
UNVEILING THE NEXUS: SOCIAL MEDIA’S ROLE IN SHAPING SECURITY DYNAMICS IN NIGERIA

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Abstract: *THIS STUDY CRITICALLY DISCUSSES SPECIFICS OF THE COMPLICATED CONVERGENCE BETWEEN SOCIAL MEDIA USE AND THE CHANGING SECURITY DYNAMICS IN NIGERIA BASED ON THE PERSPECTIVES OF 100 SOCIAL MEDIA USERS IN THE COUNTRY WHO RESPONDED USING AN ONLINE SURVEY. WITH MORE THAN 33 MILLION ACTIVE USERS ON SOCIAL MEDIA IN THE COUNTRY, FACEBOOK, TWITTER, AND WHATSAPP HAVE BECOME ESSENTIAL PARTS OF PUBLIC DEBATE AND INFORMATION EXCHANGE. HOWEVER, THERE IS A GROWING CONCERN THAT THESE PLATFORMS ARE ALSO USED TO PEDDLE MISINFORMATION, INFLAMMATORY RHETORIC, AND MESSAGES INTENDED TO INVOKE VIOLENCE THAT CAN UNDERMINE STABILITY. THE FINDINGS SUGGEST THAT WHILE SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS INCREASE THE AWARENESS AND ALLOW AN INFORMED DEBATE, THEY CAN EQUALLY BE USED IN THE SPREADING OF 'FAKE NEWS' THAT HAVE UNCLEAR IMPACTS ON VIOLENCE. GOVERNMENT POLICY TAKES UP SOME ONLINE PERSPECTIVES, BUT THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SOCIAL PLATFORMS AND STATE RESPONSES IS VERY COMPLEX. RECOMMENDATIONS ARE TOWARDS MITIGATING RISKS TO PEACE WHILE LEVERAGING SOCIAL GOOD. INSIGHTS OFFER GUIDE FOR PLATFORMS ON REGULATION, AND HELP SHAPE EVIDENCED-BASED POLICY SOLUTIONS THAT ARE MORE NUANCED TO NIGERIA'S ENORMOUS BUT COMPLEX CHALLENGES. ULTIMATELY, THE STUDY AIMS TO ILLUMINATE THIS CONTESTED ISSUE TO INFORM IMPACTFUL PROGRESS*

Keywords: SOCIAL MEDIA, INSECURITY, NIGERIA



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Background to the Study

Many citizens in Nigeria, a country with over 200 million citizens, have integrated social media into their daily lives. Accessibility to the internet increased the usage of social media; the number of active Nigerian online users on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Whatsapp surpasses 86 million, (Statista, 2021). The growing dominance of social media over the years has changed the face of interaction among Nigerians. It has even become a critical platform for sharing information and meaningful discourse on a host of matters of an individual nation's security. For instance, October 2020 saw the use of social media to mobilise citizens into massive #EndSARS protests against police brutality. People and activists went on Twitter and other social media platforms to create massive public awareness by demanding justice, running testimonies, videos, and live updates. Citizens are now using social media as a platform to demand transparency and accountability from their government. As quoted by Jimada (2019) and Obiaje (2021), Nigerians used Facebook and Instagram to expose corruption, give evidence, and make a demand for transparency by government office holders. This act has exposed the government to deeper scrutiny and hurried the hand of the government on issues relating to governance and transparency. Social media spaces are equally avenues where Nigerians can be part of vital social and political discussion. The great hash tags of Twitter, such as #SayNoToRape, #NotTooYoungToRun, and #BringBackOurGirls, have become widely accepted and used under new issues, drawing the attention of millions to immediate needs, notably in response to sexual violence, abduction of schoolgirls, and youth engagement in politics (Statista, 2021).

It is worth noting that alongside the new space of expression that social media has afforded citizens in Nigeria, there have equally been gigantic challenges. Well, misinformation has many times led to fear, violence, and social unrest. Therefore, fake news and disinformation became vast issues. On account of the said fact, the government of Nigeria enacted the Act on NITDA in 2021. The said Act is meant to regulate the use of social media as a measure to check the spread of false information. The billions of Nigerians that interacted on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and WhatsApp daily; matters related to the circulation of fake news and information should be taken into account and addressed to ensure that the media is properly put to good use in Nigeria (Asika, 2016). At the moment, the country is in insecurity, a condition that has serious implications and repercussions on the country's stability and development. This present insecurity is deepened by an escalation in many criminal activities, such as terrorism, kidnappings, armed robberies, and interethnic conflicts. Insecurity threats such as these weaken the social cohesion and economic development of the country and should be promptly and urgently addressed (Tanko, 2021; Agbo, 2023). Nigeria is ranked as one of the most insecure countries in the world, as awarded by the Institute for Economics and Peace's Global Peace Index (2020). Private.

