

Critical discourse analysis of selected Facebook comments on gender-based violence against gospel artist, Osinachi Nwachukwu

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Abstract

This study critically examines the gender-based violence as represented and debated in Facebook comments surrounding the death of Nigerian gospel artist Osinachi Nwachukwu, who tragically died due to domestic abuse. Employing Fairclough's (1995) Critical Discourse Analysis, the research analyses how online language in Nigeria reflects, reinforces, or contests patriarchal ideologies and power structures. The objectives of the research are to critically analyse the language used in selected Facebook comments regarding Osinachi Nwachukwu's case and to examine the fundamental ideologies embedded in the discourse surrounding it. Data are purposefully selected from public Facebook comments on Osinachi's case. The study reveals opinions, conveys ideologies, or challenges dominant narratives regarding gender-based violence. Osinachi faced abuse in silence due to conflicting ideologies like religious fatalism, patriarchal norms, cultural indoctrination, and gendered upbringing. Many commenters unconsciously reinforce patriarchal structures through religious rationalisations and cultural fatalism. Emerging feminist perspectives challenge these norms by encouraging women to speak out and take action against domestic violence,

while some critiques target religious leaders and institutions. In conclusion, religious fatalism, patriarchal blame-shifting, cultural indoctrination, or personal belief should not justify enduring abuse. The research advocates for gender rights, accountable religious bodies, balanced gender socialisation in Nigerian families, and stronger legal measures against gender-based violence.

Keywords: *gender-based violence, Facebook, online discourse, and critical discourse analysis*

Introduction

The case of Osinachi seems to have gained the highest attention of activists and state agents, with charge number CR/199/2022 filed by Yewande Gbola-Awopetun, the Head, Sexual and Gender-Based Violence, Department of Public Prosecutions of the Federation, Ministry of Justice, at the High Court of the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja. Osinachi, a gospel singer and educated woman, was the breadwinner of her home, yet faced chronic gender-based domestic violence in her marriage. Her husband, Peter Nwachukwu, abandoned her during labour at the birth of their first child, and the neighbours helped her out. She suffered the same situation with the second child, and she had to stay with her parents for four months after giving birth to their second child. Despite advice from her mother and family members not to continue the abusive marriage, Osinachi refused, urging them not to put asunder God's union. The abuse was severe, with her husband forbidding her from driving her car. Osinachi's husband sometimes asked their children to beat their mother. He also trained them to see domestic violence as a standard practice.

With the advent of digital communication platforms, social media—especially Facebook—has emerged as a crucial venue for public discourse in Nigeria. Users utilise Facebook's interactive features to articulate opinions, disseminate experiences, and mobilise support for sensitive social issues, such as gender-based violence. However, beneath superficial interpretations, online comments often reveal deeper ideological stances that reflect society's confusion about gender equality and women's rights (Okoro & Nwafor, 2021). These discursive patterns offer a rich context for examining how Nigerians negotiate meaning about the Osinachi Nwachukwu case, particularly in terms of blame, responsibility, and advocacy for women's rights.

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) offers a framework for analysing how language in these Facebook comments constructs or contests societal ideologies. CDA highlights the connection between language, power, and ideology, rendering it an appropriate instrument for examining how discourse may either perpetuate or challenge patriarchal oppression (van Dijk, 1993). This study employs Critical Discourse Analysis to examine the language used in selected Facebook comments regarding Osinachi Nwachukwu's case of gender-based violence. This approach aims to elucidate how linguistic selections mirror social ideologies and expose the power dynamics embedded in the discursive frameworks of gender-based violence (GBV).

This study targets at critically analyzing the language used in selected Facebook comments regarding Osinachi Nwachukwu's case; and examine the fundamental ideologies embedded in the discourse surrounding this case.

