

# Social Media and Advocacy Communication Research: Trends and Implications

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## Abstract

The proliferation of social media in our everyday life has brought new forms of communication to academic scrutiny. Many non-profit organisations have turned to social media to assist with implementing their strategies such as engaging new consumers, volunteers, and funders. With the influx of studies into social media advocacy, it is imperative to understand the trends in the research methodology employed. The focus of this study is to uncover methodological patterns and theoretical orientations in social media and advocacy studies. This work is a meta-analysis of social media and advocacy research methodologies and their resulting implications with a focus on the analysis of major research methods used, the major theoretical approaches used to study social media and advocacy, recurrent sampling techniques, and the prevalent methods of data analysis. The study content analysed 53 social media and advocacy articles from 19 journals between 2010 and 2015. The meta-data revealed that more than half of the articles sampled did not indicate any theory at all. This trend is a major concern because basic research should be theory-driven with predictions based on theoretical conceptualizations. The study of published peer-reviewed journal articles also revealed that social media and advocacy research would benefit from more rigorous and systematic research process because this would ensure scientifically sound research studies.

Keywords: Trends, Social Media, Advocacy, Meta-analysis, Methodology.

## Introduction

One of the goals of communication research is to address issues that improve lives through research. Folkerts & Stephen (2003:18) say that research in mass communication involves the methodical study of media content, the motivations for media use, and the impact of these on the society. Communication experts engage in research to discover behavioural patterns of people and the society. Consequently, communication research is used in discovering patterns in communication behaviour of people.

One aspect of communication research that has recently enjoyed scholarly inquiry is social media. The proliferation of social media in everyday life has brought these forms of communication to academic scrutiny. Social media, which are growing tremendously, have the potential of being employed for meaningful engagement in advocacy. They offer an avenue for the discussion of an endless array of issues ranging from causes to events, to advocacy, that might otherwise not gain the attention of the traditional media (Qualman, 2009; Ojo, 2014). Advocacy is an effort to shift power by cultivating skills that can amplify the voice of the people and to address a variety of social problems (Obar, Zube, & Lampe, 2012; Guo & Saxton; 2013). When people realise that their contributions can

have a quick effect, they are likely to be more willing to participate because collaborative efforts ginger immediate participation of the masses, thereby making collaborative solutions possible (Obar, Zube, & Lampe, 2012).

Currently, the rate at which information spreads make understanding the potential influences of social media an urgent pursuit (Cheung, 2009; Boulianne, 2009; Douai, Auter, Wedlock & Rudyk, 2013). Social media and advocacy research are still fairly new because the medium and their usage patterns are in their early years, hence, an array of approaches is being used to study social media and advocacy. Social media platforms, however, also have the nature of multifunction and cross-discipline, which provides more choices in research perspective. The value of social media is, therefore, inviting in-depth scholarly inquiries that critically assess its implications (Olorunisola and Martin, 2013).

A theory usually acts as a precursor to research. It provides a framework for viewing the phenomena and understanding the research and practices associated with a particular discipline. A theory is a generalization about a phenomenon, an explanation of how or why something occurs. A researcher who raises theory-driven questions sends the message that the researcher is knowledgeable about the existing knowledge in their chosen area of study. Such a researcher will have the potential to contribute, to the growth of knowledge, however, not all research need theory. A meta-analysis for instance, does not predict the results of a single large study so typically, it does not require a theory to anchor it. The purpose of a study usually determines the methodology while the problem of a study determines the theory that would be used to drive the study. Given the importance of research in the quest to advance knowledge, it becomes imperative to examine the current trends of research methodology employed in social media and advocacy. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the trends in the area of social media-driven advocacy as well as the implications of these trends on this emerging field of scholarship..

