A Multimodal Analysis of Pro-life and Pro-choice Campaigns on Selected Social Media Platforms

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Abstract
The debate on abortion remains highly contentious, with pro-life and pro-choice campaigns utilizing diverse communication strategies to shape public opinion. However, existing studies often focus on verbal arguments, overlooking the interplay between linguistic and visual elements in these campaigns. This study examines the multimodal strategies employed in pro-life and pro-choice campaigns on selected social media platforms, analyzing how verbal and non-verbal resources interact to construct meaning and influence audiences. Using multimodal discourse analysis, the study explores the integration of text, images, and other semiotic resources in campaign materials. The analysis reveals that while both sides employ persuasive language and emotive visuals, pro-life campaigns frequently use religious and moral appeals, whereas pro-choice campaigns emphasize autonomy and rights-based discourse. Additionally, findings indicate that the strategic combination of linguistic and visual elements enhances audience engagement and ideological reinforcement. The study recommends that future research should further investigate the role of digital affordances in shaping multimodal persuasion.

Keywords: *Pro-life, Pro-choice, Social media campaigns, Multimodal Discourse Analysis*

Introduction

The emergence of social media platforms has significantly influenced the abortion debate, one of the most divisive and controversial topics of our time. Platforms such as Facebook and X (formerly Twitter) are increasingly utilised by both pro-life and pro-choice organisations to disseminate their ideologies, engage with diverse audiences, mobilise supporters, and participate in public discourse. A crucial aspect of their communication strategies is the intentional use of language, particularly formal registers, in combination with various multimodal elements, including sound, images, and videos. The integration of these sensory components enhances the impact of their messages by reinforcing credibility, authority, and engagement.

In today's digital landscape, social media serves as a critical arena for advocacy efforts, particularly concerning reproductive rights. These platforms are inherently multimodal, combining text with interactive, visual, and auditory elements (Jewitt, 2013). Multimodal discourse analysis provides a valuable framework for examining how pro-life and pro-choice campaigns construct and present their arguments by integrating different communication modalities. Research suggests that political and social campaigns become significantly more persuasive when multimodal elements—such as images, videos, music, and emojis—are strategically deployed (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2001; Bateman, 2014). By blending multimodal resources with formal registers—characterised by authority, professionalism, and structure—organisations can enhance the legitimacy and effectiveness of their campaigns (Jones, Chik, & Hafner, 2015).

The pro-life movement advocates for the protection of unborn life, viewing abortion as morally and ethically wrong. Their agenda includes promoting restrictive abortion laws, offering alternatives such as adoption, and providing support for pregnant women through crisis pregnancy centres. They emphasise religious, ethical, and scientific arguments to affirm the sanctity of life from conception. In contrast, the pro-choice movement focuses on reproductive rights, asserting a woman's autonomy over her body and the right to access safe and legal abortion services. Their agenda includes ensuring comprehensive reproductive healthcare, legal protections for abortion, and education on contraception. They argue that restricting abortion violates women's rights and increases the risk of unsafe procedures. Both groups employ multimodal strategies—visual,

verbal, and digital—to influence public opinion, shape policies, and mobilise supporters.

This study investigates the use of multimodal features and formal registers by pro-life and pro-choice organisations on social media platforms. Analysing both linguistic choices and visual and auditory elements provides deeper insights into their messaging strategies, target audiences, and the broader cultural and political contexts in which they operate (Bouvier & Rosenbaum, 2020). Studies on social media rhetoric by Decker (2024) and Papacharissi (2015) highlight how platform-specific affordances shape communication strategies. For instance, campaigns on visually oriented platforms like Instagram may prioritise imagery, whereas text-heavy platforms such as X (formerly Twitter) may focus more on linguistic expression. This research aims to explore notable variations in the application of formal registers and multimodal elements across different social media platforms used by pro-life and pro-choice organisations. Language and multimodal elements play a crucial role in shaping public opinion and driving social and political developments. Previous studies have underscored the power of language in influencing public discourse (Fairclough, 1989; Lakoff, 2004) and the contribution of multimodal components in enhancing communicative impact (Kress & van Leeuwen, 1996; Jewitt, 2009). Likewise, social media provides a unique space for real-time communication, allowing organisations to reach vast audiences and influence public perceptions of their messages. By strategically crafting language and integrating multimodal features, pro-life and pro-choice organisations can shape global public opinion and contribute to ongoing debates on abortion and reproductive rights.

The Role of Social Media in Advocacy Campaigns
In Nigeria, where scholars like Obadare (2016) and Opeibi (2019) have highlighted social media's role in amplifying civic participation, promoting political discourse, and enabling grassroots mobilisation, social media has become a crucial tool for advocacy, allowing organisations and individuals to mobilise support, influence public opinion, and foster social change. Platforms like Facebook, X (formerly Twitter), Instagram, and WhatsApp have changed the dynamics of campaigns, allowing activists to bypass traditional gatekeepers and connect directly with audiences. Prominent campaigns such as #EndSARS and #BringBackOurGirls serve as examples of how social media has strengthened advocacy initiatives. Platforms were used by these groups to plan demonstrations, spread

awareness, and win over people around the world. For example, Ajibade (2021) attributes the #EndSARS protests to social media, which helped spread worldwide solidarity and provide real-time updates while elevating Nigerian voices. The #BringBackOurGirls campaign also used digital channels to plan events and interact with the public, as noted by Okoro and Odoemelam (2013). These illustrations highlight how social media helps connect online and offline advocacy.