The insecurity level in Nigeria has primarily been attributed to terrorism, with groups like Boko Haram and the Islamic State of West Africa increasingly conducting attacks that have resulted in hundreds of



deaths and displacement from their homes. Not only have they contributed to human suffering, but the terrorist activities have also harmed the country's economy by derailing agricultural production, scaring off foreign investors, and destroying infrastructure as well (Council on Foreign Relations, 2021). Kidnapping has also emerged as one of the major security concerns in the country. As the criminal syndicates and militant groups target and carry out kidnapping on not only people visiting from other countries but also on local people, it has become a profitable business (Al Jazeera, 2021). The increased rate of these incidences at the moment raises concerns about the safety of individuals in general in this country and the business environment, first and foremost. Armed robbery remains one of the most frequent violent crimes in Nigeria. Armed gang members often target not only individuals but also their houses and business premises. This has continued with the proliferation of illegal weapons and ineffective law enforcement (The Guardian Nigeria, 2021).

This insecurity situation is further escalated by inter-communal clashes—usually ignited by ethnic, religious, or resource-based tensions—that leave people dead, displaced, and property destroyed in Nigeria (Human Rights Watch, 2021). The Nigerian government has responded to the insecurity problem in various ways: by deploying more security personnel, constituting more special task forces, and launching more community policing programs (Premium Times Nigeria, 2021). However, the effectiveness of these moves has been seen to be contended, and some people argue that more comprehensive and long-term strategies are required to deal with the root causes that have plagued the nation's insecurity. Therefore, insecurity in Nigeria poses a complex, multifaceted issue that impacts the nation's political and socioeconomic landscape. Nigeria is one of the least peaceful countries worldwide, partly due to the existence of heinous crimes such as terrorism, kidnapping, armed robbery, and intercommunal conflicts. This, therefore, acts as an imperative call that the problem be ushered in through a comprehensive approach that works on the root causes of insecurity and provides provisions for the means of achieving long-term peace and development. Background to the Study

In Nigeria, a country with a population of over 200 million, social media has become an integral part of everyday life for a large number of its citizens. The rise in internet accessibility has led to an increase in social media usage, with over 86 million Nigerians active online on platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and WhatsApp, as stated by Statista in 2021. Social media's ubiquitous presence has revolutionised the way Nigerians communicate, disseminate information, and participate in discussions on a variety of topics, including issues related to national security. For example, social media played a crucial role in the organisation and coordination of the #EndSARS protests in October 2020, which were demonstrations against police brutality. Platforms like Twitter were utilised by locals and activists to raise awareness about the issue and seek justice by sharing testimonies, videos, and live updates. Moreover, social media has transformed into a platform for citizens to demand transparency from their government. As referenced by Jimada (2019) and Obiaje (2021), Nigerians have used platforms like Facebook and Instagram to expose corruption, provide evidence, and call for transparency from government officials. This has led to increased scrutiny and forced the government to address challenges related to governance and transparency. Social media platforms have also served as a space for Nigerians to engage in important social and political discourse. Noteworthy hashtags on platforms like Twitter, including #SayNoToRape, #NotTooYoungToRun, and #BringBackOurGirls, have gained significant attention. These movements have sparked discussions and brought attention to urgent issues such as sexual violence, the abduction of schoolgirls, and youth political engagement (Statista, 2021).

It's crucial to recognise that the rise of social media in Nigeria has been accompanied by significant challenges. The spread of misinformation has often led to fear, violence, and social unrest, making fake news and disinformation major concerns. In response to this, the Nigerian government enacted the National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA) Act in 2021, with the aim of



regulating social media usage and curbing the spread of false information (NITDA, 2021). Despite millions of Nigerians regularly engaging on platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and WhatsApp, addressing the challenges posed by the spread of fake news and misinformation remains crucial to ensuring responsible use of social media in Nigeria (Asika, 2016). Nigeria is grappling with ongoing insecurity, which poses serious implications for the nation's stability and development. The existing unrest is exacerbated by a rise in criminal activities, including terrorism, abductions, armed robbery, and interethnic clashes. These security challenges undermine societal cohesion and economic growth, necessitating immediate attention and resolution (Tanko, 2021; Agbo, 2023). Nigeria is among the world's least peaceful countries, according to the Institute for Economics and Peace's Global Peace Index (2020). This ranking underscores the severity of the country's insecurity problem.

The level of insecurity in Nigeria has been largely attributed to terrorism, with groups such as Boko Haram and the Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) conducting attacks that have resulted in hundreds of deaths and forced communities to abandon their homes (Council on Foreign Relations, 2021). In addition to causing human suffering, these terrorist acts have negatively impacted the nation's economy by disrupting agricultural production, deterring foreign investment, and destroying infrastructure (Council on Foreign Relations, 2021).

