

**DIGITAL MISOGYNY AND POLITICAL POWER: A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF THE
#WEAREALLNATASHA AND #ISTANDWITHNATASHA CAMPAIGNS ON NIGERIAN SOCIAL
MEDIA**

Vivian Chioma Onwuasoeze
Department of Linguistics
Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka
vivianonwuasoeze@gmail.com

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Chinenye Loyce Okoye (PhD)
Department of Linguistics/ Department of Chinese Studies
Department of Linguistics
Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka
Clo.okoye@unizik.edu.ng

&

Chika Obiageli Ezeudo (PhD)
Department of Linguistics
Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka
chikaezeudo@gmail.com

Abstract

This study conducts a critical discourse analysis (CDA) of the #WeAreAllNatasha and #IStandWithNatasha campaigns on Nigerian social media. These campaigns emerged following allegations of sexual harassment made by Nigerian Senator Natasha Akpoti-Uduaghan against Senate President Godswill Akpabio. The allegations resulted to her suspension from the Nigerian Senate, sparking media outrage. A combination of Fairclough's three-dimensional CDA model and Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) highlights how misogynistic language was deployed to delegitimize the senator online. The study draws on 150 publicly accessible social media posts from X (formerly Twitter), Facebook, and Instagram, from which 37 comments were purposively selected for detailed analysis. The analysis reveals the systematic use of discursive strategies like gendered insults, sexualized narratives, and victim-blaming rhetoric. These strategies reinforce patriarchal power structures. The study concludes that digital platforms in Nigeria reproduce and amplify entrenched gender inequalities, positioning women in politics as targets of symbolic violence. It recommends the critical filtering of language in social media discussions bordering on politics to avoid encouraging misogyny.

Keywords: Digital misogyny, critical discourse analysis, Nigerian politics, social media, gender, power

1. Introduction

The rise of digital communication has significantly changed political engagement. Public debate has moved conventional venues like mainstream media and legislative bodies to digital arenas such as X (formerly Twitter), Facebook, and Instagram. These environments empower the electorate to participate directly in political dialogue which broadens the scope for civic involvement and personal expression (Loader & Mercea, 2012; Uwalaka, 2021). However, this expansion of democratic discourse also has negative impacts. It has simultaneously fostered a rise in aggressive communication, specifically regarding misogyny and gender-based harassment. Because these online platforms promote user anonymity, people boldly spread hateful and discriminatory posts widely. Women in politics are especially attacked online to weaken their influence, damage their reputation and ultimately discourage them and other women from participating in politics (Jane, 2017; Ging & Siapera, 2019; Krook, 2020).

In Nigeria, social media serves as a major battleground for political narrative and contestation. The public dispute involving Natasha Akpoti-Uduaghan and her allegations of sexual harassment against Godswill Akpabio produced significant online engagement. This manifested in solidarity markers like #WeAreAllNatasha and #IStandWithNatasha. These hashtags acted as instruments of collective advocacy, allowing participants to champion gender equity (Bosch, 2017; KhosraviNik, 2017).

However, the movement also received wide opposition. Many of the opposing comments relied on misogynistic language like gender stereotypes, sexual insult and victim-blaming. Rather than addressing the senator's allegations, many people focused on attacking her moral character, credibility and personality. This shift away from the main issue highlights the gender bias shaping political discourse (Manne, 2017; Oloyede, 2020).

This study champions the view that language is more than a neutral means of sharing information. It is a powerful social tool that both reflects and shapes relationships of power (Fairclough, 1995). In online spaces, people use language to express beliefs, negotiate identities, and maintain or challenge social hierarchies. From

this perspective, misogynistic discourse is not seen as a collection of isolated online attacks. Instead, it is understood as part of a wider system of symbolic control that limits women's participation in public life.

Although previous studies have examined digital misogyny, online gender-based harassment, and women's political participation in Nigeria, few have explored how misogynistic discourse is constructed. Significantly, no such analysis has been done in the #WeAreAllNatasha and #IStandWithNatasha campaigns. Most existing research has focused on these events from political science, media studies, or gender studies. As a result, the linguistic strategies through which misogyny is produced and sustained on Nigerian social media remain largely underexplored. By combining Critical Discourse Analysis with Systemic Functional Linguistics, this study seeks to address that gap.