Social media's interactive and visual features increase its efficacy in advocacy. According to academics like Uwalaka (2019) and Adesina (2020), multimedia content—such as pictures, movies, and infographics—makes difficult subjects more approachable and emotionally compelling. These tactics are frequently used to influence public opinion in campaigns pertaining to delicate subjects like abortion. According to Asogwa (2015) and Ufuophu-Biri and Iwu (2014), two-way communication on platforms also encourages user-generated material and real-time feedback, making advocacy activities more responsive and participative. Notwithstanding its benefits, social media advocacy has drawbacks, such as false information, digital divisions, and censorship by the government. Audiences can get divided by false information, especially when it comes to divisive topics like reproductive rights (Pwashikai & Woyopwa, 2019). While official limitations, like the temporary Twitter ban during the #EndSARS protests, impede persistent efforts, Adeola (2021) notes that limited internet connectivity in rural areas limits campaign reach (Egbunike, 2020). According to research looking at how Facebook and X promote communication, community development, and grassroots mobilisation, overcoming these barriers will be essential to maximise social media's potential in advocacy.

Multimodal Discourse Analysis in Digital Advocacy
Semiotic materials like text, images, and colour are combined in social media flyers to create powerful messages for online activism. The degree of authenticity or confidence that these components transmit is referred to as modality. While low-modality visuals, like cartoons or abstract images, might encourage participation and creativity, high-modality visuals, like photographs or realistic images, increase the trustworthiness of a message. Accordingly, low-modality texts use informal or conversational language to promote discourse, whereas high-modality texts communicate authority and factuality (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006; Thibault, 2000).

Conversely, modes explain how the semiotic resources used in communication affect the impact of social media flyers. Together, the text, images, font, colour, and layout determine the meaning of the message. While language provides clear, succinct information, images evoke feelings and attract attention (Lester, 2011). While font conveys formality and tone, colours influence the message's emotional impact (Furnham & Gunter, 1987; Carter et al., 2002). According to Kress and van Leeuwen (2006), a well-structured layout enhances readability and focusses the viewer's attention. The efficacy of the flyer in reaching its intended audience depends on how these modalities interact. The design and efficacy of social media flyers are also influenced by the distribution channel. Facebook and X (Twitter) each have their own audience expectations and limitations. Twitter encourages conciseness, with hashtags and succinct language playing a key role (Marwick & Boyd, 2011). The way flyers are made and customised to the tastes of the audience is influenced by these platform-specific variations. Additionally, flier designs are shaped to maximum visibility by social media algorithms that emphasise material that generates engagement (Tufekci, 2015). MDA provides a framework for comprehending how different modes- text, images, sound, and video-combine to produce meaning in digital domains, which is useful in digital activism. When examining how advocacy campaigns use multimodal tactics to engage audiences, MDA is very helpful. For instance, the #EndSARS movement broke down barriers to literacy by using text, graphics, and video to spread its message and reach a large audience. MDA emphasises the dynamic interplay of semiotic resources, showing how multimodal communication on digital platforms promotes engagement (Adebomi, 2020). Digital advocacy efforts are thus greatly influenced by the combination of modality, modes, and medium in social media flyers. Together, these components efficiently convey messages, hold audiences' attention, and promote discussion.

Theoretical Framework
A crucial theoretical paradigm for examining meaning-making in modern digital communication, especially in advocacy speech, is Multimodal speech Analysis (MDA). MDA acknowledges that communication involves more than just language and involves a variety of semiotic resources, including text, images, colour, typography, and spatial organisation (Bateman, 2014). This understanding is rooted in the larger discipline of social semiotics (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2001, 2006). This approach is especially applicable to the analysis of pro-choice and pro-life

efforts on social media, because audience perception and ideological positioning are greatly influenced by the interaction of verbal and non-verbal cues. MDA is based on the idea that meaning is co-constructed by combining various modes, each of which adds in a different way to the total communication effect (Jewitt, 2009). Modes, according to Kress and van Leeuwen (2006), are socially and culturally constructed and impact the framing and interpretation of communications. An analytical method that takes into consideration these multimodal interactions is crucial in the digital age, as social media platforms enable the convergence of text, images, audio, and video (Machin, 2016). O'Halloran et al. (2011) go into additional detail about how digital technology is changing discourse, highlighting how digital affordances like visual emphasis and interactivity open up new avenues for persuasion. This viewpoint supports Bateman's (2014) contention that genre-specific rules govern multimodal meaning-making, which makes MDA a perfect instrument for analysing social media advocacy efforts.

