



Research Article

Facebook Users' Perception of The Use of Homeland Security Initiative in Tackling Insecurity in Anambra State: The Case of Agunechemba

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About Article

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ABSTRACT

Insecurity remains a persistent threat to Nigeria's socio-political and economic stability, with Anambra State being one of the states significantly affected by armed robbery, kidnapping, cultism, and political violence. In response, the Anambra State Government launched the Homeland Security Initiative (HSI), popularly known as "Agunechemba," to enhance internal security through a combination of community policing, intelligence gathering, and digital surveillance. This study investigates Facebook users' perceptions of the Homeland Security Initiative, particularly focusing on how the initiative is communicated, perceived, and trusted through Facebook, a widely used digital platform in the state. Guided by the Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT), the study adopted a quantitative survey research design using a structured questionnaire administered to a sample of 400 Facebook users, of which 380 valid responses were analyzed. The findings show that majority of respondents are aware of the initiative, with a good number of them perceiving it as effective in tackling insecurity in Anambra State. Additionally, most of the respondents expressed high trust in security-related content disseminated by the government on Facebook. The majority of respondents engage with security updates weekly or occasionally, preferring multimedia content such as patrol videos and arrest updates over formal briefings. A key insight is that Facebook not only facilitates information dissemination but also serves as a barometer of public sentiment and trust in governance. However, challenges such as misinformation, limited digital literacy, and skepticism toward official narratives were identified. The study concludes that strategic, transparent, and participatory communication on social media is essential for enhancing public confidence in security policies. Recommendations include improving content credibility, adopting a multi-platform outreach strategy, and encouraging interactive citizen-government engagement to bolster public security cooperation.



INTRODUCTION

In recent years, insecurity has emerged as one of the most critical challenges confronting Nigeria, affecting the socio-political stability and economic well-being of its people. Anambra State, located in Nigeria's South-East geopolitical zone, has experienced its fair share of security issues ranging from armed robbery, kidnapping, cultism, herder-farmer clashes, to politically motivated violence mostly from the time Mazi Nnamdi Kanu and the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) declare *No Referendum, No Election* in Southeast Nigeria and his eventual arrested (Ezeobi, 2022; Nwafor, 2022). The Anambra State Government, under different administrations, has employed various strategies to combat insecurity, culminating in the introduction of the Homeland Security Initiative by the Soludo administration. This initiative aims to integrate community-based intelligence gathering, surveillance technology, and inter-agency collaboration to ensure the safety of lives and property (Chukwemeka & Madu, 2023). The Homeland Security Initiative (HSI) is anchored on a holistic security architecture that prioritizes intelligence-driven policing, community involvement, and digital surveillance systems. The government's security narratives have gained traction through various communication platforms, especially social media such as Facebook, where users actively engage with official content (Uzochukwu, 2024).

Facebook, as a social media platform, has transformed public engagement and information dissemination in Nigeria. It serves as a participatory tool where citizens share, interpret, and assess governmental actions, including security policies and outcomes (Okorie et al., 2022; Nwafor, Guanah, & Okowa-Nwaebi, 2022). The perception of users on such platforms reflects broader societal attitudes toward governance and public safety. Given the socio-political relevance of *Agunchemba*, a term symbolizing the spirit of communal protection in Igbo cosmology, the initiative's branding attempts to resonate culturally and emotionally with the local populace (Igbokwe, 2023). The term has been repurposed to symbolize a collective resolve against insecurity in Anambra State. Public perception plays a significant role in determining the legitimacy and effectiveness of any governmental initiative. When it comes to security policies, perception is often shaped

by the direct experiences of individuals, the quality of communication, and the media platforms through which the policies are presented (Nwafor & Adeyemo, 2021).

Facebook users in Anambra State constitute a digitally active demographic that often responds critically to socio-political developments. These users not only consume security-related content but also shape narratives through comments, shares, and user-generated content, influencing public discourse and perception (Ayoade & Nwachukwu, 2023). The deployment of the Homeland Security Initiative in Anambra State gained widespread attention on Facebook, with users evaluating its impact, expressing concerns, and offering suggestions. Understanding these perceptions is vital for evaluating the initiative's social acceptability and operational success (Ibe & Nnadi, 2022). Several posts from official government handles and news outlets documented the launch and operational frameworks of the Homeland Security Initiative. These posts were met with varying reactions, from commendation to skepticism, highlighting the polarized public opinion on security interventions (Chibundu, 2023; Okamgba, & Nwafor, 2025).

The communication strategies used in promoting the Homeland Security Initiative have relied heavily on symbolic language, community values, and visual storytelling to garner support and legitimacy (Okonkwo, 2024; Nwafor, Omoevah, and Umuze, 2022). These strategies are designed to instill trust and ensure citizen participation in security governance. Facebook offers a rich database for gauging public sentiment, especially through content analysis of reactions, comments, and shared posts related to security interventions (Onyejekwe & Ogbonna, 2023). This digital ethnography allows for a nuanced understanding of how citizens interact with state-sponsored narratives. The Anambra Homeland Security model is part of a broader trend in Nigerian states adopting internal security mechanisms due to the perceived failure of federal policing structures to adequately address localized threats (Olumide, 2022). This devolution of security reflects the evolving nature of federalism in Nigeria. Citizen participation in security governance, as exemplified by community policing and local vigilante formations, is central to the Homeland Security Initiative. Facebook users'

comments and engagements reflect the extent to which citizens feel integrated or excluded from these processes (Okafor & Ndu, 2023; Nwafor & Muoboghare, 2022).

