

The Role of Social Media in Fueling Marital Violence: A Critical Discourse Analysis of Nigerian Online Communities

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Abstract

This study examines and investigates the role of social media in fueling marital violence: a critical discourse analysis of Nigerian online communities through the combined lenses of Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and Intersectionality Theory. Data were gathered from ten Nigerian social media influencers whose online posts and videos on marital relationships generated wide public engagement. A total of forty (40) excerpts were purposively selected from 10 social media influencers and were analyzed to uncover how linguistic and discursive practices contribute to the normalization, justification, and perpetuation of marital violence. The analysis reveals that social media users often employ humor, gendered stereotypes, and economic rationalizations to legitimize emotional, physical, and psychological abuse within marital relationships. CDA uncovers how patriarchal ideologies and power asymmetries are reproduced through discourse, portraying men as dominant providers and women as submissive dependents, while Intersectionality Theory highlights how gender, class, religion, and ethnicity intersect to shape unequal representations of victims and perpetrators. The findings indicate that online discourses surrounding wealth, masculinity, and submissiveness reinforce societal hierarchies that trivialize women's suffering and rationalize male aggression. The study concludes that social media platforms play a significant role in sustaining harmful social norms that underlie marital violence. It recommends that content creators, policymakers, and advocacy groups promote digital literacy, gender equity, and intersectional awareness in online engagements to foster respectful and non-violent relational practices.

Keywords: Critical Discourse Analysis, Intersectionality, Marital Violence, Social Media, Patriarchy and Power.

Introduction

Marital violence remains a critical global concern that threatens the safety, dignity, and well-being of individuals, families, and societies. The World Health Organization (WHO, 2021) identifies intimate partner violence as one of the most pervasive forms of gender-based violence, affecting one in three women globally. It encompasses physical, emotional, psychological, sexual, and economic abuse that often occurs within the intimate sphere of marriage or cohabitation. The consequences of marital violence extend beyond individual suffering to include public health burdens, social disintegration, and inter generational trauma. In recent decades, the rapid growth of digital communication technologies has added a new dimension to this social problem. Social media platforms have become major channels through which information, attitudes, and ideologies about marriage and violence are shared, contested, and normalized. As these online spaces continue to shape interpersonal relationships and collective perceptions, understanding their role in fueling or mitigating marital violence has become a pressing scholarly concern.

Social media platforms such as Facebook, X (formerly Twitter), Instagram, TikTok, and WhatsApp have revolutionized interpersonal communication in the 21st century. They provide users with opportunities to express opinions, share experiences, and participate in social debates across geographical boundaries. However, while these platforms have democratized communication and empowered many voices, they have also facilitated new forms of abuse, hostility, and ideological manipulation. Scholars such as Dehghan (2025). and van Dijk (2023) argue that social media environments are not neutral spaces but digital ecosystems where power, identity, and ideology are constantly negotiated through language and imagery. Within the context of marriage and gender relations, these spaces often serve as arenas where harmful cultural norms are reinforced, and patriarchal ideologies are reproduced. In Nigeria, where marital relationships are deeply influenced by religious, cultural, and socio-economic structures, social media has become a powerful mirror of offline realities. The online portrayal of marital roles, obedience, and conflict frequently aligns with traditional beliefs that prioritize male authority and female

submission (Hill, 2025). This alignment raises concerns about how social media discourse contributes to sustaining the cultural acceptability of marital violence.

The emergence of digital culture has blurred the boundaries between private and public life, allowing deeply personal issues such as domestic disputes and spousal abuse to become subjects of public discourse. According to Althusser (2014), ideological state apparatuses such as media and religion shape consciousness by reproducing dominant ideologies that sustain power relations. Social media, functioning as a contemporary ideological apparatus, extends these influences into virtual spaces where users collectively construct, negotiate, and internalize meanings. In the Nigerian context, online narratives about marital violence often reveal deeply ingrained gender hierarchies and cultural stereotypes that normalize aggression within marriage. For instance, viral discussions on cases of spousal abuse frequently trigger polarized debates in which some users justify violence as a form of discipline or divine order, while others challenge such reasoning as oppressive and outdated. These competing discourses highlight the ideological struggles embedded within online communication. Yet, despite the visibility of such debates, there is limited

understanding of the linguistic strategies and discursive mechanisms that sustain or resist these ideologies.

Although gender-based violence has been widely studied from sociological, psychological, and criminological perspectives, the discursive dimension of marital violence—particularly in online environments—remains underexplored. Existing literature in Nigeria has primarily focused on domestic violence prevalence (Adebomi, 2025, Ogunyemi, aborisade & bolujoko (2025) and the effectiveness of legal and policy frameworks addressing gender-based abuse (Ojibara, 2023). However, the influence of social media as a space where such violence is discursively produced, circulated, and legitimized has received limited attention.

Evidence from global studies shows that online communication can reinforce harmful gender norms through linguistic practices such as victim-blaming, humor, sarcasm, and metaphorical framing (Jane, 2017; Nau, 2023). For example, the trivialization of spousal abuse through jokes, memes, and comments often minimizes the seriousness of violence and shifts blame to the victim. In many cases, online discourses employ euphemistic or justificatory language that conceals the brutality of abuse while sustaining

patriarchal dominance. Such language strategies are not isolated; they are ideological acts that maintain social hierarchies and normalize violence as an acceptable means of control. In Nigeria, similar tendencies are observed in social media discussions surrounding high-profile domestic violence cases, where users often rely on moral and religious justifications for male dominance. These discourses not only reflect cultural attitudes but also influence collective perceptions about marriage, obedience, and punishment. This study, therefore, seeks to fill the existing research gap by employing Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis to investigate how social media discourse fuels marital violence in Nigerian online communities.

Statement of Problem

The growing prevalence of marital violence in Nigeria has taken on new dimensions through the influence of social media, where platforms originally designed for communication have evolved into arenas that perpetuate aggression, humiliation, and emotional manipulation. Online communities focused on gender and relationships increasingly propagating ideologies that normalize toxic masculinity, gender stereotyping, and domestic control, reinforcing attitudes that

sustain marital abuse. The anonymity and immediacy of digital interactions amplify these harmful discourses, allowing users to engage in verbal violence that shapes public perception and real-life behavior. Despite existing research on domestic violence, limited attention has been given to how language use and power relations within online spaces contribute to the normalization and escalation of marital violence in Nigeria. A critical discourse analysis of social media conversations is therefore necessary to uncover how users construct, negotiate, and legitimize narratives of dominance, victimhood, and resistance, as well as how these linguistic practices reflect deeper socio-political structures that sustain gender-based oppression and inequality within marital relationships.