### **Statement of the Problem**

Advances in social media technology make the opportunities for networking; locally, nationally, internationally, much faster and simpler (Petray, 2011; Ojo, 2014). Academic explorations have especially been intensified to understand the speed, interactivity and impact of the media in reference to advocacy. The role of social media advocacy has been the focus of some recent studies, mostly from America, Europe, and Australia. Edwards and Hoefer (2010) explored the use (or lack) of social media by social work advocacy groups. Young (2012), explored the status of social media use among non-profit human service organisations in America, while Obar, Zube, & Lampe (2012) analysed how advocacy groups in the United States use social media as tools for facilitating civic engagement and collective action. Obar (2014) also appraised the extent to which some organisations in Canada are adopting social media, and perceive that these technologies offer affordances that contribute to the success of advocacy objectives. These studies collectively suggest that social media can be very powerful in fulfilling several advocacy objectives. The studies have also employed a wide range of research methodologies, including a variety of qualitative and quantitative research methods depending on the objectives of the study.

In a meta-analysis by Douai, Wedlock, Auter and Rudyk (2013), the researchers analysed social media influence studies over the first decade of the 21st Century (2001-2011). They discovered that social media research, from the conceptual definition to theoretical underpinnings, and to methodological rigour and consistency is still in its early years. Given that the medium and its usage patterns are so new, it seems logical that a panoply of approaches will be made, which in turn will help to solidify this emerging research field. In another meta-analysis by Wang, Min and Liu (2014), they systematically reviewed social media studies published from 2009 to 2013 and based on the surge in academic studies on social media, the researchers believe that a large number of high level social media studies will emerge in the future. Boulianne (2009) assessed the significant effect of Internet use on engagement. Thirty eight studies were analysed with 166 effects and it was discovered that the Internet does not have a negative effect on engagement.

Most of these previous studies have not focused on social media for advocacy. This is why this study seeks to do a meta-analysis in the areas of social media for advocacy which would involve a critique of methodologies adopted by researchers, and their justifications, using articles published in reputable communication journals. The concern of this study is to track the current trends in social media and advocacy research methodologies and their resulting implications. This is with a specific focus on the analysis of major research methods used, the major theoretical approaches used to study social media and advocacy, recurrent sampling techniques, and the prevalent methods of data analysis. Additionally, this study would encourage active discussions about areas of methodologies that are overlooked or disregarded in social media and advocacy research. Some of the research questions this study seeks to answer include 1) What are the dominant research methods adopted in social media and advocacy studies? 2) Which sampling techniques are mostly used for data gathering in social media and advocacy studies? 3) Which methods of data analysis are frequently used in social media and advocacy studies? And finally 4) What are the dominant theories applied by researchers in social media and advocacy studies?

### **Conceptual Review**

In this section, a review of concepts and empirical studies relevant to the study is presented such as research procedures, methodology, importance of theory in research, qualitative and quantitative methods for research, sampling methods, data analysis, the impact of social media and the role of social media in advocacy.

### **Social Media**

Social media as one of the entrants of Web 2.0 technologies provide a dynamic media environment for establishing relationships. Obar, and Wildman (2015) refer to social media as "computer-mediated technologies that allow the creating and sharing of information, ideas, career interests and other forms of expression via virtual communities and networks.." Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) however, define social media more comprehensively as "a computer-mediated tool that allow people to create, share or

exchange information, ideas, and pictures/videos in virtual networks. Social media are also described as a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0 and that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content." They include social networking sites, user/company-sponsored blogs, invitation-only social networks, news delivery sites etc.

In essence, social media are means of virtual interaction in which people create, share, and/or exchange information and ideas. Social media also sometimes depend on mobile and web-based applications to create interactive platforms where people share, create, discuss, and modify user-generated content. Most social media platforms, integrate social networks, whereby users create formal ties to other users of their choosing. Closely related to Kaplan and Haenlein's definition is that of Okoro and Nwafor (2013:30) who submit that the "social media are interactive web-based platforms that offer citizens opportunity and place to connect, share opinions, experiences, views, contacts, knowledge, expertise, as well as other things like job and career tips." In essence, social media use online technology tools that enable people to communicate, participate, share and network easily utilising the Internet.