Kidnapping has also emerged as a major security concern in Nigeria. Kidnapping has become a profitable enterprise due to the targeting of both foreigners and locals by criminal gangs and militant groups (Al Jazeera, 2021). The frequency of these incidents has raised concerns about individual safety and the overall business environment in the country. Armed robberies remain a common criminal activity in Nigeria. Armed gangs target individuals, residences, and commercial establishments. This issue has persisted due to the proliferation of illegal weapons and the inefficiency of law enforcement (The Guardian Nigeria, 2021).

Intercommunal clashes, often fuelled by ethnic, religious, or resource-based tensions, have further worsened the insecurity situation in Nigeria. These clashes have led to the loss of lives, the displacement of communities, and the destruction of property (Human Rights Watch, 2021). The Nigerian government has responded to the insecurity problem in various ways. These include deploying security personnel, establishing special task forces, and implementing community policing programs (Premium Times Nigeria, 2021). However, the effectiveness of these initiatives has been disputed, with some arguing that more comprehensive and long-term strategies are needed to address the root causes of the nation's insecurity. Insecurity in Nigeria is a complex, multifaceted issue that affects many aspects of the nation's political and socioeconomic landscape. Nigeria is among the least peaceful countries in the world, partly due to the prevalence of criminal activities such as terrorism, kidnapping, armed robbery, and intercommunal conflicts. A comprehensive strategy that addresses the root causes of insecurity and promotes long-term peace and development is needed to tackle this issue. Understanding how social media influences insecurity is important for several reasons. Firstly, according to Bastos and Mercea (2019), social media platforms are becoming effective tools for shaping public opinion and disseminating information. They provide individuals with a platform to voice their grievances, rally support, and raise awareness about security-related issues (Tufekci, 2014).

In Nigeria, a country with a population of over 200 million, social media has become an integral part of everyday life for a large number of its citizens. The rise in internet accessibility has led to an increase in social media usage, with over 86 million Nigerians active online on platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and WhatsApp, as stated by Statista in 2021. Social media's ubiquitous presence has revolutionised the way Nigerians communicate, disseminate information, and participate in discussions on a variety of topics, including issues related to national security. For example, social media played a crucial role in the organisation and coordination of the #EndSARS protests in October



2020, which were demonstrations against police brutality. Platforms like Twitter were utilised by locals and activists to raise awareness about the issue and seek justice by sharing testimonies, videos, and live updates.

Moreover, social media has transformed into a platform for citizens to demand transparency from their government. As referenced by Jimada (2019) and Obiaje (2021), Nigerians have used platforms like Facebook and Instagram to expose corruption, provide evidence, and call for transparency from government officials. This has led to increased scrutiny and forced the government to address challenges related to governance and transparency. Significance of knowing how social media heightens insecurity. Social media sites are critical channels used to influence public perception and to share information; therefore, they are increasingly used in this way (Bastos and Mercea, 2019). Social media provides a level playing for airing concerns, requesting assistance, and raising awareness among the general public on matters to do with insecurity (Tufekci, 2014).

And here in Nigeria, a country with over 200 million people, social media has become part and parcel of many citizens' daily lives. With the rise in internet penetration came an increased social media usage amongst Nigerians as over 86 million active users, used different platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and WhatsApp, according to Statista in 2021. Its nature of spread has drastically transformed the ways in which Nigerians communicate, even spreading information and discussions that cut across several aspects like those bordering on national security. For example, social media was instrumental in organizing and coordinating the October 2020 protests, widely known as #EndSARS protests, against police brutality. In particular, Twitter was used to generate public awareness on the matter, calling for justice by sharing footage, live testimonies, and updates.

Furthermore, social media has become the space for citizens to demand the much-desired transparency from their government. With reference to Jimada (2019) and Obiaje (2021), citizens in Nigeria have taken to platforms such as Facebook and Instagram to expose corruption practices and adduce further proof to the claims, hence calling for transparency in government offices. This is done not only for purposes of scrutiny but also in compelling solutions from the government regarding problems of governance and transparency.

The social media platforms have also become an avenue by which Nigerians will be able to conduct relevant social and political discourse. Memorable hashtags have included #SayNoToRape, #NotTooYoungToRun, and #BringBackOurGirls, which tend to make an impact on such platforms. These movements cause a stir and raise awareness of high-priority issues like sexual violence and the abduction of many schoolgirls, as well as youth political engagement (Statista, 2021).

This section strives to let the reader know that the advent of social media in Nigeria is, however, not without its challenges. Misinformation through social media most often causes fear, violence, and social unrest, raising fake news and disinformation to the point of live issues. That said, in response, the Nigerian government made a bid to try and regulate the use of social media to see that people stop peddling fake news through the new act of 2021: the National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA) Act. Although millions of Nigerians are active on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and WhatsApp, among other social media, the issues of the spread of fake news and misinformation are at the very core of being responsible users of the same in Nigeria (Asika, 2016).

