

SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE AND INSECURITY IN NIGERIA: AN APPRAISAL

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Abstract

The aim of the study was to appraise social media usage and insecurity in Nigeria. The objectives of the study were to: determine the social media network that has contributed more to insecurity in Nigeria; examine ways social media messages have been used to promote insecurity in Nigeria; and find out the causes of social media insecurity in Nigeria. The study was anchored on technological determinism and media equation theories. The study relied on data gathered from survey research method. Questionnaire was used in eliciting responses from Nigerians on social media usage and insecurity in Nigeria. The population of the study was 736,375 Nigerians derived from Akure, Awka, Damaturu, Dutse, Lokoja and Yenagoa. The sample size for the study was 600 respondents drawn from these capital cities representing the six geopolitical zones of Nigeria. The sample size was calculated using the Australian sample size calculator. The study utilised the frequency counts and percentages. The analysis was run using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software (version 23). Findings showed that WhatsApp is the social media platform that contributes more to insecurity in Nigeria. The study showed that social media have been used to promote insecurity in Nigeria. They have been used for recruitment, creating panic, propaganda, introduce virus in the systems, hack accounts and expand the network of criminal gangs. The results also indicated that lack of social media regulation is responsible for social media insecurity in Nigeria. It however, recommended among others that there should be policies and legal framework to regulate the negative use of social media in Nigeria.

Keywords: insecurity, message, Nigeria, social media, usage

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Introduction

Social media are electronic means of communication, sharing information and private messages. It could be in the form of words, pictures or videos. Important information is shared via popular social sites and one cannot deny the absence of fun there as well. The mid-2000s saw a marked increase in internet accessibility, which in turn sparked an enthusiastic uptake of networking services such as X, Facebook and the rest of them. The role of social media on insecurity is still very much debated. While some believe it is a security threat, others see it as a potential tool in the hands of security agents to combat crimes. Despite the benefits, social media have been subjected

to abuse and some negative stories. Threats of attack by Boko Haram are reported on the social networks and YouTube has been a regular channel used to relay messages from Boko-Haram leaders. Evans & Daniel (as cited in Alakali *et al* 2013) argued that terrorist groups use chat rooms, dedicated servers and websites and social networking tools as propaganda machines, as a means of recruitment and organisation, for training grounds and for significant fundraising through cybercrime. These websites and other Internet services may be run by international terrorist groups, transnational cybercrime organisations or individual extremists. YouTube channels and Facebook pages of Taliban and Al Qaeda supporters may radicalise

Western-based sympathisers and provide a means for communication between these small and larger organised networks of terrorist groups in the country. There are indications that some international terrorists use the Internet to organise their attacks or to devise ways to escape security agencies in order to carry out their attacks. This is done by the use of some specific codes understood by the groups only. Some give advice on how to build and operate weapons and how-to pass-through border checkpoints. Other news articles reported that a younger generation of terrorists and extremists are learning new technical skills to help them avoid detection by various national security enforcements.

In all these, social media have stood over time as mechanisms of capturing, storing and broadcasting the theatrical manifestations of this malicious pandemonium which often times, are manifesting through violence (Patrick, 2020). It is on this ground; therefore, this study aims to interrogate social media usage and insecurity in Nigeria with a view to proffering solutions to the menace.

Statement of the Problem

The mass media generally have a very important role to play in modern democratic society as basic channels of communication. This implies that people rely on the mass media to know what is happening in their environment (Asemah, 2011). With the advent of new technologies, the world has changed from analogue to digital and this has brought about change in every facet of life. Social media are new technologies through which people now communicate and interact freely with the rest of the world. Social media, like the traditional media, play different roles in the society. These roles may be positive or negative. While they may have the potentials to expose the state of insecurity that exists in the country, ranging from the issue of banditry, Boko Haram insurgency, cult-violence, armed robbery, kidnapping, herdsman-farmers conflicts, among others, they also increase opportunities for insecurity.

Asemah & Edegoh (2013) made a critical appraisal of social media and insecurity in Nigeria and concluded that social media have contributed to insecurity in Nigeria. It also recommended that the audiences and users of social media should be educated on the dangers of using the platforms to portray negative vices. Similarly, Joshua & Chijioke (2018) made an assessment of the impact of social media on national security from the perspective of Northern and Southern regions of Nigeria. They concluded that the impacts of social media on Nigeria security challenges could be positive or negative, depending on the purpose, intention and reason attached by the user during usage.

