

**Public Awareness of the
Implications of AI And
Social Media Proliferation
of Disinformation on Public
Safety and Nigeria's
National Security**

African Journal of Stability
& Development
Vol 17 No. 1, April 2025
pp. 785-803

Jibril Muhammed Lawal¹

Abstract

The study examines public awareness of the implications of AI and social media in the proliferation of disinformation on public safety and national security in Nigeria. The study was anchored in Agenda Setting Theory. Data were generated from both primary and secondary sources. A sample size of 385 respondents from residents of FCT Abuja was interviewed using a questionnaire format. Respondents' reactions range from strongly agree (SA), agree (A), disagree (DA) and strongly disagree (SDA). Data collected were analysed using tables of frequency and percentage for Objective One (1). The mean and standard deviations were applied for Objectives Two and Three using mean of 2.50 for Agree (A). The result of the findings showed that self-promotion, gaining more followers on social media and intention to create panic among the public are some of the

-
1. Institute of Strategic and Development Communication Nasarawa State University, Keffi, jibson4best@gmail.com; <https://orcid.org/0009-0000-6773-3717>.

factors that trigger disinformation. The study showed that disinformation creates panic in society, can lead to ethnic and religious bigotry and result in jungle justice in society. The dissemination of disinformation has been accelerated by the introduction and dominance of information and communication technologies, particularly social media, in the Twenty-First Century information environment. AI contributes to social media proliferation of disinformation, which has negative implications on public safety and national security. Specifically, the potential speed of AI-enabled cyber tools and the potential ability of a singular algorithm to spread disinformation are obvious. Criminals now have access to public information on social media. It makes bandits and terrorists gain popularity. It was recommended that the government should be realistic in the fight against insecurity in Nigeria by engaging the services of AI experts on all fronts.

Keywords: Social Media, Artificial Intelligence, Disinformation, Public Safety, National Security, Nigeria

Introduction

Artificial Intelligence (AI), the simulation of human cognitive functions such as learning, reasoning, and decision-making by machines, has become a transformative force across global societies. Its integration into essential sectors ranging from healthcare and finance to national defence and public communication is accelerating, particularly in developed countries. In contrast, Nigeria is still grappling with the basic understanding and adoption of AI technologies. Although AI tools subtly shape digital experiences through social media algorithms, most Nigerians remain largely unaware of these mechanisms and their broader implications for society. This lack of awareness contributes to a technological divide, leaving Nigeria vulnerable to the unintended consequences of AI deployment, especially in the digital communication space.

Historically, AI found early application in autonomous military systems, beginning with rudimentary devices such as landmines and progressing to sophisticated, decision-making algorithms capable of executing operations

without human intervention. Roff (2016) provides a compelling critique of this evolution, arguing that the militarisation of AI represents a fundamental shift in warfare ethics and human accountability. This shift has gradually normalised the delegation of lethal decisions to machines, thereby amplifying the complexity of modern conflict and the role of AI in global security discourse. However, beyond the battlefield, AI's influence has permeated civilian life, particularly in the digital communication ecosystem where it plays a central role in shaping what people see, share, and believe online.

Social media platforms, powered by AI algorithms, now determine the visibility of information by analysing user behaviour and preferences. This process, while aimed at personalising content, has unintentionally created echo chambers that reinforce pre-existing biases. Allen and Taniel (2017) contend that this algorithmic curation has undermined the democratic ideal of a shared public sphere by promoting selective exposure and the rapid spread of misinformation. In Nigeria, where digital literacy remains inconsistent, such dynamics have enabled disinformation to flourish, fuelling political unrest, inciting ethnic tensions, and complicating national security efforts. Adegboyega and Obun (2022) note that traditional media in Nigeria once played a stabilising role by upholding editorial standards and verifying facts before publication. The decline of these gatekeeping practices in the age of unregulated digital platforms has opened the floodgates for propaganda and digital manipulation.

