HISTORICAL TRAJECTORY OF NEW MEDIA AND ATTITUDINAL CHANGE IN SHAPING NATIONAL SECURITY IN NIGERIA, 2000–2025

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Abstract

The study examined the influence of attitudinal change, driven by new media, on national security in Nigeria between 2000 and 2025. Nigeria, now Africa's largest internet user base, has experienced a surge in digital engagement, particularly among young people, through platforms such as X, Instagram, TikTok and YouTube. The study explored how new media have reshaped public values, driven online interactions and influenced societal behaviour, while also facilitating civic mobilisation, including the End SARS protests. Employing qualitative methods, including interviews with media practitioners, security personnel and youth activists, as well as document analysis, the study adopted a thematic analytical framework. It was observed that although new media exerts significant influence on public attitudes with important implications for national security, this impact remains insufficiently recognised and reflected in policy frameworks. This gap essentially informed the research. The findings revealed both positive and negative implications for national security, with new media shaping public perceptions, behavioural trends and societal norms. The study concluded that new media have significantly influenced attitudes in Nigeria with direct consequences for national security. It was therefore recommended that the Federal Government of Nigeria adopt cyber forensics strategies through a whole-of-society approach to detect and counter harmful agents of attitudinal change operating through new media, and that the National Orientation Agency initiate nationwide awareness campaigns, beginning with foundational institutions such as the family, schools, and places of worship.

Keywords: Attitudinal Change, National Security, New Media, Whole-of-Society Approach.

Introduction

In contemporary times, driven by the age of information, nations no longer conquer through military force alone but through the subtle architecture of narratives crafted on technological platforms, to win hearts, shape minds and secure the soul of society for enduring peace and progress. The world is witnessing a gradual but significant shift from traditional media such as television, radio and newspapers to more participatory and interactive platforms hosted over digital networks, which aim to influence public attitudes to align with various interests. This shift has made the information domain one of the

most dynamic and contested spaces, an arena to which nations must pay close attention if their national security is to be safeguarded. These new platforms are increasingly shaping the future of national security by driving attitudinal change, largely due to the unrestricted flow of information among users, including opinion polling on public policies and expressions of criticism fueled by concerns, dissent, hate and disinformation. Given the capacity of new media to drive attitudinal change, governments must proactively engage in the information domain to shape and, where necessary, dominate the narrative in furtherance of national security.

New media refers to the digital forms of communication and content that have emerged with the rise of the internet, including websites, social media platforms, blogs, podcasts and streaming services. This term highlights how technology has transformed traditional media practices and created new ways for individuals and organisations to produce, distribute and consume information.[1] Examples of new media platforms include WhatsApp, Facebook, X (formerly Twitter), Instagram and TikTok, among others (Appendix 1). Attitudinal change refers to the process by which a person or group modify or alters their views, beliefs, feelings or behavioural tendencies toward a particular object, issue, person, or idea. This change is sometimes from new information, experiences, social influence or cognitive processes such as belief systems, dissonance or persuasion.[2] [3] Attitudinal change on a large scale can significantly influence a populace, leading to trends that affect a nation's security. The contemporary security environment demonstrates that information disseminated through new media has profoundly influenced attitudinal change, with notable implications for national security. National security refers to

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[1] Fiveable, *Key Term - New Media*. 2025. 16 September 2025. <https://fiveable.me/key-terms/mass-media-society/new-media>
[2] K. Cherry, *The Components of Attitude: Formation of an Attitude and How it can be Changed*. 2024. Internet. 25 May 2025. <https://www.verywellmind.com/attitudes-how-they-form-change-shape-behavior-2795897#citation-5>.
[3] Fiveable, *Intro to Psychology Review: Key Term Attitudinal Change*. Ed. Fiveable Inc. 2025. 23 May 2025. <https://fiveable.me/key-terms/intro-psychology/attitude-change>.

the condition in which a sovereign state ensures the protection and defence of its territory, citizens, economy, institutions and core interests against a wide range of threats.[4] These threats span multiple dimensions, including military, social, economic, environmental, information and cyber domains. Thus, the impact of new media as a vehicle for advancing these threats cannot be overemphasised, given its capacity to drive attitudinal change that ultimately impacts national security.

