of the media in promoting gender discrimination and inequality in Nigerian politics. It argues that the male domination of Nigerian politics, which reproduces gender inequality, is anchored on societal patriarchy as a cultural logic, but, orchestrated and reinforced by media stereotypical portrayal of female politicians as unequal to their male counterparts in the Nigerian political sphere. The study used a corpus of sociological and media communication theories to advance the argument that the media reinforce the cultural-patriarchal social structure, which narrates women as subordinates, weak, inferior, and subservient to their male counterparts; and this engenders gender inequality and affects how society perceives women and their participation in politics.

It examined media coverage of the 2015 presidential election in Nigeria, with the aim of comparing the level of coverage given to the female presidential candidate in contrast to the male candidates. It concluded that mass media frame their stories through a patriarchal structure that subordinates the female gender in Nigeria and positions them as subservient and inferior to their male counterparts. This way of treating the female gender affects their emotions and their confidence within society, and makes them shy away from fully participating in politics.

The study recommended that there should be policy pronouncements that will compel the media houses to provide equal access to women as much as they do to their male counterparts to enable women to express themselves, concerning their political pursuits and persuasions. A socio-cultural awareness campaign that educates the people about the challenges inherent in the pursuit of a patriarchal society, in this modern time, as it inhibits the development of the

human person and the society at large. Corroborating the above findings, gender equality, media, and national development were the focus of Jakonda, Agara & Orjiako (2018). The study examined how media representation of the Nigerian woman perpetuates gender inequality. Using secondary data, the paper argued that women are more often underrepresented, misrepresented, and stereotyped in the mass media. This not only further reinforces the gender inequality and discrimination they experience in society, but it also slows the pace of achieving gender equality and empowerment. The study concluded that the media is a very powerful tool that can be used to make women relevant, and at the same time has the power to portray them as irrelevant. The study recommended that the government should create empowerment programmes, especially educational programmes that should be targeted at women in rural areas. This will enable them to be aware of their rights, civic responsibilities, capabilities, and opportunities.

Maliha Jahan (2021) evaluated the knowledge, attitudes, and practices towards gender equality in achieving SDG5. This research was conducted to determine the awareness level of the students at the University of Malaya (UM) towards gender equality in achieving SDG5. A set of survey questionnaires based on Knowledge, Attitude, and Practices (KAP) was distributed through an online Google survey form to all UM students. The results revealed that the respondents have a higher knowledge level, with lower attitude and practice levels. The study concluded that the awareness level of UM students towards gender equality in achieving SDG5 is high, shown by a significant number of students who possess high knowledge with a positive attitude. Nonetheless, they showed lower performance in practicing gender equality and SDG5. It was recommended that universities in Malaysia should start to include gender equality and SDG5-related courses in their academic structures for both science and non-science students.

According to Sushmita, Chitnis, Rucha & Simran (2019) in their paper titled A review-based study of gender equality in media noted

the potential of new media to break down gender biases. They highlighted that it is the media's responsibility to take gender issues out of the private sphere and put them on the political agenda, and to depict the current situation of discrimination between genders in the real world. Another interesting contribution on social media effectiveness on women's voices in decision-making progress analysed whether social media can effectively give women a voice in the decision-making process from a political perspective. Social media has proven to be a powerful tool for bringing more attention to women's rights, inspiring cities around the world to act, and encouraging policymakers to commit to gender equality. The article discussed the social media revolution and combined social media with women's empowerment. To show how social media can promote gender equality, researchers offer the example of hashtags: the hashtag movement has brought women's issues to the forefront of politics. Similar to UN Women's successful and high-profile #HeForShe online campaign, there are many other hashtag campaigns. The #MeToo movement, for example, has brought public attention to sexual harassment of women (OECD, 2015).

