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Combating Insecurity Using Communication and Technologies: Insight from Southeast Nigeria

Florence C. Nnah

Department of Broadcasting, Imo State University, Owerri. Imo State, Nigeria



ORCID:

<https://orcid.org/0009-0009-9907-9567>

***Corresponding Author:** florachika69@gmail.com

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Abstract

This paper looks at how important technology and communication are to the fight against insecurity in the nation, particularly in the southeast. With a focus on actionable steps that are pertinent in this regard, this discussion uses a qualitative method to evaluate the relationship between Nigerian insecurity and developing technologies and the mass media. From the standpoint of systems theory, the study examined the theoretical foundation. When assessing how communication and technology affect insecurity in South Eastern Nigeria, it was found that the public does not have preconceived notions about a particular event and that information about insecurity in the region is primarily disseminated through mass media that is aided by communication and technology. Therefore, it can be concluded that communication and technology are important in shaping public perceptions of insecurity and their behaviour.

Keywords: Communication, Technology, Insecurity, South-East, Mass Media

Introduction

A secure environment encourages brighter minds to do more, which ensures the country's growth and progress. The goal of securing an environment is to prevent attacks that could compromise people's physical, mental, and emotional health. Only in a state of peace and tranquility—national security—can any significant progress be accomplished. Effective policing and vigilant monitoring against threats to the nation's social, economic, and political development are essential components of national security (Dada, 2016). Human and political security (basic human rights), economic security, environmental security, energy and natural resource security, cyber security, social and food security, and the prevalence of internal peace are all significant topics that are included in the national security discourse, which is not just restricted to territorial boundaries (Altheide, 2017).



In Nigeria, the level of insecurity has escalated to the point where the proper science systems and professionals must be deployed to fight against all crimes and corruptions, just as is done in developed countries. The introduction of science systems into many aspects of daily life has led to the development of the modern concept of an information society, which offers great opportunities (Ogbonnaya, 2016). In the present day, the proper placement of science systems is necessary to maintain national security. The scientific application of knowledge to generate high-caliber research that yields technology and information and communication technologies is known as the science-system.

It is well acknowledged that communication plays a crucial role in human life and existence. Through the employment of media like radio, television, newspapers, books, the telephone, and face-to-face interactions, man shapes and governs society. As a result, it is widely accepted that these communication channels are characteristics of contemporary social activities and arrangements, rapid social change, and technical forms of authority and control. Media-driven communication has emerged as the key pillar upon which society is built. This also applies to Nigeria. In actuality, Nigerian media has a reputation for being extremely outspoken, persistent, and tenacious in its quest of social justice and political equality throughout Africa (Dada, 2016).

Communication and technology use will assist the country detect possible dangers, disseminate information more easily, create safeguards for the country, and build response capabilities in the fight against insecurity. The security agencies' capacity to tackle Nigeria's security issues will be significantly enhanced by the use of emergency communication systems, GPS-enabled devices, social networking tools, emergency operation centres (EOCs), intelligent monitoring systems, data mining and database tracking systems, and information sharing (Lai & Lin, 2017).

The worrying trend of anti-social activities that are common in Nigeria and that were unimaginable and unrelated to the country not so long ago highlight the country's state of insecurity. Banditry, instances of kidnapping and murder in the southeast, violent agitations by secessionists, and acts of terrorism by the Islamic sect Boko Haram in the north have all turned into "brands" of crime that have damaged Nigeria's reputation. This is on top of other common crimes that law enforcement officers deal with on a daily basis, such as theft, arson, and violent ethno-religious clashes. Some regions of the nation are experiencing a concerning level of insecurity as a result of these acts, especially those that pose a threat to life.

Everyone is concerned about Nigeria's escalating security issue, and every effort must be made to address it. Examining how technology and communication would be crucial in bolstering Nigeria's security against insecurity, with a focus on the South East, is crucial. Thus, the purpose of this paper was to investigate how technology and communication can help fight insecurity in South East Nigeria (Dada, 2016).

This paper was guided by the following objectives:

1. Examine the role of communication and technology in forming public opinion about insecurity in South East Nigeria,
2. Determine the contribution of communication and technology in the efforts for addressing insecurity in South East Nigeria

Theoretical Framework

The Systems Theory, first proposed by biologist Ludwig Von Bertalanffy in 1968, serves as the foundation for this study. The intricate interactions between the components of the ecosystem are



explained by the theory. According to his theory, biological elements can continuously evolve by emerging and interacting with their surroundings to gain qualitatively new adaptive capabilities. Here, "system" refers to a group of interconnected and dependent pieces that may be man-made or natural, and "evolution" refers to the result of changes made to one component of a system that may have an impact on other components or the system as a whole (Vallacher & Nowak, 2007).

Later, social philosophers of the 20th century incorporated Ludwig's theory into the social sciences, including communication and sociology, and used it as the basis for their own theories, including James Clerk Maxwell's Control theory, Niklas Luhmann's Social Systems theory, and Talcott Parsons' Action Theory. All things considered, the system theory clarifies how components within a single eco-system are interrelated, claiming that nothing truly exists in complete independence of other components, including communication and technology systems, which include social institutions, information systems, and communication processes (Lai & Lin, 2017).