Several researchers have focused on social media and the attendant insecurity challenges they pose to society, among whom are: Ngige, Badekale & Hamman (2016); Callister, (2015); Nsude & Onwe (2017); Asemah & Edegoh (2013). In spite of their contribution to the body of knowledge in this regard, none has looked at it in a broad perspective as this study and how to contain it. This is the knowledge gap that the study intends to bridge.

Research Objectives

The study seeks to:

1. determine the social media network that has contributed more to insecurity in Nigeria.
2. examine ways social media messages have been used to promote insecurity in Nigeria; and
3. find out the causes of social media insecurity in Nigeria.

Research Questions

1. What social media network has contributed more to insecurity in Nigeria?
2. What ways have social media messages been used to promote insecurity in Nigeria?
3. What are the causes of social media insecurity in Nigeria?

Significance of the Study

The significance of this study has both academic and policy functions. Policy functions in that, nations would learn the threats of social media on their security architectures and formulate policies that would regulate the way information is passed via social media. Similarly, it would also serve as counter strategies on the threats posed by social media on insecurity in Nigeria. More so, institutions of learning (Universities, Polytechnics, Colleges of Education, etc) would as well find this work very helpful in conflicts and media studies.

Scope of the Study

The study focuses on the use of social media by Nigerians in six state capital cities across the six geopolitical zones of Nigeria viz: Akure, the Ondo State capital, representing the South-West, Awka, the capital of Anambra State, representing the South-East, Damaturu, the Capital of Yobe State, representing the North-East, Dutse, the capital of Jigawa State, representing the North-West, Lokoja, the capital of Kogi State, representing the North-Central and Yenagoa, the capital of Bayelsa State, representing the South-South. These six states were randomly chosen

because no state in Nigeria is free from insecurity. In addition, majority of them were among states where the UK, in 2022, advised its citizens not to travel to for fear of possible terrorists' attack (<https://punch.com/insecurity-avoid-12-nigerian-states-uk-advises-citizens/?amp>). This also finds collaboration in Nwanegbo & Odigbo, (2013) which referred to Borno, Bauchi, Niger, Sokoto, Jigawa, Yobe, Kano Adamawa, Kaduna, Kogi and the Federal Capital Territory (Abuja) where insecurity was high.

Literature Review

Once the word "insecurity" is mentioned while referring to Nigeria, the first words to come to mind are Boko Haram, kidnapping, banditry, Niger Delta crises and ethno-religious crises. These words constitute a brand used in identifying the nature of insecurity peculiar to Nigeria among other African nations. Before the public manifestation of Boko Haram terrorist activities in 2009, Nigeria had been witnessing series of kidnapping of mostly foreign expatriates by militants in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria (Ali, 2013). The militants were said to be agitating against what they saw as injustice against their region. They were initially operating in the creeks but once their activities extended to the streets, they constituted palpable insecurity in the South Southern region of Nigeria.

Also emerged, kidnapping in the South-Eastern part of the country which contributed to the worsening insecurity level in the South-East and South-Southern geographical regions. These were in addition to the growing level of ethno-religious violence in Jos, Plateau State and some other parts of North central region with reprisal attacks in some parts of the South (Ibager, 2010). At a point, the *Jamaatu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati Wal-Jihad* Islamic sect otherwise known as Boko Haram brought another dimension to the threats to life in Nigeria. With a strong aversion to western education and persistence on instituting Sharia law in the Northern states of the country, the group went into a killing spree and suddenly states like Borno, Bauchi, Niger, Sokoto, Jigawa, Yobe, Kano Adamawa, Kaduna, Kogi and the Federal Capital Territory (Abuja) became insecure at varying degrees. Some seriously terrorised while some others had a few flash points (Nwanegbo & Odigbo, 2013). Churches, schools, markets, motor parks, offices and office complexes, special day celebrations (Independence, Christmas, Sallah celebrations, etc.), public transport, villages, public and even private places, became insecure. Today, though, attempts are being made by the federal government to negotiate with these groups of insurgents. However, tension, anxiety, terror, fear and general insecurity are still thick in the air. Thousands

have been killed in these flashes of madness. However, the emergence of social media has only come to make the situation worse as it comes with its challenges.