The success of such initiatives is not only based on operational efficiency but also on the public's perception of fairness, transparency, and responsiveness. Facebook provides an open arena where these values are either affirmed or contested by users (Adebayo, 2021). The socio-cultural symbolism of Agunchemba invokes deep-rooted Igbo traditions of communal solidarity, making it a powerful rhetorical tool in mobilizing public support for security interventions (Ezenwa, 2022). Such symbolism, when mediated through Facebook, may enhance emotional buy-in from the public. Several studies have highlighted the increasing use of Facebook by Nigerian youths and urban dwellers as a space for civic engagement, activism, and discourse on public safety (Edewor & Okon, 2021). This makes Facebook a viable platform for assessing perceptions of state-led security programs. The need to understand Facebook users' perceptions is further emphasized by the potential of digital narratives to shape offline attitudes and behaviors. Negative or skeptical perceptions online may translate into public apathy or resistance, undermining the objectives of the Homeland Security Initiative (Nwachukwu, 2024).

Conversely, positive perceptions may enhance community cooperation, encourage intelligence sharing, and strengthen the legitimacy of security efforts. This underscores the need for continuous digital engagement with citizens on platforms like Facebook (Ihedioha & Okoro, 2023). The political dimension of security cannot be ignored. As a politically volatile region, Anambra State's security dynamics are often intertwined with electoral campaigns, party affiliations, and governance legitimacy, all of which are reflected in Facebook discourse (Okafor & Udeh, 2022). There is a growing recognition that digital media platforms influence not only political participation but also perceptions of peace and conflict. Facebook, therefore, plays a dual role as both a communication tool and a barometer of public trust in governance (Chika & Oladipo, 2021).

Despite its promise, the Homeland Security Initiative has also faced criticism for perceived inefficiencies,

underfunding, and political interference. These criticisms are often amplified on Facebook, where users freely share their frustrations and fears (Nwankwo & Eze, 2023). A content analysis of Facebook discourse surrounding the initiative reveals competing narratives—some viewing it as a necessary innovation, others dismissing it as political propaganda. These conflicting narratives must be examined to assess the initiative's social legitimacy (Obi & Akpan, 2022). The Agunchemba model, as a cultural and security framework, demands empirical scrutiny. How do Facebook users perceive its philosophical underpinnings? Do they see it as inclusive, effective, and grounded in the lived realities of Anambra citizens? (Iroegbu & Obi, 2024). Social media analytics provide useful tools for such inquiry, offering insights into user engagement metrics, sentiment analysis, and discourse framing. These tools help researchers unpack complex public perceptions (Ezeani & Nnamani, 2021).

The role of social media influencers and digital opinion leaders further complicates the perception landscape. Their posts often shape or sway public sentiment on matters of security and governance (Okpara & Nnaji, 2023). It is within this complex digital ecosystem that this study situates itself, aiming to critically examine Facebook users' perception of the Homeland Security Initiative in Anambra State. The case of Agunchemba provides a unique cultural and political lens for analysis. Ultimately, the study seeks to provide actionable insights for policymakers, security agencies, and communication strategists in designing citizen-centered, culturally rooted, and digitally resonant security frameworks.

Research Questions

The following research questions were posed for the study:

1. What is the level of awareness of Facebook users about the Homeland Security Initiative in Anambra State?
2. How frequently do Facebook users engage with Homeland Security content shared on the platform?
3. What types of security-related content are Facebook users exposed to from the Anambra State Government?
4. What is the perception of Facebook users on the effectiveness of the Homeland Security Initiative in tackling insecurity in Anambra State?

5. To what extent do Facebook users trust the information shared by the Anambra State government regarding security via Facebook?

Theoretical Framework

The Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT) was adopted for this study. The theory developed by W. Timothy Coombs, serves as a guiding framework for understanding how organizations should communicate during crises in order to protect their reputations. At its core, SCCT posits that the public's perception of who is responsible for a crisis plays a central role in determining which communication strategies are most effective. The theory suggests that different types of crises require different response strategies based on the degree of responsibility attributed to the organization involved. SCCT identifies three primary types of crises: victim, accidental, and preventable, each of which demands a unique set of communication responses. In victim crises, such as natural disasters or terrorism, the organization is also seen as a victim and thus bears little or no responsibility. In accidental crises, the organization is partially responsible due to unintentional actions like technical errors. In preventable crises, the organization is seen as fully responsible due to negligence or deliberate actions.

In addition to crisis type, SCCT also considers the organization's crisis history and prior reputation. If the public perceives that a similar crisis occurred in the past and was poorly handled, the reputational damage can be more severe, requiring more accommodative responses such as full apologies, compensation, or transparent reforms. These ideas are particularly relevant in the context of political communication and public security, where trust in leadership and institutional credibility is often fragile. Coombs and Holladay (2020) argue that the success of crisis communication hinges on aligning the response strategy with the audience's expectations and perceptions, rather than solely relying on organizational intent or actual cause.