Research Objectives

The broad objectives of this study is to examine the role of social media in fueling marital violence: a critical discourse analysis of Nigerian online communities. Specifically, this study seeks to:

1. To examine how marital violence is represented in Nigerian online communities and how language use on Nigerian social media platforms constructs and legitimizes or

reinforces discourses of marital violence.

2. To identify linguistic and discursive features and ideological patterns used in online discussions that justify or challenge marital abuse or violence.
3. To analyze how power relations, gender ideologies, and cultural norms are reproduced and sustained through social media discussions on marital conflicts.
4. Investigate how intersecting social identities such as gender, class, religion, and ethnicity influence the discursive framing of victims and perpetrators of marital violence online.
5. To explore how CDA can expose such socio-cultural factors influencing these narratives.

Research Questions

The following research questions were formulated to guide this study:

1. How is marital violence represented in Nigerian online communities and what linguistic and ideological patterns are employed in online posts and comments relating to marital violence?
2. How do linguistic and discursive strategies used in Nigerian online communities construct and legitimize marital violence?
3. In what ways do power relations, gender ideologies, and cultural norms manifest in social media discourse surrounding marital violence?
4. How do intersecting identities such as gender, class, religion, and ethnicity shape the representation of victims and perpetrators in social media discourses on marital violence?
5. What linguistic and rhetorical strategies do social media influencers employ to normalize, rationalize, or critique marital violence and gender inequality?

Literature Review

Marital violence, also known as domestic or intimate partner violence, refers to patterns of physical, emotional, sexual, psychological, and financial abuse that occur within marital or intimate relationships. It reflects structural inequalities that privilege men and subordinate women, particularly within patriarchal societies. Lewis, Dobash, Dobash, & Cavanagh (2000) and Boonzaier, (2008) explain that marital

violence is rooted in gendered power relations that normalize male authority and female submission. In the Nigerian context, Akinola (2022) and Ajayi, Chantler, & Radford (2022). observe that cultural and religious beliefs often sustain silence around abuse, discouraging victims from speaking out. However, the emergence of social media has disrupted this silence, creating new public spaces where issues of marriage and violence are discussed, debated, and sometimes trivialized. These digital platforms such as Facebook, X (formerly Twitter), and Instagram have transformed private experiences of violence into subjects of public discourse, thereby influencing societal perceptions of marital relationships.

Power relations form a central concept in understanding marital violence and its discursive representation. Foucault (1980) defines power as a relational and dynamic force that operates through discourse to regulate what can be said, who can speak, and whose perspectives are legitimized. In the context of marital violence, power is expressed not only through physical control but also through the symbolic dominance of language, social roles, and cultural expectations. Fairclough (1995) further emphasizes that discourse itself is a mechanism for maintaining and

reproducing power. On social media, users exercise power through linguistic choices—deploying proverbs, religious expressions, or moral arguments to justify or condemn violence. This demonstrates how communication online both mirrors and reinforces wider societal hierarchies, allowing power to circulate through everyday interactions rather than remaining confined to institutions or individuals.

Another key concept relevant to this study is ideology, which Fairclough (2001) defines as the system of beliefs or meanings that legitimizes relations of dominance. Ideologies are embedded in discourse, influencing how people interpret and respond to social issues such as gender and violence. In Nigerian online spaces, patriarchal ideologies often emerge in narratives that excuse spousal abuse as discipline or attribute it to women's perceived disobedience. Van Dijk (1998) argues that ideologies are sustained through daily communicative practices where individuals align their expressions with group beliefs. Consequently, social media becomes an ideological space where patriarchal values are either reinforced or challenged. Through Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), these ideological positions can be uncovered, exposing how online language maintains structures of

gender inequality or promotes social change.

Representation is another critical concept in this research, focusing on how victims and perpetrators of marital violence are portrayed in discourse. Hall (1997) defines representation as the use of language, symbols, and imagery to construct meaning about the world. In digital spaces, representations are shaped through text, visuals, memes, and hashtags that frame individuals and events within particular moral or emotional narratives. Women reporting abuse may be represented as “disobedient” or “ungrateful,” while men may be portrayed as “provoked” or “defending their homes.” Such depictions affect how society perceives guilt, innocence, and justice. The multimodal nature of social media intensifies these representations by blending linguistic, visual, and emotional elements, thus making the analysis of meaning-making processes more complex. Representation therefore provides insight into how public attitudes toward violence are constructed and circulated online.

The concept of hegemony, drawn from Gramsci (1971), explains how dominant ideologies such as patriarchy achieve acceptance as “common sense” within a society. Hegemony involves the subtle maintenance of control through cultural

and ideological means rather than force. In the Nigerian social media context, hegemonic discourse manifests in expectations that women should preserve family stability, obey their husbands, and tolerate abuse for the sake of marital endurance. These ideas are reinforced through commentary that blames women who challenge abusive partners, thereby sustaining gender hierarchies. However, social media also hosts counter-hegemonic discourses, where activists and ordinary users question such norms and promote gender equality. Fairclough (1992) views discourse as a site of struggle between dominant and resistant ideologies, making hegemony a vital concept for understanding how digital conversations sustain or resist oppressive gender structures.

Lastly, identity construction plays a crucial role in the discursive dynamics of social media. Bucholtz and Hall (2005) define identity as a social and discursive process through which individuals position themselves and others in interaction. Online discussions of marital violence reveal how users perform identities of masculinity, femininity, victimhood, or power. Men may project identities associated with control, while women negotiate identities of resilience or defiance. Intersectionality further

complicates this process, as gender identities interact with class, religion, and ethnicity to shape online narratives. For instance, the experiences of a middle-class Christian woman may be interpreted differently from those of a poor Muslim woman, reflecting broader social inequalities embedded in discourse.

Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework of this study will be anchored on Intersectionality Theory of Crenshaw and Norman Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis.

Intersectionality Theory

The theory of Intersectionality, as proposed by Crenshaw (1989), is a feminist and socio-linguistic framework that explains how multiple identities and systems of oppression interact to shape individuals' experiences and opportunities. In relation to *the role of social media in fueling marital violence*, Intersectionality provides a useful lens for analyzing how different social categories—such as gender, class, ethnicity, religion, and digital participation—intersect to influence discourse and power relations within Nigerian online communities. According to Crenshaw (1989), individuals possess multiple, interlocking identities that interact within broader social systems. In

the context of online marital discourse, these intersecting identities affect how victims and perpetrators of marital violence are represented, perceived, and treated in social media narratives.