Social Media Promotion of Insecurity

Social media can be described as online-based tools and services connecting people and enabling interaction with each other over the internet. The new media have increased social and political interactions through WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter and other platforms (Chukwuere and Onyebukwa, 2017). Social networking sites are used by terrorist groups with dedicated servers and websites to spread their propaganda (Nsude & Onwe, 2017). They use the medium for recruitment, fundraising, training mechanisms and other forms of cybercrime. These platforms help in promoting local and international terrorist groups and the insecurity associated with it. International and local terrorist groups deploy social media to organise or strategise attacks and ways of escape (Nsude & Onwe, 2017).

Locally, Nigerian insecurity is increasing and lives and properties are threatened on a daily basis. This insecurity is affected by the penetration and diffusion of social media. Social media cannot be easily controlled or censored from the general public as a result of social freedom and a lack of cyberspace law (Nsude & Onwe, 2017). The social freedom of speech associated with social media makes it free for users to generate contents at any time and post them online. Social media is not only used by terrorist groups to challenge the peace and stability of a country, the citizens themselves are using the social media to render terror on each other by means of fake news and fake postings, which promote propaganda and fear. An example is the increased number and differing nature of unverified news or information surfacing on social media platforms in Nigeria.

Movements Using Social Media Handles to Promote Insecurity

Threats of social media can manifest themselves in many ways. Social media are more and more used by terrorist organisations as tools for ideological radicalisation, recruitment, communication and training. In addition to this, terrorist groups take advantage of social media to communicate with cybercrime groups and to coordinate along with them fundraising activities carried out in part or completely on the internet. The link between organised crime and terrorist organisations is increasing considerably in the cyber-world and this coalition will be able to produce new offensive technologies.

Social media is being used to propagate beliefs,

positions and agenda by individuals, groups, organisations and states because the tools allow for generation of contents free of any regulation or rules and reaches mass audiences. The freedom to use social media as a tool for communication and information sharing and without ethical considerations, exposes the platforms to abuses. Hence, through social media, fake and genuine contents struggle for space. Individuals, groups and associations such as Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) employ the platforms to spread various messages. The IPOB contents are consumed (whether genuine or fake) by both its followers and non-followers (Onayinka, Segun, Euphemia, Ajijola, Amoda & Ige, 2019).

To date, the terrorist groups which make the most substantial use of social media for their own purposes are the Islamic-jihadist ones. Facebook and YouTube channels are often used by al-Qaeda with the aim of recruiting and increasing the number of sympathisers and jihad-supporters, especially in the West, by spreading photos and videos of successful terrorist attacks, publishing lists and biographies of the martyrs, preaching or ideological texts. Apart from being used for recruitment purposes, social media are also used by Islamist groups for propaganda activities aimed at making public successful terrorist attacks and consequently, at throwing civil population into a panic. To demonstrate the power of social media and online activities of terrorist groups, the example of Boko Haram is of note. Boko Haram's online strategy has shifted in recent years. It initially made use of more traditional types of media, including public statements, leaflets and open air lectures. Before moving to online media, Boko Haram attempted to establish a newspaper and distributed audio cassettes with recorded messages from Mohammed Yusuf and Abubakar Shekau. Since 2015, the group has favoured social media platforms including YouTube, Twitter and Facebook. According to Kimutai (2014), Boko Haram's use of social media is not as sophisticated as that of al-Shabaab. Nonetheless, it appears to have become more advanced in its techniques following Boko Haram leader, Shekau's declaration of allegiance (bay'ah) to ISIL on 7 March 2015 and its adoption of the name "Islamic State West Africa Province" (ISWAP) the following month (Kimutai, 2014).

Causes of insecurity in Nigeria

There is no doubt that Nigeria has great potential for greatness, particularly with its large population consisting of a dynamic workforce, a growing economy, abundant natural resources, diverse raw materials, huge oil reserves and intellectual reservoirs. Despite these aspects of greatness, Nigeria continues to be a developing country struggling the

most frantically to find its feet among the nations' committees due, among other factors, to the prevalent insurgency and insecurity that have continued to present a challenge to its development and growth. Oderinu, Zubair & Bakar (2019) have pointed out some causes of insecurity in Nigeria are the followings: The menace of unemployment and poverty, corruption, elite exploitation of ethnicity and religious differences, weak security apparatus, porous border and marginalization and inequalities in the country.