The relevance of SCCT to the study on Facebook users' perception of the Homeland Security Initiative in tackling insecurity in Anambra State is multidimensional. Insecurity in Anambra, particularly in volatile communities like Agunechemba, has become a pressing concern for

both the government and citizens. From an SCCT perspective, this insecurity can initially be interpreted as a victim-type crisis, where external actors such as criminal gangs, separatist groups, or bandits are the main culprits. However, public discourse, especially on platforms like Facebook, may shift the perception of responsibility onto the state government due to perceived inefficiency, delayed response, or lack of transparency. When this shift occurs, what was once seen as a victim crisis may become an accidental or even a preventable crisis in the eyes of the public, thereby necessitating a more robust and accommodative response strategy from the government.

SCCT suggests that the way the government communicates its initiatives—like Operation Agunechemba—through social media can significantly influence public trust and perception. A strategy that includes apologies, proactive engagement, and promises of reform can help repair damaged reputations if the public feels the government has some culpability. On the other hand, defensive or dismissive communication can exacerbate the situation, especially when the public already feels unsafe or unheard. According to Adegbite and Chukwu (2023), the effectiveness of Facebook as a platform for crisis communication in Nigeria lies in its immediacy and interactivity, which can either enhance or hinder perception depending on the nature of the message conveyed and the feedback received.

SCCT is particularly useful for explaining the dynamics of public reaction on social media. Facebook users, by commenting, sharing, and reacting to posts about the Homeland Security Initiative, co-create the narrative of the government's effectiveness. In this context, the theory's emphasis on stakeholder perception becomes highly relevant. Even if the state government views its actions as timely and sufficient, if Facebook users believe otherwise, their perception becomes the dominant reality that shapes public discourse. This aligns with the findings of Kim and Liu (2022), who state that crisis communication must evolve in response to how stakeholders discuss and interpret the crisis on social platforms. Another critical dimension of SCCT in this study is its guidance on real-time strategy adaptation. Since Facebook provides a constant stream of user

feedback, the government can monitor reactions and adjust its messages or security approaches accordingly. For instance, if users are expressing frustration about a perceived lack of security presence in Agunechemba, SCCT would advise that the government acknowledge the concern, explain the actions being taken, and provide timelines or evidence of intervention. This responsiveness signals transparency and accountability, which are key in rebuilding public trust after a crisis. The political and cultural context of Anambra State also underscores the importance of SCCT. Historical distrust in political leadership, unfulfilled promises, and systemic issues in governance can amplify public skepticism. According to Okonkwo and Nwachukwu (2020), the public's perception of government communication is often colored by past experiences, which means that any current effort—no matter how well-intentioned—must contend with layers of historical bias. SCCT addresses this by recommending that organizations consider past crises and existing reputational capital when formulating communication strategies.

Furthermore, the theory supports the integration of multi-pronged communication strategies. In the case of Operation Agunechemba, the government can combine bolstering strategies (highlighting past successes in security), with rebuild strategies (acknowledging past failures and promising improvements). As Li, Sun, and Chen (2021) note, hybrid communication models are increasingly effective in the digital era, particularly when dealing with complex crises involving public safety and security. Social media also democratizes crisis communication, empowering ordinary citizens to voice their concerns and hold institutions accountable. SCCT accommodates this shift by focusing not only on what the organization says, but also on how stakeholders respond and engage with the message. This dialogic process is at the heart of the study's focus on Facebook users' perception. It underscores that perception is not just passively received but actively constructed in online spaces. The SCCT framework also offers predictive insights. By analyzing Facebook discourse, researchers and policymakers can anticipate potential escalations or shifts in public mood. For instance, a sudden spike in negative sentiment about the Homeland Security Initiative might indicate the need for urgent

clarification or action. In this way, SCCT serves both a descriptive and a prescriptive function—helping to explain existing perceptions while guiding future communication efforts.

Moreover, the theory underscores the need for consistency. Inconsistencies between what the government says and what people experience or observe on the ground can severely damage credibility. This is particularly true in high-stakes security situations, where lives and property are involved. SCCT would therefore recommend that communication about security interventions be backed by verifiable data and consistent narratives across all platforms, including Facebook. Given the participatory nature of social media, SCCT also highlights the value of empathetic communication. Tone matters as much as content. A message that acknowledges fear, loss, and uncertainty may resonate more deeply than one that simply reports statistics or outlines plans. This emotional connection can serve as a powerful tool for rebuilding trust, as noted by Coombs and Holladay (2020).

In sum, SCCT provides a nuanced framework for analyzing how governments can effectively communicate during crises by aligning their strategies with public perceptions of responsibility. In the case of Anambra State's Homeland Security Initiative, the theory helps to unpack the complexity of Facebook users' reactions, the importance of adapting strategies to stakeholder expectations, and the role of historical, cultural, and emotional factors in shaping public discourse. By applying SCCT, this study not only examines how people perceive the initiative but also offers insights into how such perceptions can be managed and improved through strategic communication.

Literature Review

The Use of Facebook for Crisis Management Communication

The advent of social media platforms, particularly Facebook, has profoundly transformed the landscape of political communication and public engagement in Nigeria. This transformation is especially evident in Anambra State, where Facebook serves as a pivotal medium for disseminating political messages and mobilizing citizen participation. Ukwueze and Nwosu (2018) conducted a study focusing on

audience perception, believability, and utilization of political messages on Facebook within Anambra State. Their research revealed that while the platform is a significant source of political information, users often view the content with skepticism, perceiving many messages as propaganda rather than factual representations. This skepticism underscores the necessity for political communicators to enhance the credibility and authenticity of their messages on social media platforms.