Social media platforms have become popular in Africa. Egypt is Facebook's largest user in Africa, with 27,000,000 users and Nigeria comes second with 15,000,000 users (Internet World Statistics, 2015). Social media have changed the way people communicate with each other (Petray, 2011). Today, there are a remarkable array of social networking platforms which affords people the opportunity to stay connected.

### **Uses of Social Media**

Since the 1990s, when the Internet emerged, the world's Internet population has grown tremendously from a few million into billions (Shirky, 2011). Previous constraints of distance and time allowed some individuals brief connections with friends and family during holidays or the periodic phone call. The interconnected social media life of micro-blogging, social networking sites, picture sharing, videos, and games are as important to this Net Generation as the telephone, newspaper, and television were to the Baby Boomer generation (Shirky, 2011). With the availability of mobile devices, social media allow users to stay connected with whomever, wherever they are, as long as there is access to the Internet.

Social media platforms are changing the way business is done because they allow companies connect and engage with customers in previously unimaginable ways. In 2011, for every passengers who had checked in on Twitter, KLM pleasantly surprised them at the airport with a gift. After this occasion, the KLM Twitter feed was viewed more than one million times during the month of the campaign, generating massive support (Benioff, 2012).

Social media platforms have become imperative ways for building loyalty, brand awareness, and growth in today's businesses. This is evidenced by the increasing popularity of online malls in Nigeria such as Jumia (with over 1,350 likes on Facebook,

489 likes and over 74,400 followers on Twitter), and Konga (with over 1,432,867,000 likes on Facebook and over 111,000 followers on Twitter). Companies such as GTBANK (with over 1.5 million likes on its Facebook page and over 469,000 followers on its Twitter account) and telecommunication giants in Nigeria such as MTN (with over 3,286,346 likes on Facebook and over 514,000 followers on its Twitter account), and Etisalat (It has over 1,382,904 likes on Facebook and over 246,000 followers on Twitter) use social media for customer services.

Other small and medium enterprises also use social media to constantly engage and get feedback. Businesses that require display such as clothing, make-up, hair extensions, electronics, etc., also find social media imperative. Therefore, there has been an influx of social and digital media managers. According to Aaker and Smith, (2010:44) "The Obama campaign of 2008 also demonstrated how massive, meaningful impact that social media can have on getting people engaged and involved." The campaign was able to raise \$639 million from three million donors, mostly from the internet.

Social media technologies are empowering people around the world to demand basic human rights. Social movements of today employ the use of social media to raise awareness about issues such as police brutality, which seems to be on the increase. Shortly after the acquittal of George Zimmerman, a neighbourhood watch volunteer who fatally shot Trayvon Martin (African-American teen) in 2012, #BlackLivesMatter became a hashtag under which dozens of organisations, and millions of individuals, press for change, on social media platforms such as Twitter.

### **Social Media and Advocacy**

Advocacy is perhaps what all individuals do every day consciously or unconsciously to push specific agendas. Advocacy is fundamental in building support for public policies. Effective communication is necessary for the success of advocacy and advocates need to collaborate with the media to publicize their activities so that there can be access to thousands/millions of concerned voices sharing information widely.

Technological advancements have led to improved interactive opportunities for advocates. Social media enable advocates to reach a larger audience; "provide a platform for developing two-way, communication with publics; and facilitate participation in advocacy campaigns more than ever" (Guo & Saxton, 2013:51). Successful social media campaigns will show supporters (netizens) that there are other ways to participate in life changing process. This is because people will be able to share information about their activities on social media platforms like Twitter and Facebook; upload their works on YouTube. Moreover, advocates are able to continuously strengthen their relationship with their communities by sharing timely information about campaigns. (Obar, Zube, & Lampe, 2012; Guo & Saxton, 2013).