Strategic multimodal decisions are used by pro-choice and pro-life campaigns on social media to bolster their stances and sway public opinion. These campaigns use a mix of:

- Linguistic components: emotionally charged narratives, slogans, and persuasive language.
- Visual components: Symbolic colours (e.g., blue for trust, red for urgency), expressive face expressions, and graphic imagery (e.g. foetal images).
- Typographic and spatial components: contrast to draw attention to ideological positions, structured layouts to direct viewer attention, and bolded and capitalised text to underline important statements (Forceville, 2020).

Through the use of MDA, this study explores how intermodal relations shape persuasive messages in advocacy discourse, going beyond a conventional language analysis. This is consistent with the work of Jewitt (2016), who emphasises the relevance of multimodal literacy in digital persuasion, and van Leeuwen (2008), who emphasises the role of visual grammar in forming ideological narratives. Gaining a deeper understanding of the strategic use of multimodal resources in pro-choice and pro-life campaigns can help with audience reception, ideological framing, and digital activism.

Research Methodology

The employment of formal registers in pro-choice and pro-life campaigns on particular social media platforms was investigated in this study using a Multimodal Discourse Analysis (MDA) methodology. Exploration of different semiotic resources, including language, pictures, symbols, and other visual components, was made easier by MDA. Understanding how formal language was used in conjunction with other forms of communication, such as images, hashtags, and captions, to advance pro-choice and pro-life beliefs was the main goal. Relevant Pro-choice and Pro-life campaign content was chosen using a purposive sample technique. Due to their extensive usage in social media activism and their ability to produce rich multimodal content, including text, videos, photos, and hashtags, Facebook and X (Twitter) were selected as the social media platforms for research. To ensure legitimacy, posts were chosen based on where they came from, which are reputable advocacy organisations. Current trends and societal sentiments were captured by concentrating on content published within the last five years (2019-2024). Images in a multimedia format were utilised to improve participation and demonstrate successful communication techniques. Furthermore, the articles' regional relevance shed light on how lobbying activities were influenced by local environments.

Manual extraction method was used for data collecting. In order to find and choose pertinent posts based on the predetermined criteria, social media platforms were searched. Additionally, tools and software were used to automatically gather posts by filtering and retrieving material that satisfied the criteria using algorithms. Posts with hashtags like #iamprolife, #LetTheBabyLive, #EndAbortion, #AbortionIsHealthcare, and #LegaliseAbortion were found using social media search engines and manual scraping methods. It was also observed that contextual information, such as the goal, timing, and target audience of the campaign, offered greater insights into the employment of formal registers. The study focused on linguistic, visual, and multimodal elements while adhering to Multimodal Discourse Analysis protocols. The posts' text components were subjected to linguistic analysis, which identified characteristics including advanced vocabulary, impersonal tone, and passive voice in the formal register. In order to ascertain how these components complimented or opposed with the formal register, visual and symbolic analysis investigated semiotic resources outside of language, such as colour

choices, image symbolism, and graphic content. To understand how various modes (text, image, and design) interacted to deliver the overall message, intermodal relationships were evaluated. This multimodal method captured the interaction of linguistic and non-linguistic factors in these advocacy activities and guaranteed a thorough knowledge of the usage of formal registers in pro-choice and pro-life social media campaigns.

Multimodal Discourse Analysis of Pro-Life Campaign Statements
    i.   The Use of Authority Figures

The ideas of MDA, which studies how various semiotic resources interact to produce meaning, are strongly aligned with Cialdini's (1984; 2016) claim that people with authority, credibility, and knowledge are more persuasive. According to Kress and van Leeuwen (2006), the employment of authoritative persons in pro-life advocacy, such as scientists, physicians, and well-known people, helps to establish credibility and trust, two important factors that affect the audience's perception and behaviour. In order to establish their message as reliable and grounded in knowledge, pro-life movements try to include authoritative speakers. This is important because, as Cialdini notes, persuasion is improved by trust in authority. Thus, using the opinions and support of well-known individuals strategically increases the credibility of pro-life organisations' messaging and solidifies their position in the abortion debate.
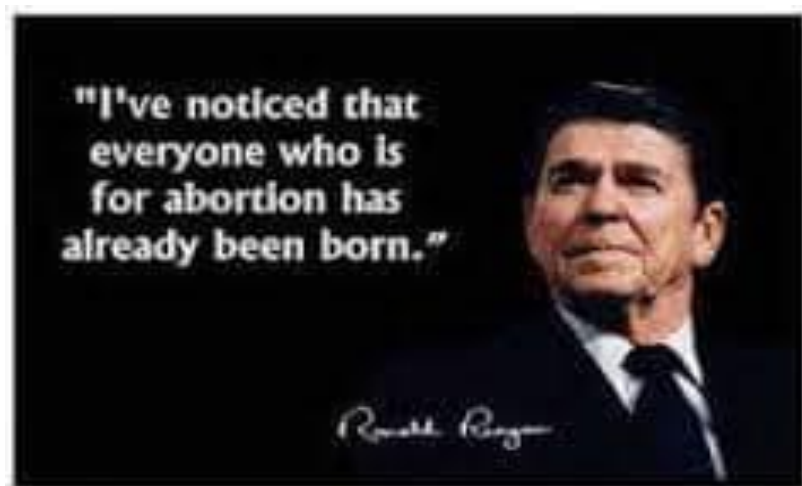