Findings from a study on the role of youth in raising gender awareness on social media revealed that social media is the most accessible platform to raise communication-based gender sensitivity. It also concluded that people can use social media to provide social change regarding gender equality by campaigning, producing, reproducing, and spreading information on the importance of gender equality. (Annisa Anindya, 2021). Another study discovered that social media serve to further amplify gender-equality activism by facilitating the conversations surrounding gender equity and proposing solutions to self-identified issues by the virtual community of female physicians and their allies. The study also revealed that social media has the capacity to shape societal norms and cultural values, as well as challenge traditional gender roles, particularly given its dynamic nature and ability to capitalize on contemporary social trends. (Beygui, Bahl, Mansour, Michos, Velagapudi, Grapsa, Choi, Naidu, & Parwani, 2021). In contrast to the findings above,

Christina Mponji (2020) investigated public opinion regarding the role of social media in promoting gender equality in Tanzania. The results revealed that Tanzanians are knowledgeable about gender equality. The findings also indicated that social media perpetuates a perception of women as inferior, which is reflected in their negative portrayal on these platforms.

## **Methodology**

The paper used an analytical survey research design. The instrument of data collection for the study was a self-designed questionnaire. The questionnaire had six sections in line with the research objectives. The questionnaire was administered through Google Forms. The area of study was Ibadan South-West Local Government Area of Oyo State, with a total population of 505,697 (World Population Review, 2024). The simple random sampling was employed to select 150 residents living in Oyo State. 150 respondents were sampled from the population due to resource constraints and the fact that a smaller sample size can provide statistically significant results and achieve the research objectives. After the administration of the questionnaire, 116 copies of the questionnaire were returned and found valid for analysis. The data generated was subject to analysis by the researchers and is presented below in percentage tables for easy understanding and simplicity.

## Analysis of findings

**Table 1: Responses of respondents on Social Media Platforms that they often use**

Variable	N=116	Percentage
Facebook	42	36.2
Instagram	25	21.5
Thread	0	0
Twitter	22	19
YouTube	13	11.2
LinkedIn	14	12.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 1 highlighted that the majority of the respondents, 36.2% often use Facebook, 21.5% of the respondents often use Instagram, 19% often use Twitter, while 11.2% and 12.1% often use YouTube and LinkedIn, respectively.

**Table 2: Respondents' Responses on Level of Exposure to Social Media Contents on Gender Equality**

Items	SA	A	D	SDA
I often see social media content on Gender Equality	26 (22.4%)	56 (48.3%)	28 (24.1%)	6 (5.2%)
I often see content on Gender Equality through Facebook	8 (6.9%)	68 (58.6%)	38 (32.8%)	2 (1.7)
I often see content on Gender Equality through Instagram	18 (15.5%)	52 (44.8%)	32 (27.6%)	14 (12.1%)
I often see content on Gender Equality through Twitter	22 (19%)	40 (34.5%)	28 (24.1%)	26 (22.4%)
I often see content on Gender Equality through LinkedIn	8 (6.9%)	28 (24.1%)	58 (50%)	22 (19%)
I often see content on Gender Equality through the Thread	0	0	34 (29.3)	82 (70.7)

Table 2 revealed that the majority of the respondents, 70.7% affirmed that they often see social media content on gender equality, while the remaining 29.3% disaffirmed that they often see social media content on gender equality. Also, the majority of the respondents, 65.5% affirmed that they often see content on Gender Equality through Facebook, while 34.5% disaffirmed. Correspondingly, the majority of the respondents, 60.3% affirmed that they often see content on Gender Equality through Instagram, while 39.7% disagreed with this statement. Findings also revealed that the majority of the respondents, 69% disaffirmed that they often see content on Gender Equality through LinkedIn, while the remaining respondents, 31% affirmed the statement above. Moreover, all the respondents 100% disagreed that they often see content on Gender Equality through Thread. This implies that respondents have been exposed to content on Gender Equality through various social media platforms.