As a global medium, social media have proved their presence with the Arab Springs (Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Algeria, Bahrain, Syria) that spawned series of movements using social media platforms as means of spreading relevant information while promoting

revolutionary agendas. As a local medium, social media have been used to spur people into action by sharing information and inviting participation as witnessed by the #OccupyNigeria campaign in 2012, #SaveBagega 2013 and more recently the #BringBackOurGirls 2014. Nigerians employed social media for communicating political issues during the April 2011 general elections (Ojo, 2014) as well as the 2015 general elections. Politicians and political parties used social media influencers to solicit votes. The electorates employed social media platforms in reporting their experiences while also receiving election-related information. According to Chukuebuka, (2013) social media "have also provided social critics with a platform to monitor, critique, and expose illegitimate activities of government officials." Social media also exposes societal ills, for instance, the 2013 Aluu killing of some students of the University of Port Harcourt, was brought to fore using social media platforms. According to Ogbe (2014), as cited by Ojo (2014), the youths sufficiently relied on social media platforms to solve societal problems. More significantly, social media have proven its potential as a tool to create awareness for social, political, and economic policies.

### **Methodology**

The content analysis method of research was adopted for this study. To obtain data for this study, academic journal databases such as Google Scholar, Science Direct, Wiley, Jstor, Proquest was searched. To cast a wide net, the database search used several relevant phrases: such as 'social media and advocacy', 'internet and advocacy', 'advocacy', 'advocacy campaign' 'social media', 'charitable giving', 'fundraising', 'social networking platforms' and 'social networking sites'. The search was restricted to English articles and those with full-text access. Articles lacking relevance to advocacy and social media were not considered.

### **Study Population**

Data were drawn from research journals in the areas of journalism, mass media, social work, advocacy, development, and other communication-related areas of the several databases that were searched. The journals include: Non-profit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly, American Behavioural Scientist, The International Journal of Press/Politics, European Journal of Communication, Journal of Public and Non-profit Affairs, Canadian Journal of Communication, Public Relations Journal, Journal of Information Policy, New Media and Society, Journal of Interactive Advertising Society, Global Media Journal - Canadian Edition, Global Media Journal, Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication, Policy & Internet, Public Relations Review, Advances in Social Work, Environmental Politics, Journal of Service Management, and International Journal of Communication. These journals are published globally, and they represent the development of social media and advocacy research.

### **Sampling Procedure**

The studies reviewed for this paper were purposively selected. Articles focused on social media for advocacy, published between 2010 and 2015 (a span of 6years) were used for this study. A total of fifty-three (53) articles from 19 journals were reviewed. The study did not include books, abstracts, newspapers, reports, wire feeds, magazines, blogs,

podcasts and websites, working papers, audio and video works, review of events, position papers; it was limited to only published journal articles. Articles that were not available due to cost implications were searched for using Google search.

### **Unit of Analysis**

For the purpose of this study, each journal article on advocacy uses of social media formed the unit of analysis.

### **Content Categories**

The following categories were created for the coding: Research methods used, Sampling techniques, Theories adopted, Methods of Data Analysis.

- a. Research methods used: This category was created to determine the specific research methodology employed in each of the studies reviewed in this study. The following sub-categories were created. (1) Content analysis (2) Survey (3) Experiment (4) Focus Group Discussion (5) In-Depth interview (6) Structured interview (7) Case study (8) Online Ethnography (9) Any Other (10) Unspecified.
- b. Sampling techniques used: This category was created to determine the sampling techniques adopted in each of the studies reviewed in this study. The following sub-categories were created. (1) Stratified sampling (2) Purposive sampling (3) Multi-stage sampling (4) Simple random sampling (5) Available sampling (6) Snowball sampling (7) Census sampling (8) Reputational Selection (9) Any Other (10) Unspecified.
- c. Methods of Data Analysis Used by the Researchers: This category was created to determine the various methods of data analysis adopted in each of the studies reviewed in this study. The researchers adopted (1) Descriptive statistics (2) Discourse analysis (3) Thematic analysis (4) Pattern matching (5) Regression Analysis (6) Inductive Analysis (7) Confirmatory Factor Analysis (8) Structural Equation Modelling (9) Any Other (10) Unspecified.
- d. Theories adopted: This category was created to determine the theories used to frame each of the studies reviewed in this study. (1) Media Systems Dependency Theory (2) Theory of Affordances (3) Social Cognitive Theory (4) Media Richness Theory (5) Self-Determination Theory (6) Dragonfly Effect Model (7) Diffusion of Innovations Theory (8) Empowerment Theory (9) Uses and Gratification Theory (10) Theory of Planned behaviour (11) Management Relationship Theory (12) Excellence Theory (13) Spiral of Silence Theory (14) Any Other (15) Unspecified.