In May 2020, the internet was awash with footage of the killing of George Floyd, a Black man, by a police officer in Minneapolis, USA.[5] This incident sparked a flood of narratives across online platforms with the slogan "Black Lives Matter", resulting in mass demonstrations in many parts of the world, including a significant impact on football in the UK and diaspora followership of the sport. The attitudinal change among non-British fans, including the African continent, led to a notable decline in viewership of Union of European Football Associations (UEFA) competitions, which generate approximately \$3.2 billion annually from broadcasting rights.[6] In response, UEFA introduced the symbolic act of players taking a knee before matches, in solidarity with global protests against racial injustice.[7] Additionally, on the first anniversary of George Floyd's death, UEFA President Aleksander Čeferin launched the 'Equal Game' campaign, encouraging players and fans to use social media to advocate for equality in sports.[8] These proactive measures by UEFA, leveraging new media, helped

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[4] K. R. Holmes, "What Is National Security?" *2015 INDEX OF U.S. MILITARY STRENGTH* (2015): 18.

[5] CNN, *How George Floyd's Death Reignited a Movement*. 2021. CNN. Internet. 23 May 2025. <https://edition.cnn.com/2021/05/21/us/gallery/george-floyd-protests-2020-look-back>.

[6] P. Tagai, *beIN Sports retains rights for Champions League in Middle East and Africa*. 2021. Internet. 23 May 2025.

[7] Goal.com, *Why do Footballers Kneel Before a Match? What 'Taking the Knee' Means in Sport*. 2023. Internet. 23 May 2025. <https://www.goal.com/en-us/news/why-do-footballers-kneel-before-a-match-what-taking-the-knee-means-in-sport/10iqy03uyp5y01uh4x89dnaicz>.

[8] PA Media, *UEFA Calls on Football World to Join New Campaign to Fight Discrimination*. 2021. Internet. 23 May 2025. <https://www.skysports.com/football/news/11095/12316826/uefa-calls-on-football-world-to-join-new-campaign-to-fight-discrimination>.

maintain global support for UK football, thereby preserving the sport's integrity and sustaining the livelihoods of those who depend on it.

In Africa, new media played a key role in amplifying the act of protest by Mohamed Bouazizi, who set himself ablaze on 17 December 2010, into a powerful symbol of resistance against political repression, not only in Tunisia but across the Arab world.[9] The Arab Spring of 2011, fuelled by over 230,000 daily tweets in Tunisia and more than 225,000 daily tweets across Algeria, Egypt, Morocco and Yemen, sparked a massive regional shift in public attitudes. This led to prolonged protests that resulted in the fall of governments in Tunisia, Libya and that of Hosni Mubarak in Egypt.[10] Particularly in Egypt, the transitional government, through Article 31 of the 2014 Constitution, explicitly recognised the security of its information space as integral to national security, equating it to the economy and defence (Shires 1).[11] This granted security agencies authority over cyberspace, enabling the censorship and surveillance of online content. Egypt also introduced the National Cybersecurity Strategy (NCS) 2017–2021 to confront emerging threats in cyberspace. These efforts reflect Egypt's awareness of the impact of new media in shaping public attitudes, while enhancing the country's Global Peace Index, rising 37 places from 142nd in 2016 to 105th in 2024.[12]

In Nigeria, the government has made deliberate efforts to establish frameworks for addressing practices and content on new media that could negatively influence attitudinal change. The Cybercrimes

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[9] N. David, *Tunisia: the Spark that Set the Arab World Ablaze*. 2011. Internet. 23 May 2025. <https://www.ei-ie.org/en/item/20793:tunisia-the-spark-that-set-the-arab-world-ablaze>.

[10] P. Howard, et al. "Opening Closed Regimes: What Was the Role of Social Media During the Arab Spring?" *PITPI* (2011): 30.

[11] J. Shires, *Between Multistakeholderism and Sovereignty: Cyber Norms in Egypt and the Gulf States*. 2018. Internet. 23 May 2025. <https://warontherocks.com/2018/10/between-multistakeholderism-and-sovereignty-cyber-norms-in-egypt-and-the-gulf-states/>.