Figure 1: Ronald Reagan's Pro-life Comment

Ronald Reagan's quote from a pro-life campaign in Figure 1 is a good illustration of this tactic and provides a clear illustration of formal registers. In addition to having an authoritative voice, his statement, "I've noticed that everyone who is for abortion has already been born," also exudes high modality due to its declarative, fact-based tone. The pro-life viewpoint is presented as an indisputable truth in the declaration, which functions as a high-modality text according to MDA standards. Its language also supports its authoritative position. The inclusion of Reagan's quotation strengthens the pro-life argument by linking it to a well-known political figure, increasing its impact. By highlighting how authority affects public perception and engagement, this multimodal strategy for establishing credibility through authoritative personalities is consistent with Cialdini's principles of persuasion.

The image's multimodal composition—text, images, and color—increases its persuasiveness even further. Pro-life organisations seek to identify the unborn child with purity and innocence, which are symbolised by the white font used in the quote. According to Furnham and Gunter (1987), the selection of hue can be understood as a symbolic element that communicates emotional and moral importance. The black background, on the other hand, reinforces the message's high modality by adding sophistication and authority (Hess, 2007). The use of these colours gives the picture a sense of strength and gravity, two qualities that are essential for inspiring the audience to support and sympathise with the pro-life position. MDA asserts that this deliberate merging of text, colour, and background serves as a style that works in tandem with the text to provide a coherent, convincing narrative, rather than only serving as a visual aid. Furthermore, the quote's tone and universality are enhanced by the generic usage of the word "everyone." The statement appeals to a wider audience by being inclusive, reiterating its point without mentioning any one person or group. By implying that the argument is a universally applicable truth rather than just a personal view, this strategy improves the language. In the context of MDA, this intentional decision to engage a larger audience reflects a strategic use of language as a semiotic resource to increase the persuasive power of the message (Kress, 2010).

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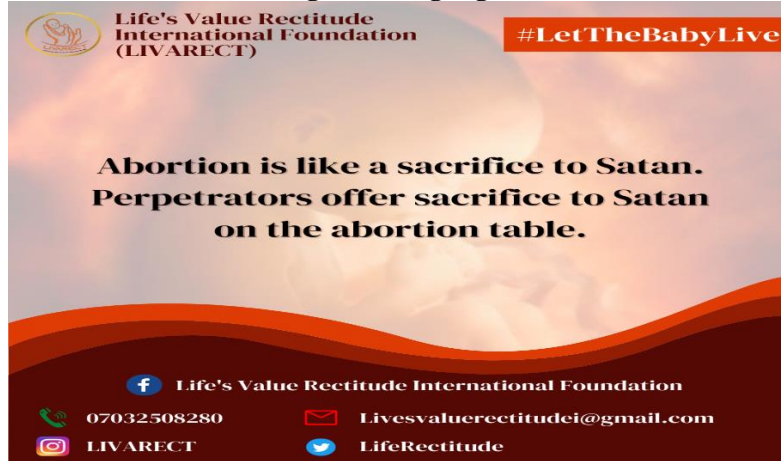## ii.   The Use of Religious Language

Figure 2: LIVARECT's #LetTheBabyLive Campaign flier

The Life's Value Rectitude International Foundation (LIVARECT) flyer is a prime example of how a variety of semiotic resources—such as text, images, colour, and religious references—combine to create a powerful pro-life message. The flyer successfully uses modality and medium in addition to integrating many modes to appeal to its target audience. Drawing on Lewis and Petty's (2017) research on guilt appeals, which highlights the significance of moral values in prosocial action, this flyer demonstrates how guilt and fear can be used in advocacy to influence behaviour in a socially beneficial manner. In order to convey warmth, vitality, and innocence, the flyer's visual modality uses colours like pink, orange, brown, and white on a softly illuminated background image of a foetus. The picture of the foetus in its "beauty" emphasises the value of life and supports pro-life viewpoints that regard the unborn child as a living being that should be protected. These images add to the high-modality impact, which gives the flyer a serious and genuine feel. Without being overly stark, the image of the fetus's subtlety encourages reflection. By establishing a bond with the unborn kid, such decisions stimulate an emotional reaction based on empathy, hence utilising prosociality (Lewis & Petty, 2017).