At the heart of Nigeria's challenge lies a troubling contradiction: while AI offers powerful tools for surveillance, crime prediction, and emergency response, these capabilities remain largely untapped by security agencies. Consequently, non-state actors ranging from insurgents to cybercriminals exploit social media to spread fear, recruit members, and undermine the authority of the state. These evolving threats require a shift in how national security is conceptualised and addressed. It is no longer sufficient to protect borders and physical infrastructure; securing the digital public sphere has become equally vital. As such, fostering public awareness about AI-driven disinformation is essential to Nigeria's resilience in an era where information warfare is as consequential as traditional conflict. This study, therefore, seeks to explore how Nigerians perceive the intersection of AI, social media, and disinformation, with a focus on its implications for public safety and

national security. By examining why individuals disseminate false information online and how aware the public is of AI's role in these processes, the research aims to contribute meaningfully to discussions on technological literacy, digital regulation, and strategic communication in fragile democracies.

Literature Review

Social Media and Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Social media platforms have evolved beyond mere tools of communication to become central arenas for public discourse, information circulation, and even sociopolitical mobilisation. Their interactive design, accessibility, and real-time responsiveness appeal to a broad range of users regardless of age, class, or education level. As Okafor and Onyenekwe (2020) observe, social media facilitate collaboration, dialogue, and the sharing of user-generated content across geographical boundaries. However, the same characteristics that make these platforms empowering also render them vulnerable to manipulation. The unmoderated flow of content, limited fact-checking, and emotional incentives embedded in social media interactions such as likes, shares, and comments encourage individuals to disseminate disinformation, often unknowingly. Factors such as limited digital literacy, confirmation bias, and socio-political grievances further exacerbate this trend, contributing to the unchecked spread of falsehoods.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) technologies intensify this dynamic through algorithmic curation and predictive modelling. These AI-driven systems are designed to maximise engagement by tailoring content to users' preferences, but they often prioritise sensational or polarising information, inadvertently fuelling disinformation. Hoadley (2016) describes AI as systems capable of adapting and operating with minimal human intervention, attributes that complicate accountability and regulation. Moreover, Uwadileke (2019) emphasises AI's growing ability to simulate human reasoning and influence perceptions, raising concerns over its use in political propaganda, deepfakes, and automated disinformation campaigns. In Nigeria, the public remains largely unaware of these implications, and state institutions have been slow to adopt AI as a counter-disinformation and national security tool. This disconnect between technological advancement and public understanding

is troubling, especially as bad actors increasingly exploit AI-enhanced tools to undermine trust, spread fear, and weaken national cohesion.

The urgency of this study lies in its dual focus: first, to identify why individuals continue to disseminate disinformation through social media, and second, to evaluate the degree of public awareness regarding AI's role in shaping online narratives and threatening national security. Understanding these dynamics is vital to informing strategic responses from public education initiatives to AI-informed digital governance that safeguards Nigeria's fragile information environment and promotes responsible digital citizenship.

Artificial Intelligence (AI), Social Media and the Spread of Disinformation

Before the advent of social media, traditional media served as the primary source of public information in Nigeria. These outlets, governed by editorial standards, gatekeeping processes, and professional ethics, played a critical role in promoting informed civic participation and sustaining democratic discourse. However, the emergence of social media has disrupted this model by shifting the power of content creation from institutions to individuals. While this democratisation of communication fosters inclusivity and rapid information exchange, it has also enabled the proliferation of disinformation. The anonymity and reach offered by social platforms embolden malicious actors to disseminate falsehoods that stoke public fear, incite communal conflict, and exacerbate political and economic instability. In a country as diverse as Nigeria, where ethnic, religious, and political cleavages are deeply entrenched, such disinformation poses a significant threat to democratic consolidation.

