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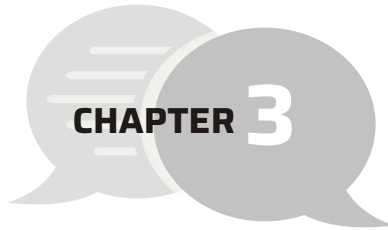
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SECTION 2:
SOCIAL MEDIA, POLITICS
AND GOVERNANCE



SOCIAL MEDIA AND THE PROMOTION OF NATIONAL INTEGRATION IN NIGERIA

***Armstrong Aduku IDACHABA; Okoh Samuel EJIME;
Kusugh TERNENGE***



Introduction

The struggle to keep Nigeria as one indivisible nation over 60 years ago since Independence in 1960 has been with a lot of challenges. It is widely believed that the composition of the country as a multi-ethnic, cultural and religious entity with over 200 million inhabitants has made the task of achieving national unity and integration even more challenging (Auwal, 2018; Chukwurah, Nwachukwu, Desmond & Okeke, 2020; Kusugh, 2018; Ahamefule & Onozie, 2020). Joshua (2017) discloses that:

Nigeria is a country blessed with multi-ethnic diversity, which would have been expected to lift her through the strength they possess together, and by managing their potentials in such a way as to make room for national unity capable of creating sustainable development and peace in the polity. But their ethnic diversity seems to be somewhat of a curse and a point of discord in the polity. Since the inception of the federation, several signals of disunity had emerged that pointed to a difficult marriage between three major hostile

kingdoms. But somehow, the nationalists ignored these warnings and opted to live together, which brought more pain, destruction, retarded development and discord than necessary. It is now being considered whether or not this union is tenable in light of these disloyalties (p. 88).

National integration is achieved when the people have feelings of togetherness and unity on one hand and a desire to build a strong and united country without undue emphasis on one's cultural, social and economic interests on the other. It means the congruence of diversities leads to a unity in which all the varieties and peculiarities are preserved. The preservation task is to be done in the wider national interest (Maniram, 2015). By structure, Nigeria has opted for a stable multi-ethnic nation. Unfortunately, the complex nature anchored on ethnic diversity, uneven distribution of resources without accountability due to institutional arrangements and a quest for leadership baton has relegated national integration to the background (Chukwurah, Nwachukwu, Desmond & Okeke, 2020). A clear picture was painted of the fact that:

Today, rather than integrating into a cohesive community with a common sense of national identity and destiny, citizens of Nigeria are returning more and more to primordial affiliations for identity, loyalty and security. Instead of forging a united front and presenting a concerted effort to face the challenges of development in an increasingly competitive and globalised world, Nigerians are busy waging ethnic and religious wars.... (Ekanola, 2006, p. 280).

Irrespective of the fact that the journey towards national rebirth and integration amidst diversity is quite challenging, constant efforts at ensuring the country's indivisibility have subsisted. (Edosa, 2014). National unity and integration are aspirations all nations strive for. Not only is national unity associated with peace, harmony among citizens and national stability, but it is also considered a catalyst for economic development (Arina, 2019).

In all the efforts, the contributions of the media at different times have been recognized but with mixed feelings (Madu, 2021; Mufutau & Olusegun, 2022; Oluwakemi, 2021; Onobe & Kente, 2020). In particular, the advent of social media, and its acceptability and usage by many groups in different areas for different purposes has since been recognized. However, previous theoretical and empirical works by other scholars also acknowledge the successes and otherwise of social media in achieving the desired goals (Okafor & Onyenekwe, 2020; Ugochukwu, Obiajulu & Nnabuiife, 2021; Uwalaka, 2021). As Iroye (2020) observes current events have proven the efficiency and acceptability of the usage of social media for easy and quick information dissemination, Therefore, studying how social media platforms are used among Nigerians in the promotion of national integration amidst the nation's ethno-religious and cultural diversity is imperative.

Objectives of the Study

This study is to achieve the following:

- i. To identify the social media platforms frequently used for promoting national integration among Nigerians.
- ii. To identify the components of national integration frequently discussed on social media among Nigerians.
- iii. To examine perceptions on how favourable social media messages are in promoting national integration among Nigerians.

- iv. To examine perceptions of the positive influence of social media messages on national integration among Nigerians.