The flyer's linguistic modality strengthens the guilt appeal that is at the heart of its pro-life message. The use of strong, high-modality language in phrases like "Abortion is like a sacrifice to Satan" makes the

assertion formal, straightforward, and authoritative. The brochure instills guilt in the viewer by evoking moral censure through a simile that compares abortion to a sacrificial offering, suggesting that individuals who perform abortions are participating in an awful deed. The demand for a return to religious principles as a moral compass is strengthened by this allusion to sacred writings, particularly the Bible, which resonates with the target audience's moral framework. The font and colour scheme used in the layout and typography convey the seriousness of the message. The lettering's choice of brown and white echoes the pro-life stance by conjuring images of innocence, life, and purity. Despite being gentle, the warm hues of pink and orange create a visual contrast with the severity of the accusation, emphasising how serious the claim is. By connecting the visual components to a contemporary digital call to action, the hashtag #LetTheBabyLive promotes additional engagement and highlights the message's urgency. From a medium point of view, the flyer is a creation of the digital advocacy environment, made to stand out on platforms where clear messaging and eye-catching imagery are crucial. According to Opeibi and Shodipe (2023), the flyer is in line with multimodal discourse theories, which describe how social media and other platforms combine text, picture, and colour to produce potent emotional and cognitive impacts. In keeping with MDA's perspective of communication as an interaction of semiotic resources, the pro-life flyer uses multimodal tactics to captivate viewers, elicit strong feelings, and promote advocacy.

iii.   The Use of Positive Modalities

In the context of advocacy, MDA provides a thorough framework for examining the ways in which various semiotic resources—such as language, images, colours, and layout—interact to affect the audience and communicate meaning. When analysing pro-life efforts, which usually use positive modalities to communicate their message of respect for life, this method is especially helpful. Positive methods, according to Seligman (1990), place a strong focus on a positive and upbeat tone that promotes emotional resilience and message engagement. Positive modalities are deliberately used in pro-life campaigning to encourage a principled, respectful affirmation of life. A tone that is both assertive and polite is produced by combining a formal register with a positive modality, which invites the audience to consider the topic at hand carefully. This formal tone is essential for conveying the seriousness of the pro-life message and making sure the conversation is presented in a way that is appropriate and courteous for a wide range of listeners (Opeibi & Shodipe, 2023).
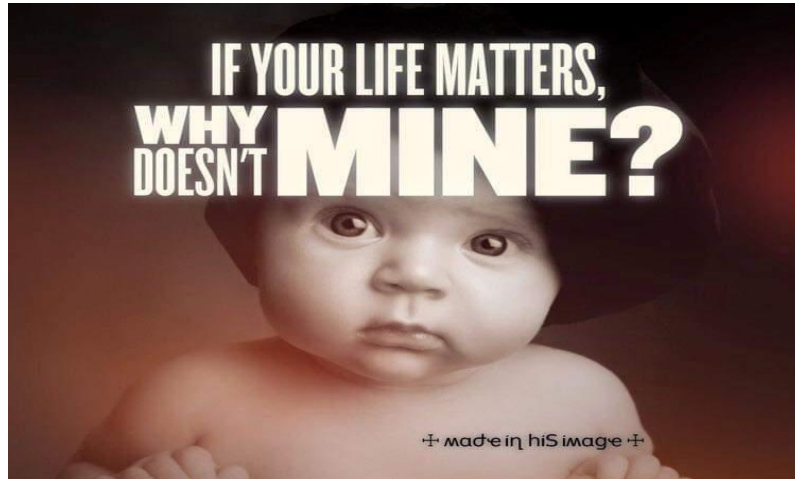
Figure 3: Made in His Image Flier

One of the main elements of pro-life flyers' positive modality is the use of text and images. As seen in Figure 3, the text *"If your life matters, why doesn't mine?"* and an image of a newborn looking directly at the viewer combine affirmative language with high-modality imagery. The picture of the infant staring straight at the audience gives the message more emotional depth and increases its allure. The audience is urged to reevaluate their position on the worth of life, especially that of the unborn, by the baby's look, which resembles an interrogation. A respectful discussion regarding the dignity of life is fostered by this blend of formal language and potent imagery. This pro-life flyer's positive mood is further enhanced by the colour selections. The use of brown and white tones is very symbolic; white denotes innocence and purity, while brown symbolises the earthy, human side of life. With white signifying the child's innocence and brown highlighting the unborn child's humanity, these hues serve to further emphasise the idea that life is sacred. White's prominence in the text draws attention to important terms like "why" and "mine," emphasising the equality message and the intrinsic worth of life at all stages.

Multimodal Discourse Analysis of Pro-Choice Campaign Statements
    i.   The Use of Authority and Objectivity