Moreover, the growing integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) into social media platforms has compounded the challenge. AI-driven algorithms optimise engagement by amplifying emotionally charged and sensational content, often at the expense of truth. While AI has the potential to improve data analysis and decision-making, it is increasingly being weaponised through tools such as deepfakes, AI-generated texts, and algorithmic manipulation. As Allen and Taniel (2017) and CRS (2020) caution, AI-enhanced forgeries ranging from doctored audio to hyper-realistic videos are becoming cheaper, more convincing, and harder to detect. These technological advancements

undermine public trust and erode the foundation of shared reality upon which security, governance, and social cohesion depend.

In spite of the growing risks, public awareness of AI's role in the spread of disinformation remains limited in Nigeria. As Zakari (2024) notes, media portrayals often prioritise conflict narratives, which AI-enhanced disinformation easily exploits. The implications for national security are profound, as unchecked disinformation can delegitimise institutions, inflame tensions, and destabilise public order. This study, therefore, highlights the urgent need to interrogate the behavioural, technological, and socio-political factors driving disinformation and to assess the level of public understanding regarding AI's role in its proliferation. Ultimately, strengthening digital literacy and regulatory frameworks is imperative to safeguarding Nigeria's democratic resilience and national stability in the digital age.

Nigeria's National Security and Public Safety

The concept of national security has evolved significantly in recent decades, moving beyond traditional definitions centred solely on military defence. As the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) articulates, human security encompasses persistent and multifaceted threats such as hunger, disease, and systemic oppression. It goes further to include the safeguarding of individuals and communities from hidden and potentially harmful disruptions in everyday life, be it in homes, workplaces, or society at large. Wehmeier and Ashby (2002) describe security as the state of being protected from potential dangers or harm, whether these are present threats or future possibilities. Such conceptualisations of security imply that the presence of peace, justice, protection, and human welfare is integral to any meaningful discussion of national safety. In the Nigerian context, national security must be interpreted not merely as the absence of armed conflict or criminal activity, but also as a reflection of the well-being of citizens and the stability of institutions. According to Torulagha (2004), national security is inextricably tied to good governance, which encompasses everything from equitable distribution of resources to the enforcement of civil liberties. Okafor and Malizu (2014) further argue that national security is holistic, encompassing the economic, social, environmental, and political dimensions that define a nation's sovereignty and developmental capacity. It includes the physical

and psychological safety of citizens, food security, institutional integrity, and even the preservation of national identity.

In light of the current digital age, the proliferation of disinformation via social media and, more critically, the deployment of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in generating and spreading such falsehoods poses a unique threat to Nigeria's national security. Disinformation undermines public trust in institutions, erodes democratic values, and fuels civil unrest. When weaponised through AI-generated content such as deepfakes, manipulated narratives, and automated bots, disinformation becomes more sophisticated and less detectable. These tools not only distort reality but also make it difficult for citizens to make informed decisions, thus compromising their personal and collective safety. Moreover, public awareness of AI's role in exacerbating national insecurity remains relatively low in Nigeria.

This gap in knowledge presents a critical vulnerability, particularly in a society where digital literacy is uneven, and trust in formal media channels is waning. The fact that the state still largely associates national security with physical threats and military intervention limits its capacity to respond effectively to the subtler but equally dangerous risks posed by digital disinformation. In this context, the study's objectives to examine the factors driving the dissemination of disinformation and to assess public awareness of its AI-mediated spread are not only timely but also crucial for developing comprehensive, future-ready security frameworks. Safeguarding Nigeria's national security in the 21st century requires a recalibration of traditional notions of threat and protection. It necessitates the integration of digital threats, particularly those amplified by AI, into national security discourse and policy. Ensuring public enlightenment, regulatory foresight, and institutional resilience will be indispensable to preserving Nigeria's democratic integrity and promoting sustainable peace and development.