Thus, the present study investigates the linguistic construction of misogynistic discourse in the #WeAreAllNatasha and #IStandWithNatasha campaigns on Nigerian social media. The study adopts the following research questions as a guide:

1. What linguistic features of misogynistic discourse are identified in the selected campaigns?
2. How do these linguistic features construct and reinforce gendered power relations?
3. What are the discursive strategies through which female solidarity is challenged and delegitimized?
4. What is the role of social media in facilitating the circulation and amplification of misogynistic discourse?

2.0 Literature Review

This section reviews literature relevant to the study's objectives. The following sub-topics form the theoretical and empirical bedrock of the paper: Misogyny in Digital Spaces, Language and Gender, Women in Nigerian Politics, Social Media and Political Discourse, Misogyny in African Digital Contexts, and the Theoretical Framework.

2.1 Misogyny in Digital Spaces

Within modern feminist discourse, misogyny has been re-envisioned as a structural and ideological framework designed to govern female conduct within patriarchal systems. Moving beyond the narrow view of individual animosity, Manne (2017) posits that misogyny serves as a corrective mechanism; it reinforces gender stratification by penalizing women who contest male hegemony. This theoretical lens is vital for discursive analysis, as it redirects the focus from idiosyncratic abuse toward systemic configurations ingrained in linguistic and social exchanges.

In the digital realm, this hostility materializes through targeted harassment, sexualized vitriol, and systematic discursive marginalization. Jane (2017) identifies this phenomenon as "e-bile", a specific brand of gendered aggression involving moral disparagement and threats of violence. Such rhetoric is strategically deployed to stifle the voices of women, particularly those occupying high-visibility roles in activism and governance.

The severity of online misogyny is further intensified by the inherent affordances of digital platforms. Attributes like anonymity and diminished accountability foster more radicalized expressions of hate, a trend identified as the "online disinhibition effect" (Suler, 2004; Jane, 2017). Furthermore, the algorithmic architecture of platforms such as X and Facebook incentivizes high-engagement content. Because inflammatory and misogynistic material often generates significant interaction, these systems inadvertently prioritize and accelerate its circulation (Ging & Siapera, 2019).

Contemporary research also emphasizes the rise of networked misogyny, wherein abuse is not merely incidental but collectively manufactured and strategically mobilized in response to specific personas or socio-political events (Ging & Siapera, 2019). These organized campaigns frequently target women who advocate for gender equity, seeking to invalidate their contributions and deter future participation.

Moreover, digital misogyny is inextricably linked to intersecting social hierarchies, including class, race, and regional cultural paradigms. In African contexts, these interactions are filtered through localized conceptions of femininity and institutional authority, resulting in a system that is both globally connected and culturally specific (Bosch, 2017).

2.2 Language and Gender

Language serves as a primary vehicle for the construction and preservation of gender identities and established power hierarchies. Early contributions to feminist linguistics, most notably Lakoff (1975), posited that linguistic features such as hedging, hyper-politeness, and the use of tag questions function as mirrors of women's marginalized social status. While subsequent scholarship has refined and contested these initial assertions, Lakoff's framework remains an essential foundation for understanding language as an ideologically saturated tool.

Expanding upon these concepts, feminist discourse analysts argue that sexism transcends overt hostility, operating instead through subtle, naturalized patterns that characterize women as inherently emotional, irrational, or lacking in authority (Mills, 2008). Such discursive representations serve to delegitimize female involvement in governance and leadership by prioritizing stereotypical framing over professional competence.

Furthermore, language facilitates the reproduction of gender inequality through specific processes of naming, categorization, and normative evaluation. In public discourse, women are frequently tied to themes of domesticity or sexuality, whereas masculine identity is consistently aligned with rationality and institutional command (Cameron, 2005). These linguistic asymmetries fundamentally condition the perception of women within the political arena.

Within these political environments, women face a disproportionate degree of discursive violence, including symbolic degradation and sexist stereotyping, both of which erode their political legitimacy (Krook, 2020). Rather than inviting a substantive critique of policy or performance, the surrounding rhetoric often shifts to an interrogation of the female subject's morality, emotional resilience, or private life.

2.3 Women in Nigerian Politics

The involvement of women in Nigerian politics is constrained by structural, cultural, and institutional barriers. Despite global efforts toward gender equality, women remain significantly underrepresented in political offices. This is largely due to entrenched patriarchal norms, socio-economic inequalities, and limited access to political resources (Akinola, 2018).

From a cultural perspective, the Nigerian political arena is frequently constructed as a masculine preserve, characterized by themes of dominance and patriarchal authority. Consequently, women who attain leadership roles are often perceived as transgressing traditional gender roles, a perception that subjects them to intensified public scrutiny and institutional resistance.