### **Coding of Data and Analysis**

In all, 53 studies were coded. Four content categories were created, namely: Research methods, sampling, theories, methods of data analysis. For each of these categories, sub-categories were created and each sub-category was coded 1. Where there was a combination of two sub-categories, each sub-category was assigned 0.5. For example, under 'research method' category, if a study combined 'content analysis' with 'survey', each was assigned 0.5 each instead of 1. All studies that did not make mention of any specific category were coded under 'Unspecified' and each was assigned 1.

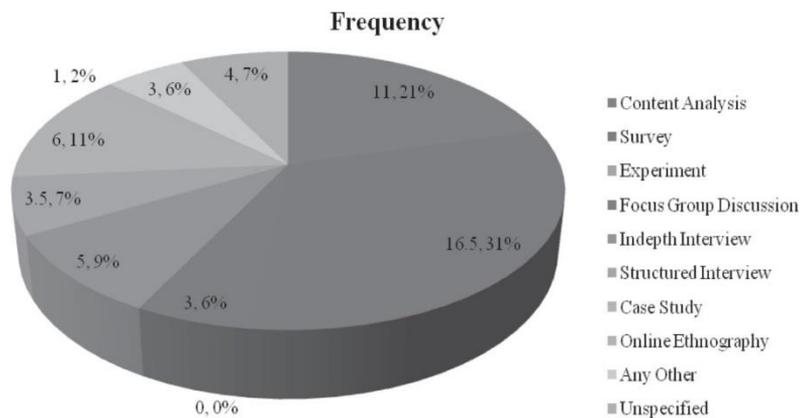
### Method of Data Analysis

This study adopted simple percentage and frequency counts of occurrence for measurement, presented in pie charts. In other words, descriptive statistics were adopted for dataanalysis.

### Data Presentation and Discussion of Findings

This section provides answers to the research questions which includes predominantly used research methods, the major theoretical approaches used to study social media and advocacy, recurrent sampling techniques, and the prevalent methods of data analysis.