According to this study, Nigeria's communication systems and the system for resolving insecurity in South East Nigeria are connected and interrelated. Because they both play reactive or reciprocating roles, the two subsystems—communication and security—that are a component of the same eco-system (national system) are not completely independent or isolated. As a result, national security influences the communication process within the country, and communication processes influence national security. Therefore, as the country's communication system develops, the government is expected to figure out how to instill a positive national atmosphere that is primarily centred on security and implement policies to guarantee that insecurity is reduced and national security is attained with the help of the communication and technology systems.

Literature Review

In any civilisation, the media are the primary means of communication. In this study, "mass media" essentially refers to the press, a term that was once used to refer to print media but is now used to apply to both print and broadcast media. The mass media's ability to communicate is essential to the development of a nation. It is nearly impossible for governments to function without the efficient use of mass media for communication. of reference to the three main powers of mediaeval European society—the Lords (or Nobles), the Clergy, and the Commons—Edward Burke, a politician from the 18th century, initially referred to the press as the "Fourth Estate" of the realm because of its immense power (McQuail, 2000). The press is still referred to as the fourth estate of the realm, after the legislative, executive, and judicial branches.

From the advent of Reverend Henry Townsend's Iwe Irohin in 1859 through the period of independence to the present, Nigeria's mass media landscape has seen significant progress. With new media outlets popping up almost every day, Nigeria now has highly regarded mass media, including both privately held and government-owned outlets. With the advent of satellite broadcasting, television networks like Channels Television, African Independent Television (AIT), and the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) are starting to reach a truly worldwide audience. Interesting news and current affairs programs that have an impact on society in one way or another are broadcast by radio stations like Radio Nigeria, Ray Power FM, and the many state and privately held organisations. According to Nwabueze and Ebeze (2013), a number of newspapers, including The Guardian, Punch, Daily Sun, Thisday, Vanguard, The Nation, and Daily Independent, have emerged as prominent communication channels in Nigeria, offering a variety of hard and soft news that inform the public.



In Nigeria today, the press continues to serve these crucial responsibilities in society, particularly in guaranteeing widespread support for democratic administrations at all levels. The news media have a significant impact on business, politics, society, and the attitudes, behaviours, and core moral principles of millions of individuals in their everyday lives. However, there have been difficulties for Nigeria's press (Tejumaiye, 2011). Despite these obstacles, they have had a variety of effects on the country.

Insurgencies, banditry, kidnapping for ransom, and rampart killings are just a few of the many forms of insecurity that plague Nigeria overall. A string of kidnappings and killings of targeted individuals in the country's southeast has also increased the level of insecurity in the south-eastern and south-southern regions.

Violence in the country has been attributed to a number of causes. These include Nigeria's multifaceted, multicultural personality, corruption, bad governance, unemployment, mishandling diversity, and conflict problems in the nation. After analysing the nation's violent trend, Pate (2011) raises some troubling points that remain unanswered: "How can one explain the basis for these regular violent explosions that seem to litter the landscape? Why do individuals from diverse ethnic origins murder one another? Why do followers of other religions perceive one another as threats? Why do members of opposing political parties use violence against one another? Why do pastoralists and farmers clash? When did social ties between members of various ethnic groups, especially in the North, begin to deteriorate?

Why are institutions and governments not keeping an eye on and controlling these conflicts? Who are we to blame? Could it be particular people or organisations?

Method

This paper adopted the library research method where secondary sources on technology and Insecurity were extensively discussed in line with the objective raised to guide this discourse.

Discussion

The Role of Communication and Technology in Combating Insecurity in South East Nigeria

Any country that wants to be truly secure in the twenty-first century, sometimes known as the information or jet age, must look beyond the traditional security forces because communication is the fundamental force behind social interaction, which can prevent and curb enmity as well as promote peace and tranquilly in society. As communication has evolved to determine *modus operandi* in almost every aspect of social life, there has been a significant shift in the conceptualisation and application of communication-security affiliation, according to a critical analysis of technological development and security dynamics (Okeke & Oji, 2014).

Al-Rfouh (2015) asserts that the battleground is now a cybernetic environment rather than a physical one. In this instance, its weapons or instruments of victory encompass not only firearms and arsenals but also any technology that might influence people's bodily, emotional, and spiritual well-being. He goes on to say that the emergence of digital and instantaneous communication technologies, made possible by machines, systems, facilities, and gadgets like satellites, fibre optics, cable, broadband, the Internet, social media, mobile phones, and other small gadgets, has completely changed how people interact with one another and caused a reexamination of long-held ideas about national security and governance since the end of the Cold War.



According to Altheide (2017), the majority of wars and crises are brought on by the use of propaganda, lies, terror, or deceptive victimisation framing. Therefore, in order to combat such content or intent before they escalate into a full-fledged crisis or war, communication mechanisms must be adopted. He used media coverage of the Gulf War, which was obviously propaganda-driven, as an example of this. Therefore, there is a pressing need to reconsider the role of information in relation to national security, particularly in a multiethnic and diverse country like Nigeria, given the current development and popularisation of information and communication technology.