Female political actors also contend with various manifestations of gender-based violence, encompassing intimidation, verbal aggression, and systemic character assassination. These assaults typically bypass critiques of political efficacy, focusing instead on private conduct and moral standing. Such rhetoric serves to reinforce rigid societal standards of female respectability, effectively weaponizing social expectations against political ambition (Oloyede, 2020).

2.4 Social Media and Political Discourse

Social media has greatly impacted political communication by expanding participation and public engagement. Platforms such as X (Twitter), Facebook, and Instagram allow citizens to bypass traditional media gatekeepers and engage directly in political discussions. This enables what Loader and Mercea (2012) describe as "networked participation," where users mobilize and influence political processes. In Nigeria, social media has become an important space for political expression, activism, and accountability. As Uwalaka (2021) observes, citizens use digital platforms for hashtag activism, political debate, and citizen journalism, thereby strengthening participatory political culture.

However, these platforms also facilitate harmful discourse due to weak regulation, rapid information flow, and algorithmic promotion of engaging content. This often leads to polarization, misinformation, and hostile interactions rather than constructive debate. In Nigeria, political discussions usually include insults, ethnic and gendered abuse, and identity-based attacks, shifting focus from policy issues to personal attacks.

2.5 Misogyny in African Digital Contexts

In African digital contexts, the study of misogyny has gained increasing scholarly attention as digital engagement expands across the continent. Whereas digital misogyny shares certain global features, it is also shaped by specific cultural, social, and political dynamics that distinguish African contexts from those in the Global North.

Bosch (2017) highlights that digital platforms in Africa serve as important spaces for youth engagement, activism, and identity formation, but they also reproduce entrenched inequalities, including gender-based discrimination. In several cases, online interactions reflect deeply rooted cultural norms that define appropriate roles and behaviors for women, thereby influencing how female voices are received and evaluated in digital spaces.

Misogyny within African digital landscapes frequently converges with localized perceptions of morality, respectability, and institutional authority. Women who challenge traditional gender paradigms—specifically those advocating for gender equity, sexual autonomy, or political reform—usually face a backlash rooted in culturally specific modes of stigmatization. Rhetorical strategies involving allegations of promiscuity, moral bankruptcy, or a lack of communal respect are systematically employed to invalidate female contributions to public debate, functioning as regulatory tools to preserve the patriarchal order.

2.6 Theoretical Framework

This study is theoretically anchored in Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), specifically Norman Fairclough's three-dimensional model, combined with M.A.K. Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL).

Within CDA, discourse is conceptualized as a social practice through which systems of dominance and resistance are both generated and perpetuated (Fairclough, 1995). Fairclough's schema bridges micro-linguistic details with macro-social structures through three dimensions:

1. **Text:** The formal linguistic features of the message.
2. **Discursive Practice:** The processes of text production, distribution, and consumption across digital media.
3. **Social Practice:** The overarching socio-political and patriarchal structures governing political communication in Nigeria.

To complement CDA, SFL provides the precise textual analytical apparatus by examining three core language metafunctions (Halliday, 1994):

- **The Ideational Metafunction:** Analyzes how experiences and realities are discursively constructed (evaluated via *Transitivity* and *Process Types*).
- **The Interpersonal Metafunction:** Evaluates how social relationships, attitudes, and stances are enacted (evaluated via *Appraisal*, *Mood*, and *Modality*).
- **The Textual Metafunction:** Examines how messages are organized and structured cohesively within digital networks.

Together, these integrated frameworks facilitate a granular examination of the construction, circulation, and institutionalization of misogynistic discourse within Nigerian digital political spaces

3.0 Methodology

Grounded in an integrated framework of Critical Discourse Analysis (Fairclough, 1995) and Systemic Functional Linguistics (Halliday, 1994), this study adopts a qualitative design to examine the construction of digital misogyny in Nigerian political discourse. Data were collected from 150 publicly accessible posts on X (formerly Twitter), Facebook, and Instagram between March 2025 and September 2025, capturing the online reactions to Senator Natasha Akpoti-Uduaghan's sexual harassment allegations and subsequent Senate suspension. Using purposive sampling, 37 comments were selected via key hashtags (#WeAreAllNatasha, #IStandWithNatasha) and relevant search terms based on their rich evaluative and gendered content (Palinkas et al., 2015). The analysis followed a multi-tiered procedure: micro-level textual coding of SFL features (Transitivity, Mood, Appraisal, and Modality), meso-level evaluation of platform affordances (virality and comment threads), and macro-level socio-cognitive interpretation of patriarchal power structures (Van Dijk, 2001). To observe digital research ethics, all individual user identities were anonymized while preserving references to public political figures involved in national discourse.