[12] State Information Service, *Egypt Climbs 37 Places on Global Peace Index over 11 Years*. 2024. Internet. 23 May 2025. <https://www.sis.gov.eg/Story/193432/Egypt-climbs-37-places-on-Global-Peace-Index-over-11-years>.

(Prohibition, Prevention, etc.) Act, enacted in 2015 and amended in 2024, was aimed at strengthening the fight against cybercrime and regulating social media content. However, gaps in the Act led to calls for a new bill mandating social media companies to establish physical, verifiable offices in Nigeria to ensure accountability. While the bill has passed its second reading, many Nigerians view it as a threat to freedom of expression.[13] Despite these measures, new media continues to drive attitudinal change, often with negative implications for national security. For instance, driven by a desire for quick gains, Nigerians fell victim to the CBEX digital asset platform, which defrauded around 600,000 investors of nearly ₦1.3 trillion, sparking social unrest.[14] This and many other similar incidents highlight the ongoing influence of new media on public attitudes, with little awareness or a coordinated response from the government and stakeholders to address them, thereby hindering national security in Nigeria.

The aim of this study is to examine the role of attitudinal change, influenced by new media, on national security in Nigeria between 2000 and 2025. In line with this aim, the study seeks to determine the evolution of new media and its impact on attitudinal change and national security in Nigeria from 2000 to 2025. It also sets out to assess the influence of new media on attitudinal change and its implications for national security in Nigeria. Additionally, the study identifies the governmental and institutional responses aimed at securing attitudes through new media in support of national security.

Research Methodology

The study employed qualitative methods, relying exclusively on primary and secondary data sources. Primary sources included oral interviews and unstructured interactions with media

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[13] *ThisDay*, *Senate Okays Bill Mandating Social Media Platforms to Have Offices in Nigeria*. 2025. Internet. 24 May 2025. <https://www.thisdaylive.com/2025/03/19/senate-okays-bill-mandating-social-media-platforms-to-have-offices-in-nigeria-2/>.
[14] EFCC. *Shun Ponzi Schemes - EFCC Charges Nigerians*. 2025. Internet. 27 May 2025. <https://www.efcc.gov.ng/efcc/news-and-information/news-release/10980-shun-ponzi-schemes-efcc-charges-nigerians>.

practitioners, security personnel, civil society actors, government communication officials and youth participants involved in digital activism. These individuals were selected based on their involvement in or observation of national security issues linked to new media influence between 2000 and 2025. The list of persons interviewed and referenced in this paper is in Appendix 2. Secondary data were obtained through document analysis of both electronic and hardcopy materials. These include newspapers, official reports, government white papers, security briefs, academic articles, social media archives and online databases relevant to new media, attitudinal change and national security in Nigeria. Data were also sourced from libraries, digital repositories and credible internet sources.

The qualitative analytical approach employed involved interpreting themes, narratives and patterns from interviews and document reviews. A thematic analysis was used to categorise responses and textual data according to recurring ideas and security implications. Findings were presented descriptively in narrative form, supported by thematic summaries, direct quotations from respondents and content analysis of key documents. Limitations of the study included restricted access to classified security data and the reluctance of some key informants to speak openly due to the sensitivity of the subject. The effort made to mitigate this was by ensuring anonymity and using multiple sources to verify information. Also, travel and logistics challenges in reaching some respondents due to insecurity and distance were addressed through telephone interviews and online document sourcing. With the efforts made to mitigate the limitations, the study is considered valid and the results herein are reliable.

Theoretical Framework

The work is based on 3 theoretical frameworks. The first is the Social Learning Theory (SLT) by Albert Bandura in 1977, which emphasises that attitudes are shaped by individuals' voluntary choice

to observe and learn certain behaviours that they find attractive through new media.[15] The second is the Cultivation Theory by George Gerbner in 1969, which delves into the deliberate effort to influence attitudes without the consent of the targeted population.[16] The third is Kurt Lewin's Change Model, developed in 1947, which serves as the framework for strategies that modify attitudes on a large scale. It likens attitudes to the process of unfreezing ice, getting the water into the desired container shape and then refreezing.[17] Although the theoretical frameworks have their critics, they were observed to still be relevant to the paper.