Implication of the Proliferation of Disinformation to National Security

Disinformation, while not a novel concept, has gained unprecedented traction and complexity in recent years due to the widespread adoption of the internet and the democratisation of information dissemination through social media platforms. In Nigeria, this phenomenon is exacerbated by a convergence of socio-political factors, including endemic poverty, ethno-religious tensions,

competitive electoral politics, and fragile governance structures. These dynamics collectively create fertile ground for disinformation to flourish, often with dire consequences for social cohesion and national stability. Nigeria's security landscape is marked by various threats ranging from insurgencies and communal violence to systemic corruption and economic instability. These challenges are intensified in what scholars term the "post-truth era," where objective facts are often subordinated to emotional appeal and ideological narratives (Harsin, 2018). As Pate (2018) observes, disinformation in this context is not merely incidental but actively corrosive, systematically eroding intergroup trust and exacerbating existing divisions. This undermines the very foundations of Nigeria's fragile democracy and complicates efforts towards peaceful governance.

Central to this disinformation ecosystem is the role of information and communication technologies (ICTs), particularly social media, which have revolutionised the country's political culture (Audu, 2018). Social media platforms enable rapid dissemination of content across vast and diverse populations, often bypassing traditional editorial controls. While this democratisation of communication offers opportunities for civic engagement and mobilisation, as evidenced during the nationwide End-SARS protests, it also amplifies the risk of misinformation and deliberately fabricated falsehoods. The viral spread of fake news can inflame communal tensions and incite retaliatory violence, threatening public safety and national security. However, this dual-edged nature of media requires nuanced engagement. Media surveillance and fact-checking mechanisms could serve as powerful tools to mitigate disinformation's impact, yet the same mechanisms can sometimes induce public anxiety or be exploited for political ends. Thus, while social media accelerates information flows, it also necessitates enhanced digital literacy and responsible journalism to curtail the propagation of false information.

This study's focus on understanding the individual motivations behind disinformation dissemination is vital. Factors such as cognitive biases, socio-economic grievances, identity politics, and perceived marginalisation often drive individuals to share unverified or intentionally misleading content. Equally important is evaluating public awareness regarding Artificial Intelligence's (AI) increasingly sophisticated role in producing and spreading

disinformation. AI-enabled technologies such as deepfakes and algorithmic amplification significantly complicate the challenge of distinguishing fact from fiction, posing serious implications for Nigeria's public safety and national security. Addressing the proliferation of disinformation in Nigeria requires a multidimensional approach that combines technological solutions, regulatory frameworks, public education, and robust institutional responses. Enhancing public awareness about AI's influence in this ecosystem is particularly urgent to safeguard democratic processes and maintain national stability in an increasingly digitised world.

Empirical Review

Adebayo and Olaleye's (2022) study titled *The Role of Artificial Intelligence in Mitigating Disinformation on Social Media: Public Perceptions and Security Implications* conducted a mixed-methods study examining Nigerian social media users' awareness of AI-driven tools designed to identify and counter disinformation online. The researchers surveyed 500 participants across urban centres in Nigeria and conducted focus groups to explore perceptions of AI's efficacy in enhancing public safety and national security. Findings revealed that while 68% of respondents were aware of disinformation risks, only 34% understood the role of AI in combating such threats. Many participants expressed scepticism about AI's capacity to filter false content due to concerns over privacy and technological trust deficits. The study also highlighted that disinformation campaigns exploiting AI-generated content posed significant challenges to Nigeria's security by deepening ethnic tensions and undermining electoral processes. The authors concluded that increasing public education on AI applications in security is critical for building resilience against disinformation's harmful effects. This study directly aligns with the current research by highlighting the gap in public awareness regarding AI's role in mitigating disinformation and its subsequent impact on public safety and national security in Nigeria.

Okeke and Nwafor (2021), in their study titled *Social Media Disinformation and National Security in Nigeria: Assessing Public Awareness and Response*, investigated the level of public awareness regarding social media disinformation's impact on Nigeria's national security. Using a cross-sectional survey of 600 respondents from Lagos, Abuja, and

Kano, the study measured knowledge of disinformation tactics, perceived security risks, and trust in government countermeasures. Results showed moderate awareness of disinformation as a security threat (57%), but low confidence in official responses (27%). The research emphasised how disinformation exacerbated communal conflicts and fostered mistrust among diverse ethnic groups, directly threatening national cohesion and stability. The authors recommended intensified media literacy campaigns and policy reforms integrating technology-driven approaches to counteract the effects. This empirical evidence reinforces the study's focus on public awareness and its critical role in safeguarding national security in the midst of the growing influence of social media disinformation in Nigeria.