4. Data Presentation and Analysis

4.1 Introduction

This section presents the analysis of selected social media posts related to the #WeAreAllNatasha and #IStandWithNatasha movements, which emerged following allegations made by Natasha Akpoti-Uduaghan. A qualitative dataset comprising of user-generated comments from platforms such as X (Twitter) and Facebook was examined using an integrated framework of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL).

The empirical analysis of the dataset demonstrates that misogynistic discourse is fundamentally systematic, manifesting as a series of interconnected discursive patterns rather than isolated incidents. The data suggests that these rhetorical structures function collectively to marginalize the female subject within the digital political sphere. Across the breadth of the analyzed material, the primary discursive themes identified include:

1. Sexualization and moral degradation
2. Victim-blaming and disbelief
3. Delegitimization of female political authority
4. Patriarchal ideology and gender role enforcement
5. Silencing, intimidation, and discursive exclusion
6. Anti-feminist backlash and gender hostility
7. Normalization and trivialization of harassment

These patterns collectively demonstrate how language is strategically deployed to undermine the credibility, morality, and political legitimacy of Natasha Akpoti-Uduaghan and, by extension, women in political spaces.

The seven thematic categories identified in the dataset directly address the four research questions guiding this study. Specifically, Sections 4.2.1 and 4.2.2 address **RQ1** (linguistic features of misogynistic

discourse) and **RQ2** (construction of gendered power relations); Sections 4.2.3, 4.2.5, and 4.2.6 answer **RQ3** (delegitimization of female solidarity and authority); while Section 4.2.7 and the cross-cutting platform dynamics address **RQ4** (the role of social media affordances in amplifying misogyny).

4.2 Thematic and Linguistic Analysis

4.2.1 Sexualization, Sexual Shaming, and Moral Degradation

A dominant feature across the dataset is the reduction of the female subject to her sexuality through derogatory and morally charged expressions. For example:

- i. “ashawo,” “oloshos,” “I wonder weytin even dey her yeye toto”
- ii. “married via your shameless and malicious ways”
- iii. “Can any woman in Nigeria politics swear with #ogun say she reach high level for politics without her sleeping with some godfather b4 she reach where she dey”
- iv. “Ashawo! 4 husbands, 4 children. That is 4 by 4.”
- v. “Natasha don give them yellow toto”
- vi. “So, all of a sudden, her toto don sweet abi?”
- vii. “#500m sent just to browse her website”

These expressions construct the subject as sexually immoral, promiscuous, and manipulative.

A dominant feature of the discourse is the use of sexualized and morally charged language to delegitimize the subject. The dataset contains repeated use of derogatory expressions such as “ashawo,” “oloshos,” and explicit references to sexual behavior, including claims that women in politics advance through sexual relationships. Additionally, references to multiple partners, body parts, and sexual acts are used to reduce the subject to a sexual object.

From the SFL perspective, the ideational function features the female actor as morally deviant, while the interpersonal function encodes strong negative judgment through abusive lexical choices. Textually, the repetition of such expressions foregrounds sexuality as the central lens through which the subject is evaluated. From a CDA perspective, this shows a patriarchal ideology that equates women’s public success with sexual impropriety. By intentionally reducing a female political figure to her sexuality, the discourse delegitimizes her capacity, competence and authority, reinforcing gendered power imbalances.

4.2.2 Victim-Blaming, Disbelief, and Evidential Burden Shifting

A recurring pattern is the systematic rejection of the harassment allegation and the transfer of responsibility to the victim. Examples:

- i. “why didn’t she report earlier?”
- ii. “she’s lying”
- iii. “emotional blackmail”
- iv. “no evidence... no proof”
- v. “let her file charges and stop all this drama.”
- vi. “Sexual harassment of 2023 while we’re in 2025 - this is blackmail”
- vii. “Women and emotional blackmail, this becoming norm in Nigeria”

Another obvious pattern is the systematic questioning of the credibility of the harassment allegation. Many posts emphasize the timing of the accusation, repeatedly asking why it was not reported earlier, while others frame the claim as “blackmail,” “lies,” or “emotional manipulation”. Additionally, there is a strong insistence on evidence, often followed by outright dismissal of the claim in its absence.