Presently, in Nigeria, the wave of insecurity has been high and persistent, threatening the stability and development of the nation. As if this is not enough, vices in the form of terrorism, kidnapping, armed robbery, and interethnic conflicts continue to increase, fuelling simmering unrest. These security challenges sweep away any aspirations of societal cohesiveness and economic development; therefore, they require keen attention and an ameliorative application (Tanko, 2021; Agbo, 2023). According to the Global Peace Index 2020, continued by the Institute of Economics and Peace, Nigeria ranks among



the never-published peaceful countries in the world. A low ranking thus paints a thousand words for the security status in the country.

The level of insecurity in Nigeria relates mainly to terrorism, with Boko Haram and the Islamic State West Africa Province being responsible for attacks in the area that have accounted for hundreds of thousands of lives and displaced communities, including people into other countries. Besides the human toll, such terrorist attacks have hurt the nation's economy through losses in agricultural output, scaring away foreign investment, and the destruction of infrastructure (Council on Foreign Relations, 2021).

Kidnapping has also become one of the most significant security issues in Nigeria. Kidnapping has turned into a lucrative business venture because of the involvement of criminal gangs and militant groups who kidnap foreigners and locals alike (Al Jazeera, 2021). The frequency of both incidents has raised concerns about the safety of individuals and the business environment as a whole within the country.

Armed robberies are a common criminal wrong in Nigeria, where gun-wielding gangs operate against people, homes, businesses, and commercial hubs. This problem of insecurity dates back decades but has been made worse by the growing circulation of illegal arms and law enforcement failures. Clashes between communities, particularly those that are ethnic, religious, or competing for resources, have also heightened insecurity in Nigeria. These extract a death toll, displace community members, and lead to the torching of property (Human Rights Watch, 2021).

The government of Nigeria has responded to the insecurity problem in many ways: it has activated security personnel, established special task forces, and set up community policing programs (Premium Times Nigeria, 2021). However, this move was discredited by some quarters that argue that the initiatives are short-term and more comprehensive strategies are needed to tackle the bulging underlying issue of insecurity that the nation is heading into. Insecurity in Nigeria is a complex web that stretches into the very fabric of the nation's political and socioeconomic life. The country remains one of the least peaceful nations in the world, as evidenced by the upsurge in criminal activities such as terrorism, kidnapping, armed robbery, and intercommunal conflicts. An all-inclusive strategy to curb the inception of insecurity and promote long-term peace and development should be studied.

Understanding how insecurity is triggered through social media has a lot of importance in a number of ways in society. Bastos and Mercea (2019) point out that social media platforms have become effective tools for shaping public opinions and passing information. They give people leverage to air their grievances, appeal for support, and raise awareness on issues touching security (Tufekci, 2014). Social media has a way of amplifying fake news and misinformation that further increases insecurity by creating panic, fear, and mistrust among the population (Vosoughi, Roy, & Aral, 2018). Studies have proven the fast and wide spread of a majority of false information on social media, and the condition warrants attention because the miserable consequences seem not to appear in one case. This can foster the spread of rumours, conspiracy theories, and other false narratives against security efforts. For instance, when an analysis is undertaken about the role that social media plays in insecurity, those in security agencies and policymaking may hopefully come up with usable solutions to their security problems in Nigeria. Existing literature has pointed out the fact that research on social media can reveal a clear trend in violence, conflict, and radicalization. By understanding manipulation by social media on coordination or even dissemination of extremist ideology on harmful techniques, policymakers are then able to devise specific action on how to resolve the problem.

Social media does play a part in insecurity in a variety of ways. It becomes a situation whereby it helps to express people's perceptions and even mobilise for a cause against insecurity, but it becomes dangerously volatile from the inception of fake news and false information spread all over. Studying this influence will, therefore, put in the hands of policy decision-makers how to reduce and contain



security problems in Nigeria. Social media can be used to escalate the diffusion of misinformation and disinformation, hence instilling insecurity based on panic, fear, and, in turn, mistrust among the citizenry, resulting in certain actions at immense price rates. It is established that misinformation moves faster and is more widely disseminated relative to accurate information on social media. This would ultimately lead to rumours, conspiracy theories, and false narratives that, in themselves, defeat the efforts towards security.

Unpack the mechanism of social media influence towards insecurity among the security agencies and policymakers in the development of a workable solution to Nigeria's security challenges. Several studies have indicated that social media can be used to depict a wave of violence, conflict, and radicalisation (Conover et al., 2013). The knowledge of the use of social media in the coordination of crime or the dissemination of extremism may help policymakers customise their contribution towards this impact. There are various ways in which social media impacts insecurity. It gives people a platform to air their concerns and to solicit support for one security-related cause or another. However, it is replete with danger, as that same platform harbours unending false information and fake news. Through emphasis on this influence, it will be possible for policymakers and security agencies to come up with workable strategies for the control and reduction of security issues in Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