#### (1) What are the dominant research methods adopted in social media and advocacy studies?

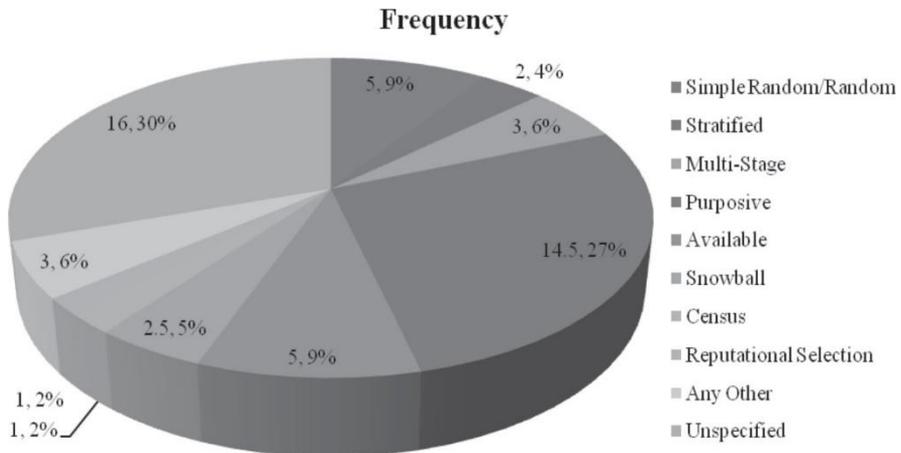


**Fig. 1: Pie Chart Displaying Dominant Research Methods Employed in Social Media and& Advocacy Studies**

Figure 1 shows that survey method is currently the predominantly used research method by the researchers in social media and advocacy studies with 31% (n=16.5) and this is followed by content analysis with 21% (n=11). Case study follows with 11% (n=6) and in-depth interview follows closely with 9% (n=5). Structured interview and focus group discussion were adopted in just 3.5 and 3 journal articles respectively. Online ethnography was adopted in just one journal article and none of the researchers adopted experimental research method. Also, 7.5% (n=4) of the articles surveyed did not specify the research method used.

Some of the studies also combined methods such as survey and structured interview or content analysis and case study. Having a mixed-methods research sometimes ensures depth. One of the reasons researchers combine methods is to achieve cross-validation which involves the combination of sources to study the same phenomenon to gain a more rounded understanding of it. Another reason this is done is to ensure complementary results such that the strengths of one method complements the other.

**(2) Which sampling techniques are mostly used for data gathering in social media and advocacy studies?**



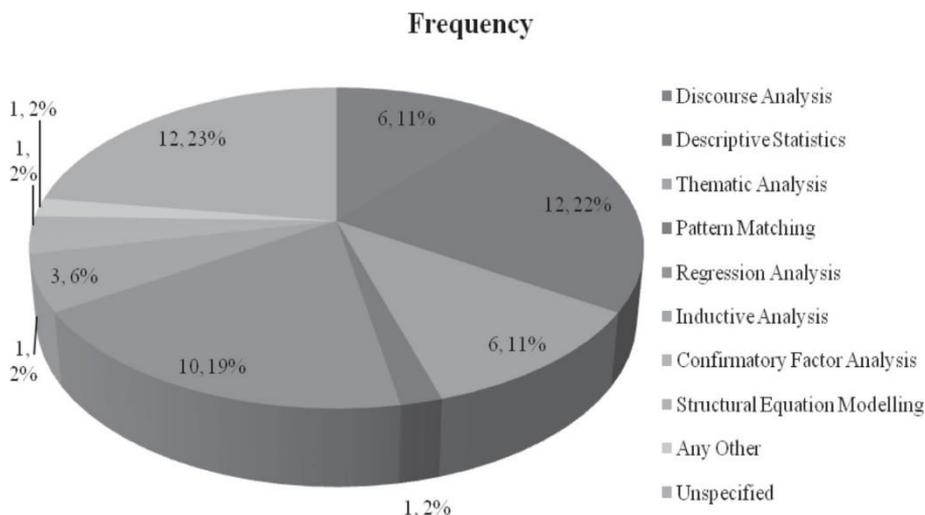
**Fig. 2: Pie Chart Displaying Sampling Techniques Employed in Social Media and Advocacy Studies**

Figure 2 shows that purposive sampling technique is mostly used by the researchers in the sampled social media and advocacy studies with 27% (n=14.5) and this is followed by available sampling technique and the simple random sampling, both with 9% (n=5). The multistage sampling technique follows with 6% (n=3). A total number of 16 journal articles (30%), which is a majority of the sampled articles, did not specify their sampling technique. This has implications for reporting research in communication because, without the specific mention of the sampling technique used, it may be difficult to trust the

quality of research in terms of attention given to the scientific process and rigour.

Non-probability sampling techniques were more prominent with 41.5% than probability sampling techniques. The nature, objectives, characteristics and size of the study population, usually determine the sampling technique(s) to be adopted, and whether or not a combination of methods will be required (Wimmer & Dominick, 2011).