In SFL terms, interrogative structures and high-modality declaratives are used to express doubt and certainty simultaneously. The interpersonal function positions the speaker as rational and authoritative, while casting the subject as unreliable. On the other hand, CDA reveals that these discursive strategies shift responsibility from the alleged perpetrator to the accuser. By framing the victim as deceptive or opportunistic, the discourse protects male authority and reproduces a broader cultural tendency to discredit women’s testimonies in cases of sexual misconduct.

4.2.3 Delegitimization of Female Political Authority

The dataset frequently portrays the subject as incompetent, unruly, or unfit for leadership. Expressions include:

- i. “you lack the proper orientation to be in the Senate”
- ii. “Senate is not where one can come and constitute nuisance”
- iii. “I am not against Natasha, but she is too unruly”
- iv. “Natasha does not deserve to be in the Senate”
- v. “reasons why women aren’t meant for powerful positions”

Some comments generalize this to all women, suggesting that female participation in politics leads to disorder. Some expressions describe the subject as unfit for leadership position. The instances of such as “unruly,” “arrogant,” or lacking the “orientation” for leadership appear across multiple posts. Some comments expressly argue that women should not occupy positions of power, suggesting that their presence leads to disorder.

From an SFL perspective, the ideational function assigns negative attributes to the female actor, while the interpersonal function adopts an authoritative and evaluative tone. The use of generalized statements about “women” further amplifies the exclusionary nature of the discourse.

On the other hand, CDA reflects a broader ideological framework in which politics is constructed as a male domain. The delegitimization of female leadership serves to reinforce structural inequalities and discourage women’s participation in political processes.

4.2.4 Patriarchal Ideology and Gender Role Enforcement

Many posts systematically reinforce traditional gender roles and male dominance. For instance:

- i. “madam abeg enter kitchen fry dodo for husband”
- ii. “let her go and learn how to talk to MEN first”
- iii. “any woman that rules over her husband...”
- iv. “women use what they have to attract goodies”
- v. “men have the right to cheat”
- vi. “patriarchy is the lesser evil”
- vii. “did the man rape u that makes u want to destroy his life?”

Following the reinforcement of traditional gender roles and patriarchal norms, women are instructed to “go to the kitchen,” “respect men,” or “submit” within both domestic and public spheres. Some comments justify male privilege, which include the normalization of male infidelity or dominance.

In SFL terms, imperative structures and normative statements imply obligation and authority, positioning male dominance as a natural occurrence and unquestionable. The interpersonal function reflects a patronizing and directive tone. However, CDA interpretation shows that these discourses naturalize patriarchy by presenting it as culturally legitimate and socially beneficial. These examples not only reinforce male authority but also frame female resistance as deviance from the norm.

4.2.5 Silencing, Intimidation, and Discursive Exclusion

A good number of posts attempt to silence the subject and discourage support for her. For example:

- i. “women needs to be avoid like cancer”
- ii. “this should be a warning to people who give women political office”
- iii. “go and apologize... withdraw your statement”
- iv. “If Natasha did not apologize for her rudeness and arrogance at the Senate...”

Some comments escalate into intimidation and moral panic, including threats and fear-based rhetoric. These include direct insults, warnings against supporting women who make such allegations, and even threats suggesting consequences for those who speak out. Some comments spread across women as a group, portraying them as dangerous or manipulative.

From an SFL perspective, modality and imperative forms are used to issue commands and threats, while the interpersonal function conveys aggression and coercion. On the other hand, CDA shows that such discourse functions as a mechanism of social control. By creating a hostile communicative environment, it discourages women from participating in public spaces or reporting abuse, thereby maintaining existing power structures.

4.2.6 Anti-Feminist Backlash and Gender Hostility

The dataset also reveals strong hostility toward feminism and female solidarity. Examples include:

- i. “stupid feminist”
- ii. “feminists barking like a rabid dog”
- iii. “Women!!!!!! There are very few good ones though”
- iv. “Dear men pay attention to this comment section...any females that agree with this woman run away from such ..such a female will play the sexual harassment game on u in d future if u ignore the signs now”

Terms such as “stupid feminist” and ridicule directed at supporters of the movement show resistance to gender equality movements. Women who support the subject are usually grouped together and dismissed as irrational or biased.

In SFL terms, collective labeling and derogatory metaphors construct feminists as a homogenous and undesirable group. The interpersonal function expresses hostility and exclusion. From the lens of CDA, this backlash

represents an attempt to delegitimize feminist discourse and weaken collective resistance. By discrediting supporters, the discourse isolates the subject and undermines solidarity.