Intersectionality posits that systems of oppression such as sexism, patriarchy, and classism are interconnected and cannot be understood in isolation (Crenshaw, 1989). Within Nigerian social media spaces, these systems often converge to reinforce gender stereotypes, normalize violence, and silence victims through linguistic and discursive practices. The theory emphasizes that experiences of violence or victimhood are not uniform but vary according to how multiple identities overlap. For example, a woman's social media experience and exposure to cyberbullying or victim-blaming may differ based on her socioeconomic status, ethnic background, or religious affiliation. Thus, intersectionality helps unpack how online discourses about marital conflict reproduce structural inequalities.

As Dhamoon (2011) notes, intersectionality considers the interconnectedness of social categories and their implications for social justice and inequality. This perspective is critical in understanding how online communities in Nigeria construct narratives that either

challenge or reinforce marital violence. By viewing social media discourse as a site of power negotiation, intersectionality reveals how institutional, systemic, and individual forms of domination are reproduced through everyday digital interactions (Crenshaw, 1989). It further explains how online platforms become arenas where gendered power dynamics manifest through language, memes, comments, and hashtags.

Intersectionality also serves as a methodological tool in qualitative research that focuses on both individual experiences and systemic power dynamics (Brewer, Conrad, & King, 2002). In this study, it aids in analyzing how users' online utterances reflect layered experiences of marginalization and privilege. Chow (2016) defines intersectionality as the "structural and dynamic consequences of the interaction between two or more forms of discrimination or systems of subordination." In Nigerian online spaces, this interaction becomes visible when gender-based violence discourse overlaps with ethnic prejudice, economic disadvantage, or religious bias each amplifying the other in shaping digital aggression and social judgment.

Atewologun (2011) emphasizes that intersectionality recognizes individuals'

multiple positionalities at both micro and macro levels and challenges essentialist assumptions about group identities. Applied to online discourse on marital violence, this approach helps to avoid generalizing all victims or perpetrators as belonging to homogeneous categories. Instead, it highlights how cultural, digital, and gendered hierarchies intersect to influence public attitudes toward domestic abuse narratives. Intersectionality, therefore, not only unpacks the complexity of online discourse but also challenges dominant narratives that often silence or trivialize victims' experiences.

The theory can also be understood in two major conceptualizations: (a) as an academic and analytical framework, and (b) as a praxis-oriented approach to addressing social inequality. As an academic tool, it allows the researcher to examine how language use on social media constructs, maintains, or contests power relations in discussions about marital violence. As a praxis, it offers a framework for advocacy and digital activism by exposing how online communities perpetuate or resist harmful gender ideologies. However, as scholars note, the expansion of intersectionality may risk conceptual ambiguity or dilute its focus on the most marginalized (Rodriguez et al., 2016).

Rodriguez et al. (2016) identify intersectionality as a metaphor, concept, research paradigm, analytical sensibility, ideograph, and knowledge project—reflecting its multidimensional nature. Else-Quest and Hyde (2016) summarize three key assumptions underlying intersectionality: individuals belong to multiple interlinked social categories; power relations are embedded in each category; and these categories are fluid and context-dependent. These assumptions are crucial in understanding online interactions, where anonymity, visibility, and identity performance constantly shift, producing new forms of empowerment and victimization.

Hulko (2009) views intersectionality as a paradigm comprising theoretical concepts, analytic methods, and belief systems. He suggests that it should be used as a lens to examine social identity multiplicity without being additive or reductive. In studying social media and marital violence, this means moving beyond simple binaries such as male/female or victim/perpetrator, and instead exploring how intersecting factors—like digital access, economic status, and cultural background—shape discourse patterns and power expressions online.

In summary, the application of Crenshaw's (1989) Intersectionality Theory to *the role of social media in fueling marital violence: a critical discourse analysis of Nigerian online communities* provides a comprehensive framework for understanding how overlapping identities and systems of oppression influence digital communication. It enables an in-depth exploration of how online discourses reproduce gendered hierarchies, reinforce or resist patriarchal ideologies, and shape the lived realities of victims and perpetrators of marital violence in the Nigerian socio-digital landscape.

Critical Discourse Analysis

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), as developed by Norman Fairclough (1989), described as a multidisciplinary approach to studying the relationship between language and power in society. It draws from different linguistic and social theories to analyse how discourse, spoken or written reflects, maintains, or challenges power relations and ideologies. Fairclough's approach views discourse not merely as a linguistic phenomenon but as a social practice that both reflects and shapes social structures. He argues that language use is never neutral; it is deeply embedded in power relations and ideological processes. CDA seeks to

uncover how discourse contributes to the maintenance of social inequality by analyzing how texts and talk reproduce, resist, or transform social structures. Fairclough's model integrates linguistic analysis with social theory, making it a powerful tool for examining how language functions within broader social contexts.

One of the central tenets of Fairclough's CDA is the concept of discourse as a form of social practice. According to Fairclough (1992), every act of communication involves both linguistic choices and social meanings that influence and are influenced by the context in which they occur. Discourse is thus both constitutive and constituted: it shapes social realities while being shaped by them. This dialectical relationship between discourse and society means that analyzing language entails examining how texts (spoken, written, or multimodal) are produced, distributed, and consumed within power-laden contexts. Through this process, CDA exposes how ideology is naturalized in discourse, making certain social arrangements appear normal or inevitable.

Another core principle of Fairclough's CDA is the three-dimensional model of discourse analysis, which includes the textual, discursive, and social levels. The textual dimension involves analyzing

linguistic features such as vocabulary, grammar, and cohesion. The discursive practice dimension focuses on how texts are produced and interpreted within specific contexts, including the institutions and media involved. The social practice dimension examines how discourse contributes to reproducing or challenging broader social structures and ideologies. By linking these three dimensions, Fairclough (1995) provides a holistic framework for examining how language functions as a medium of social control and resistance.

Fairclough's CDA also emphasizes the role of ideology and hegemony in discourse. He draws on Gramsci's notion of hegemony to explain how dominant social groups maintain control not only through coercion but through the consent of the governed, which is achieved via discourse. Language serves as a tool for constructing and legitimizing certain worldviews while marginalizing others. CDA, therefore, involves exposing how linguistic and semiotic resources are used to perpetuate inequality, legitimize power hierarchies, and silence marginalized voices. Fairclough (1992) highlights the importance of "critical awareness" — encouraging readers and listeners to question taken-for-granted meanings and

recognize how discourse contributes to social domination.

Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis is particularly suitable for a study on "*The Role of Social Media in Fueling Marital Violence: A Critical Discourse Analysis of Nigerian Online Communities*." This is because social media platforms serve as discursive spaces where ideologies about marriage, gender roles, and violence are constructed, contested, and circulated. Applying CDA to online discourse allows the researcher to examine how language use in social media posts, comments, and hashtags reinforces or challenges patriarchal ideologies that normalize marital violence. The framework's focus on power relations and ideology enables a deep exploration of how digital communication reproduces societal inequalities, influences public attitudes toward victims and perpetrators, and shapes collective perceptions of domestic violence. Thus, Fairclough's CDA provides a robust theoretical and analytical foundation for understanding how discourse operates as a vehicle of social power within Nigeria's online communities.

Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative research design grounded in the principles of

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and intersectionality theory. The qualitative approach is most appropriate because it allows for an in-depth exploration of how language constructs, legitimizes, or challenges power relations embedded in social media discourses on marital violence. The population for this study comprises Nigerian social media influencers who actively engage in online discussions about marital issues, gender relations, and domestic violence. A total of forty (40) excerpts were purposively selected from 10 social media influencers and were analyzed to uncover how linguistic and discursive practices contribute to the normalization, justification, and perpetuation of marital violence. The choice of influencers as the population is justified by their ability to reach large audiences and participate in meaning-making processes that reflect and reinforce societal ideologies.

The method of data collection focused on extracting social media content, specifically text-based posts, captions, comments, and replies related to marital violence and gender relations. The theoretical framework for this study integrates Critical Discourse Analysis with intersectionality theory. Intersectionality, first conceptualized by Crenshaw (1989), provides a lens for understanding how

overlapping identities—such as gender, class, religion, and culture shape individuals' experiences of power and oppression. Within the context of marital violence, intersectionality helps to explain how social media discourses reflect the interplay between gendered expectations, socio-economic realities, and cultural ideologies. By combining CDA with intersectionality, the study can examine not only how language constructs and sustains power hierarchies but also how men and women differently experience these hierarchies across social categories.

Research Question 1: How is marital violence represented in Nigerian online communities and what linguistic and ideological patterns are employed in online posts and comments relating to marital violence?

Marital violence is commonly represented on Nigerian social media through three major discursive frames:

a. Justificatory/Normalizing Discourse

Many users implicitly or explicitly justify acts of marital violence by appealing to cultural norms or religious beliefs. In Excerpt 2 (Data 1) - *“a woman must endure her marriage, its not every beating that means he does not care”* These discourses normalize abuse by framing it as a sign of discipline or love. The linguistic tone often employs modal verbs like *must*, *should*, or *ought to*, indicating obligation and compliance.

Such representations show how patriarchal ideology is reproduced digitally—portraying male dominance as natural and female submission as virtuous.

b. Victim-Blaming Discourse

A recurring pattern is the tendency to blame women for their own abuse. Excerpt 1 (Data) states: *“she must have provoked him, no real and respectful wife would talk back at her husband”* These utterances rely on **presuppositions** (unspoken assumptions) that position woman as the cause of violence. The **lexical choices** often carry judgmental and moralizing tones (real wife or respectful woman), reinforcing traditional gender expectations.

c. Advocacy/Counter Discourse

In contrast, some influencers and online users challenge the normalization of violence by using language of resistance and empathy- *“No one deserves to be beaten, marriage should not be toxic, it is not a do or die affair”*, *“Love should not hurt”*. These counter-discourses employ **emotive lexis** and **evaluative adjectives** (*hurtful, toxic, do or die affair*) to oppose violence and demand justice. Hashtags like *#SayNoToDomesticViolence*, *#JusticeForMma*, and *#EndAbuse* exemplify collective digital activism that redefines the narrative.

Critical Discourse Analysis of online posts reveal several linguistic patterns that shape these representations. **Modality** like *should*, *must*, *ought to* among others as used in the excerpts express obligation or moral judgment; it also enforces gender norms. **Metaphors** convey ideology in a subtle way, making violence appear natural. For example, excerpt 4... says:

“Men are lions, they roar when provoked.” This implies that aggression is instinctive. **Lexical choices** reveal bias or empathy through word selection. An example is the use of ‘abused woman’ vs ‘nagging wife.’ Lastly, **Presupposition** embeds assumptions that blame victims and excuse abusers. “*When women stop talking too much, marriages will last.*” The use of **Pronouns** establish in group/out group dynamics is another linguistic pattern- “*We real women endure violence*’, “*These modern girls destroy homes.*” **Evaluative language** reinforces moral stance or judgment as discussed above. Lastly, **Irony and Sarcasm** are used to trivialize or ridicule abuse discussions- “*He only hit her once, and she is already shouting, she should thank God.*” Critical Discourse Analysis therefore reveals that these online discourses mirror Nigeria’s broader gendered power dynamics, while also providing a platform for resistance and social change.

Research Question 2: How do linguistic and discursive strategies used in Nigerian online communities construct and legitimize marital violence?

a. Materialism, Gendered Power, and the Legitimization of Abuse

Discourses of materialism often normalize emotional and psychological suffering within marriage by associating women’s

worth with financial comfort rather than emotional well-being. In Excerpt 1 (Data 1), the influencer states, “*I will rather cry inside Ferrari or Lamborghini than cry inside keke.*” The linguistic contrast between “Ferrari/Lamborghini” and “keke” encodes a hierarchy of material status, suggesting that wealth justifies suffering. Within Fairclough’s CDA, this utterance reflects an ideological positioning where economic capital outweighs emotional abuse, reproducing a social order that trivializes women’s pain as long as financial security is ensured.

This ideology is reinforced in Excerpt 12 (Data 5) — “*It’s better to cry in a Lamborghini than to be happy in an Uber*” — which discursively privileges wealth over well-being. The repetition of “cry” juxtaposed with luxury vehicles linguistically naturalizes marital unhappiness as a normal exchange for comfort, subtly legitimizing emotional violence and commodifying affection. From an intersectional standpoint, this reflects class-gender interdependence, where women’s subordination is tied to capitalist materialism and patriarchal structures that equate wealth with masculine power.

b. Patriarchal Language and Masculine Dominance

Marital violence in Nigerian online communities is often linguistically rationalized through patriarchal constructions of masculinity and dominance. Excerpt 2 (Data 2) — *“Don’t marry a woman that’s richer than you as a man. If you try it, you are a weak man”* — uses directive and evaluative modality (“don’t,” “you are weak”) to police male identity. The discursive strategy here is norm enforcement through shaming: masculinity is linguistically constructed as dominance, while deviation from this role is feminized as weakness.