Gender-based violence in Nigeria

Gender-based violence (GBV) is a persistent global challenge, disproportionately affecting women and girls, with cultural, religious, and patriarchal structures often sustaining its prevalence in Nigeria (Olayanju, Naguib, Nguyen, Bali, & Vung, 2021). Research shows that domestic violence is normalised in some Nigerian communities, with victims frequently silenced by religious doctrines or societal expectations of women's submissiveness (Makama, 2013; Eze & Obi, 2021). The case of Osinachi Nwachukwu exemplifies the interplay of GBV, religion, and cultural silence. Scholars like Alokun (2013) and Effiom and Udo (2020) emphasise that harmful gender stereotypes in Nigeria hinder women from reporting abuse, making cases like Osinachi's all the more tragic and socially revealing.

Online platforms such as Facebook have transformed into spaces for the ventilation, analysis, and contestation of such issues. As Odu and Odiboh (2022) observed, the power of digital spaces in framing narratives around women's experiences is steadily increasing, making the analysis of online comments essential in unpacking contemporary GBV discourse.

Social media, discourse, and ideology

The interactive nature of social media provides fertile ground for the construction and reinforcement of ideologies. Online platforms like Facebook are increasingly used to analyse and contest issues related to women's experiences, making online comment analysis crucial for understanding contemporary GBV discourse. Social media's interactive nature fosters the construction and reinforcement of ideologies, influencing societal perceptions. Salihu and Abdulrauf (2022) echo this in their study of Nigerian Facebook users' reactions to GBV-related news reveals ideological

tension between victim-blaming narratives and feminist advocacy, reflecting societal ambivalence and the intersection of religion and culture.

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) and gender studies

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), as developed by scholars such as Fairclough (1995) and van Dijk (1993), is a method for uncovering hidden ideologies and power relations in texts and discourse. CDA views language as both shaped by and shaping social structures. Wodak and Meyer (2016) argue that discourse surrounding GBV often exposes deep-rooted patriarchal ideologies, particularly in contexts like Nigeria, where socio-cultural narratives about gender roles remain strong. Specific CDA applications for GBV have revealed that language choices often reflect the normalisation of violence against women, either through silence, euphemism, or the outright justification of abuse (Ndubuisi & Chukwu, 2023). Thus, using CDA to analyse online comments can reveal the often-hidden ideological work behind seemingly casual remarks on social media.

Shahen's (2021) article "Gender-Based Violence in Bangladesh: A Critical Analysis" examines gender-based violence, harassment, and discrimination targeting women and children in Bangladesh. The research uses data from ASK and BSAF to reveal that domestic violence, harassment, and discrimination against women and children are prevalent. Women and girls experience harassment on public transit as a result of abusive behaviours and attitudes. The lack of political commitment, restrictive social and cultural attitudes, and insufficient governmental support for establishing a woman-friendly business environment render the business landscape unfavourable for female entrepreneurs.

Negash et al. (2018) investigated "A Critical Discourse Analysis of Psychological Gender-Based Violence against women and girls in Jimma Zone of Oromia National Regional State, Ethiopia". The study identifies numerous occurrences of psychological gender-based violence against women and girls in the area and proposes recommendations for reform.

Risdaneva (2018) conducted "a Critical Discourse Analysis of Women's Portrayal in News Reporting of Sexual Violence". The study analysed how women are portrayed in news reporting of sexual violence in the Jakarta Post and the Guardian, using critical discourse analysis to compare and contrast their portrayals, highlighting the close relationship between men and women. Through the selection of lexical elements to represent the primary news actors, this research examines the representation of criminal cases in the Jakarta Post and the Guardian. The Jakarta Post primarily functions as both victims and criminals, viewing them as part of the legal process. At the same time, The Guardian categorises victims based on age and gender, focusing more on the crimes themselves.

From the best of my knowledge and the literature reviewed, there is no known research on Critical Discourse Analysis of selected Facebook comments on Osinachi Nwachukwu's Case of Gender-Based Violence. Some reviewed studies utilise the same theoretical framework, while the current research is unique because it uses CDA to examine gender-based violence in a Nigerian case.