**Table 3: Respondents' Level of Knowledge about Gender Equality**

Items	HA	AA	MA	NA
Through SM, I am aware of the term Gender Equality, which refers to the situation when men and women enjoy the same rights and opportunities across all sectors of society	98 (84.5%)	16 (13.8%)	2 (1.7)	0
Through SM, I am aware that gender equality is achieved when different behaviours, aspirations, and needs of men and women are equally favoured and valued.	96 (82.8%)	18 (15.5%)	2 (1.7%)	0
I am aware that 47.3% of children do not have access to formal education in Nigeria, and the majority of them are females	58 (50%)	34 (29.3%)	22 (19%)	2 (1.7%)
I am aware that 1 in 5 women in Nigeria are likely to be victims of Gender Based Violence in their lifetime	80 (69%)	28 (24.1%)	8 (6.9%)	0
I am aware that women possess only 5% of Nigeria's parliamentary seats	88 (75.9)	20 (17.2)	6 (5.2)	2 (1.7)
I am aware of the fact that there should be equal opportunities for women and men to contribute to political activities	100 (86.2%)	14 (12.1%)	2 (1.7%)	0
I am aware that there should be equal opportunities for women and men to contribute to social and cultural development	96 (82.8%)	14 (12.1%)	6 (5.2%)	0
I am aware that there should be equal opportunities for women and men to access economic resources such as financial services and inheritance	98 (84.5%)	18 (15.5)	0	0
I am aware that there should be equal opportunities for women and men to develop ambitions, interests, and talents	104 (89.7%)	10 (8.6%)	2 (1.7%)	0
I am aware that women and men should have equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making	102 (87.9)	14 (12.1)	0	0
I am aware that both genders should have equal opportunities to share responsibilities for the home and children	82 (70.7%)	26 (22.4%)	4 (3.4)	4 (3.4)
I am aware that both genders should have equal opportunities to make decisions concerning the age of marriage	86 (74.1%)	20 (17.2)	6 (5.2)	4 (3.4)
I am aware that both genders should have equal opportunities to make decisions with regards to timing at birth	86 (74.1)	20 (17.2)	4 (3.4)	6 (5.2)



From the above Table 3, based on respondents Level of Knowledge about Gender Equality, majority of the respondents 84.5% were highly aware of the term Gender Equality which refers to the situation when men and women enjoy the same rights and opportunities across all sectors of society while 13.8 and 1.7% were averagely and minimally aware respectively. Majority of the respondents 82.8% were highly aware that gender equality is achieved when different behaviour, aspirations and needs of men and women are equally favoured and valued while 15.5% and 1.7% of the respondents were averagely and minimally aware that gender equality is achieved when different behaviour, aspirations and needs of men and women are equally favoured and valued. Also, the majority of the respondents, 50% affirmed that they were aware that 47.3% of children do not have access to formal education in Nigeria, and the majority of them are females, 29.3% were averagely aware, while 19% and 1.7% of the respondents were minimally and not aware respectively.

Similarly, 69% and 24.1% of the respondents were highly and averagely aware that 1 in 5 women in Nigeria are likely to be victims of Gender Based Violence in their lifetime, while the remaining 6.9% were minimally aware. Results also showed that 75.9% and 17.2% of the respondents were highly and averagely aware that women possess only 5% of Nigeria's parliamentary seats, while 5.2% and 1.7% of the respondents were minimally and not aware that women possess only 5% of Nigeria's parliamentary seats. Also, findings revealed that 86.2% and 12.1% of the respondents were aware of the fact that there should be equal opportunities for women and men to contribute to political activities, while the remaining 1.7% were minimally aware. It was also discovered that 82.8% and 12.1% of the respondents were highly and averagely aware that there should be equal opportunities for women and men to contribute to social and cultural development, and 5.2% of the respondents were minimally aware of the aforementioned statement.