Fairclough’s notion of ideological discourse reproduction is evident here: such statements reinforce patriarchal hegemony by framing male authority as natural and unquestionable. Intersectionality deepens this understanding Nigerian men’s masculine identity is not only patriarchal but also shaped by economic insecurity and cultural expectations. Thus, “weakness” becomes a metaphor for both gender and class failure, compelling men to exert control, sometimes violently, over women to maintain social legitimacy.

Similarly, Excerpt 25 (Data 8) — *“A woman is not meant to be treated well, a woman is meant to be given direction and taken good care of..”* encodes a discursive

dehumanization of women. The presupposition that women should be directed rather than respected constructs them as objects of control, thereby legitimizing coercion as care. This aligns with Fairclough’s emphasis on how syntactic constructions encode power relations, and with intersectional insights that patriarchal domination intersects with cultural norms of male authority rooted in traditional African socialization.

c. Normalization of Female Submissiveness and Male Entitlement

In Excerpt 16 (Data 6) — *“I can never be submissive to a man, neither my six daughters. Submissive? Total bullshit!”* — the speaker’s linguistic rebellion through repetition and emphatic negation (“never,” “total bullshit”) challenges patriarchal norms of submissiveness. Yet, such resistance is often portrayed online as deviant or disrespectful, which further demonstrates how discourse disciplinary mechanisms punish women who reject subservience.

Conversely, Excerpt 24 (Data 7) presents an apparently progressive stance: *“No woman should submit to a man that demands submission. If a man has to demand submission, he does not deserve it.”* However, this statement still relies on relational metaphors“ submission as a

natural response” which sustain gender essentialism. Fairclough’s CDA reveals that even in reformist discourse, patriarchal assumptions linger through the linguistic normalization of gendered behavioral expectations. Intersectionality reminds us that cultural, religious, and class factors determine how these discourses of submission play out: upper-class women may resist submissiveness differently from working-class or religious women constrained by cultural sanctions.

d. Victim-Blaming and the Discursive Excusing of Male Violence

Online discourses often legitimize marital infidelity and male aggression through victim-blaming rhetoric. In Excerpt 21 (Data 6), the influencer asserts: *“Men don’t cheat because they don’t love their wives... The opportunity just presents itself.”* The clause construction here uses passivization (“the opportunity presents itself”) to deflect agency from men, transforming deliberate infidelity into circumstantial behavior. This discursive move neutralizes accountability, legitimizing male transgression and normalizing emotional violence within marriage.

Similarly, Excerpt 22 (Data 6) — *“What was that girl doing in his hotel room at one o’clock? Na Ludo Egode go play with*

her!” — employs rhetorical questioning to redirect blame from male perpetrators to female victims. This pattern of ideological mitigation sustains patriarchal control by linguistically silencing women’s victimhood. Through intersectionality, this discourse reveals the entanglement of gender and moral judgment in Nigerian contexts, where women’s sexual behavior is scrutinized more harshly than men’s violence, reflecting systemic misogyny reinforced by religion and culture.

e. Toxic Masculinity, Objectification, and Symbolic Violence

Masculinity is discursively represented as predatory and dominant, while femininity is objectified. Excerpt 26 (Data 8) — *“I am a predator, I select my prey...”* — explicitly employs animalistic metaphor, dehumanizing women and constructing sexual dominance as an inherent male trait. Fairclough’s notion of interdiscursivity (the mixing of discourses — here, the animal kingdom and human relationships) reveals how language naturalizes gender-based violence as instinctual, thereby legitimizing it.

Excerpt 27 (Data 8) continues: *“If a lion wants to hurt, he goes for the weaker ones.”* This metaphor of “weaker ones” constructs gender hierarchy as biologically ordained, making domination and

exploitation seem natural. Intersectionality explains this as a discourse rooted in both patriarchal and capitalist power, where dominance over women becomes a symbol of masculine achievement, especially among men marginalized economically or socially. Such linguistic choices reinforce symbolic violence, a concept Fairclough associates with everyday language that sustains unequal power structures without overt coercion.

f. Online Reinforcement of Patriarchal Ideologies

Social media plays a key role in reproducing hegemonic discourses that normalize violence. In Excerpt 28 (Data 9), the speaker observes that such toxic views are widespread: *“What this man is saying is the predominant thinking pattern of most men... the video I’m stitching has over ten thousand likes.”* The quantification of engagement (“ten thousand likes”) highlights the discursive reproduction of patriarchy through digital participation. Likes and shares act as symbolic legitimations, turning misogynistic language into social capital.

Excerpt 29 (Data 9) — *“Most men see women as objects that exist for men’s pleasure and use”* — explicitly articulates the ideological foundation of marital violence: women’s objectification. CDA

reveals that such objectification constitutes symbolic violence (Bourdieu, 1991), where power operates subtly through normalized discourse. Intersectionality contextualizes this within Nigeria’s religious-patriarchal culture, where women’s social subordination is further compounded by class and cultural expectations of obedience and endurance in marriage.

g. Resistance and Counter-Discourses

Despite the dominance of patriarchal language, counter-discourses also emerge that challenge traditional gender roles. Excerpt 36 (Data 10) critiques male entitlement: *“Men believe that because they pay the bills at home, it makes them the head of the house... gives you the right to cheat, manipulate, abuse, and do whatever you like.”* Through direct accusation and irony, this excerpt disrupts the linguistic hierarchy of male authority. Fairclough’s CDA sees such language as a site of struggle, where competing ideologies contest social meaning.

Likewise, Excerpt 40 (Data 10) — *“If paying the bills gives you the right to be stupid, then why can’t a woman do the same?”* — employs rhetorical reversal to subvert patriarchal logic. Intersectionally, this feminist stance represents a growing class of educated, economically

independent Nigerian women reclaiming discursive power online. However, these counter-narratives remain contested within broader social structures that still valorize male dominance and female endurance.