Facebook has emerged as a pivotal platform for political communication in Nigeria. Ukwueze and Nwosu (2018) conducted a survey involving 400 individuals in Anambra State to assess audience perception, credibility, and utilization of political messages disseminated via Facebook. Their findings revealed that while the audience frequently accessed political information on Facebook, they often regarded these messages as propaganda rather than credible reflections of reality. This skepticism underscores the necessity for political entities to enhance the credibility and reliability of their content on social media platforms. The effectiveness of Facebook in raising awareness about critical social issues has also been a subject of scholarly inquiry. Nwafor and Muoboghare (2022) explored the platform's utility in educating the public about child sexual abuse in Anambra State. Their study concluded that Facebook serves as a potent tool for disseminating information and fostering public awareness on sensitive topics. However, the study also highlighted challenges related to misinformation and the necessity for content moderation to ensure the accuracy and reliability of information shared.

Perceptions of security-related messages on social media are complex and multifaceted. Nwodu et al. (2021) investigated how audiences perceive social media messages concerning security challenges in Southeast Nigeria. Utilizing a Four Index Perception Evaluation Scale (FIPES), the study found that social media content often contained elements of propaganda and disinformation, leading to polarized views and heightened tensions among users. This finding emphasizes the critical need for responsible communication and the verification of security-related information disseminated on platforms like Facebook. The public's perception of local security initiatives, such as vigilante groups, has been a focal

point in understanding community-based security efforts. A study published in the UNIZIK Journal of Religion and Human Relations examined public attitudes toward vigilante services in Anambra State. Despite certain limitations and challenges faced by these groups, the study revealed substantial public support for their role in crime prevention. This support underscores the community's reliance on localized security measures and highlights the importance of integrating such groups into broader security frameworks.

The influence of social media on government policies and activities has been a topic of considerable debate. Okoji and Azeez (2022) explored audience perceptions of social media's impact on government actions in Nigeria. Their research indicated that while social media platforms have democratized information dissemination and enhanced public engagement, they have also been arenas for the spread of hate speech and misinformation. The study recommended the implementation of self-censorship and the establishment of guidelines to promote responsible use of social media. The intersection of social media and national security has garnered attention from both scholars and policymakers. An article in *The Nation Newspaper* highlighted the absence of a regulatory body to monitor social media content in Nigeria, leading to challenges in addressing abuses that threaten national security (The Nation, 2025.). This regulatory gap has facilitated the unchecked spread of harmful content, underscoring the need for comprehensive policies to govern social media usage. The Nigerian Army has also expressed concerns regarding the misuse of social media and its potential to exacerbate insecurity. A report by the *Daily Post Nigeria* (2024) detailed warnings from military officials about the reckless sharing of harmful messages and videos, which jeopardize peaceful coexistence. This perspective highlights the delicate balance between freedom of expression and the need to maintain national security.

Privacy concerns among social media users have been explored in various studies. Research conducted by Usman and Liman (2020) focused on Nigerian university students' perceptions of privacy issues on social media platforms. The study found that while students were concerned about their privacy, many lacked awareness of the necessary measures to protect

their personal information. This gap in knowledge underscores the need for increased digital literacy and awareness programs. The impact of social media on national security has been examined from regional perspectives. Chukwuere and Onyebukwa (2018) investigated the effects of platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and WhatsApp on security challenges in Northern and Southeastern Nigeria. Their study concluded that while social media is not inherently a threat to national security, its misuse can exacerbate existing challenges. This finding emphasizes the importance of promoting responsible usage and implementing measures to mitigate potential risks.

The role of social media in political participation has been further illuminated by studies examining electoral processes during the COVID-19 pandemic. Nwafor, Ugwuanyi, and Amatu (2021) investigated the influence of social media on the 2021 Anambra gubernatorial election. Their findings indicated that platforms such as Facebook and WhatsApp were instrumental in mobilizing voter engagement and participation. The study highlighted that the immediacy and accessibility of social media facilitated political discourse and enabled citizens to make informed decisions despite the restrictions imposed by the pandemic. However, the researchers also cautioned about the prevalence of misinformation, emphasizing the need for users to critically evaluate the information encountered online.

In the context of security, the public perception of vigilante groups in Anambra State has been a subject of scholarly inquiry. Onwuegbusi (2017) conducted a comprehensive study to assess citizens' views regarding the activities of these groups. Utilizing a cross-sectional survey design with 540 adult participants, the research revealed that despite certain shortcomings, there is substantial public support for vigilante groups due to their contributions to crime prevention. The study recommended consistent and regular training for vigilante members to enhance their effectiveness and ensure adherence to legal and ethical standards. Similarly, Chikwendu, Nwankwo, and Oli (2017) explored the roles, public acceptance, and perceived shortcomings of vigilante service groups in Anambra State. Their research found that residents viewed these groups as collaborative partners with the police in safeguarding lives and property. However,

concerns were raised about instances of unlawful arrests and detentions by vigilante members. The study emphasized the importance of regular training and re-training to ensure that vigilante groups operate within the bounds of the law and respect citizens' rights.