Research Questions

- i. Which social media platforms are frequently used for the promotion of national integration among Nigerians?
- ii. Which components of national integration are frequently discussed on social media among Nigerians?
- iii. What is the perception of how favourable social media messages are in promoting national integration among Nigerians?
- iv. What is the perception of the positive influence of social media messages on national integration among Nigerians?

National Integration- Concept and Context

National integration is an important factor in achieving the desired development in any nation. By connecting as one, the system is stronger and can overcome its challenges and by extension, attain greatness and development. Edosa (2014) affirms that a united country and its people are in a better position to ably confront its crises of development, nationhood and stability. The desire and consciousness of the political leaders and the entire citizenry to do this with the appropriate frame of mind and instrumentalities as Edosa (2014) maintains, is imperative for a successful and durable result. It could be remembered that national integration is a process of achieving national cohesion, stability, prosperity, strength and feelings of being united as a nation (Mirza, 2008). It is argued that national integration in the Nigerian context has been an attempt to forge “unity in diversity”, seeking to wish away socio-cultural differences and imposing uniformity despite complex cultural diversity (Edewor, Aluko & Folarin (2014). However, it has been observed that the realisation of genuine national unity within its ethnically diverse society has always been the primary challenge facing Nigeria since its Independence in 1960 (Ahmed, Afida, Zalina & Chan, 2021).

Interestingly, ever since, there have been concerted efforts by relevant stakeholders at different times in achieving national integration of which the media is part of such efforts. Importantly, previous scholars have examined the relationship between the media (including social media) and national unity and integration in different places (Aborisade, 2015; Agwuocha, 2019; Ahmed, Afida, Zalina & Chan, 2021; Jibril & Simon, 2017; Oluwagbohunmi, n.d; Samsudin, 2018). For instance, a study that was conducted by Kusugh (2018) has acknowledged the great contributions of the broadcast media in the integration of Nigeria by raising public knowledge and understanding about the need for political, sociocultural, economic and religious harmony for overall peace, unity and national integration but it, however, saw such contributions as not being genuinely enough or adequate to take the nation to the desired level of integration that will subsequently lead the country to the destination of sustainable and sufficient peace, unity and development.

The study by Onobe and Kente (2020) has shown that discussions on politics are usually centred either on the commission or omission of government and are hardly cultivated around the norms of the peoples' heritage. It pointed out that the concerns of national integration among youth have not been made an agenda by the producers and presenters of Kakaaki. Nwafor and Ogbodo(2015) found in their study on media frames of group identities in the 2014 national dialogue in Nigeria by *The Daily Sun* and *Leadership*

newspapers that the majority of the editions carried stories with sectional undertones and many of the reports showed unsupportive slants to opposing ethnic groups' viewpoints on the Conference; while dominant frames were issues of sectional interests such as power rotation, creation of additional states for equity, religion, state police, security and secession. Osabuohien (2005) opines that the activities associated with the communication of national integration must be seen as an all-encompassing task that transcends official speeches in attempts to persuade a disparate population to cultivate national consciousness. Such activities, as he noted, must encompass efforts to persuade leaders to eliminate policies that seek to promote spatial dislocation and cross-cultural interaction, and to arouse the audience to pay closer attention to integrative messages disseminated through the mass media.

In particular, the advent of social media has made the goal of national integration more demanding as the platforms have a lot of both positive and negative contributions to make, depending on the usage. The use of the platforms has increased significantly with over 32.9 million active social media users in Nigeria as of January 2022, with WhatsApp being the most popular platform used in the country, with over 90 million users. Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram followed as the most used social media platforms in Nigeria with a growing projected 103 million users in 2026 (Statista, 2022). According to Kaplan and Haenlein (2010), social media is "a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content." Another group of scholars argues that "social media employ mobile and web-based technologies to create highly interactive platforms via which individuals and communities share, co-create, discuss, and modify user-generated content" (Kietzmann, Hermkens, McCarthy, & Silvestre, 2011). Iroye (2020) acknowledged the fact that the advent of social media has created a means of easy and faster access to information which helps to create wider coverage and prompt responses on all matters of life as posted or reported on the web. The Internet, as underscored by Samsudin (2018), allows latitude of expression to be shared across the ethnic divide and creates critical debates and discussions. This was not possible before because most ethnic issues were confined to discussions in ethnic media among their readers. There are now more frequent debates and critical comments on major issues, whether social, economic or political. Young people are making their viewpoints known in public and are ready to be criticised and debate to defend their viewpoints (Samsudin, 2018).