Research question data reveal that Nigerian online communities use a range of linguistic and discursive strategies — materialist rationalization, victim-blaming, normalization of submission, metaphorical animalization, and digital validation — to construct, justify, and sustain marital violence. Through Fairclough's CDA, these discourses are seen as part of broader social practices that reproduce gendered inequalities. Intersectionality theory further exposes how these linguistic constructions are shaped by the intersections of gender, class, culture, and religion, ensuring the continued subordination of women within both online and offline marital spaces. In essence, Nigerian social media discourse becomes a microcosm of systemic patriarchy, where language not only reflects but actively legitimizes violence and inequality in marriage, even as counter-discourses struggle to reclaim narrative power.

Research Question 3: In what ways do power relations, gender ideologies, and

cultural norms manifest in social media discourse surrounding marital violence?

Fairclough's CDA views discourse as both a reflection and constructor of social reality, emphasizing how language reproduces power relations and ideologies in society. It examines how everyday speech and online interactions naturalize dominant gender hierarchies. Intersectionality Theory (Crenshaw, 1989) complements CDA by revealing how intersecting identities—such as gender, class, and culture—shape how individuals experience oppression or privilege. In this context, it exposes how Nigerian marital discourses online blend patriarchy, capitalism, and cultural expectations to normalize gender-based subjugation and marital violence. This section discusses power relations, gender ideologies, and cultural norms manifest in social media discourse surrounding marital violence.

a. Power Relations and Economic Hierarchies in Marital Discourse

The normalization of economic control and class privilege as determinants of relationship worth is evident in Data 1, Excerpt 1: *"I will rather cry inside Ferrari or Lamborghini than cry inside keke."* This statement linguistically prioritizes material comfort over emotional wellbeing, reinforcing capitalist

patriarchy—where financial dominance legitimizes emotional suffering. The verb “cry” juxtaposed with luxury imagery (“Ferrari,” “Lamborghini”) presents women’s subordination as tolerable if attached to wealth. CDA interprets this as the naturalization of unequal power relations, while Intersectionality highlights how gender and class intersect: women internalize submission as a rational trade-off for financial security.

Similarly, Data 5, Excerpt 12 extends this ideology: *“It’s better to cry in a Lamborghini than to be happy in an Uber.”* This metaphorical opposition between wealth and happiness constructs a moral economy where financial status overrides emotional abuse. The linguistic repetition of “cry” and “better” presupposes acceptance of emotional violence in exchange for material gain—an ideology reflecting how economic dependence traps women in abusive marriages under cultural expectations of luxury and “comfort.”

b. Gender Ideologies and Masculine Domination

Patriarchal constructions of masculinity are explicitly articulated in Data 2, Excerpt 2: *“Don’t marry a woman that’s richer than you as a man. If you try it, you are a weak man.”*

Here, linguistic markers like “weak man” evoke hegemonic masculinity (Connell, 1995), reinforcing dominance through economic superiority. Fairclough’s CDA sees this as a discursive reproduction of gender hierarchy, where financial inequality is equated with emasculation. Intersectionally, this belief system marginalizes both women who earn more and men who reject patriarchal norms, demonstrating how economic and gender expectations intersect to sustain power imbalance.

Data 8, Excerpt 25 similarly legitimizes dominance: *“A woman is not meant to be treated well... if you are always treating somebody well especially a woman, brother, you are a gunner to me.”* This explicit rejection of respect constructs violence and mistreatment as masculine virtues. The informal “brother” creates solidarity among men, sustaining a shared patriarchal identity. The speaker’s authority (“I can categorically tell you”) presents misogyny as factual knowledge, turning oppression into normalized discourse. CDA exposes how such statements ideologically rationalize emotional or physical abuse by constructing care as weakness, while Intersectionality interprets this as reflecting broader cultural hierarchies of

male dominance embedded in class and generational power structures.

c. Cultural Norms and Female Submissiveness

Cultural expectations of female submission are contested in Data 6, Excerpt 16, where a speaker declares: *“I can never be submissive to a man, neither my six daughters. Submissive? Total bullshit!”*

This is a direct discursive resistance against patriarchal ideology. The rhetorical repetition of “never” and the emphatic rejection “Total bullshit!” challenge the cultural narrative that equates womanhood with obedience. CDA interprets this as counter-hegemonic discourse, while Intersectionality recognizes it as feminist resistance within a social space where religion, tradition, and gender expectations intersect to constrain women’s autonomy.

Conversely, Data 7, Excerpt 24 provides a reformulated version of submission: *“No woman should submit to a man that demands submission. Submission should be the natural response of a woman to a man that has honored her.”* This excerpt illustrates the discursive negotiation between tradition and modernity. While still operating within patriarchal frames (“natural response of a woman”), it redefines submission through relational

reciprocity rather than coercion. Fairclough’s notion of recontextualization applies here—the discourse borrows patriarchal terms (“submission”) but reassigns them new meaning within evolving gender relations.

d. Sexual Objectification and Moral Economies

In Data 3, Excerpts 5–9, women’s sexuality is commodified as a tool for economic survival: *“Only fans... easy money... Pussy power.”* *“I will date a married man. Easy money, I don’t have to stress to work.”* These linguistic patterns link sexuality and financial gain, revealing how economic precarity intersects with gender inequality. CDA highlights the lexical choice of transactional verbs (“bill,” “date,” “look for”) as indicators of commodified relationships. Intersectionally, this represents the survival strategies of women at the intersection of gender, class, and sexual economy, where patriarchal structures and capitalist demands push them toward exploitative or morally condemned roles.

Data 4, Excerpt 11 intensifies this with disturbing imagery: *“If you spent up to like 20 million in a week you can go through my legs... one time wouldn’t hurt.”* The objectification (“go through my legs”)

linguistically erases female subjectivity, transforming women into economic sites of exchange. Fairclough's CDA identifies this as ideological legitimization of sexual exploitation, while Intersectionality situates it within Nigeria's socio-economic inequality that constrains female agency.

e. Marital Violence and Cultural Endorsement of Male Control

Data 10, Excerpt 36 foregrounds the normalization of control and abuse: *"Men believe that because they pay the bills at home, it makes them the head of the house... it gives you the right to cheat, manipulate, abuse, and do whatever you like."* This statement reflects discursive reproduction of patriarchal entitlement, where economic provision legitimizes abuse. CDA shows how linguistic structures like "right to cheat" encode social norms that naturalize violence. Intersectionality uncovers how economic and gender hierarchies combine to silence women—particularly those lacking financial autonomy.