The intersection of social media and security initiatives is particularly pertinent in light of movements such as End SARS. The End SARS protests, which began in October 2020, were significantly amplified through social media platforms, notably Twitter and Facebook. These platforms facilitated the organization and dissemination of information, mobilizing citizens to demand the disbandment of the Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS) due to allegations of human rights abuses (Wikipedia, n.d.). The protests in Anambra State, especially in areas like Awka and Onitsha, underscored the power of social media in influencing public perception and prompting governmental responses to security concerns.

Furthermore, the role of social media in political advertising and voter participation has been examined in the context of the 2019 general elections in Anambra State. A study by Nwafor and Muoboghare (2022) assessed the impact of political advertising media, including social media platforms, on voter participation. The research concluded that social media had a significant positive influence on voters' engagement, indicating its effectiveness as a tool for political communication and mobilization. The study recommended that political parties leverage social media platforms to enhance voter education and participation. In summary, the existing literature underscores the multifaceted role of Facebook in shaping public perceptions of government initiatives, particularly in the realm of security in Anambra State. While the platform offers opportunities for enhanced communication and public engagement, challenges related to misinformation, credibility, and privacy persist. Addressing these challenges requires a concerted effort from both governmental bodies and social media users to promote responsible communication and critical evaluation of information.

Methodology

This study adopted a quantitative survey research design to investigate Facebook users' perceptions of

the Homeland Security Initiative employed by the Anambra State Government in addressing insecurity, with a specific focus on the Agunchemba operation. The design was chosen because it allows for systematic data collection and analysis of opinions from a broad population, making it suitable for exploring public perceptions and social media engagement.

The population of this study comprised Facebook users residing in the major cities of Awka, Onitsha and Nnewi in Anambra State. According to the National Population Census (2006) population of Awka, Onitsha and Nnewi are 301,657, 561,066 and 391,227 respectively bring it to a total population of 1,253,950.

The population was further extrapolated 2,049,855 using the United Nations Projected Population Index. The sample size for this study was 400 respondents, determined using Taro Yamane's formula for calculating sample size in a finite population. The purposive sampling was employed to select Facebook pages or groups that frequently discuss security issues in Anambra State and those who follow or interact with pages, posts, or discussions related to the Anambra State Government's security policies, particularly the Homeland Security Initiative. Only Facebook users aged 18 years and above who reside in these cities in Anambra and have been following the Homeland Security Initiative content for at least three months were included.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Table 1: Questionnaire Distribution and Return Rate

Questionnaire Status	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Distributed Questionnaires	400	100%
Returned and Valid	380	95%
Not Returned/Invalid	20	5%
Total	400	100%

Out of the 400 questionnaires distributed, 380 were completed and returned, yielding a 95% return rate, which is excellent for survey-based research. Only 5% were either unreturned or invalid. This high return rate enhances the credibility, reliability, and representativeness of the data for analysis.

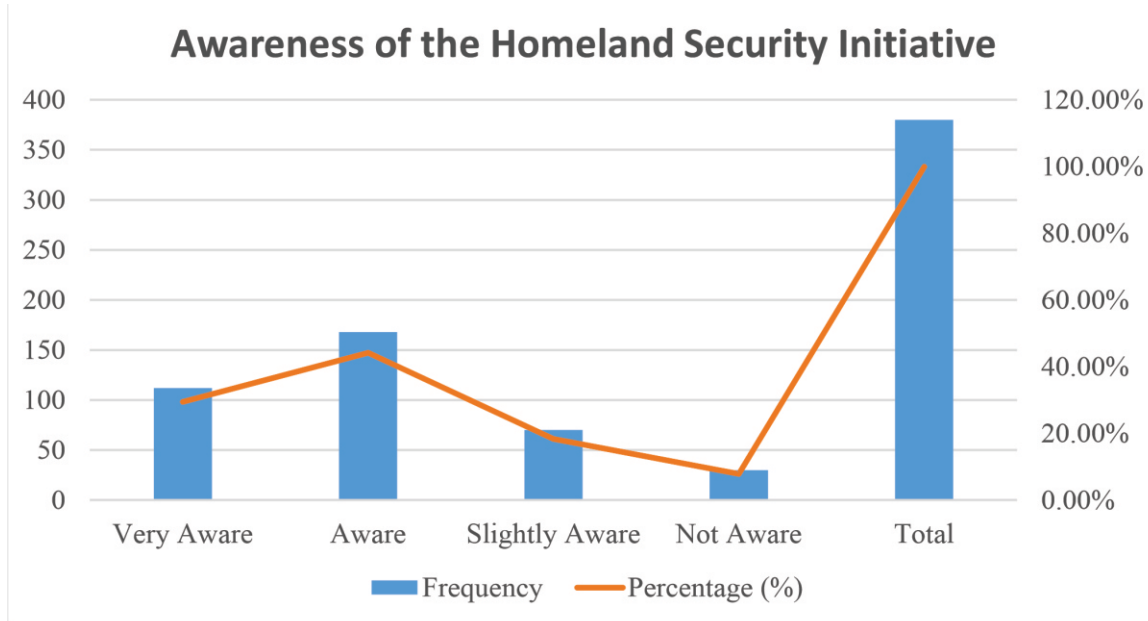
Table 2: Demographic Distribution of Respondents