Theoretical Framework

A theory is seen as an attempt at synthesising and integrating empirical data for maximum clarification and unification (Asemah, Nwammuo & Uwaoma, 2017). However, the study is anchored on Technological Determinism and Media Equation theories. The term "technological determinism" was coined by Thorstein Veblen (1857-1929), an American sociologist and economist. Technological determinism is the idea that technology has important effects on our lives. It refers to the belief that technology is the agent of social change. Technological determinism theory postulates that changes in communication modes largely determine the course of history. McLuhan's theory aimed at drawing attention to the portent strength of communication technologies emphasises the dimension of information craze in the society, as a direct result of the information explosion fostered by ICTs (Asemah, 2011 b). It is therefore safe to assume that social, historical, economic and cultural changes occurring in human society today is as a result of development of new technologies. That is, our actions and behaviours are products of new technology. According to Asemah (2011b, p.215) "the basic premise of technological determinism theory is that the media are extensions of human body". He further explains that the media do not only alter their environment, but the very message they convey. The media bring new perceptual habits while their technologies create new environments. Based on this theory, people tend to think, behave and act as a result of what they have seen or heard from the media. It simply means that the kind of technology we use now dictates how we react to situations around us. The use of multi-media phones now determines how people behave, react and interact with their environment. The theory is relevant to the study in the sense that our lives, to a great extent, revolve around our smartphones and tablets connected 24/7 to the internet. It is so ubiquitous in our lives that it is now replacing physical interaction as the preferred mode of communication. This accounts for why the actions and inactions of those exposed to social media in Nigeria and around the world are dictated by what is brought

to them by the new media.

On the other hand, media equation theory was proposed by Clifford Nass and Byron Reeves in 1996 at the Stanford University. The theory explains that people tend to respond to media as they would respond to another person or to places and phenomena in the physical world, depending on the cues they receive from the media. This theory predicts why people respond unconsciously and automatically to communication media as if it were human. This implies that people talk back at computers and use the same personal spacing techniques with media as they would, if that particular medium were a real person. Thus, we unconsciously act as if the media were people. The media equation theory of communication argues that the expression "Media=Real Life" is true. It says that people respond to communication media, especially in realm of the motion picture film, as if the images were human. A viewing audience would respond to the images of the theatre screen, as if they were present in the screen in real life.

The relevance of the theory to the study is not far-fetched. People treat the media like human beings, so whatever people see via the media, they tend to believe because they respond to the mass media, especially social media, computer and television, the way they would respond to human beings. This accounts for why a good number of Nigerians cultivated practices capable of promoting insecurity in the country.

Research Methodology

Given the research objectives and questions, this study used the survey research approach which involves the use of the questionnaire. This method became necessary because it afforded the researcher the opportunity to examine the inter-relationship among variables and help to develop explanatory inference. For purposes of gathering primary data, the population of the study are Nigerians living in six state capital cities across the six geopolitical zones of Nigeria viz: Akure, the Ondo State capital, representing the South-West-420,594, Awka, the capital of Anambra State, representing the South-East-167,738, Damaturu, the Capital of Yobe State, representing the North-East-46,000, Dutse, the capital of Jigawa State, representing the North-West-17,129, Lokoja, the capital of Kogi State, representing the North-Central-60,579 and Yenagoa, the capital of Bayelsa State, representing the South-South-24,335. These six state capital cities were randomly chosen because no state is free from insecurity in Nigeria. In addition, majority of them were among states where the UK, in 2022, advised its citizens not to travel to for fear of possible terrorists' attack (<https://punch.com/insecurity-avoid-12-nigerian->

[states-uk-advises-citizens/?amp](https://punch.com/insecurity-avoid-12-nigerian-states-uk-advises-citizens/?amp)). This also finds collaboration in Nwanegbo & Odigbo, (2013) which referred to Borno, Bauchi, Niger, Sokoto, Jigawa, Yobe, Kano Adamawa, Kaduna, Kogi and the Federal Capital Territory (Abuja) where insecurity is high. The population of the six state capitals from figures of 2023 World Population Review of cities in Nigeria stands at 736,375 (worldpopulationreview.com/countries/cities/Nigeria).

The sample size was calculated using the Australian Sample Size Calculator (<https://www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/d3310114.nsf/home/sample+size+calculator>). The calculated sample size based on the Australian sample size calculator (95% confidence interval, 0.6 (60%) relative standard error of 3.33) gave a sample size of n=600.