**(3) Which methods of data analysis are frequently used in social media and advocacy studies?**

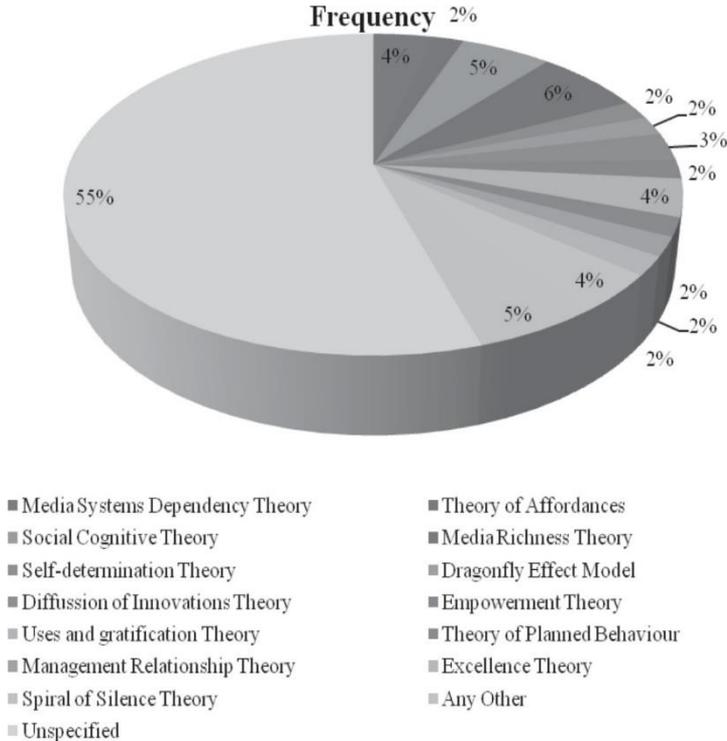


**Fig. 3: Pie Chart Displaying Methods of Data Analysis Employed in Social Media and Advocacy Studies**

Figure 3 shows that descriptive statistics are mostly used by the researchers in the sampled social media and advocacy studies with 23% (n=12). This is followed by regression analysis with 19% (n=10). Thematic analysis and discourse analysis follow, both with 11% (n=6).

Of all the journal articles sampled, 22% (n=12) did not specify the methods used for analysing data, which has implications for reporting research in communication. It is very important for researchers to be as detailed and explicit as possible about methodologies adopted in their studies. Without the specific mention of the data analysis method used, it may be difficult to trust the quality of the research.

**(4) What are the dominant theories of communication applied by researchers in the social media and advocacy studies?**



**Fig. 4: Pie Chart Displaying the Theories Adopted in Social Media and Advocacy Studies**

Figure 4 shows that media richness theory was the most used in social media and advocacy studies in the sampled journal articles with 6.6% (n=3.5) and social cognitive theory follows with 5.7% (n=3). Media systems dependency uses and gratification and the spiral of silence theories follow with 3.8 (n=2). All other theories were either used once or combined with the theories mentioned above. Out of 53 journal articles reviewed, only 45% (n=24) are theory-driven. A staggering 55% (n=29) did not indicate any theory at all. This probably shows that the authors of these articles did not consider the importance of theory in research. Olorunisola (2007) noted that some researchers do not understand that a theory should directly influence the crafting of research questions. When scholars propound theories, it is for the purpose of engaging that theory in different contexts. Such theorists will rely on researchers to try out the propositions of their theory because theories need to be constantly revised and evaluated.

### **Trends and Implications**

After the presentation and analysis of 53 social media for advocacy journal articles, the following trends concerning research methods, sampling techniques, adopted theories and data analysis were observed. The dominant research approach in the majority of the journal articles sampled is the qualitative research with 47%. A combination of the content analysis, the focus group discussion, in-depth interview, case studies, etc. cumulatively surpasses the quantitative research methods such as the survey. The survey method, however, (especially online questionnaire) is predominantly adopted in social media and advocacy studies. Qualitative research generally focuses on individuals with extensive knowledge of the subject being studied (Daymon & Holloway, 2002). Qualitative techniques in research are capable of increasing a researcher's intensity in understanding the phenomenon under investigation (Wimmer & Dominick, 2011). This is particularly true when the phenomenon has not been investigated previously. During a field observation or focus group discussion, a researcher might discover aspects of a subject that were not envisaged before the study began. A questionnaire is not likely to provide in-depth answers especially to questions that were not asked directly. Social media for advocacy is relatively new field which is probably why more social media and advocacy researchers are using the qualitative methods more.