The Contribution of Communication and Technology in the Efforts for Addressing Insecurity in South East Nigeria

Over time, the media and communication industry—which is referred to as the "fourth estate" of the domain of power—has shown itself to be a vital and effective tool of statecraft. No state can successfully set a protection target without taking communication and the media into account, especially since the revolution in communication brought about by technological innovation.

The military and other security-related agencies benefit from communication's investigative, monitoring, understanding, and strategic communication capabilities in addition to its ability to raise public awareness of social events (Momoh, 2016). Therefore, cooperation between the military and the media is essential to success because it allows them to obtain information, issue orders based on the best situational awareness, and make quicker and better decisions during times of peace as well as warfare.

They have allocated a sizeable portion of their budget to guaranteeing that security agents have access to and make use of the greatest communication tools available, taking a cue from several developed countries with fundamental understanding of this reality. U.S. military spending on command, control, communications, computers, intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (C4 ISR) was estimated at US\$18.5 billion in 2019, and is expected to increase to about \$22 billion in 2021, according to the United States' Information and Communication Development Research (ICDR). Thus, there is a direct as well as an indirect relationship between communication and national security strategy. This is due to the fact that national security policy covers the preservation of her resources, cultural integrity, sovereignty, institutions, and territory in addition to crisis and insurgency prevention and management (Sheikh et al., 2017).

According to Akinfeleye (2016), communication and the media in general serve normative purposes that support the efforts of security agencies in ensuring national security. This functions that especially address the transmission, linkage, and surveillance of the society's social history. It is anticipated that this will be accomplished through reporting, monitoring, educating, and informing, entertaining, regulating, and greatly reducing societal excesses. This is also based on the agenda-setting ability of communication, which has been shown over time to influence people's attitudes, behaviours, and perceptions by influencing what they read, see, and hear.

There is a progressive decline in confidence in government-owned communication agencies as a result of criticism of the traditional communication sector's operations. This is because it has been demonstrated that over time, their content reflects their reliance on the owners. Ofuafor (2008) asserts that partisanship, emotions, ethnicity, religious affiliation, power, and a number of other unrelated factors have been shown to colour, shape, and impact the nation's main communication apparatus. According to the adage "he who pays the piper, dictates the tune," this has in fact reduced the ability of traditional mass communication channels to sway public opinion in favour of national security because people now assume that almost all of the nation's media outlets are representing their owners. This has reversed such state-owned audience



dependence on new media and decentralised ICT-driven public engagement channels, particularly social media. Actually, practically every conversation has moved to these platforms.

As people's interest in traditional media wanes, alternative media has steadily grown in strength in influencing people's opinions, choices, and behavior—particularly among young people. Millions of Nigerians recently voiced their displeasure after watching the purported video of the Nigerian military men shooting #EndSARs protesters at the Lekki Toll Gate in Lagos. The video was widely shared on social media but virtually nonexistent on traditional media outlets. Since many people think what happened at the Lekki Toll Gate was real and others think it was staged, the truth about it is still up to personal judgement and intuition.

This is a sign that communication theory is evolving, which clearly necessitates analysing how new media might compete with old media to achieve national security. Given the recent rise in crime, including armed robberies, kidnappings, insurgencies, and other social vices, some have accused communication technology of contributing to the nation's insecurity. In a perfect world, however, media and communication should play a major role in maintaining national security.

As suggested by Wali (2013), the communication industry and relevant organisations should focus more on the issues and demands of sectors like technology, politics, industry, and the military. Propaganda, terrorism, subversion, sabotage, insurgency, guerrilla warfare, and other behaviours that endanger the country's peace and security should all be similarly addressed.

Conclusion and Recommendation

It is extremely difficult to determine how communication and technology affect insecurity in South Eastern Nigeria. When communication and technology are the only sources of information and there are no other viewpoints on particular events, their effect increases. Considering that the public does not have preconceived notions about a particular event and that information about insecurity in the South East is mostly disseminated by mass media that is enabled by communication and technology. Therefore, it seems sense to conclude that communication and technology are key in shaping public perceptions of insecurity and their behaviour.

Indeed, the responsibilities of national security have expanded beyond the Armed Forces, their firearms, ammunition, and military tactics to include the active adoption and use of communication technologies. Because national peace and security is a matter for all Nigerians, this paper calls on all security agencies and relevant authorities to act quickly in accordance with the advice of Nobel Laureate Prof. Wole Soyinka and former Inspector General of Police Mr. Ogbonaya Onovo, who contend that a review of Nigeria's approach to national security is necessary and should result in an inclusive communication system that reflects the responsibility and participation of all citizens. Based on the outcome of this discourse, the following recommendations are put forward: The media must understand the important role they play towards national security and its policies and actions should be geared towards its success. National leaders must understand that communication plays a vital role in national security; hence they must work together with the media on tactics that encourage development communication strategies that safeguard the nation. The media and other social institutions within the nation also have a role in educating citizens on the impact of their communications on social media platforms to the safety of the nation.

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