In line with MDA, the use of language in pro-choice campaign statements is a purposeful tactic to increase the message's authority and trustworthiness by fusing organised verbal forms with other semiotic resources like colour and pictures. These advertisements use language that conveys a serious, professional tone that appeals to people that are interested in delicate, morally challenging, and divisive topics like reproductive rights. Modality in MDA relates to the level of assurance and power expressed through communication channels, and language is essential in fostering a sense of accountability and trust in this context. Pro-choice campaigns avoid using emotive or provocative language that could offend various audience segments by presenting the abortion topic in a logical, courteous, and fact-based manner. This strategy is consistent with MDA's tenets, which state that the use of text, images, colour, and layout all work together to increase the persuasiveness of the message. Specifically, language makes the message more serious and encourages interaction with a wide range of audiences, such as the public, medical experts, and policymakers (Opeibi & Shodipe, 2023). This is demonstrated by the way the textual modality, with lines like "Countries have: Less crime" and "Pregnant people can: Stay in school," reaffirms the authority and pertinence of the message.
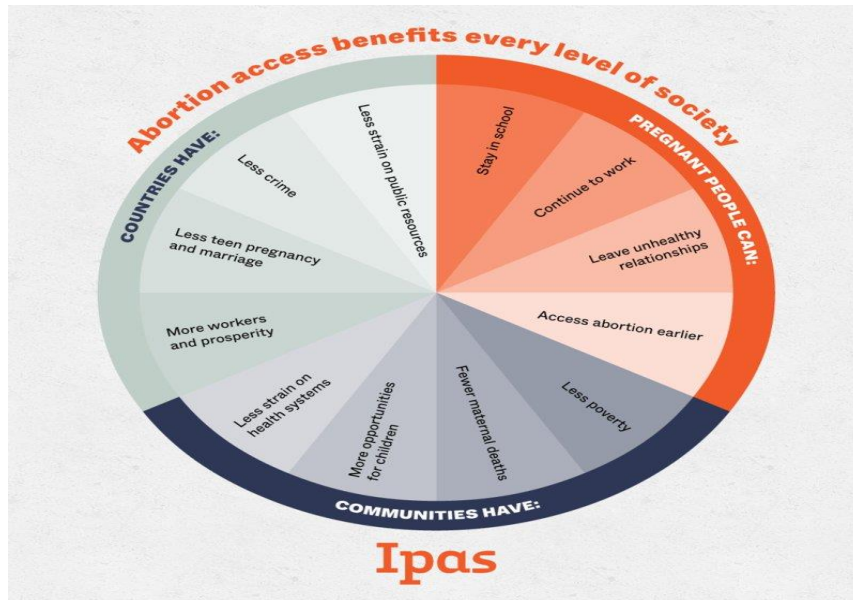
Figure 4: Ipas Abortion Access Benefits Everyone in the Society

To bolster its advocacy, Figure 4 combines visual components with high-modality words. The flyer's choice of colour is crucial to increasing the message's intended impact. Orange represents fresh starts for expectant mothers, blue represents community harmony and well-being, and green, which is used to depict nations, highlights the economic and developmental advantages of legalising abortion. Each colour enhances the campaign's visual coherence by complementing the text's formal, fact-based tone. Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) assert that colour in multimodal texts can elicit particular feelings and direct the viewer's comprehension. In this instance, the hues combine to provide a coherent, compelling story. The design and arrangement of the flyer, which includes separate parts for nations, communities, and expectant mothers, also directs the audience's attention and supports the main idea of the message: "Access to abortion benefits every level of society." The design decisions, such as the obvious separation of the diagram and the exact use of colour, are meant to maximise the flyer's impact across various social groups. According to Adebomi (2020), the language and its thoughtful use of multimodal aspects guarantee that the audience will not only understand the content but also find it emotionally compelling.

iv.   Official Announcements

Figure 5: Ipas Our Values

Figure 5 shows how official statements employ language to establish credibility and communicate serious, fact-based intentions. MDA examines how the interaction of textual, visual, and design elements creates meaning and engages the viewer. The campaign's formal language and emphasis on accuracy through numbers, which communicate urgency and authority, are consistent with high modality in textual and visual formats. High modality is crucial for conveying significant news, policy changes, and weighty topics like reproductive health in order to ensure that the message is taken seriously. Prominently displayed in orange, the organization's insignia, "IPAS," is easily recognisable and exemplifies the visual communication approach. The hue orange, which stands for activism and vigour, complements the textual elements and highlights the advocacy efforts of the organisation. A well-known semiotic tool, the logo serves as both a visual representation of the organization's identity and a declaration of authority. "OUR VALUES" and "OUR AIM" are capitalised to highlight this authority, and the layout further arranges the content by clearly separating the values from the goals.

The campaign's language, which outlines values like "Driven, Principled, Bold, Interdependent," makes use of high modality to project a sense of

commitment and professionalism. Each sentence succinctly and authoritatively conveys the organization's primary focus on justice and health. The use of quantitative numbers as a compelling tactic, such as reducing the number of unsafe abortions from 1.6 million to zero, strengthens the campaign's evidence-based approach. This use of data-driven language enhances the advocacy's credibility and aligns with the high modality required to articulate significant, attainable goals by appealing to both lawmakers and medical professionals. The circular arrangement of the values—"Driven, Principled, Bold, Interdependent"—finally represents interdependence and the ongoing effort to achieve the organization's goals. The circle is a versatile shape that conveys continuity and unity while keeping an attractive and well-organised structure. This increases its accessibility and appeal to a broader spectrum of individuals, including those outside the medical industry.