Furthermore, the majority of the respondents, 84.5% were highly aware that there should be equal opportunities for women and men to economic resources such as financial services and inheritance, while the remaining respondents, 15.5% were averagely aware. It was also revealed that 89.7% and 8.6% were highly and averagely aware, respectively, that there should be equal opportunities for women and men to develop ambitions, interests, and talents, while 1.7% were minimally aware. Also majority of the respondent were highly and averagely aware that women and men should have equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision making, aware that both genders should have equal opportunities to share responsibilities for the home and children, aware that both genders should have equal opportunities to make decisions with regards to age of marriage and aware that both genders should have equal opportunities to make decisions with regards to timing at birth while little percentage of the respondents were minimally and not aware. In summary, the findings above imply that to a large extent, respondents have a good knowledge of gender equality.

**Table 4: Respondents' Attitude towards Gender Equality**

Items	SA	A	D	SDA
Social Media content has made me believe in our society that all men and women should be treated equally in all aspects of life	54 (50%)	34 (29.3%)	22 (19%)	2 (1.7%)
Social Media content has made me acknowledge that in our society today, there are more advantages in being a man than being a woman	38 (32.8%)	32 (27.6%)	36 (31%)	10 (8.6%)
Social Media content has made me acknowledge that achieving equality between women and men is important	54 (46.6%)	52 (44.8%)	8 (6.9%)	2 (1.7%)
Social Media content has made me believe that a man who stays home to look after his children is no less of a man	46 (39.7%)	34 (29.3%)	30 (25.8%)	6 (5.2%)
Social media content has made me acknowledge that sexual harassment and domestic violence are seen as the most common issues faced by women	64 (55.2%)	48 (41.4%)	2 (1.7)	2 (1.7)
To me, raising awareness on Gender Equality on social media is necessary	84 (72.4%)	30 (25.9%)	2 (1.7)	0

For respondents' attitude towards gender equality, Table 6 revealed that 79.3% of the respondents affirmed that Social Media content has made them believe in our society that all men and women should be treated equally in all aspects of life, while 20.7% disaffirmed. Data from the table above highlighted that the majority of the respondents, 60.4% affirmed that Social Media content has made them acknowledge that in our society today, there are more advantages in being a man than being a woman, while the remaining respondents, 39.6% disaffirmed. Also, the majority of the respondents, 91.4% affirmed that Social Media content has made them acknowledge that achieving equality between women and men is important, while the remaining respondents disaffirmed. Further, the majority of the respondents, 69% affirmed that Social Media content has made them believe that a man who stays home to look after his children is not less of a man, while 31% of the respondents disagree. Correspondingly, 96.6% of the respondents affirmed that social media content has made them acknowledge that sexual

harassment and domestic violence are seen as the most serious issues faced by women. Also, 98.3% of the respondents affirmed that raising awareness on Gender Equality on social media is necessary. This implies that there is a positive attitude towards gender equality.

**Table 5: Respondents' Level of Practice on Gender Equality**

Items	Yes	No
I stay alert to any gender-based violence, such as sexual, physical, or domestic harassment or abuse	108 (93.1)	8 (6.9)
I raise my voice when someone is being treated differently just because of their sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, or expression	110 (94.8%)	6 (5.2)
I treat people of all genders equally	114 (98.3%)	2 (1.7%)
I give equal importance to my friends, colleagues, and family members, regardless of their gender	112 (96.6%)	4 (3.4%)
I don't post comments that ridicule, demean, or humiliate, regardless of their gender identity	108 (93.1%)	8 (6.9%)
I do not engage in cyberbullying regardless of their gender identity	108 (93.1%)	8 (6.9%)
I give accolades as when due to friends, colleagues, and family members, regardless of their gender identity	114 (98.3%)	2 (1.7%)
I do not refuse to do a certain task that is a gender-specific task according to society	96 (82.8%)	20 (17.2%)
I have taken courses related to Gender Equality	58 (50%)	58 (50%)
I participate in events such as seminars, talks, and workshops that relate to Gender Equality	78 (67.2%)	38 (32.8%)
I discuss Gender Equality with my friends, colleagues, and family	100 (86.2%)	16 (13.8%)
I have posted Gender Equality content on various social media platforms	54 (46.6%)	62 (53.4%)