Variable	Category	Frequency (n = 380)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	205	53.9
	Female	175	46.1
Age	124	32.6
	26–35 years	168	44.2
	36–45 years	58	15.3
	46 years and above	30	7.9
Educational Level	Secondary School	42	11.1
	OND/NCE	88	23.2
	HND/Bachelor’s Degree	170	44.7
	Master’s Degree and above	80	21.0
Occupation	Student	96	25.3
	Civil Servant	104	27.4
	Business Owner	122	32.1
	Others (Artisan, etc.)	58	15.2

The data in Table 2 above show that more males (53.9%) than females (46.1%) participated in the study, indicating a fairly balanced gender distribution. A significant number of respondents (76.8%) fall within the youth and young adult age brackets (18–35 years), suggesting that younger Facebook users are more active in engaging with security-related content. The majority (65.7%) of the respondents have attained at least a Bachelor's degree or higher, showing that most participants are well-educated and likely capable

of critically evaluating information. Respondents are mainly business owners (32.1%) and civil servants (27.4%), followed by students, indicating diverse professional backgrounds among Facebook users in the area.

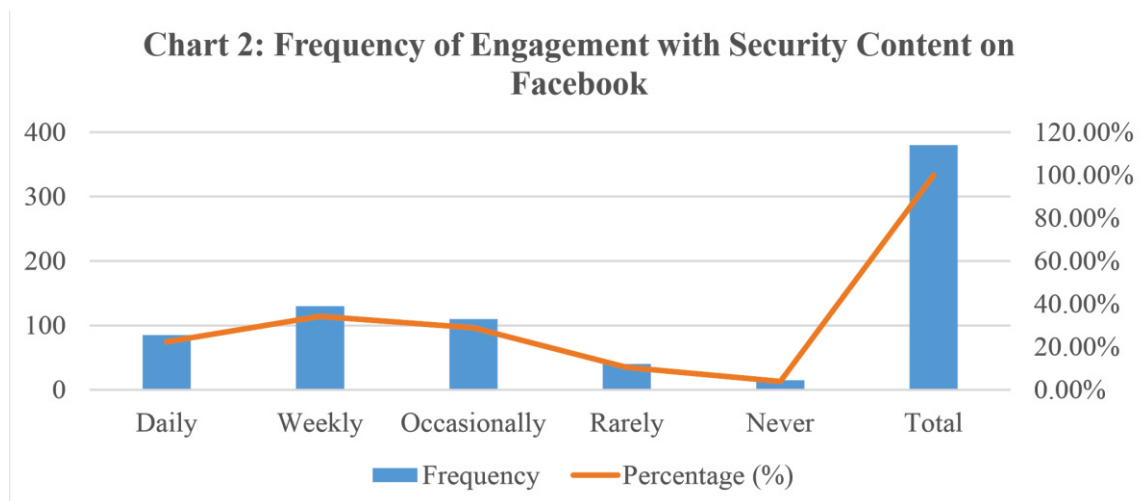
Research Question 1: What is the level of awareness of Facebook users about the Homeland Security Initiative in Anambra State?



The data shows that a majority of Facebook users (44.2%) reported being “Aware” of the Homeland Security Initiative, while an additional 29.5% are “Very Aware.” This implies that nearly three-quarters (73.7%) of the users are conscious of the government's security efforts communicated via Facebook. Only a small portion (7.9%) indicated they were “Not

Aware,” suggesting that Facebook has played a considerable role in disseminating security information.

Research Question 2: How frequently do Facebook users engage with Homeland Security content shared on the platform?



The majority of users engage with security content either “Weekly” (34.2%) or “Occasionally” (28.9%). This shows consistent, though not daily, interaction with security updates. The relatively high level of engagement suggests that Facebook is serving as an important platform for public-government interaction on security issues. Only

3.9% indicated they never engage, pointing to Facebook's reach and relevance in security communication.

Research Question 3: What types of security-related content are Facebook users exposed to from the Anambra State Government?