Theoretical framework

Critical discourse analysis (CDA), as articulated by Fairclough (1995) and van Dijk (1993), among others, views language as a social practice intricately connected to power, ideology, and

societal norms. It posits that discourse both influences and is influenced by social realities (Fairclough, 2013). In the realm of gender-based violence, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) facilitates the investigation of how Facebook users' linguistic choices reflect, reinforce, or contest patriarchal ideologies and inequality in power that uphold women's oppression.

Fairclough (1995) is appropriate for examining the ideological complexities in online commentary regarding the Osinachi Nwachukwu case. Norman Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is an interdisciplinary methodology that examines the role of language in shaping social realities. It integrates linguistic examination with social theory to understand how discourse shapes, sustains, and changes social realities. Fairclough's framework (1995) consists of three dimensions:

- **Textual analysis** (Description) to examine linguistic features such as vocabulary, grammar, rhetoric, semantics, and cohesion to understand how meaning is constructed, constructing narratives at the micro-level.
- **Discursive practice** (Interpretation) to explore how comments are produced and interpreted within the Facebook environment.
- **Social practice** (Explanation) to connect the discourse to broader cultural, societal ideologies, and power relations surrounding gender-based violence in Nigeria.

This approach helps examine how language, particularly in social media discourse, mirrors and shapes societal attitudes and power structures, such as in the Osinachi Nwachukwu case. Furthermore, contemporary research emphasises CDA's versatility in social media environments, where dynamic, multi-directional interactions generate intricate power dynamics and ideological

conflicts (Albert & Salam, 2013; Khosravini, 2019). In the context of gender-based violence, Fairclough's (1995) Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) elucidates how linguistic choices reflect and reinforce patriarchal ideologies, cultural beliefs, and power inequalities that sustain the oppression of women.

Methodology

This study employs a qualitative descriptive research design, employing Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as the main analytical framework. The qualitative method is ideal for a thorough analysis of language use, narrative formation, and ideological underpinnings in online discourse (Wodak & Meyer, 2016). This design facilitates how underlying ideologies are integrated into their narratives regarding the Osinachi Nwachukwu case of gender-based violence while utilising Fairclough's (1995) framework.

Data were gathered from public comments on Facebook posts about the Osinachi Nwachukwu case in July 2022. Purposive sampling was used to select comments from Facebook in response to audio-visual reports from True Crime Daniel regarding Peter Nwachukwu's crimes of gender-based violence against his wife, Osinachi Nwachukwu, who subsequently died as a result of it.

Eight Facebook comments were purposively selected for analysis. The selected comments were chosen based on their direct relevance to the Osinachi Nwachukwu case, the depth and richness of their content, their explicit engagement with issues related to gender-based violence, and the presence of ideological expressions. This focused sample facilitates a detailed examination of discourse patterns. To maintain ethical standards and safeguard user privacy, all identifiable information was

anonymised, and the disclosure of identifiable personal data in analysis was avoided (British Psychological Society, 2017).

The researcher used critical discourse analysis (CDA) and textual analysis to analyse selected Facebook comments about gender-based violence in Nigeria. The study used Norman Fairclough's three-dimensional framework to examine linguistic characteristics, discourse practices, and the production and interpretation of narratives. The methodology aligns with the study's objectives by incorporating discourse analysis to critically analyse the language used in selected Facebook comments regarding Osinachi Nwachukwu and examine the fundamental ideologies embedded in the discourse surrounding this case.

