# YOUTH, MEDIA AND INSECURITY: THE ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN SOLVING INSECURITY CHALLENGES IN NORTHERN NIGERIA

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## ABSTRACT

*Social media is a form of mass media communication on the Internet that allows users to share information, ideas, and opinions. Social media plays a multifaceted role in modern society, impacting how we communicate, connect, consume information, and engage in cultural and societal problem-solving. In this paper, efforts have been made to focus on the contributions of these social media platforms, especially Facebook, to addressing security issues at the community level, considering the engagement of youth in speech and online writing. In the article, the two sides of the issue were first described as how Facebook contributes to instilling violence in a peaceful area, and as well discussed how to resolve the crisis by using the same youth and media platforms. During this investigation, efforts were made to portray various scenarios from Facebook pages containing articles that would create confusion and those that would provide solutions. In addition, the youths were directly interviewed, some sections of the security agencies were contacted, and the results of the investigation were carefully presented conclusion was made. This work is based on the view of descriptive analysis of the View used by Jump up^ McArrthur (1992), Andrews, Jump up^ Janicki, Karol (2006), and Larry (2006).*

***Keywords:*** *Youth, Social Media, Security, Challenges*

## INTRODUCTION

Security is the foundation of prosperity, economic growth, and social well-being in every society. A society that faces insecurity challenges, is liable to crashing down. In the social system of any country or society, modernity is used to solve major problems. For instance, radio stations in the past were some of the few means of information dissemination unlike now that the modern world has come up with new ways and more convenience than old versions of radio and television.

Social media is a platform for integrating political, religious, and cultural diversity. These technologies have come with their advantages and otherwise. Through social media, many nations were able to perceive the needs of their citizens and provide them with the means of curtailing any social vices. However, it's very critical that in any country, the majority of these platform users are youths, either young male or female. Young people in every society are the most useful and vulnerable at all times. Every alien phenomenon first attacks the young ones due to the high probability of being risky and vulnerable. For example, young person is righteous, will have the opportunity to grow with a passion and commitment to the community, they will take advantage of what they (youths) have in common, which will lead to the development of their society. If they do not have the right to do so, then they will be in a state of unhappiness, and it remains hard to be able to find a way out of it.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Conceptual Framework of Social Media

Social media is defined as computer-based technology and interactive digital channels that facilitate the creation and sharing of information, ideas, and interests through virtual networks. It has become an integral part of modern society by overcoming the barriers of time and distance. Key platforms include Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and WhatsApp, which offer faster and cheaper communication compared to traditional media. Research indicates that these platforms have a positive impact on knowledge-based work and organizational performance (Rio Baviga, Afrizal, Wirmie Eka Putra, 2024)

### The Concept of Insecurity

Insecurity is a feeling of inadequacy and uncertainty that leads to anxiety regarding one's goals and relationships. It can manifest in various forms:

- **Relationship Insecurity:** Difficulty in trusting others or being vulnerable.
- **Social Insecurity:** A lack of confidence in one's ability to succeed in social environments.
- **Job/School Insecurity:** Feelings of inadequacy in professional or academic settings.
- **Basic Needs Insecurity:** Lack of food, housing, or health, which prevents individuals from focusing on other life aspects.

### Insecurity in Northern Nigeria

Insecurity in Nigeria, particularly in the North, is significantly driven by the Boko Haram insurgency. This group, whose name means "Western Education is forbidden," has targeted schools, leading to the death of thousands and the displacement of many. These challenges have disrupted academic calendars and destroyed infrastructure, including ICT facilities (Baviga, 2024).

**RESEARCH METHODS**

The research utilized a **descriptive analytical approach** based on the perspectives of McArrthur (1992), Janicki (2006), and (Haryono et al., 2022). The methodology involved several layers of data collection:

- **Case Study Analysis:** The study examined various Facebook pages to identify scenarios where content either incited confusion or provided solutions to crises.
- **Primary Interviews:** Direct interviews were conducted with youth to gather firsthand perspectives.
- **Stakeholder Consultation:** Parts of security agencies were contacted to provide a comprehensive view of the security landscape.
- **Secondary Data:** The paper references empirical studies, such as the survey by Asemah and Edegoh (2012), which sampled 400 respondents regarding social media and insecurity.

**RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

**The Dual Role of Social Media**

The study finds that social media, particularly Facebook, plays a multifaceted role in the security of Northern Nigeria. In Nigeria, over 87% of social media activity occurs on Facebook, with 74% of that traffic coming from the youth.

**Negative Impacts:** Terrorist groups like Boko Haram use platforms such as YouTube and Facebook as tools for propaganda, recruitment, and fundraising. They use coded language to organize attacks and spread misinformation to instill fear. Furthermore, the lack of "gatekeeping" allows for the spread of hate speech and anonymous comments that incite communal violence.

**Positive Impacts:** Conversely, social media provides a voice to the voiceless and serves as a cost-effective platform for participatory political discourse. It allows for healthy discussions to address security challenges and creates awareness to prevent future attacks.

**CONCLUSIONS**

Social media has both positive and negative influence on the Nigerian security system. Positive influence via healthy discussions to address security challenges and create awareness to prevent attacks. However, it influences the system negatively via dissemination of false information and used by terrorists and internet fraudsters to perpetrate fraud. However, considering the numerous benefits of the social media as x-raycd in this work, one can safely conclude that social media are used to combat security threats and also used to perpetrate crimes.

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