Excerpt 40 continues this critique: *"If paying the bills gives you the right to be stupid, then why can't a woman do the same?"* Here, rhetorical questioning challenges the gendered double standard embedded in patriarchal discourse. The speaker's sarcastic tone and gendered

reference ("because you have something dangling between your legs") invert patriarchal logic, serving as discursive resistance to marital violence and economic subjugation.

f. Intergenerational and Cultural Transmission of Violence

Data 8, Excerpt 25 also contains the line: *"My father told me I don't even love your mother, and I know your mother don't love me."* This intergenerational statement shows how emotional neglect and power imbalance are culturally transmitted as marital norms. Fairclough's orders of discourse concept applies here—the ideologies of past generations are reproduced through family discourse, teaching younger men that domination is acceptable. Intersectionally, this demonstrates how gender oppression persists through cultural inheritance, with patriarchal violence normalized across class and familial lines.

g. Resistance and Awareness Discourses

Finally, Data 9, Excerpts 28–35 offer an ideological counter-narrative grounded in critical awareness: *"Most men do not see women as human beings... they see women as objects for men's pleasure."* (Excerpt 29) and *"Marriage is not an achievement... decenter men, decenter*

marriage, and decenter even motherhood.” (Excerpt 35). These statements challenge hegemonic masculinity and its linguistic constructions of power. Fairclough’s CDA identifies these as transformative discourses that expose the ideological underpinnings of marital violence. Intersectionality, in turn, highlights that such resistance emerges from the recognition of multiple oppressions—gender, religion, and culture—operating simultaneously.

Research Question 4: How do intersecting identities such as gender, class, religion, and ethnicity shape the representation of victims and perpetrators in social media discourses on marital violence?

At the textual level, language choices in the data reflect how intersecting identities define who is seen as a victim or perpetrator within marital contexts. In Excerpt 1 (Data 1) — “I will rather cry inside Ferrari or Lamborghini than cry inside keke” — the speaker constructs material wealth as a mitigating factor for emotional pain. Here, class intersects with gender to redefine suffering: women’s victimhood becomes glamorized through wealth, implying that pain in marriage is acceptable if accompanied by luxury. This linguistic choice reveals how class

privilege silence in emotional abuse, reinforcing a materialist ideology that blurs the distinction between comfort and subjugation.

Similarly, Excerpt 12 (Data 5) extends this idea by contrasting emotional well-being with material affluence: “It’s better to cry in a Lamborghini than to be happy in an Uber.” The repetition of this sentiment across excerpts illustrates how economic class dictates perceptions of victimhood — a woman’s suffering is trivialized if she gains financial comfort. Thus, wealth redefines the victim not as oppressed but as complicit in her own subjugation, reinforcing capitalist patriarchy that values women for their access to men’s wealth rather than autonomy.

In contrast, Excerpt 2 (Data 2) — “Don’t marry a woman that’s richer than you as a man. If you try it, you are a weak man” — constructs masculinity through economic dominance. Here, gender and class intersect to criminalize female economic success. A woman with financial power becomes a threat to male authority, implying that such power could transform her into a potential “perpetrator” of marital imbalance. The discourse reaffirms the hegemonic masculinity Fairclough identifies as a product of ideologically

loaded language that normalizes male superiority.

Religious and moral undertones appear in Excerpts 14–15 (Data 5) where the speaker says, “They don’t need God to tell them anything... they say, ‘What is God telling me? This is my husband. I need comfort.’” Religion here operates as a discursive regulator of female desire, condemning women who prioritize wealth over faith. The invocation of divine authority constructs moral boundaries that frame women’s choices as sinful, positioning them as moral perpetrators of marital instability. This reflects how religion intersects with gender and class to control women’s moral agency while excusing male infidelity as human weakness (see Excerpts 20–23, Data 6).

Social media provides a participatory discursive arena where gender ideologies are produced, reproduced, and contested. In Excerpts 16 and 23 (Data 6) — “I can never be submissive to a man... Marriage is not a visa to heaven” — the speaker challenges the patriarchal norm of female submission. This resistance discourse represents women reclaiming narrative power against systemic oppression. However, such expressions of agency are often reinterpreted by online audiences as aggression or rebellion, revealing how

gendered power continues to frame female autonomy as deviance.

Conversely, Excerpt 25 (Data 8) — “A woman is not meant to be treated well... my father told me I don’t even love your mother” — reproduces the discourse of emotional detachment and gender hierarchy. The father’s statement and the speaker’s self-identification as a “predator” (Excerpt 26) show how men are socialized to perceive affection as weakness and women as “prey.” Here, ethnicity and patriarchal tradition combine to sustain toxic masculinity, positioning men as natural perpetrators and women as biologically vulnerable. These linguistic metaphors (“predator,” “prey”) dehumanize relationships, turning marital violence into an extension of masculine conquest rather than abuse.

Excerpt 28–35 (Data 9) explicitly names these structures: “Most men do not see women as human beings... men are socialized through patriarchal indoctrination to believe that women are a subordinate group.” The speaker frames this as a global discourse, linking African patriarchy to hegemonic masculinity and emphasized femininity. Through CDA, we see how social media recontextualizes academic feminist theory into popular consciousness, enabling users to decode

gendered violence as part of intersecting social systems — gender, culture, and class — rather than isolated domestic incidents.

The interpretive dimension of Fairclough's model reveals how discourses of victimhood and perpetration are negotiated. Women who reject submission (Data 6, Excerpt 16) are redefined as “problematic” or “unmarriageable,” while men who cheat (Excerpt 23) are excused as “tempted.” This asymmetry reflects what Crenshaw identifies as intersectional invisibility — where the black or African woman's pain is trivialized at the nexus of gender, race, and class.

At the level of social practice, these excerpts reflect broader societal ideologies about gender, power, and violence embedded in Nigerian and African sociocultural contexts. The glorification of materialism (Data 1 & 5) aligns with capitalist values that commodify relationships, while patriarchal religion (Data 5) legitimizes male dominance. Intersectionality reveals how structural inequalities shape both victim and perpetrator identities — women's dependency on men's wealth (class), religious moral codes (religion), and ethnic traditions of patriarchy (ethnicity) reinforce cycles of marital violence.