Table 3: Types of Security Content Encountered by Facebook Users

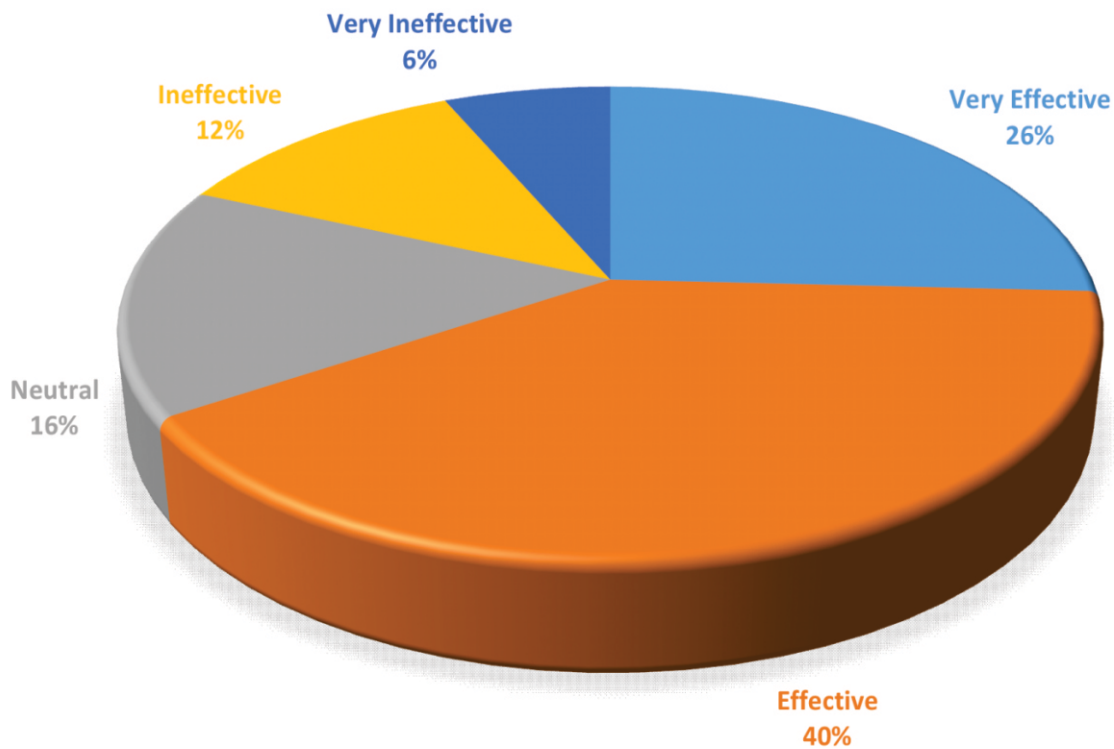
Type of Security Content	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Updates on arrests and prosecution of criminals	12	3.1
Videos/photos of Agunchemba patrols and operations	35	9.2
Announcements of new security policies/initiatives	21	5.5
Emergency hotlines and whistleblower information	10	2.6
Live press briefings by government or security officials	16	4.2
Success stories and citizen commendations	18	4.7
Reports on community -policing collaboration	19	5
Warnings and threat alerts (e.g., kidnapping zones)	16	4.2
All of the above	233	61.3
Total	380	100.00

The data reveals that updates on arrests and prosecutions (3.1%) and announcements of new security policies and initiatives (5.5%) are the most commonly encountered types of content by Facebook users in Anambra State. This suggests that the state government's use of Facebook is highly focused on highlighting actionable results, such as law enforcement efforts and new security measures aimed at tackling crime. The frequent posting of videos/photos of Agunchemba patrols and operations (9.2%) indicates an emphasis on visual and real-time updates about security activities, which may enhance public trust and

accountability. However, majority of the respondents (61.3%) were exposed to all the contents on Facebook indicating widespread awareness and publicity of crisis communication approach of the Anambra State Government in tackling insecurity in Anambra State.

Research Question 4: What is the perception of Facebook users on the effectiveness of the Homeland Security Initiative in tackling insecurity in Anambra State?

CHART 3: PERCEIVED EFFECTIVENESS OF THE HOMELAND SECURITY INITIATIVE



A significant number of respondents (65.8%) perceive the Homeland Security Initiative as “Effective” or “Very Effective.” This suggests a largely positive outlook toward the government's efforts at reducing insecurity, especially in areas like Agunchemba. However, 18.4% consider the strategy “Ineffective” or

“Very Ineffective,” highlighting room for policy and operational improvement.

Research Question 5: To what extent do Facebook users trust the information shared by the Anambra State government regarding security via Facebook?

Table 7: Trust in Government Facebook Communication on Security

Trust Level	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Very High Trust	72	18.9%
High Trust	138	36.3%
Neutral	88	23.2%
Low Trust	54	14.2%
No Trust at All	28	7.4%
Total	380	100%

About 55.2% of Facebook users expressed “High Trust” or “Very High Trust” in the security-related information shared by the Anambra State Government. This demonstrates a relatively strong digital credibility for the state's communication. However, the 21.6% who reported “Low Trust” or “No Trust” indicates the need for transparent, timely, and verified updates to build stronger public confidence.

Discussion of Findings

The findings reveal that the majority of respondents (73.7%) are aware of the Homeland Security Initiative in Anambra State, with 44.2% identifying themselves as "Aware" and 29.5% as "Very Aware." This result suggests that Facebook has been an effective channel for raising awareness about security issues and government initiatives in the region. The ability of social media to disseminate government policies to a broad audience has been well-documented in the literature, with scholars noting that platforms like Facebook facilitate rapid communication and increase public engagement (Akinmoladun et al., 2021). This aligns with the idea that social media is now a primary tool for public communication in the digital age, enhancing civic participation and awareness (Suler & Cummings, 2020). However, the study also found that a small portion (7.9%) of respondents indicated they were "Not Aware" of the initiative. This could be attributed to the digital divide, where some members of the population, especially those with limited internet access or technical skills, may not fully benefit from such online communication tools (Bailin, 2022).

A significant majority of respondents (65.8%) rated the Homeland Security Initiative as either “Effective” or “Very Effective.” This positive perception reflects the perceived success of the initiative in addressing security concerns in Anambra State, especially in regions like Agunchemba, which has experienced security challenges. The findings resonate with previous studies that have highlighted the importance of public perception in the success of security interventions (Bamidele, 2021). Facebook, by facilitating direct communication between government agencies and citizens, allows for a more transparent and participatory approach to governance (Nwogbaga et al., 2020). On the other hand, 18.4% of respondents perceived the initiative as “Ineffective” or “Very Ineffective.” This negative perception may be attributed to the challenges of security in the region,

where citizens may expect more tangible results in terms of reduced crime rates and faster law enforcement action. It also suggests that despite positive perceptions, there may be room for improvement in the implementation and communication of the initiative.