Historical Overview of New Media in Nigeria from 2000 - 2025

The historical overview of new media in Nigeria from 2000 particularly began with the global scare over the millennium bug, which was expected to affect computers with programming dates set to only 2 digits.[18] While banks and other data-intensive sectors in Nigeria expressed concern due to their reliance on high-speed internet, the larger population of Nigerians, who were mostly not computer-literate at the time, remained undisturbed. Nigerians' internet usage was mostly limited primarily to email services, especially Yahoo and Google Mail.[19]

The popularity of email drastically reduced dependence on traditional letter writing, which was often slow and unreliable. Cyber cafés sprang up across urban centres, where users even paid to create

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[15] S. McLeod, *Albert Bandura's Social Learning Theory*. 2025. Internet. 6 June 2025. <https://www.simplypsychology.org/bandura.html>.

[16] D. Stacks, Cathy Li Zongchao and Spaulding Cylor, "Media Effects." Wright, James D. *International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioural Sciences (Second Edition)*. Florida: Elsevier, 2015. 29 - 34.

[17] H. S. Talib, *et.al*. "Kurt Lewin's Change Model: A Critical Review of the Role of Leadership and Employee Involvement in Organisational Change." *Journal of Innovation & Knowledge,* 2018, 5.

[18] M. Thomas, *The Millennium Bug was Real – And 20 Years Later We Face the Same Threats,* 2019. Accessed May 26, 2025. https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/dec/31/millennium-bug-face-fears-y2k-it-systems.

[19] I. Daramola, Air Vice Marshal. *New Media, Attitudinal Change and National Security in Nigeria*. Interviewed by Irom A. Irom at Abuja on 26 May 2025.

email accounts. This shift led to a decline in the relevance of the Nigerian postal system, resulting in dwindling revenue from stamp sales and postcard services and the loss of jobs for many postal workers. In turn, new job opportunities emerged that required basic computer literacy.[20] This transition marked the early stages of a broader digital transformation and introduced a wave of digital literacy, signalling a major shift in how Nigerians interacted, accessed information and communicated, setting the groundwork for attitudinal change through new media.

The progression continued in 2001 with President Olusegun Obasanjo's telecommunications reforms, which deregulated the sector and granted Digital Mobile Licences (DML) to companies to operate Global System for Mobile Communication (GSM) services. As a result, Nigeria Telecommunication plc (NITEL), MTN Nigeria and Econet Wireless received licences on 23 March 2001 and began operations, with Econet Wireless (now Airtel) launching services on 7 August 2001.[21] The popular mobile phone brands used at the time in Nigeria, like the Nokia 3310, Sagem MW3020, Samsung SGH-R220, Ericsson T28 and Motorola C115 did not support internet use. By 2003, the introduction of Skype for voice and video further changed the disposition of Nigerians tot the traditional use of written letters and even phones, owing to its reach.[22] However, by 2004, GSM subscribers had increased from 400,000 in 2001 to 14 million, with many Nigerians using internet-enabled phones such

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[20] O. O. Obinyan. "The Influence of Email Use on Generation and Postage of Mails." *International Journal of Digital Library Services,* , 2011, 16.
[21] A. Isoje. *The Birth of GSM in Nigeria: Who Made the First Call?* 2025. Accessed May 26, 2025. https://www.pulse.ng/articles/lifestyle/first-gsm-call-in-nigeria-2025050512243100721.
[22] S. Otulana. *End of an Era: The Sunset for Skype,* 2025. Accessed June 16, 2025. https://marketingedge.com.ng/skype-shut-down/.

as the Blackberry series.[23] The global emergence of YouTube, Facebook and Twitter (now X) by 2006 exposed Nigerians to more online engagements and interactions that influenced their social values.[24]