The inquiry used the multistage sampling technique. The multistage sampling involves a gradual reduction in sample size at each stage of the sampling procedure. For instance, Nigeria was stratified into 6 geopolitical zones and simple random sampling was used to select 6 states from the zones such as Anambra, Bayelsa, Kogi, Jigawa, Ondo and Yobe States. Purposive sampling and simple random sampling were used to select the state capitals of the chosen states (Akure, Awka, Damaturu, Dutse, Lokoja and Yenagoa) and one University and a popular street in each of the state capitals to reflect the heterogeneity of social media users in the cities respectively. Lastly, purposive sampling technique was used to select respondents based on some inclusion criteria such as whether or not the respondent has attained the age of consent, the respondent uses the social media and educational qualification of respondents.

As the research methodology used in this study is quantitative, data was collected via the utilisation of a structured questionnaire, which serves as a quantitative tool for data collecting. The closed-ended questions on the questionnaire were developed using a five-point Likert scale, consisting of the response options: Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree. The study used a self-administered questionnaire, which was uniformly distributed to all participants. The researcher used content validity where an expert in the field of Mass Communication went through the variables to determine if the variables measured what the researcher wished to measure. To ensure reliability of the study, the study used a test-retest methodology. The test instruments underwent adequate coding and evaluation by the use of the Guttman split half test, facilitated by the SPSS software version 23. The examination produced a Guttman λ value of .744. This demonstrates a significant level of internal consistency between the two tests, since it

closely approaches the maximum score of 1. In this study, face-to-face distribution of questionnaires served as the data gathering method. Participants received the surveys at many locations that worked well for both the researcher and the respondents. More so, the frequency counts and percentages were used in the investigation. The statistical analysis software SPSS (version 23) was used to perform these analyses.

Data Presentation

Table 1: Social media network that has contributed more to insecurity in Nigeria

Site	Frequency	Percentage
Facebook	45	7.5%
Whatsapp	139	23.2%
Youtube	105	17.5%
Twitter	126	21%
Instagram	36	6%
Blogs and Blogging	13	2.2%
Google	34	5.7%
Others	4	.7%

Responses in table 1 show that WhatsApp has the highest frequency of 23.2%, followed by Twitter (21%) and YouTube (17.5%). The other identified social media platforms indicated are Facebook (7.5%), Instagram (6%), Google (5.7%) and others (.7%).

Question	SA	A	N	D	SD	Mean	Standard Deviation	Significance
They have been used to promote insecurity	245	101	67	99	88	4.1124	1.00413	Significant
They have been use for recruitment	186	219	76	87	32	3.9701	0.99234	Significant
They have been used to create panic	101	174	156	50	119	3.9139	1.27310	Significant
They have been used for propaganda	98	104	200	78	120	3.8314	1.11903	Significant
They have been used to introduce virus in the systems	142	111	135	123	89	3.7167	1.21563	Significant
They have been used to hack accounts	201	96	193	45	65	3.5237	1.02879	Significant
They have been used to expand the network of criminal gangs.	130	69	197	121	83	3.4511	0.87452	Not Significant

The table 2 indicates the ways in which social media messages have been used to promote insecurity. The mean score for the responses to the statement “They have been used to promote insecurity” is significant (X= 4.1124±1.00413). Being the most responded to, it implies that a great deal of the social media messages have been used to promote different levels of insecurity being experienced in Nigeria today. Next is the mean response to the statement “They have been use for recruitment" (X3.9701±0.99234) which is significant. Respondents on the average do not agree that social

media has been used to create panic (X 3.9139± 1.27310) just as the average response to the statement “They have been used for propaganda” (X 3.8314± 1.11903) and “They have been used to introduce virus in the systems” (X 3.7167±1.21563). Also, the statements "They have been used to hack accounts" (X 3.5237± 1.02879) is supportive of the ways through which social media messages have been used to promote insecurity. Lastly "They have been used to expand the network of criminal gangs" (X 3.4511± 0.87452) is the only one that is not significant.

Table 3: Causes of social media insecurity in Nigeria

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Decision
Bad governance	3.5833	1.28028	Significant
Poor intelligence gathering	3.8300	1.38599	Significant
Lack of regulation	4.4383	.99222	Significant
Corruption	3.3333	1.45456	Not significant
Unemployment	3.8533	1.21557	Significant
Imbalance	4.1317	1.13276	Significant
Narcotics	3.4017	1.43542	Not Significant

Table 3 shows lack of regulation is the highest ranked factor (X 4.4383±.99222). This implies that lack of social media regulation is a significant cause impacting on social media insecurity in Nigeria.