iii.   The Use of Statistics

In Multimodal Discourse Analysis (MDA), language and structured visuals are powerful tools for achieving clarity and persuasion in policy-driven campaigns. The use of statistics not only supports evidence-based lobbying but also enhances the objectivity and credibility of the message. In the example of the title, "Percentage of Nigerian women reporting any potential abortion-related complication, by wealth," the language is precise and technical, reinforcing the intended audience of policymakers, healthcare professionals, and researchers. The statistical figures, such as 91%, 73%, and 40%, are presented without emotional embellishment, underscoring a commitment to factual, unbiased communication. The visual modality of the horizontal bar graph contributes to the formal tone of the message by presenting the data in a clear, systematic manner. Bar graphs are commonly used in professional publications for their ability to convey complex information straightforwardly. The use of a muted colour palette—different shades of purple and blue—aligns with the formal tone by ensuring that the visual presentation does not detract from the seriousness of the message (Furnham & Gunter, 1987). The choice of percentage labels rather than further explanations assumes that the target audience has a sufficient level of expertise to interpret the significance of the data, which is a characteristic of a discourse aimed at knowledgeable readers.

Institutional branding, such as the inclusion of the PMA logo, adds an additional layer of authority and reliability to the visual presentation. The logo signals that the information is sourced from a

credible organisation, thus reinforcing the nature of the communication (Lester, 2011). In this way, MDA highlights how branding, alongside textual and visual elements, helps to establish the document's professionalism and aligns it with the broader goals of policy and public health advocacy.
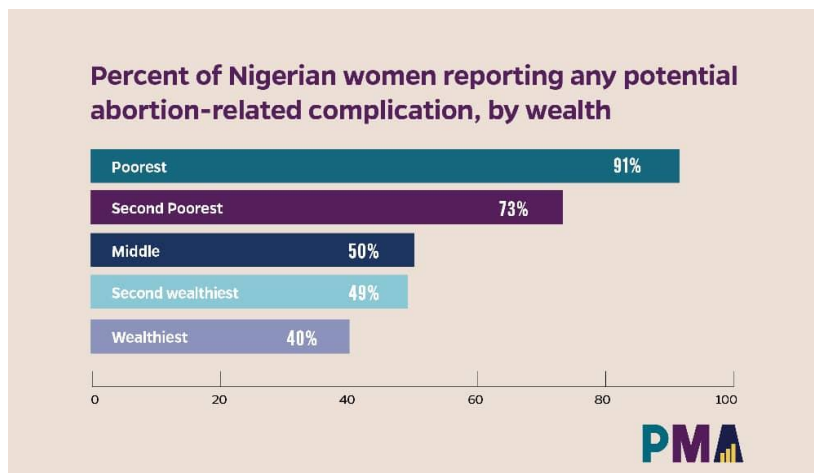

Figure 6: PMA Statistics on Women Reporting any Potential Abortion-related compilation, by Wealth

Figure 7: Ipas Statistics on Safe and Unsafe Abortion

In Figure 7, the emphasis on the data - "6 in 10 abortions is unsafe" and "1.2 million abortions are unsafe every year" - further underscores the

register of the campaign. The enlarged, bold text draws attention to the statistical message, while the simple, clear iconography of the ten figures representing women reinforces the data visually (Tufekci, 2015). The colour scheme - orange for unsafe abortions and white for others - further directs the viewer's attention to the key data points, while the use of subtle design elements, such as the dotted orange border, guides the viewer's gaze and enhances the flow of information (Carter et al., 2002). Overall, the combination of formal text, clear and structured visuals, and branding in these digital advocacy flyers demonstrates how MDA can be employed to effectively communicate complex issues such as reproductive rights. The register, supported by statistics and professional design, ensures that the message resonates with an educated audience, including activists, legislators, and healthcare professionals. By aligning textual, visual, and branding modalities, the campaign maintains its credibility and positions itself within important policy discussions without resorting to emotive or sensationalist tactics (Kress, 2010). This approach highlights the potential of multimodal communication to influence public health discourse and policy.

Discussion of Findings
Pro-choice and pro-life organisations carefully combine a variety of multimodal elements, including text, images, videos, and infographics, with formal registers in order to convey their ideas. In order to elicit strong emotional reactions and present abortion as a moral issue, pro-life organisations frequently use religious terminology and emotive imagery. On the other hand, pro-choice organisations present abortion as a health and rights issue by using data-driven visuals and legalese. This study looks at how the pro-choice and pro-life sides of the abortion debate employ formal registers differently. In pro-life campaigns, formal registers are evident in the quoting of authoritative figures, the use of positive modality, and religious references, which enhance persuasion. For pro-choice organisations, a serious and professional approach is crucial, as seen in campaign statements that communicate information clearly and authoritatively, reflecting the gravity of the issue at hand. This strategic combination enables both movements to gain traction online and engage a wider audience.

Pro-life Use of Formal Registers
Pro-life campaigns often employ formal registers to enhance their credibility and foster trust, drawing on authoritative figures, such as

scientists and public personalities. This reliance on authority figures helps build a perception of expertise and moral authority, particularly when combined with persuasive multimodal elements. Through the strategic use of both text and imagery, these campaigns construct an air of professionalism and seriousness. The formal tone is typically maintained through precise, technical language, which adds weight to the arguments and appeals to educated audiences, including policymakers and healthcare professionals. This formal approach is particularly effective in discussions involving moral and legal complexities, such as abortion, where nuanced and careful language is essential.