By 2009, the introduction of WhatsApp provided even more powerful tools for networking, communication and political mobilisation, especially among Nigerian youths, through fast and reliable data, voice and video messaging.[25] In the years leading up to 2015, there was a surge in the use of tablets, Android devices and iPhones, with Nigerians launching various apps and blogs, with bloggers like Linda Ikeji notably rising to prominence as influential voices in digital media.[26] By 2020, Nigeria had experienced the emergence of new media platforms such as Spotify and Boomplay, which significantly impacted the music landscape by providing wider access and monetisation opportunities for artists. However, the same period also saw many Nigerians fall victim to Ponzi schemes like MMM, driven by a desire for quick financial gratification.[27] In the years leading up to 2025, about 25 million Nigerians are increasingly engaged with cryptocurrencies such as Bitcoin, while a large sports fan base turned to betting apps like Bet9ja and 1xBet, reflecting broader trends in digital finance.[28] More recently, short-form videos (reels) were introduced across nearly all major social media platforms, with TikTok also becoming popular in Nigeria, reshaping content consumption habits. Also worth mentioning has been the rise of Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools like ChatGPT and others, which have begun redefining

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[23] M. A. Enahoro and D. B. Olawade. "GSM and the Nigerian Economy: The Journey from 2004 to 2019." *International Journal of Economics and Finance,* , 2021, 9. Accessed May 26, 2025.

[24] O. Asika. *The Convergence of Media, Technology and the Nigerian Story,* , 2017. Accessed May 27, 2025. https://guardian.ng/technology/the-convergence-of-media-technology-and-the-nigerian-story/.

[25] L. Ajanaku. *Users and the Magic of WhatsApp.* , 2024. Accessed May 27, 2025. https://thenationonlineng.net/users-and-the-magic-of-whatsapp/.

[26] Tech Intelligent. *The Rise, Impact and Legacy of Linda Ikeji Blog: Nigeria's Top Entertainment Platform,* , 2024. Accessed May 27, 2025. https://techintelligent.co.uk/linda-ikeji-blog/.

[27] F. Quadri. *Timeline of Ponzi Schemes in Nigeria: A Decade of Financial Fraud, Deception.* , 2025. Accessed May 27, 2025. https://factcheckhub.com/timeline-of-ponzi-schemes-in-nigeria-a-decade-of-financial-fraud-deception/.

[28] Statista. *Digital Assets - Nigeria.,* 2024. Accessed May 27, 2025. https://www.statista.com/outlook/fmo/digital-assets/nigeria.

academia, workplace productivity and content creation in the new media space (Usman, interviewed on 26 May 2025).[29] Although Nigeria's journey with new media has been marked by diverse transformative experiences, this is a concise summary of its evolution from 2000 to 2025.

Appraisal of Attitudinal Change by New Media and National Security in Nigeria

In Nigeria, the impact of new media on public attitudes has been steadily increasing. As of February 2025, Nigeria ranked highest in Africa for internet usage, with over 107 million users, followed closely by Egypt with approximately 96.3 million users.[30] A significant portion of the users comprises mostly young people, who drive one of the world's most active social media communities. Millions engage daily on platforms such as Instagram, X, TikTok and YouTube.[31] Influencer marketing is also on the rise in Nigeria's digital space. The country boasts over 15,000 influencers on Instagram, more than 2,000 on YouTube and over 600 on TikTok, with many more across other platforms. Additionally, these influencers typically have follower counts ranging from 1,000 to over 10 million, making Nigeria a leading hub for digital content creators and influencers in Africa.[32] Furthermore, social media penetration among internet users in Nigeria is estimated at 36.2 per cent, indicating that a little over one-third of Nigerians who are active on the internet use various social media platforms for work, business, entertainment and leisure. As of the first quarter of 2025, the average daily internet usage among

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[29] K. Usman, Air Vice Marshal. *New Media, Attitudinal Change and National Security in Nigeria.* Interviewed by Irom A. Irom at Abuja on 26 May 2025.

[30] Great Africa. Statista Quoted on "Number of Internet Users in Africa as of February 2025, By Country (In Millions)". Facebook. . 2025. Accessed May 24, 2025.

[31] O. Fathia. "Top 10 African Countries with the Highest Number of Internet Users in 2025." *eCarsTrade*, , 2025, 1. Accessed May 24, 2025. https://www.africanexponent.com/top-10-african-countries-with-the-highest-number-of-internet-users-in-2025/.

[32] Starngage. *Top YouTube Influencers and YouTube Users in Nigeria in 2025.* , 2025. Accessed May 24, 2025. https://starngage.com/app/global/influencer/ranking/youtube.