The broad use of social media platforms has increased the level of insecurity in the country. For example, the growing scale of hate speech and incitement to violence or criminal activities made possible by the broad usage of social media platforms serves to increase insecurity. This anonymity provided by the social media platforms further insured the operation of the criminals, since they do not feel threatened with any possible eventualities of being recognised or caught in any case due to their activities. Kidnapping, armed robbery, and other related crimes have been committed, placing the lives and well-being of the citizens of Nigeria at risk. In addition to this, the situation is worsened by the lack of effective laws and enforcement procedures for addressing these issues, a situation that is a breeding ground for the use of social media to transmit insecurity throughout the nation. In Nigeria, the spread of misinformation and fake news through these channels has promoted continuous instability. Since information travels at a supersonic speed over social media, people get carried away by false reports and rumours that evoke fear. This has seen communal conflicts, mob violence, and even the shifting of communities from one place to another. Social media has also served as a recruitment platform for extremist groups or even terrorist organizations. Most of these groups take advantage of and/or spread the ideology of these groups, recruiting new members and spreading new attacks across a wide reach of accessibility made possible by social media. That is how terrorism and insurgency multiply in Nigeria. That is, social media is the main tool for escalating ethnic and religious issues within this nation. Individuals and groups have taken advantage of the social media platforms to propagate hate speech, incite violence, and promote discrimination against certain ethnic or religious groups, thereby causing increased intercommunal conflicts in the country and breaking down social cohesion to make Nigeria even more insecure. The ineffectiveness of the current regulatory and enforcement mechanisms to address the issues continues to foster increased exploitation of social media as a tool for promoting insecurity. Technology has advanced so fast; the dynamic nature of social media platforms and increasing loopholes in the technology have continued to make it a daunting challenge for the government. This gap in legislation and enforcement has given an upper hand to the continued unscrupulous use of social media by individuals and groups. Insecurity has been directly affected by the wide use of social media platforms in Nigeria. Some of the factors that have as well contributed to this anxiety are simply summed up as accessibility, anonymity, posting of inaccurate information, radicalization of individuals into far-out ideas through different websites, increasing



potential for recruiting by extremist organizations, and finally the rise in tensions between different ethnic and religious groups, not to mention lack of effective moderation. In ensuring the security and safety of its citizens', the Nigerian government, out of impulse, should come up with holistic plans and legislation measures that curb these related challenges and at the same time encourage responsible use of social media.

The Research Objectives

Awareness of the level of usage of social media in misinformation and violence-driven in Nigeria;
To understand the impact of social media on the government's response regarding insecurity in Nigeria;
Suggest recommendations for effective usage of social media to cope with insecurity in Nigeria;
To be able to measure the similarity or difference related to the existing literature with this regard in respect to the usage of social media in insecurity in other countries.
To motivate policies among policymakers, security agencies, and social media platforms that will ameliorate the negative effect of social media on insecurity in Nigeria.

Research Questions

How far-reaching is misinformation and incitement to violence on social media platforms in Nigeria?
How does social media shape the reaction of a government to insecurity in Nigeria?
How can social media best be utilized to address insecurity in Nigeria?
How does insecure relationship and usage pattern of social media play out in Nigeria compared to other countries?
What policy, security agencies, and social media service provider recommendations would be drawn in the process of minimizing the negative effects of social media on insecurity in Nigeria?

5. Significance

This study would be significant because it is an area in which potentialization, if helped to open, would subsequently build up relevant knowledge about an under-researched yet important issue. It is in that regard that, with social media becoming more integrated into governance, civic engagement, and conflict dynamics across Africa, the illuminating experiences from Nigeria will continue to be valued. This research also carries practical policy relevance with implications for building social cohesion and formulating better and more rights-respecting counterterrorism strategies. The findings might also contribute to global debates on platform governance amid growing threats linked to online speech. Addressing these challenges will, however, mean moving beyond simplistic narratives to fully appreciate the complexities surrounding social media, a goal this rigorous examination aims to advance.

Research Methodology

This study adopted a strong method wherein the efficiency and outreach of Web questionnaires/surveys were combined in gathering quantitative data on social media usage and perceptions of insecurity across a representative sample of social media users in Nigeria. The structured questions used within the Web-based survey enabled the researchers to collect numerical data which can be further analyzed and compared with different variables. This approach also meant that the researchers could elicit relatively larger quantities of information from the sampled population at a much shorter time and thus at reduced costs, which have also contributed to enhancing the general strength and reliability of the findings. The data were analyzed by using descriptive statistics-such as frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations-to summarize and interpret responses from the survey. This analytical approach gave a better overview of the trends and patterns observed within the sampled population's social media use and the security perception; thus, it provided valuable insight that could help in addressing the research questions.