Another significant feature of pro-life campaigns is the strategic combination of religious allusions with visual elements. These campaigns often incorporate religious symbols or references to strengthen their message and evoke a moral response from the audience. Religious imagery, such as depictions of babies, families, or crosses, is used to connect the campaign's message to ethical and religious principles. This blend of moral authority and visual appeal aims to influence individuals who are considering or have undergone abortion by invoking a sense of guilt or spiritual responsibility. This moral framing not only presents the pro-life stance as a righteous cause but also elicits empathy and moral reflection from the audience.

Pro-life organisations also effectively employ positive modalities in their advocacy to communicate a tone of respect and affirmation. Visual elements often feature themes of life, innocence, and purity, further emphasised through specific colour palettes, such as brown and white. These colours symbolise life, innocence, and purity, aligning with the pro-life message of protecting the unborn. The formal register is complemented by the calmness and clarity of these visual choices, which uphold the seriousness of the pro-life message without resorting to colloquial or emotional language. This approach underscores the professionalism and dignity of the pro-life position, ensuring that the message is communicated in a respectful and impactful manner.

Pro-choice Use of Formal Registers
Pro-choice advocacy campaigns effectively employ formal registers to establish authority, objectivity, and credibility in their messaging. By avoiding emotional or inflammatory language, these campaigns ensure that their tone remains professional and respectful, fostering trust among diverse audiences, including supporters, opponents, and undecided

individuals. The use of a formal register enables campaigns to communicate a sense of responsibility, demonstrating a commitment to evidence-based discourse. This approach aligns with Multimodal Discourse Analysis (MDA), which emphasises the interplay of semiotic modes—text, visuals, and design—to construct meaning within a cohesive narrative.

Official statements are a cornerstone of pro-choice advocacy, serving as focal points for clear and unambiguous declarations of stance. These statements often encapsulate the core themes of the campaign, addressing critical issues with transparency and precision. By adopting a formal tone, these declarations function as platforms for policy updates, key announcements, and calls to action, offering an authoritative voice in discussions on reproductive rights. As Adebomi (2020) notes, the use of formal registers in advocacy creates a structured and trustworthy framework for engaging in nuanced sociopolitical debates.

The presentation of statistical data plays a pivotal role in shaping public perception and fostering an evidence-based narrative. Statistics are framed within a formal language framework to enhance objectivity and credibility. For instance, the title, *"Percentage of Nigerian women reporting any potential abortion-related complication, by wealth,"* employs precise terminology like "complication," a technical medical term that conveys professionalism and detachment from emotive connotations. The inclusion of exact percentages—91%, 73%, and 40%—reinforces the factual basis of the discourse, avoiding subjectivity and ensuring the audience interprets the data within a logical, policy-oriented context.

Visual modalities, such as bar graphs and colour schemes, are integral to MDA's application in advocacy. The use of a horizontal bar graph with a muted colour palette not only enhances readability but also maintains a professional and composed aesthetic. Shades of purple and blue represent wealth categories, ensuring visual clarity while adhering to the campaign's formal tone. The combination of visual data display and branding, such as the inclusion of the PMA logo, further underscores the authority and reliability of the information presented. These visual elements are strategically designed to communicate with a professional audience, including policymakers, healthcare experts, and advocates.

In the graphic titled *"6 in 10 abortions are unsafe"* and *"1.2 million abortions are unsafe every year!"* bolded and enlarged text draws

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attention to critical statistics, reinforcing the campaign's factual tone. The use of symbols, such as figures representing women, further simplifies complex data, making it accessible without sacrificing professionalism. The muted orange and green colour scheme effectively highlights urgent data points while maintaining an authoritative visual design, balancing emotional engagement with credibility. This multimodal approach ensures that the campaign appeals to its target audience while upholding the principles of objectivity and respect.

Conclusion

When examining the rhetoric and tactics employed in pro-life and pro-choice movements' social media campaigns, the notion that visual signals, like colour, can affect human behaviour and comprehension is especially pertinent. In order to successfully convey messages, evoke strong feelings, and influence public opinion, these campaigns also heavily incorporate visual components in addition to written or spoken words. According to multimodal studies, communication occurs when different modes—such as text, images, colour, layout, and typography—cooperate to produce meaning. One of the most significant visual elements affecting how audiences interpret and react to information is colour. Colour is frequently strategically used in conjunction with text in pro-life and pro-choice efforts to communicate underlying values, feelings, and social cues.

This multimodal approach in pro-choice and pro-life campaigns have shown that formal language, carefully considered colour schemes, and powerful design are not random elements but are deliberately chosen to influence perception, bolster ideological claims, and inspire supporters. In addition to being an aesthetic decision, the combination of modes is a strategic instrument that guides interpretation and interaction. Both textual and visual components are used in these emotionally driven campaigns to create gripping stories that influence viewers' actions. Therefore, the formal use of language in advocacy on social media depends on this integration of modes.

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