Nigerians aged 16 and above was estimated at 3 hours and 23 minutes.[33] It is noteworthy that most internet users in Nigeria primarily access the internet through mobile devices, relying on major telecommunications providers such as MTN, Airtel and Glo. This underscores the population's growing dependence on digital connectivity and the potential of new media to influence attitudinal change in Nigeria.

Unfortunately, Nigeria accounts for several cases of negative attitudinal change from new media that have impeded national security. For instance, the anonymity that the internet provides was exploited by youths who sought to meet their vanity by acquiring quick wealth through internet crimes popularly referred to as '419 scam' or 'yahoo-yahoo'. The flamboyant lifestyles brandished by the few who recorded success became attractive to many youths, modifying the attitude of many youths to seek the lifestyle of fraud. For instance, The Guardian noted that social media fraud from mobile apps increased by 680 per cent between 2015 and 2018, a sudden spike that clearly indicates the growth of the criminal enterprise, which relied on platforms like Facebook, Instagram and WhatsApp to attack the economic security of Nigeria.[34] This was corroborated by the Chairman of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), Ola Olukoyede, who noted that the country lost over $500 million in 2022 through yahoo-yahoo, which led to the capital flight of over 71 international companies and a corresponding loss of jobs.[35]

Another instance where negative attitudinal change was imprinted on Nigerians through the new media, with adverse effects on national security, was the increasing trend of seeking wealth through

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[33] Krestel Digital. *Social Media Statistics in Nigeria [2025 Data Report].* , 2025. Accessed May 24, 2025. https://kresteldigital.com/resources/social-media-statistics-in-nigeria-2025-data-report/.
[34] *The Guardian. Social Media Fraud Rose by 43% in 2018.* , 2019. Accessed May 24, 2025. https://guardian.ng/technology/social-media-fraud-rose-by-43-in-2018/.
[35] *Punch.* "$500m lost to internet fraud in 2022 -EFCC chair." 2024. Accessed May 24, 2025. https://punchng.com/500m-lost-to-internet-fraud-in-2022-efcc-chair/.

content creation and massive online followership on social media platforms. This trend rapidly reshaped societal values, with many youths and some adults drawn into this obsession. The viral nature of this practice trivialised nudity, indecency, dissent, hate speech and other behaviours that conflict with established societal norms. Moreover, it was also a major distraction for many young people, reducing their attention span for academics and other honourable pursuits. Unfortunately, the wrongful use of social media has become prevalent at a time when Nigeria desperately needs a focused and productive workforce to drive national development.[36] The excessive time spent producing and consuming such content modifies attitudes and fosters an inappropriate addiction, which often leads to procrastination and a culture of laziness, with valuable time wasted on unproductive social media indulgence.

New media have also played a significant role in spreading misinformation that portrays urban life as inherently more prosperous, thereby fueling rural depopulation and its attendant negative effects on Nigeria's food security. This concern was echoed by His Royal Highness M. Mbina, the Ohorodo of Okum in Obubra, who noted a growing scarcity of farm workers due to the migration of youths to urban areas, leaving behind older individuals who can barely manage the physical demands of farming.[37] This migration to urban centres has exacerbated youth unemployment, which stood at about 6.5 per cent in 2024.[38] This has contributed to rising crime rates and increased social unrest, posing significant threats to national security. An example of unrest that was driven by new media was the End SARS Movement of 2020. The movement, which initially started as the #EndSARS online campaign on Twitter in 2017, later culminated in nationwide protests that had youths demand the disbandment of the Nigerian Police

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[36] D. Owonuwa, Captain (Nigerian Navy). Interviewed by Irom A. Irom at Abuja on 4 May 2025.
[37] His Royal Highness M. Mbina, the Ohorodo of Okum in Obubra. Interviewed by Irom A. Irom, Telephone Conversation on 26 May 2025.
[38] NBS. *Nigerian Labour Force Statistics Report.* Annual, Abuja: National Bureau of Statistics, , 2024. Accessed May 24, 2025. https://www.nigerianstat.gov.ng/pdfuploads/NLFS_Q1_2024_Report.pdf.