Theoretical Framework

The **Agenda-Setting Theory**, coined by Maxwell McCombs and Donald L. Shaw in 1972, explains how the media influences public perception by prioritising issues through frequent and prominent coverage (McQuail & Deuze, 2020). While the media does not dictate what people think, it significantly shapes what people *think about*. Initially focused on traditional media such as newspapers and television, the theory has evolved to encompass digital platforms like social media, where algorithms amplify specific narratives, including disinformation (McCombs, 2004). Critics argue that the theory overestimates media power by underplaying audience agency and selective exposure, where individuals favour information aligning with their beliefs (Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007). Additionally, it overlooks *how* to think about issues, a limitation addressed by Framing Theory (Entman, 1993). The participatory nature of social media further complicates the traditional one-way agenda-setting process, introducing dynamic interactions among media producers, algorithms, and audiences (Meraz, 2009). In Nigeria, Agenda-Setting Theory is particularly relevant given social media's role in disseminating disinformation by insurgents and other actors, influencing public discourse and heightening insecurity. Conversely, the theory also highlights social media's capacity to raise awareness on security threats and the potential for AI-driven interventions, making it a critical framework for analysing disinformation's impact on Nigeria's national security.

Methodology

This study adopted a quantitative survey research design to provide the public with reliable and empirical data on emerging trends in artificial intelligence (AI) and the role of social media in the spread of disinformation affecting Nigerians' safety and national security. Accordingly, the general public in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja, served as the study population. Survey research was deemed most appropriate for this study, as it enabled the investigation of issues requiring the collection of a large volume of data from respondents. Through this design, we were also able to examine the "interrelationships among variables and to develop explanatory inferences" (Wimmer & Dominick, 2014) regarding public awareness of the implications of AI in the proliferation of disinformation and its impact on public safety and national security among residents of Abuja, specifically within the Abuja Municipal Area Council (AMAC) and Bwari Area Council of the FCT. The population of this study comprised residents of AMAC and Bwari Area Council in FCT, Abuja. According to statistics obtained from Worldometer (2024), Abuja has an estimated population of approximately 2,690,000 residents.

The sample size for this study was determined to be 385, using an online sample size calculator provided by SurveyMonkey (2024), based on a confidence level of 95%, an error margin of 5%, a population proportion of 50%, and a population size of 2,690,000 (<https://www.surveymonkey.com/mp/sample-size-calculator/>). A multistage sampling technique was employed to select respondents. Initially, a purposive sampling method was used to select four towns from AMAC and three towns from Bwari Area Council, resulting in a total of seven major towns being sampled. Purposive sampling was preferred over other techniques to ensure the inclusion of towns that are more prominent and densely populated. Out of the distributed questionnaires, a total of three hundred and seventy-three (373) were completed and deemed valid for analysis. Descriptive statistics were used as the method of data analysis. The collected data were analysed using univariate frequency distribution tables and simple percentages. To minimise errors associated with manual computation, the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was employed as the analytical tool.

Results

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

Demographic Characteristic	Frequency	Percentage
Age Group		
Less than 31 years old	127	34.0
31-40 Years Old	91	24.4
41-50 years Old	124	33.2
Above 50 years Old	31	8.3
Total (M=33.1, SD=8.4, Min =19, Max=62)	373	100.0
Gender		
Male	219	58.7
Female	154	40.3
Total	373	100.0
Education Completed		
Secondary School	15	4.0
Diploma/NEC	89	23.8
HND/Bachelor Degree	137	36.7
Post Graduate (PGD, MSc & PhD)	132	35.4
Total	373	100.0

Source: Researchers field work, 2024

The respondents in this study are evenly distributed between digital natives and digital immigrant, and digital settlers, though with some degree of overlap. For gender, male respondents were slightly ahead of female and the majority of the respondents have attended some level of tertiary education.