Table I: Analysis of the Responses on Effective ways of Utilising Social Media in Addressing Insecurity in Nigeria

Item on	SA (%)	A (%)	SD (%)	D (%)
I use social media platforms to stay informed about issues related to insecurity in Nigeria	51(51%)	37(37%)	3(3%)	9(9%)
Social media campaigns or initiatives have successfully raised awareness about insecurity in Nigeria	47(47%)	39(39%)	5(5%)	9(9%)
Social media is a reliable source of information when it comes to understanding the root causes of insecurity in Nigeria	41(41%)	31(31%)	11(11%)	17(17%)
I have participated in online discussions or debates related to insecurity in Nigeria on social media	21(21%)	13(13%)	41(41%)	25(25%)
Online discussions or debates is productive in terms of generating solutions or ideas to insecurity	23(23%)	27(27%)	31(31%)	19(19%)
Social media can be used to amplify the voices of those affected by insecurity in Nigeria, such as victims or marginalized communities	21(21%)	27(27%)	41(41%)	11(11%)
Social media platforms should take a more active role in monitoring and removing content that promotes or incites violence related to insecurity in Nigeria	61(61%)	31(31%)	-	8(8%)

From the analysis in the table above, the findings showed that 51(51%) and 37(37%) of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed that they used social media platforms to stay informed about issues related to insecurity in Nigeria, while 3(3%) and 9(9%) of the respondents strongly disagreed and disagreed, respectively. Social media campaigns or initiatives have successfully raised awareness about insecurity in Nigeria as 47(47%) and 39(39%) of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed, while 5(5%) and 9(9%) of the respondents strongly disagreed and disagreed. The findings of the study also revealed that 41(41%) and 31(31%) of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed that social media is a reliable source of information when it comes to understanding the root causes of insecurity in Nigeria, while 11(11%) and 17(17%) of the respondents strongly disagreed and disagreed. The findings of study indicated that 13(13%) and 21(21%) of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed that they have participated in online discussions or debates related to insecurity in Nigeria on social media, while 41(41%) and 25(25%) of the respondents strongly disagreed and disagreed. The findings also showed that social media can be used to amplify the voices of those affected by insecurity in Nigeria, such as victims or marginalized communities as 41(41%) and 25(25%) of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed, while 25(25%) of the respondents strongly disagreed and disagreed, respectively. The study also revealed that 61(61%) and 31(31%) of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed that social media platforms should take a more active role in monitoring and removing content that promotes or incites violence related to insecurity in Nigeria, while 8(8%) of the respondents disagreed.



Table II: Analysis of the Responses on Relationship between Social Media Usage and Insecurity in Nigeria and Other Countries

Description of Items	SA (%)	A (%)	SD (%)	D (%)
Excessive social media usage contributes to feelings of insecurity	31(31%)	27(27%)	21(21%)	21(21%)
I have experienced feelings of insecurity as a result of comparing myself to others on social media	-	-	71(71%)	29(29%)
Relationship between social media usage and insecurity differs between Nigeria and other countries	31(31%)	37(37%)	11(11%)	21(21%)
Social media platforms can reduce the feelings of insecurity among social media users in Nigeria	37(37%)	31(31%)	13(13%)	19(19%)
There are cultural or societal factors in Nigeria that may influence the relationship between social media usage and insecurity	41(41%)	37(37%)	15(15%)	7(7%)
Social media platforms have the responsibility to address the issue of insecurity among her users	23(23%)	27(27%)	19(19%)	31(31%)

The findings from the table above showed that 31(31%) and 27(27%) of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed that excessive social media usage contributes to feelings of insecurity, while 21(21%) and 21(21%) of the respondents strongly disagreed and disagreed. None of the respondents neither strongly agreed nor agreed that they have experienced feelings of insecurity as a result of comparing myself to others on social media, while 71(71%) and 29(29%) of the respondents strongly disagreed and disagreed, respectively. The findings of the study revealed that 31(31%) and 37(37%) of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed that relationship between social media usage and insecurity differs between Nigeria and other countries, while 11(11%) and 21(21%) of the respondents strongly disagreed and disagreed, respectively. 37(37%) and 31(31%) of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed that social media platforms can reduce the feelings of insecurity among social media users in Nigeria, while 13(13%) and 19(19%) of the respondents strongly disagreed and disagreed. The findings of the study revealed that 41(41%) and 37(37%) of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed that there are cultural or societal factors in Nigeria that may influence the relationship between social media usage and insecurity, while 15(15%) and 7(7%) of the respondents strongly disagreed and disagreed. The study also showed that 23(23%) and 27(27%) of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed that social media platforms have the responsibility to address the issue of insecurity among her users, while 19(19%) and 31(31%) of the respondents strongly disagreed and disagreed, respectively.