Data analysis

The 8 selected comments from Facebook are as follows:

Comments 1: Osinachi was chosen. When God sends you on a mission he makes provision and I guess hers was TOLERANCE. Or else who can tolerate what she went through? The financial abuse, physical abuse, emotional abuse, and verbal abuse.... There must have been times she asked God why have you thou forsaken me just like Jesus did? However, she must have said father not my will but yours be done. Her ministry and mission came first. She was equipped to go through it all. I have always imagined how she can come out to sing the songs of victory while she was going through tough times YET SHE DID NOT BREAKDOWN AND CRY. Thank God she has a twin sister to be a constant reminder to us that she was once here with us. The heart of a man is in God's hand. I think she was remotely controlled.

Comment 2: I wish I can ask God some questions, why did he allow this to happen to a woman who has dedicated her entire life

to his work, if anyone could fail her, why did God also, Her faith, trust n belief in God, she may have kept quiet but I know she has talked countless times with God, hoping for a miracle, was her marriage too much of a big deal for u said there is nothing u cannot do, so why?? God enough of your silence in Christian lives, Arise in your power n mercy n never forsake us, subjecting our trust and belief in u into mockery, it as if u no longer with us, n it discouraging as a Christian. All they could tell us is to rejoice always in everything that u know the best; this is not what u promised us.

Comments 3: ... them because there's no pastor or whatsoever man of God in Africa all are businessmen, God has done everything he is supposed to do for us, it's left for us to use the brain he gave us but these crazy people will ignore God to listen to those 419ers, family and marriage breakers.

Comment 4: The cross was heavy but she carried it. God is interested in domestic Violence and he wants it to end. Her death WILL NOT BE IN VAIN. Seek help when you know you are abused. Don't keep quiet you are not Osinachi. Only one osinachi, Only one Jesus.

Comments 5: A wicked person will never go unnoticed n God will give to each one according to his or her deed, I don't know much about Osinachi but her death struck me as if she is my sister, I hate men that maltreat women, if all I heard is true, that man will never know peace.

Comments 6: Mothers please try and train our male children very well, on how to love, respect, and protect their wives. Many of our mothers focus on the female children how to cook, respect, and submit to their husbands, please let's balance it.

Comments 7: WHY DID SHE CHOOSE TO STAY? Most women choose to stay in toxic marriages because of their kids. But what they don't know is that such marriage can send them to an early grave living (sic) same children all by themselves in this cruel world.

Comments 8: Well so sad! Why did you remain with him? With all your talents and intelligence now that you are NO more your kids will be motherless, and your so call husband will get himself another wife...may her soul RIP.

The language used in selected Facebook comments regarding Osinachi Nwachukwu's case

Comment 1 and Comment 2 uses religious and metaphoric language. The use of religious and metaphoric language: "God sends you on a mission," "TOLERANCE," "she must have said father not my will but yours be done." There are superfluous theological and philosophical reasons for Osinachi's death. The commenters refrain from providing direct commentary on the violence or abuse, opting instead to elaborate on her experience using religious terminology, invoking ideas such as divine will, sacred mission, and suffering analogies, exemplified by phrases like "Her ministry and mission came first" and "she must have said, 'Father, not my will but yours be done.'" While such language adds emotional weight, it obscures the core issue of domestic violence. **Commenter 1 asserts that "God" presumably chose Osinachi and endowed her with TOLERANCE.** This writer gives divine purposes to Osinachi's suffering without solid proof (**Comment 1**). Statements like "God chose Osinachi", "equipped with tolerance", and "remotely controlled" offer a religious explanation for her suffering. This utterance lacks factual evidence

and serves as a coping strategy to explain the tragic death, thus creating conversational implicature. Religious ideologies, rather than empirical facts, profoundly influence the lack of a factual basis. There is no evidence to support the claim. This assertion is merely an insinuation, especially considering that Osinachi was burdened with domestic and gender violence. The commenter above made an excessive contribution due to her religiosity. In her opinion, she pictured herself performing her songs of Victory and not crying. This commenter wants to convey her strong religious belief in God.