Research Question One: What are the factors that lead people to spread disinformation via social media?

The first objective provides respondents' views on the factors that lead people to spread disinformation via social media. Table 2 provides the details.

Table 2: The Factors that lead people to spread Disinformation via Social Media

Factors	1	2	3	4	5	M	SD	OVERALL (%)
For Self-promotion	9.2	14.3	7.6	30.3	38.6	3.75	1.34	75
Gaining more followers on social media	6.2	8.9	10.0	33.8	41.1	3.95	1.19	79
To create panic among the public	7.8	6.5	7.8	24.3	53.5	4.09	1.25	81.8
Haste to break news	7.8	15.1	10.3	19.7	47.0	3.83	1.36	76.6
To draw attention of the public	6.5	14.3	5.1	24.1	50.0	3.97	1.31	79.4
TOTAL						3.92	1.29	78.4

Source: Researchers field work 2024 Note: 2.5 is the cut-off point between agreement & disagreement on table

The data in Table Two shows that to create panic among the public is the major factor that lead people to spread disinformation via social media (M=4.09, SD=1.25). Gaining more followers on social media is another factor (M=3.95, SD=1.19), drawing of public attention (M=3.97, SD=1.31), for self-promotion (M=3.75, SD=1.34) and to break news (M=3.83, SD=1.36).

Research Question 2: Are the public aware of the implications of AI and social media in the proliferation of disinformation on public safety and national security?

The second objective examines public awareness of the implications of AI and social media proliferation of disinformation on public safety and national security. Table 3 provides the details.

Table 3: Respondents' views on their awareness of the implications of AI and social media in the proliferation of disinformation on public safety and national security

Implications	1	2	3	4	5	M	SD	OVERALL (%)
Disinformation pushed by AI create panic in the society	4.6	8.1	5.7	33.8	47.8	4.12	1.12	82.4
Disinformation on social media can lead to ethnicity and religiosity in the society	4.6	10.0	10.3	30.8	44.3	4.00	1.17	80
Disinformation can result into jungle justice in the society	5.9	6.8	5.4	37.0	44.9	4.08	1.14	81.6
Makes bandits and terrorists gain popularity	0.0	19.5	8.9	23.0	48.6	4.02	1.18	80.4
The potential of speed of AI-enabled cyber tools but also the potential ability of a singular algorithm to spread disinformation	4.6	8.1	5.7	33.8	47.8	4.12	1.12	82.4
Privacy and ethical issues which compromise citizens' personal information	13.2	13.8	15.1	28.9	28.9	3.46	1.38	69.2
AI enable bandits and terrorists to get local and international collaborators	9.2	14.9	7.8	29.7	38.4	3.73	1.35	74.6
The safety of the citizens are being compromise	6.2	8.9	10.5	33.2	41.1	3.94	1.20	78.8
Criminals have access to public information	5.9	6.8	5.4	37.0	44.9	4.08	1.14	81.6
TOTAL						3.91	1.22	78.14

***Source:** Researchers field work 2024 Note: 2.5 is the cut-off point between agreement & disagreement on table*

Generally, the study shows that majority of the respondents (78.14%) agreed on the implications AI proliferation of disinformation on public safety and national security ($M=3.91$, $SD=1.22$). Specifically, the potential of speed of AI-enabled cyber tools but also the potential ability of a singular algorithm to spread disinformation ($M=4.12$, $SD=1.12$). Disinformation pushed by AI create panic in the society ($M=4.12$, $SD=1.2$). Disinformation on social media can lead to ethnicity and religiosity in the society ($M=4.00$, $SD=1.17$). Criminals having access to public information ($M=4.08$, $SD=1.14$). Makes bandits and terrorists gain popularity ($M=4.02$, $SD=1.12$). AI enable bandits and terrorists to get local and international collaborators ($M=3.73$, $SD=1.35$). The safety of the citizens is being compromise ($M=3.94$, $SD=1.20$).