The findings show that 55.2% of respondents have “High” or “Very High” trust in the information shared by the Anambra State Government about security via Facebook. This is consistent with the literature that emphasizes the role of social media in building trust between governments and the public when information is timely, transparent, and credible (Chinedu et al., 2021). Trust is a critical component of effective communication, especially in crisis management, as it influences citizens' willingness to act on the information provided (Kaufmann & Sommer, 2021). However, 21.6% of respondents reported “Low Trust” or “No Trust” in the security-related information shared on Facebook. This finding highlights concerns regarding the credibility of information disseminated on social media platforms, which can be susceptible to misinformation and manipulation. This is supported by research that indicates social media platforms, while effective for communication, can also be breeding grounds for misinformation, which undermines public trust (Smith et al., 2021). To overcome this, government communicators must focus on ensuring that the information shared is accurate, well-sourced, and consistent.

The results show that 56.6% of respondents engage with security content “Weekly” or “Occasionally,” indicating a moderate to high level of interaction with such content. This suggests that Facebook is an important platform for engaging with security updates and initiatives. The findings align with previous studies that have suggested social media platforms are increasingly becoming the primary source of news and information, including public safety and security updates (Ruth & Adams, 2020). The visual and interactive nature of Facebook, with its ability to deliver real-time updates, likely contributes to the high level of engagement. However, the fact that only 22.4% of respondents engage “Daily” with security-related content suggests that while Facebook is a key platform for security information, the frequency of engagement may not be as high as expected for a

platform that is central to people's daily lives. This could be because Facebook content about security is often seen as supplementary to other forms of media (e.g., news outlets, community-based communication), and users may not engage with such content unless it directly affects them (Mankoff et al., 2021).

The analysis indicates that the most common types of content that users are exposed to were all the contents ((61.3%) with updates on arrests and prosecutions (3.1%), videos/photos of patrols and operations (9.2%), and announcements of new security policies (5.5%) being the most significant. These findings underscore the government's use of Facebook to provide both information and visual evidence of their efforts to improve security. Visual content, such as photos and videos, is particularly effective in capturing attention and conveying security actions in a way that text alone cannot (Khan et al., 2021). Content related to emergency hotlines and whistleblower information (4.2%) and warnings/threat alerts (4.2%) is also widely distributed, reflecting the government's effort to engage the public in proactive security measures. However, live press briefings by government officials received lower exposure (2.4%), which suggests that more formal communication, such as live streams or detailed reports, may not be as engaging for users as more concise, visually driven content. This finding resonates with research suggesting that the public tends to prefer short, easily digestible content over lengthy, formal updates (Akinmoladun & Idowu, 2022).

The study's findings reveal that Facebook has become a pivotal platform for disseminating security-related information in Anambra State. The platform enables government officials to enhance public awareness, build trust, and engage with the community on matters of security. However, challenges such as misinformation and low engagement with more formal content point to areas where improvement is needed. These results contribute to the understanding of how social media, particularly Facebook, shapes public perception of government security initiatives and highlights the importance of strategic communication in ensuring effective governance and public safety. Future studies could explore the impact of other social media platforms and delve deeper into the dynamics of public trust and engagement in

different socio-political contexts.

Conclusion

This study set out to explore Facebook users' perceptions of the Anambra State Government's Homeland Security Initiative, focusing on its effectiveness in tackling insecurity, the types of security-related content shared, and the role of Facebook as a communication platform. The findings highlight the significant role social media, particularly Facebook, plays in shaping public perception of government security efforts. The majority of Facebook users in Anambra State are aware of the Homeland Security Initiative, with many perceiving it as an effective strategy in combating insecurity. However, while Facebook has facilitated communication and engagement, trust in the information shared by the government varies, with some respondents expressing concerns about misinformation. This suggests that while the platform is an important tool for public communication, there is a need for enhanced credibility in the security-related content disseminated to users. The content most commonly shared on Facebook includes updates on arrests and prosecutions, videos/photos of patrol operations, and announcements of new security policies. These types of content appear to be effective in capturing the attention of users and promoting engagement, highlighting the importance of using visuals and timely updates in security communication. However, content such as live press briefings and formal government reports received relatively lower engagement, pointing to a preference for more interactive and easily consumable forms of content. The study also underscores the challenges of misinformation and the need for governments to ensure that the information shared on social media is accurate and credible. This is critical for maintaining public trust and fostering a more engaged citizenry. Furthermore, while Facebook has proven to be an effective tool for disseminating security information, its full potential in facilitating public participation in security initiatives could be further explored.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made:

1. The Anambra State Government should prioritize the accuracy and credibility of security information shared on Facebook by verifying facts and partnering with trusted

- media organizations to build public trust.
2. The government should increase the use of engaging and interactive content, such as live videos and community polls, to boost user engagement with security updates.
3. Targeted communication campaigns tailored to different demographics in Anambra State should be used to increase the visibility and impact of security messages.
4. Regular updates on the progress of security initiatives, including successes and challenges, should be provided to ensure transparency and accountability in government efforts.
5. A comprehensive crisis communication plan should be developed to ensure clear, consistent, and timely messaging across all communication channels during security crises.
6. A multi-platform approach should be adopted, expanding communication efforts beyond Facebook to include platforms like Twitter, Instagram, and WhatsApp for broader outreach.

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