4.2.7 Normalization and Trivialization of Harassment

Another critical pattern as identified in the dataset is the minimization and normalization of harassment. Examples include:

- i. "The truth is that when a man flirts with a woman (according to the Nigerian culture) it is mostly seen as a social gesture"
- ii. "ordinary small harassment"
- iii. "Holding hands and mere sexual request can't hold water. Man na man. Normally"

Finally, the data reveal a troubling normalization of harassment. Some posts describe inappropriate behavior as "flirting" or a "social gesture," while others dismiss it as insignificant. In extreme cases, sexual coercion is indirectly justified and normalized, and women are advised to comply or remain silent.

From an SFL perspective, the ideational function reframes harassment as harmless, while the interpersonal function adopts a dismissive tone that minimizes its seriousness. From the interpretation of CDA, it shows that this normalization sustains a culture in which gender-based misconduct is tolerated. By trivializing harassment, the discourse delegitimizes victims' experiences and reinforces male dominance.

5.0 Discussion and Conclusion

This study investigated the linguistic construction and socio-political functions of digital misogyny in Nigerian political discourse through a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) examination of the #WeAreAllNatasha and #IStandWithNatasha campaigns. The synthesis of findings directly answers the four research questions guiding the inquiry.

5.1 RQ1: Linguistic Features of Misogynistic Discourse

The analysis reveals that digital misogyny in Nigerian political discourse relies on specific SFL grammatical and lexical choices. Ideationally, the discourse is dominated by Relational Processes (Attributive and Identifying) that attach derogatory epithets ("ashawo," "unruly," "shameless") to the female politician. Interpersonally, high negative Judgement (Propriety and Veracity) under Halliday's Appraisal framework is deployed through abusive Pidgin and English vocabulary. Textually, posters front sexualized and moralized terms in Theme position, forcing public debate away from legislative misconduct or sexual harassment allegations and onto the female body.

5.2 RQ2: Construction and Reinforcement of Gendered Power Relations

Gendered power relations are constructed through micro-linguistic choices that enforce patriarchal supremacy. Interpersonally, male commenters frequently utilize Imperative Mood clauses ("enter kitchen," "learn how to talk to MEN") embedded with high Deontic Modality (obligation). This establishes a patronizing discourse where men assume normative authority to police female behavior. Ideationally, political governance is constructed as an exclusively male domain, while female participation is framed as a disruptive Material Process ("constituting nuisance"). By naturalizing patriarchy as a culturally protective mechanism, these linguistic structures preserve male hegemony in Nigerian governance.

5.3 RQ3: Discursive Delegitimization of Female Solidarity and Authority

Female political authority and collective digital solidarity are challenged through systematic strategies of victim-blaming, evidential burden-shifting, and anti-feminist hostility. Interpersonally, rhetorical questions in Interrogative Mood ("why didn't she report earlier?") cast doubt on the target's veracity, while high-modality declaratives label survivor testimony as "emotional blackmail." Furthermore, collective solidarity campaigns (#WeAreAllNatasha) are met with anti-feminist backlash, using homogenizing labels ("stupid feminists," "rabid dogs") to isolate the victim, delegitimize gender-equity activism, and deter other women from offering public support or reporting institutional abuse.

5.4 RQ4: Role of Social Media Affordances in Amplifying Misogyny

Social media platforms (specifically X and Facebook) do not act as neutral political arenas; rather, their algorithmic affordances actively accelerate the spread of gendered hostility. Features such as comment threading, virality metrics, and user anonymity facilitate the "online disinhibition effect" (Suler, 2004) and "networked misogyny" (Ging & Siapera, 2019). High-engagement, emotionally charged content—such as moral outrage and sexualized vitriol—is algorithmically prioritized, creating a hostile digital environment that normalizes harassment, trivializes sexual misconduct as mere "flirting," and functions as symbolic violence against women in public life.

5.5 Conclusion

Conclusively, the study finds that the #WeAreAllNatasha and #IStandWithNatasha movements became sites of ideological struggle in Nigerian digital politics. While they initially represented solidarity and resistance, they also became spaces where misogynistic discourse was used to undermine female political agency, particularly that of Senator Natasha Akpoti-Uduaghan. Therefore, language is not a neutral medium but a powerful tool of ideological control, and social media platforms frequently reproduce and intensify real-world gender inequalities.

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