Table 5 highlights respondents' level of practice on gender equality. Findings revealed that 93.1% of the respondents stay alert to any gender-based violence, such as sexual, physical, or domestic harassment or abuse, while 6.9% do not. 94.8% of the respondents raise their voices when someone is being treated differently just because of their sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, or expression, while 5.2% do not. Also, the majority of the respondents, 94.8% treat people of all genders equally, with 1.7% of the respondents do not. Moreover, the majority of the respondents give equal importance to their friends, colleagues, and family members regardless of their gender, while 3.4% of them do not. 93.1% of the respondents don't post comments that ridicule, demean, or humiliate regardless of their gender identity, while 6.9% of the respondents do. 93.1% of the respondents do not engage in cyberbullying regardless of their gender identity, while the remaining 6.9% respondents do. 98.3% of the respondents, who are the majority, give accolades as when due to friends, colleagues, and family members, regardless of their gender identity, while the remaining 1.7% do not.

Additionally, 82.8% of the respondents do not refuse to do a certain task that is a gender-specific task according to society, while the remaining 17.2% refuse certain tasks that are specific gender based. On average, 50% of the respondents have taken courses related to Gender Equality, while the remaining 50% have not. 67.2% of the respondents participate in events such as seminars, talks, and workshops that relate to Gender Equality, while 32.8% of the respondents do not participate in events such as seminars, talks, and workshops that relate to Gender Equality. Also, 86.2% of the respondents discuss Gender Equality with my friends, colleagues, and family, while the remaining 13.8% do not. 46.6% of the respondents have posted Gender Equality content on various social media platforms, while 53.4% of the respondents have not posted Gender Equality content on various social media platforms. In summary, respondents in Oyo State practice gender equality in society.

## Discussion of Findings

Succinctly, based on the findings, it was discovered that the majority of the respondents often use Facebook with the highest percentage to get informed, entertained, and educated, followed by Instagram, YouTube, Twitter, and LinkedIn, while they do not use Thread. Therefore, Facebook is the most widely used social media platform among residents of Oyo State, surpassing other platforms in popularity. The majority of the respondents have seen social media content on gender equality, except for Thread. This implies that various social media platforms disseminate information about gender equality. The finding corroborates a study that concluded that social media has been proven to be a powerful vehicle for addressing gender equality (Etumnu, Onyebuchi, Chima, Jumbo, Ukpong, Edikan Okpongkpong, & Imaikop, 2023).

In contrast to the above findings, a study concluded that the media is found wanting in fostering development for gender equality in politics, social, and economic life in Nigeria (Okafor 2010). Another study supported the findings that new media have the potential to break down gender biases. It is the media's responsibility to take gender issues out of the private sphere and put them on the political agenda, and to depict the current situation of discrimination between genders in the real world (Sushmita, Chitnis, Rucha & Simran, 2019). It can be said that the majority of the respondents were aware of the term gender equality through social media, while a minority were exposed to the term gender equality through other means.

Based on findings, the majority of residents of Oyo State are highly aware that gender equality is achieved when different behaviours, aspirations, and needs of men and women are equally favoured and valued. Also majority of the respondents were highly and averagely aware that there should be equal opportunities for women and men to contribute to political activities, that equal opportunities for women and men to contribute to social and cultural development,

that there should be equal opportunities for women and men to economic resources such as financial services and inheritance, that women and men should have equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision making, that both genders should have equal opportunities to make decisions with regards to age of marriage and that both genders should have equal opportunities to make decisions with regards to timing at birth. The findings infer that residents' level of knowledge about gender equality is high with the help of social media. This finding is in harmony with the technological determinism theory that states that social media influences how human thoughts and knowledge are influenced by the media. This also aligns with another study that concluded that respondents have a higher knowledge level of gender equality (Maliha Jahan, 2023).

Research findings from Table 4 revealed that majority of the respondents affirmed that Media content has made them believe in our society that all men and women should be treated equally in all aspects of life, Social Media content has made them acknowledge that in our society today, there are more advantages in being a man than being a woman, Social Media content has made them acknowledge that achieving equality between women and men is important and raising awareness on Gender Equality on Social media is necessary. This avers that respondents have an affirmative attitude towards gender equality.