Also, **the writer** – enumerates types of abuse that Osinachi experienced such as, ‘the financial abuse, physical abuse, emotional abuse, and verbal abuse...’ The commenter emphasised that there must have been times she asked God why have you thou forsaken me just like Jesus did. Though the commenter frames endurance as divinely ordained. The meaning inferred from the utterance is that Osinachi is fated to endure and this is how the writer understands it and presents it to the audience.

This writer, also employs rhetorical questions and allusions to biblical suffering such as, “who can tolerate what she went through?”, “...why have you thou forsaken me just like Jesus did?” the use of the series of rhetorical questions and allusion to biblical statement are to elicit emotional outbursts. Also, the commenter draws on Christian narratives of suffering, martyrdom, and submission. The comment is likely intended for a religious audience familiar with such references. Commenter Positions Osinachi as a chosen figure, shifting focus from abuse to spiritual endurance. This comment reinforces cultural and religious ideologies that valorise female endurance and sacrifice in abusive relationships which may contribute to normalisation of suffering by linking it to divine purpose, potentially discouraging resistance

to abuse. The writer perpetuates silence around abuse by framing endurance as virtuous.

The second commenter elaborates on Osinachi's profound faith in God, which results in conversational implicature. The writer expresses disappointment and disillusionment with religious promises and uses emotive and interrogative language. She asks God questions. She queries why God allowed her to die. Was her marital conflict excessively difficult for him to manage? The commenter emphasised that, although Osinachi devoted her life to church service, supporting her marriage, and nurturing her family, God allowed her to experience unjust suffering. She remained silent, anticipating God's miracles, which ultimately did not materialise. In the reality, there is a discursive Practice which reflects on crisis of faith and challenges religious explanations for suffering. The comment is both personal and communal ("it is discouraging as a Christian"), inviting empathy from others experiencing similar doubts. The author implores God to rescue and liberate Christian women from gender-related curses and afflictions rather than abandoning them. The presentation of excessive information, particularly when articulating religious sentiments, does not contribute to the factual discussion about domestic violence. These religious references function as emotional justifications rather than logical contributions to the discourse. Excessive information unrelated to the main discourse, which is introduced by religious commentary and emotional digressions in **Comments 1 and 2**; these commenters unnecessarily elaborate on Osinachi's faith and divine mission, making their contributions irrelevant to the specific context of her death from domestic violence. This creates indirect meanings (implicatures), such as victim-blaming disguised as piety.

Comment 3 strongly critical tone toward religious leaders (“no pastor...all are businessmen”). The writer employs colloquial and derogatory terms (“419ers”). The writer insists that No pastor or man of God exists in Africa, as stated in **Comment 3**. The expression “All are businessmen shifting the focus from Osinachi’s personal experience to an attack on religious leaders and institutions. The comment diverts attention from gender-based violence to religious criticism despite its being peripherally connected to the religious aspects of Osinachi’s marriage. The sentence is a generalised commentary on African pastors and societal problems. Digressions reveal the intersection of religion and leadership ideologies in conversation. These diversions create conversational implicatures, revealing underlying ideologies about religion and societal leadership. This commenter criticises clinging to false prophets, lies, and falsehoods until death. The speaker believes God has given humans everything they need to succeed and solve problems. We do not effectively use the brains He gave us to think and act. Most people turn to clergy and other religious leaders for solutions to marital problems, but they rarely provide effective ones. Such inaction can lead to death in an abusive marriage. This writer implies that Osinachi should have used her brain and left before dying. The commenter attributed personal blame to Osinachi rather than focusing on the actions of the culprit: Osinachi’s husband. The writer challenges the legitimacy of religious authorities and their role in family and marital issues and encourages self-reliance (“use the brain he gave us”). By saying so, exposes distrust in religious institutions and critiques their complicity or ineffectiveness in addressing social problems like GBV. The writer further promotes rationality over blind faith.