The high penetration of information and communication technology among the young generation, as a study by Samsudin (2018) indicates, provides an opportunity for active citizen participation that could lead to a better understanding of the citizens' rights and responsibilities, which can form the basis for bridging the ethnic divide. According to Lessing (2004), the Internet has created a 'creative common' where people, for various reasons and agenda, contribute their views, skills, resources and time to issues of special or public interest. This development sort of creates a 'marketplace of ideas' that should be a catalyst in forging the ethnic divide ..., especially among the young generation (Samsudin, 2018). For Agwuocha (2019), friendship, reunions, growth of the business, awareness, communication, knowledge, etc. are all positive gains accrued to the use of social media. Negatively, the area of information sharing has constituted problems which are a result of the intent of the person sharing the information as well as the perceived interpretation of the message. Oftentimes, we witness social media content generating reactions, counter-reactions, sentiments and arguments among users (Agwuocha, 2019).

Similarly, two critical challenges, as Ogunyombo (2017) observed, faced by any nation are the challenge of nation-building (or the creation of unity among heterogeneous members of the polity); and the challenge of participation which refers to the extent to which people influence decisions which affect their lives. In terms of creating a forum of cohesion and active participation on issues of common interest among the citizens, social media have been found very relevant (Ogunyombo, 2017). Jibril and Simon (2017) found that the online media platform has offered opportunities for media audiences to be active participants in the media-making process; a viable and powerful access that has no regulation, which renders the gatekeeping process a very weak one. Concerns here are on the inappropriate use of the media by the active audience to disseminate hate messages, lies, insults and other messages that are destructive to the much sought-after unity of the country. These negative penchants of destruction by some irredentists and ill-informed Nigerians, by implication, define followership as one lacking in loyalty, mutuality, national interest and unity, which by extension threatens the already fragile unity (Jibril & Simon, 2017).

A study conducted by Madu (2021) has shown an impressive growth rate of smartphone ownership, internet access, and social media use in Ebonyi state and that through social media, they make friends from a clan, tribe, ethnicity, state, or even country other than theirs. Ugochukwu, Obiajulu and Nnabuife's (2021) findings indicate that the growth of social media in Nigeria has birthed the emergence of fake news as a bane to its effective deployment for promoting security awareness. According to their study, social media users spread fake information on the platform to gain more followers; also, people do not unfollow social media platforms for reporting fake stories or news and the fake news spread on social media creates panic and tension when rapidly shared by a multiplicity of the audience. Ogunyombo (2017) recommended the deliberate adoption of social media by development and socio-political agents as a major element in the social system to achieve social bonding among the citizens when engaged in matters that require collective responsibility to achieve peace and security and avoid national failure.

Amid the social media revolution, a study by Agwuocha (2019) revealed that prevalent issues such as crime, violence, conflict, elections and insurgency are discussed online. Accordingly, there are predominantly hate speeches, especially in reaction to issues of national interest. Most of such discourses are laced with inappropriate use of language exposing the lack of communicative competence amongst users. Auwal (2018) corroborated that owing to the freedom associated with the use of social media, Nigerians tend to politicise, 'ethnicise' or even 'religionise' public discussions on the social media space. This trend continuously generates controversies among the diverse population, particularly on Facebook. On the debates that surrounded a female graduate of the University of Ilorin, *Amasa Firdaus* who was denied being called to bar by the authorities of the Nigerian Law School for refusing to remove her *hijab*, Auwal (2018) found in a study that users of Facebook were polarised along ethnic and religious lines in their comments, posting negative and injurious statements capable of reducing the platform into a chaotic and indiscreet battlefield where Nigerians engage in a war of words. Mutiu, Umar & Muhammed (2021) study acknowledged an increase in the spread of fake news on social media and also established how it was a threat to national unity and integration in Nigeria.

Onoja, Bebenimibo and Onoja (2021) examined Facebook audiences' comments on herdsmen attack news in Nigeria and their implication for national unity and security and

found that many online commenters believed that political conspiracy, “Fulanization” of Nigeria, poor leadership/poor security, and terrorism were responsible for the herdsmen attacks. According to the study, more comments were calling for war or reprisal attacks than those calling for peace and resolution of the conflict. The study concluded that audience comments on herdsmen attack news in Nigeria were laden with negative frames which could worsen the security situation in the country.