Table III: Analysis of the Responses on How Prevalent the Spread of Misinformation and Incitement of Violence through Social Media Platforms in Nigeria

Description of Items	SA (%)	A (%)	SD (%)	D (%)
The spread of misinformation prevalent in Nigeria through social media platforms	71(71%)	21(21%)	-	8(8%)



Social media contribute to the excitement of violence in Nigeria	71(71%))	21(21%))	-	8(8%)
Misinformation commonly spread through social media platforms in Nigeria	77(77%))	23(23%))	-	-
Social media play a role in promoting violence in Nigeria	21(21%))	29(29%))	27(27%)	23(23%)

The finding of study revealed that the spread of misinformation prevalent in Nigeria through social media platforms as 71(71%) and 21(21%) of respondents strongly agreed and agreed, while 8(8%) of the respondents disagreed. The study also indicated that 77(77%) and 23(23%) of respondents strongly agreed and agreed that misinformation commonly spread through social media platforms in Nigeria, while none of the respondents nether strongly disagreed nor disagreed. The findings of the study showed that 21(21%) and 29(29%) of respondents strongly agreed and agreed that social media play a role in promoting violence in Nigeria, while 27(27%) and 23(23%) strongly disagreed nor disagreed.

Table IV: Analysis of the Responses on Impact of Social Media on the Government's Response to Insecurity in Nigeria

Description of Items	SA (%)	A (%)	SD (%)	D (%)
Social media have impact the government's response to insecurity in Nigeria	37(37%))	36(36%))	11(11%)	16(16%))
Government is influenced by social media in addressing insecurity in Nigeria	41(41%))	43(43%))	7(7%)	9(9%)
Nigeria government consider social media opinions when responding to insecurity in Nigeria	21(21%))	23(23%))	33(33%)	23(23%))
There is relationship between social media and the government's response to insecurity in Nigeria	21(21%))	23(23%))	33(33%)	23(23%))

The findings of the study revealed that 37(37%) and 36(36%) of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed that social media have impact the government's response to insecurity in Nigeria, while 11(11%) and 16(16%) of the respondents strongly disagreed and disagreed. The study also showed that 41(41%) and 43(43%) of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed that government is influenced by social media in addressing insecurity in Nigeria, while 7(7%) and 9(9%) of the respondents strongly disagreed and disagreed. The study also indicated that 21(21%) and 23(23%) of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed that Nigeria government consider social media opinions when responding to insecurity in Nigeria, while 33(33%) and 23(23%) of the respondents strongly disagreed and disagreed. The findings of the study showed that 21(21%) and 23(23%) of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed that there is relationship between social media and the government's response to insecurity in Nigeria, while 33(33%) and 23(23%) of the respondents strongly disagreed and disagreed, respectively.

Discussion of findings

The study revealed the effective ways of utilizing social media in addressing insecurity in Nigeria. The findings showed that majority of the respondents 51(51%) and 37(37%) strongly agreed and agreed that they used social media platforms to stay informed about issues related to insecurity in Nigeria. Social media campaigns or initiatives have successfully raised awareness about insecurity in Nigeria



as 47(47%) and 39(39%) of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed. The findings of the study also revealed that 41(41%) and 31(31%) of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed that social media is a reliable source of information when it comes to understanding the root causes of insecurity in Nigeria. The findings of study indicated that 13(13%) and 21(21%) of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed that they have participated in online discussions or debates related to insecurity in Nigeria on social media. The findings also showed that social media can be used to amplify the voices of those affected by insecurity in Nigeria, such as victims or marginalized communities as 41(41%) and 25(25%) of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed. The study also revealed that 61(61%) and 31(31%) of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed that social media platforms should take a more active role in monitoring and removing content that promotes or incites violence related to insecurity in Nigeria. From the above analysis it can be deduce that social media has tremendously helps in addressing Insecurity in Nigeria, this has been justified by majority of the respondents of this study. there has been a significant increase in internet access, leading to greater use of social media. Over 86 million Nigerians are online, with many engaging on platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and WhatsApp, as reported by Statista in 2021. The pervasive presence of social media has transformed the way Nigerians connect, share information, and engage in discussions on various subjects, including national security concerns. For instance, during the #EndSARS protests in October 2020, social media played a vital role in organizing and coordinating demonstrations against police brutality. Platforms like Twitter were used by locals and activists to bring attention to the issue and seek justice through the dissemination of testimonies, videos, and live updates. The findings of this study was in line with Statista, (2021) study which revealed that Social media platforms have also provided a space for Nigerians to engage in critical social and political discourse. Notable hashtags on platforms such as Twitter, including #SayNoToRape, #NotTooYoungToRun, and #BringBackOurGirls, have gained widespread traction. These movements have ignited conversations and highlighted pressing issues such as sexual violence, the kidnapping of schoolgirls, and the political engagement of the youth (Statista, 2021).