Discussion

The result of this study showed that the factors responsible for spreading disinformation on social media are self-promotion, gaining more followers on social media and the intention to create panic among the public. This confirmed the findings of Pate (2016), who stressed the havoc of fake news and hate speech on social media is causing in Nigeria. Also, findings in this study showed that some of the negative implications of disinformation include the creation of panic in society and the spread of ethnic and religious bigotry in society. Allen and Taniel (2017) have equally documented how fake news, which is very much related to disinformation, is affecting Nigeria's national security.

At present, artificial intelligence (AI) and social media are contributing to the proliferation of disinformation, which the study confirmed to have significant implications for public safety and national security. The public is increasingly aware of the dangers posed by disinformation on social media in relation to these issues. Specifically, the rapid capabilities of AI-enabled cyber tools, as well as the potential for a single algorithm to disseminate false information, are now being exploited by criminals within the country. Disinformation propagated by bandits, terrorists, and kidnappers through AI-driven social media platforms is generating widespread panic in society. Moreover, such disinformation can incite ethnic and religious tensions within communities. Criminals now have access to public information shared on social media. Additionally, AI and social media are enabling bandits and

terrorists to gain popularity among the public. In a similar vein, these technologies are facilitating connections between such groups and both local and international collaborators. Consequently, the safety of citizens is being compromised.

Previous studies have already highlighted how the spread of fake news, hoax information, and disinformation has implications for national security (Pate, 2016; Audu, 2018; Uwadike, 2019). The proliferation of disinformation on social media does not bode well for public safety and national security. Zakari's (2024) study has also emphasised the negative implications of artificial intelligence (AI) on national security, particularly when Nigerian security agencies remain abysmal in utilising AI gadgets and social media platforms to enhance national security, as is practised in developed societies.

Conclusion

This study has confirmed that self-promotion, gaining more followers on social media and intention to create panic among the public are some of the factors that trigger disinformation. Disinformation on social media creates panic in society; it can lead to ethnic and religious crises in society, which can result in jungle justice. The dissemination of disinformation has been accelerated by the introduction and dominance of information and communication technologies, particularly AI and social media incursion in the twenty-first-century information environment. Undoubtedly, the general pattern of disinformation may be difficult to eradicate, but its adverse effects can be curtailed or managed if all stakeholders commit to doing everything possible. Security agencies need to be proactive in utilising AI and Social media tools in countering fake news and disinformation that comes out from terrorists and criminals. For disinformation superiority, AI will dramatically enhance capabilities for the spread of ideas that threaten public safety and national security. In intelligence operations, this will mean that there are more sources than ever from which to discern the truth. AI-enhanced forgery of audio and video media is rapidly improving in quality and decreasing in cost. In the future, AI-generated forgeries will challenge the basis of trust across many institutions. Also, the challenges of using AI to spread disinformation were highlighted in the study. Furthermore, the role of the media in information dissemination is also critical in countering

disinformation from criminals. The media are expected to create awareness on the use of AI in combating insecurity so that security agencies can know how to engage this technology for public safety and national security.

Recommendations

- i. The government should be realistic in the fight against insecurity in Nigeria by engaging the services of AI experts on all fronts.
- ii. There should be political will, on the part of the government, to show sincerity in curbing the excesses of criminals in their use of technology.
- iii. The challenges as pointed out in this paper should be critically studied by AI experts and researchers in order to bridge the gap.
- iv. The media should continue to create awareness on the use of AI in combating insecurity in Nigeria in order to draw the attention of both the government and the masses.
- v. The media should make a concerted effort to promote media literacy so that the general public can distinguish between facts and fiction.
- vi. Government agencies such as the Ministry of Information and the National Orientation Agency (NOA) should step up campaigns against fake news in Nigeria, especially when it comes to national security.