In **comment 4**, “There is but one Osinachi and one Jesus.” The significance is ambiguous—it is uncertain how the distinctiveness

of Osinachi or Jesus pertains to the advice provided. The writer confirms there is domestic violence in Osinachi's case and that the burden was too difficult for her to bear. This commenter insists that God is aware of domestic violence and wants it to stop. She added that her death will not be in vain and also advised people to get help if they are being abused so that they would not become Osinachi. They should not be silent. The writer makes Metaphoric reference to "the cross." This implies that the abuse is too much for her and further affirms God's interest in ending domestic violence. The writer urges victims to seek help and not to emulate Osinachi's silence and combines religious imagery with advocacy for action. The writer further distinguishes Osinachi's case as unique but uses it as a cautionary tale. This comment encourages a shift from passive endurance to active help-seeking and supports changing cultural scripts around silence and suffering in abusive relationships.

The author in **comment 5** - condemns abuse, "wicked person will never go unnoticed". Osinachi's husband, Peter Nwachukwu, has been sentenced to death by hanging, and he is presently facing the consequences of his wickedness. The author asserted that God would reward individuals according to their deeds. She asserted her aversion to violent men and claimed that, if the information she received was accurate, such individuals would not have peace. She asserts that Osinachi's death affected her as though she were her sister, despite her limited knowledge of her. The writer expresses empathy and personal connection ("her death struck me as if she is my sister"). The commenter belief in divine justice and aligns with broader social condemnation of GBV. The writer positions the self as morally aligned with victims and justice. This commenter reinforces social norms against abuse and calls for accountability

and affirms solidarity with victims, challenging patriarchal impunity.

In **comment 6**, the author directly addresses mothers, urging balanced gender socialization. The writer advised women to rear their sons in the same manner as their daughters. Rather than allocating distinct roles to different genders, she emphasises the necessity for mothers to balance gender roles. She asserts that mothers ought to instruct their sons in the importance of loving, respecting, and protecting their wives. The writer critiques traditional gender roles and advocates for change, engaging other parents as agents of social transformation. In the comment, the writer challenges patriarchal upbringing and calls for gender equity in socialization. In so doing, it promotes progressive attitudes toward gender roles.

Comment 7 poses the question, "Why did she choose to stay? 'Most women choose to stay in toxic marriages because of their kids...'" The writer warns of fatal consequences for staying in abusive marriages and reflects on the common societal tendency to question victims' choices. The writer uses cautionary language to influence future decisions and risks perpetuating victim-blaming, but also raises awareness about the dangers of enduring abuse for children's sake. Finally, the writer calls for critical reflection on societal pressures that trap women in abusive relationships.

Commenter 8, for example, persistently queries Osinachi about her decision to remain with her violent husband despite possessing all her talents and intelligence. The writer goes on to say that the so-called children are now motherless and that her husband will marry another woman. Commenter 9 expresses sadness and questions the victim's choices. The writer highlights consequences for children and predicts the abuser's future actions, and also blends sympathy with implicit blame. He/she further

appeals to the audience's sense of irony and injustice, and this may reinforce narratives that hold victims responsible for their fate. The commenter further draws attention to the broader impact of GBV on families, especially children.

The fundamental ideologies in the discourse pertaining to Osinachi Nwachukwu's case

Religious fatalism and rationalisation of suffering: Numerous comments, particularly **1, 2, and 4**, are imbued with religious fatalism— The user's repetitive questions to God in **comment 2** is a linguistic choice/ style used by the commenter and she/he presents a series of rhetorical questions to elicit emotional outbursts: “why did He allow this to happen to a woman who has dedicated her entire life to his work, if anyone could fail her, why did God also?, ... "Was her marriage too much of a big deal for u. U said there is nothing u cannot do, so why??" These comments complicate meaningful discourse on GBV solutions due to excessive emotional appeal.