Force's Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS) from 8 to 13 October 2020. This led to violence and the looting of properties in Lagos, Oyo, Akwa Ibom, Cross River and Edo States.[39]

In August 2024, new media played a pivotal role in driving attitudinal change among Nigerians, as they rallied in national solidarity during a cyber conflict with South Africans, dubbed the "Order War," which lasted over 2 months.[40] The conflict began when some South Africans pranked Nigerian Bolt drivers by repeatedly requesting and cancelling rides, wasting fuel and time amid soaring fuel costs. In retaliation, Nigerians mobilised online, especially on X and launched coordinated mass bookings to disrupt South African ride-hailing services, causing surge pricing and ride shortages in cities like Cape Town and Johannesburg. The disruption soon extended to other businesses, including restaurants that accept payment on arrival, leading to widespread service interruptions and significant economic losses.[41] Whether viewed as solidarity or digital mischief, this response by Nigerians clearly illustrates the powerful influence of new media in shaping public attitudes, effectively rallying a digital "army" capable of actions with potential implications for national security.

Way Forward for managing the impact of new media on attitudinal change for enhanced national Security

Addressing attitudinal change driven by new media must be pursued at a national level, led by the Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN) and its Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs)

[39] A. Kabir." #EndSARSMemorial: Timeline Of October 2020 Protest Across Nigeria", 2021. Accessed May 24, 2025. https://humanglemedia.com/endsarsmemorial-timeline-of-october-2020-protest-across-nigeria/.

[40] F. Aremu-Olayemi. "Bolt prank sparks cyber war between Nigerians and South Africans", 2025. Accessed May 27, 2025. https://theradar.ng/news/bolt-prank-sparks-cyber-war-between-nigerians-and-south-africans.

[41]M. Ezebuike. "The Impact of Cross-border Requests on Online Taxi Service Provider Networks: A Case of DDoS Attack". 2024. Accessed May 27, 2025. https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/impact-cross-border-requests-online-taxi-service-provider-michael-keywe.

through a Whole-of-Government Approach (WoGA). Under this framework, the National Security Adviser could operate a cyber forensic laboratory granting access to key national actors, such as the Armed Forces of Nigeria (AFN), including the Directorate of Media Operations at the Defence Headquarters, alongside other critical stakeholders from security, media and information agencies. These would include the National Information Technology Development Agency, the Ministry of Information and Culture, its subsidiary the National Orientation Agency (NOA) and security agencies, particularly the Nigeria Police Force. Once stakeholder synergy is enhanced and interoperability achieved, the broader public, including bloggers, regulators, reporting systems, new media companies and other relevant actors, can be integrated into a WoSA. Within this WoSA framework, a cyber forensic system can be leveraged to detect and counter negative agents driving attitudinal change via new media. Implementation should involve cybersecurity agencies, academic institutions, technology firms and civil society organisations to ensure comprehensive monitoring, analysis and rapid response to emerging threats. Training programs and capacity-building initiatives should be provided across these organisations, with regular assessments and updates to adapt to evolving digital influence tactics.

A complementary effort is needed to bridge the information gap, ensuring that citizens are well-informed about the influence of new media consumption on attitudes. In this regard, the FGN could mandate the NOA to implement nationwide awareness campaigns targeting attitudinal change, utilising traditional media, social media, school curricula and the support of religious institutions and clergy to effectively reach foundational societal units. The AFN, in collaboration with civil society organisations and MDAs, could also organise workshops and colloquiums aimed at training leaders and corporate actors on the importance of harnessing public attitudes to advance national development and security. A coordinated multimedia strategy, which combines social media, radio, television and print media, could be employed and the impact of these campaigns must be systematically monitored and evaluated

through stakeholder and public feedback. This will allow continuous review and adjustment of strategies, ensuring that shifts in public attitudes are measured and addressed comprehensively, thereby reinforcing national security imperatives in Nigeria.

Conclusion

The study examined the impact of attitudinal change on national development as influenced by new media. It was observed that while new media exerts a significant influence on public attitudes, with notable implications for national security in Nigeria, this awareness remains insufficiently recognised among policymakers, thereby necessitating the research. The study offered a historical overview of attitudinal change driven by new media, emphasising its relevance to national security. It specifically considered the evolution of new media in Nigeria from 2000 to 2025, alongside an appraisal of the relationship between attitudinal change and national security in the country.