This finding is corroborated by a study that avers that the media enables women to be more aware of their rights, civic responsibilities, capabilities, and opportunities (Jakonda, Agara & Orjiako, 2018). In addition, the findings are supported by research that has proven social media to be a powerful tool for bringing attention to women's rights, inspiring cities worldwide to act, encouraging policymakers to commit to gender equality, and influencing societal norms and cultural beliefs to eliminate rigid gender roles. The ever-changing nature of social media and its ability to leverage current social change trends further amplify its impact (OECD, 2015; Beygui et al, 2021).

Research findings from Table 5 highlighted that residents in Oyo State stay alert to any gender-based violence, such as sexual, physical, or domestic harassment or abuse. They raise their voices when someone is being treated differently just because of their sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, or expression, and treat all genders equally. Hence, it can be said that they give equal importance to my friends, colleagues, and family members regardless of their gender; they do not post comments that ridicule, demean, or humiliate, regardless of their gender identity, nor engage in cyberbullying. Furthermore, residents in Oyo State participate in events such as seminars, talks, and workshops that relate to Gender Equality. However, the majority of them do not post gender equality content on their various social media platforms, and they have not taken courses related to gender equality.

## **Conclusion**

A high number of the residents in Oyo State often see gender equality content on social media. They often see content on gender equality through platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, and LinkedIn. Residents of Oyo State are highly knowledgeable about gender equality which means that they are familiar with all the necessary factors related to gender equality such as there should be equal opportunities for women and men to contribute to political activities, that equal opportunities for women and men to contribute to social and cultural development, that there should be equal opportunities for women and men to economic resources such as financial services and inheritance, that women and men should have equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision making, that both genders should have equal opportunities to make decisions with regards to age of marriage and that both genders should have equal opportunities to make decisions with regards to timing at birth.

However, a few residents of Oyo State are still not aware of the existence of gender equality. Irrefutably, residents of Oyo State have



an affirmative attitude towards gender equality. They affirmed that social media content has made them believe in our society that all men and women should be treated equally in all aspects of life. Also, it can be stated that Social Media content has made them acknowledge that achieving equality between women and men is important, and raising awareness on Gender Equality on social media is necessary. The majority of the residents in Oyo state are willing to stay alert to any gender-based violence, such as sexual, physical, or domestic harassment or abuse. They also raise their voices when someone is being treated differently just because of their sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, or expression, and treat all genders equally.

Hence, it can be said that they give equal importance to my friends, colleagues, and family members regardless of their gender, and they do not post comments that ridicule, demean, or humiliate, regardless of their gender identity, nor engage in cyberbullying. Furthermore, residents in Oyo State participate in events such as seminars, talks, and workshops that relate to Gender Equality. However, the majority of them do not post gender equality content on their various social media platforms, and they have not taken courses related to gender equality. In line with the findings of this research and other studies reviewed, social media remains a platform that can go a long way to promote gender equality in Nigeria and the world at large.

## **Recommendations**

- Residents of Oyo State are highly present and visible on various social media platforms and see gender equality content. Therefore, the Government, Non-governmental organisations, international NGOS under the United Nations, such as UNICEF, UNDP, UNESCO, UNFPA, et cetera, should tap into the opportunities provided by social media to educate and inform people on the importance of gender equality.
- The study recommends that there is a need for government, individuals, and organisations to champion the course of the

promotion of gender equality in our society by devising the use of social media, actionable programmes, and policies to promote equality between genders.

- This can be achieved by sensitizing people and raising awareness on gender equality and its contribution toward the development of society through organising webinars, seminars, conferences, and educational programmes.
- With residents' willingness to practice gender equality in society, the study recommends that the Government, Non-governmental organisations, organisations, and schools should employ proper channels that will enable citizens to be more aware of their rights, civic responsibilities, capabilities, and opportunities.

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