Tajuddin, Bahari and Nordin's (2018) findings suggest four types of frames – nationalistic frame, political frame, cultural identity frame, and episodic frame. These frames were used by audiences in their interpretation of PSAs promoting unity and social cohesion messages. This study thus not only expands the work of PSAs within the Malaysian multicultural context but also contributes to framing theory by examining the consumption of meaning in the digital age.

Jibril and Simon (2017) studied Online Readers' Comments and National Unity in Digital Media and found that online readers' comments platform no doubt creates an avenue for the audience to react to mass media messages. This platform provides readers with the opportunity to interact and discuss issues published in the media, thus putting such issues into proper perspective. This is indeed a positive development. However, the way readers were polarised along regional lines in their comments, posting negative and injurious comments, has the capability of reducing the platform into a chaotic and indiscreet battlefield where readers engage in a war of words. This can further weaken the already epileptic unity of the country. Given the nature of the readers' comments that the presidential media chat received on the online news sites, this paper submits that the platform has the potential of intensifying the divides that characterise the Nigerian state. The realization of the much-desired unity in diversity in the country via this platform is not only far from reality, but also endangers national peaceful coexistence.

A study by Ahmed, Afida, Zalina and Chan (2021) revealed that in the name of promoting unity, private individuals and global conglomerates utilize pseudo acts to boost profits, enhance customer index, and construct their corporate image in the eyes of the ruling regimes and the general public in their host communities. It was also found that the envisioned future of the country as a united reality appears to contradict the common perception and lived experiences of the people. This study is meant to highlight the way certain ideologies are promoted and further interests are realised through the print media in the name of pseudo-patriotism. Anyanwu (2018) concluded in a study that the issues of national cohesion, unity and peaceful coexistence are a matter of choice and the media can help the differing ethnic interests to make this choice.

Mufutau and Olusegun (2022) and Oluwakemi (2021), in their separate studies, envisaged a lack of a legal framework to check and prevent threats to national unity and integration posed due to the activities of the social media and recommended holistic legislation derived from the Constitution, strengthening of the judicial system, socially responsible media practice and citizens' ethical revolution to check hate speech which is a major threat to national unity and integration.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on the agenda-setting and agenda-building theories of the media which deal with the influence of news media on the salience of events in the public mind or

how traditional media agenda influences the public perception of issue salience (agenda setting) (McCombs, 2004) and how some topics become a part of media agenda when others do not (agenda building) (Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007). Media dynamics in recent times which popularized the use of social media among individuals across groups have necessitated the use of both agenda-setting and agenda-building in anchoring this study. This observation was made earlier in 2001 by Chaffe and Metzger (2007); when they opined that “the key problem for agenda-setting theory will change from what issues the media tell people to think about to what issues people tell the media they want to think about” (Delwiche, 2005). Asur, Huberman, Szabo, & Wang (2011) amplified this when they posited that “when topics originate in media outlets, the social medium acts as filter and amplifier of what the standard media produces and thus contributes to the agenda-setting mechanisms that have been thoroughly studied for more than three decades.” Besides, digital media have given citizens a more active role in the production, distribution and consumption of news (Singer, 2014; Trench & Quinn, 2016), thereby creating a two-step gatekeeping process involving news visibility and value (Singer, 2014).

A study conducted by Mohamed, Abdul Manan and Wan Ghazali (2021) has revealed that reading news on Facebook changes the agenda-setting role of news media by enabling readers to join a dialogue in which they can also become meaning-makers. This, according to the study, implies that the role of the news media has evolved to the point where they are no longer agenda setters, but rather discourse centres, which means that the news media is no longer as powerful in shaping public opinion as readers' sentiments are now influenced by the discourse that goes on in the news comment sections (Mohamed, Abdul Manan & Wan Ghazali, 2021). Results in a study conducted by Kushin (2010), however, demonstrate that the news media agenda and social media agenda are often similar, questioning notions of audience fragmentation as a casualty of the news media's agenda-setting ability. How salient public issues or topics are built or discussed in social media and the impact of such discussions on national unity and integration is what this study is interested in investigating.