Also, in the comments, there are notions that suffering, including domestic violence, may serve as a divine trial or purpose. **Comment 1, claims, "she was equipped to go through it all,"** while **comment 2** expresses a desire with the plea, "I wish I could ask God some questions..." **Comment 4:** “.... the cross was heavy, but she carried it." All these comments contextualise her abuse as an aspect of God's mysterious will. This passage illustrates a widespread Christian ideological perspective that suffering, including in abusive marriages, may fulfil a spiritual purpose (Eze & Obi, 2021). This ideology recklessly frames women as martyrs for family or religious stability, legitimising their tolerance of violence in exchange for anticipated divine rewards or societal harmony (Makama, 2013; Effiom & Udo, 2020).

Patriarchal expectations regarding women's endurance: **Comments 7 and 8** perpetuate the patriarchal standards by enquiring, “WHY DID SHE CHOOSE TO STAY?” and implying that her decision to remain constitutes a personal failure. This assigns blame to women for persisting in abusive marriages instead of examining the patriarchal system that forces women to endure for the sake of children or societal honour. This aligns with the findings of Ndubuisi and Chukwu (2023) regarding blame-shifting ideologies in Nigerian online discourse concerning gender violence. The expression is an irrelevant hypothetical question when the real issue should have been primarily focused on the actions of the culprit: Osinachi's husband who chose to abuse his wife.

Critique of religious leaders and Institutions: Conversely, certain remarks, such as **Comment 3**, reflect counter-ideologies that contest religious institutions. The mention of “419ers, family, and marriage breakers” illustrates an increasing public mistrust regarding religious authority. This outlook corresponds with Fairclough's (1995) perspective of discourse as a battleground for ideological conflict, wherein prevailing ideologies (patriarchal religious justification) challenge emerging resistive ideologies (exposing religious hypocrisy).

Emerging feminist ideologies and advocacy: **Comments 4 and 6** emphasise emerging feminist ideological trends. **Comment 6** explicitly critiques the gendered socialisation of children and advocates for balanced parental responsibility: “Mothers, please try and train our male children very well...” This comment exemplifies a progressive feminist ideology promoting gender

equity in upbringing, aligning with global discussions on the prevention of gender-based violence (WHO, 2021). Similarly, **Comment 4 emphasises the importance of seeking help when you become aware of abuse.** Don't keep quiet; you are not Osinachi," rejecting the model of passive endurance in womanhood in favour of assertive self-preservation, in alignment with global feminist discourses (Chiluwa & Ifukor, 2015). The comments reveal a discursive conflict between traditional patriarchal and religious ideologies that rationalise or normalise women's suffering and emerging feminist and reformist ideologies that confront silence, promote equitable gender education, and critique religious hypocrisy. The ideological tensions illustrate that social media platforms function as contentious arenas for negotiating the significance of gender-based violence in Nigeria.

Remarks

The comments on the Osinachi Nwachukwu case sheds light on how average Nigerians, especially within the religious and socio-cultural context of Nigeria, create narratives about gender-based violence (GBV) on social media. These narratives, while emotionally charged and fragmented demonstrate clear patterns in how language is used to either reinforce or challenge existing socio-religious ideologies and patriarchal structures. The study's objectives guided the Analysis, yielding results that have significant implications for ideology, and the broader gender discourse.

A significant portion of the comments—especially Comments 1 and 2—use religious and metaphorical language to frame Osinachi's suffering. Expressions like "God sends you on a mission", "TOLERANCE", and "Father, not my will but yours be done" redirect attention from the concrete realities of abuse to

abstract theological discourses. This rhetorical approach, though emotionally stirring, frequently conceals the fundamental issue of domestic violence. By saying that Osinachi's ability to endure is part of God's plan or a holy mission, people support cultural and religious beliefs that praise women for suffering and being strong, which can stop them from fighting against abuse and keep them quiet about violence against women.

Additionally, these comments often incorporate rhetorical questions and biblical references, evoking Christian themes of martyrdom and submission. This language not only resonates with a religiously informed audience, but it also normalises the expectation that women must endure suffering for a greater spiritual purpose. This discursive pattern corresponds with Fairclough's (1995) assertion that language can perpetuate dominant power structures by legitimising the subjugation of women under the pretext of religious obligation.