It also explored the evolution of digital platforms and their role in shaping public behaviour, perceptions and responses to governance. Over these 25 years, Nigeria's new media landscape has transformed significantly from basic email use in cyber cafés to widespread mobile internet access via platforms such as Facebook, WhatsApp and TikTok. The proliferation of new media platforms and the addiction they foster clearly indicate their inevitable impact on public attitudes. Therefore, there is a need for a WoSA to deploy cyber forensics and other enhanced capacities in information management in Nigeria to detect and counter information-based threats aimed at manipulating attitudes against the state. Additionally, the government could make a deliberate effort to conduct campaigns that raise awareness about attitudinal change through new media, ensuring that protection begins at the foundational level of the family and extends to the broader society.

The steps proffered above would strengthen the country's ability to manage the forces that shape public attitudes and ensure that harmful influences in the digital sphere are checked in a way that supports national security. Thus, it is recommended that the FGN adopt a cyber forensic framework that leverages WoSA to detect and counter negative agents of attitudinal change operating through new media. Also, it is further recommended that the FGN mandate the National Orientation Agency to initiate campaigns to raise nationwide awareness about the impact of new media on attitudinal change, starting from foundational units such as the family, schools and worship centres.

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Appendix 1

Types of New Media

Serial	New Media Types	Description	Examples
1	Social Media Platforms	Interactive platforms that allow users to create, share and interact with content and communities.	Facebook, X (Twitter), Instagram, TikTok, LinkedIn
2	Websites and Blogs	Digital spaces for publishing information, opinions and multimedia content.	WordPress, Medium, Blogger
3	Streaming Services	Platforms that provide real-time or on-demand audio and video content.	YouTube, Netflix, Spotify, Twitch
4	Mobile Applications	Apps on smartphones or tablets that offer content creation, communication, or media consumption.	WhatsApp, Telegram, Canva, CapCut
5	Search Engines and Web Portals	Systems for finding and accessing digital content and information.	Google, Bing, Yahoo
6	Online Forums and Communities	Platforms that facilitate discussion, Q&A and niche community engagement.	Reddit, Quora, Discord, Stack Exchange
7	Digital News Platforms	Online-based news sources offering real-time updates and multimedia journalism.	BBC Online, Al Jazeera Digital, CNN.com
8	Virtual Worlds and Gaming Platforms	Immersive digital environments for interaction, entertainment and socialisation.	Second Life, Roblox, Fortnite, Meta Horizon
9	Email and Digital Messaging Systems	Tools for private or group communication over the internet.	Gmail, Outlook, Slack, Microsoft Teams
10	AR/VR Systems	Technologies that provide augmented or immersive virtual experiences.	Oculus, Microsoft HoloLens, AR mobile apps
11	Content Management & Sharing Systems	Platforms for storing, organising and sharing digital content.	Google Drive, Dropbox, Notion

12	E-commerce & Digital Marketing Platforms	Tools for online buying, selling and targeted marketing.	Amazon, Shopify, Google Ads, Meta Ads

Appendix 2

Details of Interviews

Serial	Interviewee	Title	Appointment	Topic	Interviewer	Location/Mode	Date
1	Ibikunle Daramola	Air Vice Marshal	Chief of Civil Military Relations, Headquarters Nigerian Air Force	New Media, Attitudinal Change and National Security in Nigeria	Irom A. Irom	Abuja	26 May 2025
2	Kabir Usman	Air Vice Marshal	Chief of Communication Information Systems, Headquarters Nigerian Air Force	New Media, Attitudinal Change and National Security in Nigeria		Abuja	26 May 2025
3	Mbina Mbina	His Royal Highness	The Ohorodo of Okum in Obubra Local Government Area	Attitudinal Change and National Security in Nigeria		Telephone Conversation	26 May 2025
4	Damilola Owonuwa	Captain (Nigerian Navy)	Principal Staff Officer to the Chief of Defence Staff, Defence Headquarters	New Media, Attitudinal Change and National Security in Nigeria		Abuja	4 May 2025