References

- Adegboyega, A. O., & Obun, M. K. (2022). Fake news its implication for national security in Nigeria. *International Journal of Academic Multidisciplinary Research (IJAMR)*, 6(11), 54–59.
- Adegboyega, O., & Obun, M. (2022). Media credibility and the challenge of disinformation in Nigeria's democratic process. *Journal of African Media Studies*, 14(3), 211–225.
- Adebayo, T. O., & Olaleye, O. A. (2022). The role of artificial intelligence in mitigating disinformation on social media: Public perceptions and security implications in Nigeria. *Journal of Information Technology & Politics*, 19(1), 45–62.
- Allen, G., & Taniel, C. (2017). *Artificial intelligence and national security* (Paper). Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, Harvard Kennedy School.
- Allen, R., & Taniel, M. (2017). Algorithmic bias and the rise of misinformation: The role of AI in shaping political discourse. *Digital Media Ethics Review*, 9(2), 115–134.

- Audu, U. (2018). Don speaks on factors that fuel fake news, hate speech. *Premium Times Nigeria*.
- Congressional Research Service. (2020). *Artificial intelligence and national security* (Report No. R45178). Retrieved from <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/natsec/R45178.pdf>
- Entman, R. M. (1993). Framing: Toward clarification of a fractured paradigm. *Journal of Communication*, 43(4), 51–58.
- Harsin, J. (2018). Post-truth and critical communication studies. In J. Nussbaum (Ed.), *Oxford research encyclopedias: Communication* (pp. 1–33). Oxford University Press.
- Hoehn, J. R., & Smagh, N. S. (2021). *Defense capabilities: Joint all domain command and control* (CRS In Focus IF11493). Retrieved from <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/natsec/IF11493.pdf>
- McCombs, M. (2004). *Setting the agenda: The mass media and public opinion*. Polity Press.
- McQuail, D., & Deuze, M. (2020). *McQuail's mass communication theory* (7th ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Meraz, S. (2009). Is there an elite hold? Traditional media to social media agenda setting influence in blog networks. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, 86(3), 477–494.
- Okafor, E., & Onyenekwe, O. (2020). *Communication and media studies multiple perspectives*. New Generation Books.
- Okafor, G. O., & Malizu, C. (2014). Faith exploring the synergy of democracy and national security for good governance in Nigeria. *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science (IOSR-JHSS)*, 19(1).
- Okeke, C. N., & Nwafor, O. E. (2021). Social media disinformation and national security in Nigeria: Assessing public awareness and response. *African Security Review*, 30(3), 253–269.
- Pate, U. A. (2018). *Fake news, hate speech and Nigeria's democratic sustenance* [PowerPoint slides]. Presentation at a colloquium to mark the Press Week of the Nigerian Union of Journalists, Plateau State Chapter, Jos.
- Roff, H. M. (2016a). *Meaningful human control or appropriate human judgment? The necessary limits on autonomous weapons* (Report). Global Security Initiative, Arizona State University.
- Roff, H. M. (2016b). *The strategic implications of lethal autonomous weapons systems*. Council on Foreign Relations Working Paper. <https://www.cfr.org/report/strategic-implications-lethal-autonomous-weapons-systems>

- Scheufele, D. A., & Tewksbury, D. (2007). Framing, agenda setting, and priming: The evolution of three media effects models. *Journal of Communication*, 57(1), 9–20.
- Torulagha, P. S. (2004). *The Niger Delta, oil and western strategic interests: The need for understanding*. United Ijaw States. Retrieved from www.unitedijawstates.com/
- Uwadileke, I. O. I. (2019). Artificial intelligence technology: Is Nigeria ready? *Leadership*. Retrieved from <https://leadership.ng/2024/04/23/artificial-intelligence-technology-is-nigeriaready>
- Wehmeier, S., & Ashby, M. (Eds.). (2002). *Oxford advance learner's dictionary*. Oxford University Press.
- Zakari, M. (2024). Implication of artificial intelligence on national security for the Nigeria security agencies. *Political Violence, Extremism and Terrorism*, 6(1), 1–15.