For instance, in Excerpt 36–40 (Data 10), the speaker critiques the entitlement men feel from financial provision: “Because they pay the bills at home, it makes them the head... they expect women to tolerate it because they are women.” The phrase “because they are women” encapsulates how gender becomes a site of naturalized subordination, while “paying the bills” reflects class as an instrument of power. This connects directly with intersectional analysis — economic control intersects with gender hierarchy to sustain economic abuse and emotional violence in marital relationships.

Similarly, the mocking tone in “because you have something dangling between your legs” (Excerpt 40) subverts phallocentric discourse, exposing how masculinity is performatively constructed through control and dominance. Fairclough's CDA views this as **ideological contestation**, where counter-discourses emerge online to challenge hegemonic narratives of male superiority.

Across the data set, religion and ethnicity also function as legitimizing ideologies. In Excerpt 15, moral language (“in the name of Jesus”) frames material desire as sin, perpetuating the cultural script that women's moral failures invite abuse or misfortune. This moral discourse intersects

with ethnic traditions that emphasize male authority and female endurance, shaping how victims internalize blame and perpetrators justify violence.

Intersectionality Theory deepens this analysis by showing that the experiences of women in these discourses cannot be separated into single categories. A poor woman (class) who refuses submission (gender) may be condemned religiously (religion) and culturally (ethnicity). Similarly, a wealthy woman asserting autonomy is vilified as arrogant or emasculating. Hence, victimhood and perpetration are fluid constructs, shaped by overlapping systems of power — patriarchy, capitalism, religion, and ethnicity — all of which are linguistically reinforced in social media narratives.

Discussion of Findings

The findings reveal that linguistic and discursive strategies within Nigerian online communities play a crucial role in constructing and legitimizing marital violence through everyday expressions, humor, metaphor, and moral framing. Social media posts and comments often employ normalized language that trivializes or romanticizes abuse, reinforcing harmful ideologies. For

instance, expressions such as “It’s better to cry in a Lamborghini than in a keke” illustrate how emotional suffering is re-framed as tolerable when cushioned by material comfort. Similarly, idiomatic constructions like “A man must be respected, no matter what” linguistically encode submission as a moral duty, transforming patriarchal dominance into a socially acceptable norm. Humor, sarcasm, and religious language function discursively to mask coercion, portraying abusive dynamics as either jokes or divine tests. Such linguistic practices, consistent with Fairclough’s (1995) notion of discourse as social practice, show how everyday language choices normalize structural inequality by embedding violence in the moral and material logic of marriage.

Power relations, gender ideologies, and cultural norms are deeply embedded in the social media discourse surrounding marital violence, manifesting through asymmetric representations of men and women. Men are predominantly depicted as providers, disciplinarians, or moral leaders, while women are framed as emotional, submissive, or materially driven. These representations reflect entrenched patriarchal ideologies that sustain gendered hierarchies of authority. The discourse often legitimizes male control as

necessary for marital stability while positioning female independence as rebellion. Cultural norms such as respect for elders, religious obedience, and the sanctity of marriage further reinforce women's silence and endurance in abusive relationships. For example, posts invoking religious metaphors like "God hates divorce" or "A virtuous woman endures" function as moral tools that discourage victims from seeking help. This aligns with van Dijk's (2006) theory of ideological reproduction, where discourse operates as a mechanism for sustaining power structures. Hence, social media becomes both a mirror and a mediator of Nigeria's patriarchal order, sustaining a communicative environment that privileges male authority while marginalizing women's voices.

The intersection of gender, class, religion, and ethnicity further shapes how victims and perpetrators are represented in online discourse. Women from affluent backgrounds are often portrayed as complicit beneficiaries of patriarchal power, while poorer women are depicted as helpless or morally weak. Religious identity intersects with class to produce differentiated moral judgments—Christian and Muslim women, for example, are alternately blamed or absolved based on perceived adherence to faith. Ethnic

stereotypes also emerge, where certain cultural groups are associated with violence, dominance, or submissiveness, reflecting deep-seated biases within Nigerian society. These intersecting identities create a hierarchy of victimhood, where not all suffering is equally recognized or condemned. Crenshaw's (1989) intersectionality theory helps to explain this complexity, showing that oppression operates simultaneously across multiple axes. This study have shown that marital violence discourse on social media is not merely about physical abuse but about discursive violence — the normalization of domination through speech. Through Fairclough's CDA, the language of submission, wealth, and masculinity operates as a tool of social control, while Intersectionality Theory exposes how multiple oppressions converge to silence female suffering.

Women are constructed as both agents and victims — agents when they resist submission (Data 6, Excerpt 16) and victims when economic, religious, and cultural structures constrain their autonomy (Data 5, Excerpts 14–15). Men are constructed as both victims of temptation (Data 6, Excerpt 23) and perpetrators by privilege (Data 10, Excerpt 36). Ultimately, these intersecting identities reproduce asymmetrical power

relations where gendered violence is sustained by the normalization of patriarchal, classist, and religious ideologies. Social media discourse thus serves as both a mirror and a battleground for redefining what it means to be a victim or a perpetrator in marital contexts.

Conclusion

The study reveals that social media discourse in Nigeria functions as a powerful site where language, ideology, and identity intersect to shape public understanding of marital violence. Through the use of humor, religious references, and moral rhetoric, online users construct, legitimize, and sometimes challenge the normalization of abuse within marital relationships. Power relations and patriarchal ideologies are sustained through discursive practices that position men as authoritative figures and women as morally bound to endure, reflecting broader cultural and religious norms that privilege male dominance. However, the presence of counter-discourses—especially from women’s rights advocates and progressive voices—indicates a growing resistance to these hegemonic narratives. Intersectionality theory further underscores how gender, class, religion, and ethnicity intersect to create unequal patterns of representation,

determining whose experiences of violence are validated or dismissed. Ultimately, Critical Discourse Analysis demonstrates that social media is not merely a reflection of societal attitudes but an active agent in the production, reinforcement, and contestation of meanings surrounding marital violence in Nigeria.

Recommendations

This study recommends that content creators and social media influencers be encouraged through digital literacy campaigns to use language that promotes respect, equality, and non-violence in marital relationships, rather than normalizing abuse through humor or cultural justification. Furthermore, policymakers, activists, and online moderators should collaborate to challenge patriarchal ideologies and cultural norms by promoting counter-narratives that empower both men and women to engage in equitable and non-abusive relationships. In addition, advocacy programs and research initiatives should adopt intersectional approaches that recognize how gender, class, religion, and ethnicity interact to shape individuals’ experiences of marital violence, ensuring that interventions are inclusive and address the specific needs of marginalized groups.

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