Furthermore, the study also revealed the Relationship between Social Media Usage and Insecurity in Nigeria and Other Countries. The findings from the table above showed that most of the respondents 31(31%) and 27(27%) strongly agreed and agreed that excessive social media usage contributes to feelings of insecurity. None of the respondents neither strongly agreed nor agreed that they have experienced feelings of insecurity as a result of comparing myself to others on social media. The findings of the study revealed that 31(31%) and 37(37%) of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed that relationship between social media usage and insecurity differs between Nigeria and other countries, respectively. 37(37%) and 31(31%) of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed that social media platforms can reduce the feelings of insecurity among social media users in Nigeria. The findings of the study revealed that 41(41%) and 37(37%) of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed that there are cultural or societal factors in Nigeria that may influence the relationship between social media usage and insecurity. The study also showed that 23(23%) and 27(27%) of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed that social media platforms have the responsibility to address the issue of insecurity among her users. The analysis above revealed that there is significant relationship social media usage and insecurity. It is essential to acknowledge that the rise of social media in Nigeria has been accompanied by significant challenges. The proliferation of misinformation has often led to fear, violence, and social unrest, positioning fake news and disinformation as major issues of concern. To combat this, the Nigerian government enacted the National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA) Act in 2021, aiming to regulate social media usage and mitigate the spread of false information (NITDA, 2021) With millions of Nigerians regularly engaging on platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and WhatsApp, social media has revolutionized communication,



information sharing, and engagement on various topics, including national security matters. Nonetheless, addressing the challenges posed by the dissemination of fake news and misinformation remains critical to ensuring the responsible utilization of social media in Nigeria (Asika, 2016)

The findings of the study also revealed the prevalent the spread of misinformation and incitement of violence through social media platforms in Nigeria. The finding of study revealed that the spread of misinformation prevalent in Nigeria through social media platforms as 71(71%) and 21(21%) of respondents strongly agreed and agreed. The study also indicated that 77(77%) and 23(23%) of respondents strongly agreed and agreed that misinformation commonly spread through social media platforms in Nigeria. The findings of the study showed that 21(21%) and 29(29%) of respondents strongly agreed and agreed that social media play a role in promoting violence in Nigeria. It can be deduce from the results of this study that the spread of misinformation and incitement of violence through social media platforms in Nigeria have been prevalent. This findings connotes with a study conducted by Oluwaseun and Adekunle (2018) examined the impact of social media on the spread of fake news and its implications for insecurity in Nigeria. The study found that the rapid dissemination of false information through social media platforms has contributed to increased insecurity, as it fuels panic, fear, and violence among the population.

Lastly, the findings of the study revealed that 37(37%) and 36(36%) of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed that social media have impact the government's response to insecurity in Nigeria, while 11(11%) and 16(16%) of the respondents strongly disagreed and disagreed. The study also showed that 41(41%) and 43(43%) of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed that government is influenced by social media in addressing insecurity in Nigeria, while 7(7%) and 9(9%) of the respondents strongly disagreed and disagreed. The study also indicated that 21(21%) and 23(23%) of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed that Nigeria government consider social media opinions when responding to insecurity in Nigeria, while 33(33%) and 23(23%) of the respondents strongly disagreed and disagreed. The findings of the study showed that 21(21%) and 23(23%) of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed that there is relationship between social media and the government's response to insecurity in Nigeria, while 33(33%) and 23(23%) of the respondents strongly disagreed and disagreed, respectively.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this research, the following recommendations are advanced:

1. Social media companies should increase their efforts at identifying and deleting false or dangerous content that may trigger upheavals or destabilize the environment. However, regulations should seek a balance between mitigating harm with protecting free expression.
2. Programs of media literacy intervention could be facilitated on platforms and fact-checking initiatives upheld in order to help identify misinformation and verify claims by Nigerians online. This would reduce the sharing of "fake news" while preserving attendant advantages associated with social media.
3. Ensure periodic consultations between the Nigerian government and social media companies in order to come up with these kinds of coordinated actions, which are based on evidence. Joining hands together will help address a number of challenges like regulating speech online.
4. Authorities can use the fact that social media can equally be used as a means for disseminating information much faster. For example, countering misinformation with timely and credible messages in crisis situations.
5. Civil society can have a core function in monitoring online threats, conducting independent research on associated impacts, and advising proportionate policy responses. Their diversity of perspective to be accounted for in decision-making.



6. Further research that involves different data sources may further enlighten this complex problem in various local contexts. Longitudinal studies might further ascribe how different regulatory or partnership approaches are effective in the long term.

Conclusion:

The present study teases out the rudimentary insights into the controversial role of social media within Nigeria's emerging security landscape. Though these platforms offer opportunities, they are equally exploited in ways that undermine stability. Both opportunities and challenges are culturally dynamic. Balanced, evidence-based understanding of these is necessary to exploit the opportunities and narrow the risks. Collaboration between platforms, government, and civil society could help, with open research led by respect for.

The multi-dimensional challenges of Nigeria need nuanced solutions. More generally, it involves recognizing in-country complexity of social media that is of central importance to progressive policymaking.

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