Methodology

This study adopted a quantitative research method using a survey. The questionnaire was used as the instrument for data collection and was conducted on 22,166,893 population of social media users comprising 9,113,605 social media users in Lagos, 3,652,000 in Abuja and 9,401,288 in Kano respectively. The sample size of the study was 601 which was determined using an online sample size calculator, *calculator.net* under the confidence level of 95%, margin errors of 4%, population proportion of 50%, and population size of 22,166,893. Respondents were sampled proportionate to the population size of each of the areas selected, using the statistical formula thus:

$$\frac{S \times n}{N}$$

Where;

S = Size of State

n = Sample Size

N = Total Population

The proportionate sampling was done using the above formula thus:

$$\text{Abuja: } \frac{3652000}{22166893} \times \frac{601}{1} = 99$$

$$\text{Lagos: } \frac{9113605}{22166893} \times \frac{601}{1} = 99$$

$$\text{Kano: } \frac{9401288}{22166893} \times \frac{601}{1} = 99$$

Therefore, through a proportionate sampling technique, 99 respondents were sampled from Abuja, 247 respondents from Lagos and 255 respondents from Kano respectively, giving us a total of 601 respondents that were sampled in the study. The data collected was analysed through the use of descriptive statistics such as multivariate frequency distribution tables and percentages.

Findings and Analysis

A total of 601 copies of the questionnaire were administered to the respondents using an online administration method but only 579 representing 96.34% were returned and found usable for analysis while 22 representing 3.66% were not usable because of multiple completion by the respondents. The breakdown of the returned questionnaire indicates that Abuja has a 95 (95.96%) return rate with a margin of error of only 4.04%; Lagos was 239 (96.76%) with a margin of error of only 3.24%; while Kano was 245 (96.08%) with 3.92% error margin. Therefore, since the return rate of the questionnaire by far overwhelmed the non-return rate, our analysis of the data is based on the rate of the questionnaire which returned and was usable while the error margin of 4% was deemed insignificant to affect the validity of our data in the study.

Table 1: Social Media Platforms Frequently Used for Promotion of National Integration among Nigerians

Response	No. of Respondents							
	Abuja	%	Lagos	%	Kano	%	Total	%
Facebook	15	15.79	46	19.25	57	23.27	118	20.38
WhatsApp	22	23.16	58	24.27	76	31.02	156	26.94
Instagram	10	10.53	25	10.46	18	7.35	53	9.15
YouTube	7	7.37	19	7.95	14	5.71	40	6.91
Facebook Messenger	6	6.32	15	6.28	10	4.08	31	5.35
Telegram	5	5.26	17	7.11	9	3.67	31	5.35
Twitter	13	13.68	29	12.13	21	8.57	63	10.88
TikTok	3	3.16	7	2.93	5	2.04	15	2.59
Snapchat	2	2.11	4	1.67	4	1.63	10	1.73
LinkedIn	4	4.21	9	3.77	11	4.49	24	4.15
Pinterest	3	3.16	3	1.26	5	2.04	11	1.90
Others	5	5.26	7	2.93	15	6.12	27	4.66
Total	95	100	239	100	245	100	579	100

Source: Field Survey, 2022.

Table 1 revealed that WhatsApp (26.94%) followed by Facebook (20.38%) and Twitter (10.88%) are used by the majority of Nigerians in the promotion of national integration, compared to Instagram (9.15%), YouTube (6.91%), Facebook Messenger (5.35%), Telegram (5.35%), TikTok (2.59%), Snapchat (1.73%), LinkedIn (4.15%), Pinterest (1.90%), and Others (4.66%). It implies therefore that WhatsApp followed by Facebook and Twitter are the major social media platforms used among Nigerians in the promotion of national integration.

Table 2: Components of National Integration Frequently Discussed on Social Media Among Nigerians

Response	No. of Respondents						Total	%
	Abuja	%	Lagos	%	Kano	%		
Political integration	19	20	65	27.20	67	27.35	151	26.079
Economic integration	13	13.68	27	11.30	29	11.84	69	11.92
Cultural integration	15	15.79	25	10.46	27	11.02	67	11.57
Religious integration	17	17.89	57	23.85	51	20.82	125	21.59
Ethnic integration	13	13.68	31	12.97	31	12.65	75	12.95
Social integration	6	6.32	14	5.86	16	6.53	36	6.22
National symbols	7	7.37	11	4.60	13	5.31	31	5.35
Others	5	5.26	9	3.77	11	4.49	25	4.32
Total	95	100	239	100	245	100	579	100

Source: Field Survey, 2022.

Data in Table 2 revealed that political integration (26.079%), followed by religious integration (21.59%), ethnic integration (12.95%), economic integration (11.92%), cultural integration (11.57%) are major aspects of national integration available in social media for promotion compared to social integration (6.22%), integration through national symbols (5.35%) and Others (4.32%). This implies that political integration, followed by religious integration, ethnic integration, economic integration, and cultural integration are major aspects of national integration available in social media for promotion in Nigeria.