Some comments, specifically Comments 7 and 8, reflect and reinforce patriarchal ideologies by questioning Osinachi's decision to stay in an abusive marriage. These remarks implicitly assign blame to the victim, shifting focus away from the perpetrator's actions and the systemic constraints—such as religious doctrine, financial dependency, and social stigma—that restrict women's agency. The victim-blaming narrative is prevalent in Nigerian online discussions regarding gender violence. It reinforces patriarchal expectations concerning women's endurance and self-sacrifice for family or societal honours.

In contrast, specific comments (particularly Comment 3) question the authority and legitimacy of religious leaders and institutions. By characterising pastors as "businessmen" and "419ers", these writers convey public mistrust and discontent regarding the perceived complicity or ineffectiveness of religious

authorities in addressing gender-based violence. Demands for rationality, independence, and institutional accountability increasingly challenge prevailing religious narratives on social media, revealing a discursive conflict.

Amidst the religious and patriarchal narratives, there are clear indications of emerging feminist and reformist ideologies. Comments 4 and 6, for instance, promote help-seeking behaviour, gender equity in upbringing, and proactive strategies for preventing gender-based violence. These remarks contest the normalisation of suffering and silence by imploring victims to speak out and communities to promote equitable gender socialisation. They signify an increasing recognition of the necessity for societal transformation and correspond with global feminist discourses regarding empowerment and agency.

The interplay of these discourses highlights the ideological conflicts that define public discussions regarding gender-based violence in Nigeria. Social media platforms such as Facebook function as venues where new feminist viewpoints and critiques of institutional authority challenge conventional religious and patriarchal values. This situation shows Fairclough's (1995) three-part framework, where language (text), how people discuss and understand comments (discursive practice), and broader societal beliefs (social practice) work together to shape how the public understands and responds to gender-based violence.

Conclusion

This study analyses Facebook comments regarding the Osinachi Nwachukwu case and offers vital information about the role of language and ideology within Nigerian social media discourse on gender-based violence. The analysis reveals that in online discussions on sensitive topics, such as domestic violence, the

conflict between conservative religious ideologies and progressive feminist ideologies highlights the normalisation of abusive marriages and advocates for gender equity. This study highlights social media's function as a reflection of Nigeria's existing gender ideologies and as a transformative platform for ideological debate and possible social change. Nigeria's fight against gender-based violence requires legal and policy measures, as well as a deep examination of languages, ideologies, and cultural beliefs that sustain detrimental practices. Facebook comments, a platform for contesting divergent interpretations of womanhood and religious duty, highlight systemic deficiencies in religious doctrines and gender stereotypes. The tragic demise of Osinachi Nwachukwu signifies not merely a private failure or misguided choice but reflects profound, systematic inefficiencies in religious doctrines, cultural anticipations, and gender stereotypes in society.

The explications here suggest the necessity for deliberate sensitisation initiatives regarding language usage, media literacy, and awareness of gender rights on social platforms. Firstly, Women ought to be empowered to identify early indicators of abuse, assert their rights, and adopt uncompromising measures for self-preservation, even when it contradicts religious or cultural norms. Furthermore, we must hold religious institutions responsible for not dismantling harmful doctrinal interpretations that perpetuate abuse under the guise of spiritual endurance. Again, gender socialisation in Nigerian households must be balanced and inclusive, stressing mutual respect and collective responsibility for family well-being. We should train boys from early childhood not to use violence as a method of control. Additionally, the legal frameworks in Nigeria that address domestic violence need reform and rigorous enforcement. Offenders who promote gender-based violence should face stringent penalties. In April 2025, Justice

Njideka Nwosu-Iheme convicted Peter Nwachukwu of culpable homicide, leading to a death sentence.

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