The non-probability sampling techniques, especially the purposive sampling, available sampling (convenience sampling) and the simple random sampling are more prominent with social media and advocacy studies with 41.5%. Probability sampling normally adopts a of systematic approach, such as a table of random numbers, to ensure that each unit has an equal chance of being selected (Rubin & Babbie, 2005; Gerring, 2010; Wimmer & Dominick, 2011).

It is, however, important to note that 30% of the journal articles sampled did not specifically mention their sampling techniques which make it difficult to trust the quality of research in terms of attention given to rigour. This is even more important because social media and advocacy are just gaining ground in scholarly domain and studies need to be systematic to ensure validity.

Descriptive statistics and regression analysis are the most frequently used methods of data analysis for the sampled social media and advocacy journal articles. This shows that most of the studies relied on quantitative methods in analysing data. Although qualitative methods of data analysis are being used, the majority of researchers still relies on quantification in data gathering and analysis.

Of all the articles studied, 22% of them did not indicate their methods of data analysis, which is not good enough as social media research needs to be rigorous to ensure validity and reliability. Deficiencies in the methodologies used in research can be problematic (Cheung, 2009), thus causing a lack of credibility to the researcher and the research itself. Lack of rigour could lead to internal validity issues. With the influx of emerging social media and advocacy studies, if the methods used are not clearly specified, future researchers would be incapable of replicating studies aimed to expand literature.

This study discovered that the media richness theory was the most used theory in social media and advocacy studies in the sampled journal articles, followed by social cognitive theory. Media systems dependency, uses and gratification and the spiral of silence theories are also frequently used theories. However, it is essential to mention that majority of the articles sampled (an astounding 55%) did not indicate any theory at all. This trend is a major concern because basic research should be theory-driven with predictions based on theoretical conceptualizations. Empirical research is done to develop, test and clarify these theories. The theoretical foundations are perspectives through which the world is seen. For this reason, theories need to undergo continuous revision, evaluation, construction and reconstruction by others, including those who may experience alternative perspectives of the observable world (Olorunisola, 2007). Although, it is imperative to note that not all studies need theory. For instance, this current study does not require a theory because it is a meta-analysis, which typically is conducting research about previous research.

The knowledge and application of theories, however, help researchers to join a global conversation (Olorunisola, 2007). Additionally, the understanding of the relationship between a theory and empirical observation would add significance to research undertakings (Frank & Riedl, 2004). A researcher who raises theory-driven questions show that she/he is knowledgeable about the existing knowledge in their chosen area of study. Such a researcher will have the potential to contribute, in a significant way, to the growth of knowledge.

### **Summary and Conclusion**

This study attempted to track the current scholarly conversations in social media and advocacy research with specific focus on the prominent research methods, the theoretical approaches used to study social media and advocacy, recurrent sampling techniques, and the prevalent methods of data analysis and their resulting implications.

The prominent research approach in the majority of the journal articles sampled is the qualitative research, although the survey is mostly used. The non-probability sampling techniques are more prominent with social media and advocacy studies. Descriptive statistics and regression analysis are the most recurrent used methods of data analysis and media richness theory is the most used, although more than half of the sampled articles did not indicate any theory used to craft their study.

With the analysis of published peer-reviewed journal studies, one can conclude that social media research would benefit from more rigorous, systematic research process because this would ensure validity, reliability and scientifically sound research studies. It is also apparent from this study that research about social media and advocacy in Africa and specifically Nigeria, featured in international journals are scant. Finally, social media and advocacy research are still relatively new. Given that the medium and its usage patterns are in the early years, it seems logical that an array of approaches will be used which will help to solidify this emerging research field.

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