Discussion of Findings

This section dwells on the three major findings in line with the research questions on social media usage and insecurity in Nigeria.

Research Question 1: What social media network has contributed more to insecurity in Nigeria?

Responses in table 1 show that WhatsApp has the highest frequency of 23.2%, followed by Twitter (21%) and YouTube (17.5%). The other identified social media platforms indicated are Facebook (7.5%), Instagram (6%), Google (5.7%) and others (.7%). Findings show that out of the social media networks, the WhatsApp is the one that causes insecurity more. People use the WhatsApp to interact. WhatsApp is an online doings or pastime that will obtain a few times. Through WhatsApp and other social media sites, we will study or learn about each one of us, discuss or talk about concern or issues and methodologies and defy each other. WhatsApp is one of the fast developing social networking sites, particularly popular with people under the age of 40, with nearly 500 million users worldwide. In many cases it is just a way for people to keep in touch with each other and exchange news and photographs. Increasingly, young people

prefer it as a source of news and information rather than listening to radio or watching television.

Research Question 2: What ways have social media messages been used to promote insecurity in Nigeria?

The study revealed that social media have been used to promote insecurity in Nigeria. The mean score for the responses to the statement "They have been used to promote insecurity" is significant ($\bar{X}=4.1124\pm 1.00413$). Being the most responded to, it implies that a great deal of the social media messages have been used to promote different levels of insecurity being experienced in Nigeria today. This is perhaps because everyone is free to post information in the social media, like face book, twitter, etc, without any form of censorship. Citizens now practice journalism without any form of training required. Thus, citizen journalists can post pictures that can bring about sentiments, which will in turn, lead to crisis. People now use the social media network to send all sort of alarming messages, without minding the consequences. This according to McQuail (2005) is because it is still difficult to find a better means of regulating the new media.

Research Question 3: What are the causes of social media insecurity in Nigeria?

According to research question three results, the lack of regulation is the primary cause of social media insecurity in Nigeria. Factors like imbalance, unemployment, and bad government come next. It is implied that the absence of regulation is the main reason for social media instability based on the conclusion that it emerged as the most important factor. With an average score of 4.4383 ± 0.99222 , the factor with the highest ranking is the lack of regulation. This implies that one major factor contributing to the unease social media creates is its lack of control.

That Nigeria is presently facing diverse and grievous security challenges is no longer news. Several factors have been advanced as the causes of insecurity in Nigeria. Oderinu, Zubair & Bakare (2019) identify weak security system, porous border, persuasive material inequalities and unfairness, unemployment/poverty, corruption and ethno-religious conflicts.

Within the framework of mass communication theory, Roberts compares gatekeeping to vanilla ice cream in his paper from 2005. Although, it may not be to everyone's taste, the majority of people can put up with it. This specific theory, although, not very tasty, provides a useful foundation for other ideas and

analytical methods. Undoubtedly, there have been many critics of gatekeeping as a media theory. Folarin (2002) asserts that no media organisation could possibly broadcast every message it gets in a normal workday. There are certain people who have to decide what information should be sent, what should be delayed, what should be edited, and what should be removed. Whether this gate is open or closed depends on a number of circumstances. Organisational policies, audience needs and preferences, the personality of the communication professional, competitiveness, legal restrictions, media nature, information source characteristics, and professional ethics are some of these factors (Adepoju, 1999 cited by Anaeto, Onabajo & Osifeso, 2006). Some may claim that the credibility of establishing interactive news sources is compromised by the lack of gatekeeping.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The study set out to examine the social media usage and insecurity in Nigeria. Social media have a higher capacity regarding transmission, which overcomes the former restrictions of cost, distance and capacity. There is also room for interactivity as the receiver can select, answer back, exchange and be linked to other receivers directly and there is flexibility in deciding on content and usage patterns. Social media among others include WhatsApp, YouTube, facebook, twitter, 2go, etc. Based on the findings, the paper concludes that social media have actually contributed to the insecurity in Nigeria. It recommends among others that the audiences and users of social media should be educated on the dangers of using the social media to portray negative vices. People now treat the media as human beings, so they tend to believe whatever they come across in the media. Youths, especially should moderate the kind of messages they send through the social media. Lastly, there is a need for policies and a legal framework to regulate the negative use of social media, and the government should take active steps to ensure the implementation of such policies.

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