Table 3: Perception of How Favourable Social Media Messages Are in Promoting National Integration among Nigerians

Response	No. of Respondents						Total	%
	Abuja	%	Lagos	%	Kano	%		
Strongly agree	6	6.32	13	5.44	14	5.71	33	5.70
Agree	11	11.58	21	8.79	23	9.39	55	9.50
Neutral	5	5.26	15	6.28	16	6.53	36	6.22
Strongly Disagree	41	43.16	123	51.46	127	51.84	291	50.26
Disagree	32	33.68	67	28.03	65	26.53	164	28.32
Total	95	100	239	100	245	100	579	100

Source: Field Survey, 2022.

Table 3 reveals that the majority (50.26%) of the respondents strongly disagreed and another 28.32% disagreed that messages predominant on social media are favourable in the promotion of national integration among Nigerians. While 6.22% remained neutral, only a cumulative 15.20% fell in the category of those that agreed. This implies that social media messages are unfavourable in the promotion of national unity and integration in Nigeria.

Table 4: Perception of Positive Influence of Social Media Messages on National Integration

Response	No. of Respondents							
	Abuja	%	Lagos	%	Kano	%	Total	%
Strongly agree	5	5.26	9	3.77	11	4.49	25	4.32
Agree	9	9.47	17	7.11	19	7.76	45	7.77
Neutral	3	3.16	13	5.44	15	6.12	31	5.35
Strongly Disagree	53	55.79	139	58.16	139	56.73	331	57.17
Disagree	25	26.32	61	25.52	61	24.90	147	25.39
Total	95	100	239	100	245	100	579	100

Source: Field Survey, 2022.

Table 4 shows that cumulatively, a large proportion of the respondents (82.56%) fell in the category of those who disagreed that social media messages have a positive influence on national integration.

Discussion

It is clear from this study that social media has been actively used among Nigerians in discussing issues of national interest. WhatsApp followed by Facebook and Twitter are the top social media platforms used among Nigerians as they discuss issues about national integration. The components of national integration which are regularly featured are political integration, religious integration, ethnic integration, economic integration, and cultural integration. These issues attract huge attention from Nigerians compared to other aspects. The findings align with what Tajuddin, Bahari and Nordin (2018), found in a similar study. They identified four types of frames used by audiences in their interpretation of PSAs in promoting unity and social cohesion messages. The frames are nationalistic frame, political frame, cultural identity frame, and episodic frame. Also, a study by Agwuocha (2019) found that during the social media revolution, prevalent issues such as crime, violence, conflict, elections and insurgency are discussed online. There are predominantly hate speeches, especially in reaction to issues of national interest because most of such discourses are laced with inappropriate use of language exposing the lack of communicative competence amongst users.

However, as found in the study, social media messages that are aimed at promoting national integration in Nigeria are not hitting the right notes with the people as a cumulative 78.58% of the respondents disagreed that the messaging is effective in promoting national integration. The implication of this is that social media messages are predominantly unfavourable in achieving integration in Nigeria. Findings in a study by Ugochukwu, Obiajulu and Nnabuiife (2021) supported this finding that the growth of social media in Nigeria has birthed the emergence of fake news which has been the bane of its effective

deployment for national integration on issues such as security.

Furthermore, the findings revealed that social media messages are not usually favourable and have no positive influence in promoting national integration as indicated by a significantly large portion of the respondents. This finding corroborates the one in a study by Jibril and Simon (2017) that with the divisive nature of online comments, the possibility of perpetual disunity is very high. Mutiu, Umar and Muhammed (2021) also acknowledged the increase in the spread of fake news on social media threatens national unity and integration in Nigeria. For instance, Onoja, Bebenimibo and Onoja (2021) noted that social media comments on herdsmen attacks in Nigeria were laden with negative frames which could worsen the security situation in the country.

Conclusion

It can be concluded from the study that while social media platforms present opportunities for Nigerians to freely interact and discuss issues of national interest, the nature and pattern of conversation have not helped the course of national integration in Nigeria. The fact majority of respondents in this study do not find social media messages on the various components of the national integration discourse favourable or to have a positive influence meant that proponents of social change may need to rethink how best social media messages can be retooled to achieve these objectives.

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