Influence of Artificial Intelligence-Enabled Social Media Communication on National Security in Nigeria

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Abstract

The proliferation of social media in Nigeria has fundamentally altered communication, with significant implications for national security; however, the integration of artificial intelligence (AI) into these platforms presents a dual challenge. While AI offers enhanced capabilities for information dissemination and political engagement, it also amplifies the risks of misinformation and polarisation, as evidenced by the #EndSARS protests. This study employed the use mixed-methods approach. This combined both qualitative and quantitative with national security experts, social media administrators, and AI developers, alongside a quantitative survey to capture public sentiment. The findings reveal that AI-driven social media algorithms contribute to the formation of echo chambers, exacerbate political polarisation, and amplify sensationalised content, thereby posing a threat to social cohesion and national security. In light of these challenges, the study recommends the development of robust regulatory frameworks and investment in indigenous AI technologies tailored to Nigeria's specific national security needs. This research uniquely contributes to the body of knowledge by providing an empirical examination of AI's impact on social media communication and national security within the Nigerian context, offering insights into mitigating its adverse effects and harnessing its potential for security enhancement.

Keywords: Social media, Artificial Intelligence, communication, national security, citizen engagement

Introduction

With the recent emergence of social media, the communication crossover between social media and Artificial Intelligence (AI) has become a study-focus given the disruptive impact on various facets such as national security (Oladipo & Adeyemi, 2022). Social media platforms utilizing AI tools, however, are not only changing how information gets out, but how information is received and processed by individuals and institutions (Adekunle et al., 2021). As Nigeria experiences an increasing necessity for social media tools used in political engagement, political discourse, and public engagement, AI integration within social media presents unique opportunities and challenges (Omowunmi & Johnson, 2023). The way AI algorithms manage, filter, and personalise content generates questions about whether and how this might impact national security (Nwachukwu et al., 2019). This study will examine how AI-enabled social media are shaping the nature and dynamics of national security in Nigeria based on prospects and challenges. As AI is gaining increased relevance globally in several sectors (Egbetokun & Ibrahim, 2020), little has been researched about its implications for national security, with the situation being particularly so for Nigeria. While the potential of AI is being studied in areas like business, healthcare, and military logistics (Adeyemo & Folarin, 2018; McBride & Thompson, 2023), its critical role as a factor in national security through social media communication effects in developing nations such as Nigeria is yet to attract a significant body of scholarly literature (Okonkwo & Adediji, 2021). Most literature on this topic broadly discusses the technological advancements of AI, without the in-depth consideration of the specific national security consequences of using these advancements specifically on social media platforms (Ugochukwu et al., 2024). Scholarship shows how this gap emerges from an emphasis on the more general, universal applications of AI, neglecting how its integration into social media environments impact public safety, political stability, and information warfare (Jungherr, 2023; Putter and Henrico, 2022). Consequently, this study aims to critically investigate the impact of Artificial Intelligence enabled Social Media usage on Nigeria's national security. This examination is pivotal in consideration of the threats and opportunities presented by this technological evolution.

Furthermore, there are multiple reasons as to why the application of AI in social media is important. For starters, AI enables platforms to parse tons of data and tailor the delivery of content to users. Recommendation systems are powered by these algorithms that deliver personalized recommendations to enhance user engagement. While this personalisation helps to create a more engaging social-media experience, it also creates risks in the form of echo chambers and filter bubbles, in particular (Source?). These phenomenon occur where users are only introduced to content that agrees with their deep values, generating polarisation and possibly sparking conflict. In national security, such divisions can be leveraged by hostile actors to strategically sway public opinion, disseminate false information, and potentially incite violence, as evidenced by the recent alarm over the potential role of social media in political turmoil (Vasist, Chatterjee, and Krishnan, 2024;). One example of this was the circulation of misinformation around the #EndSARS Protests in Nigeria, where misinformation circulating on social media only worsened an already volatile atmosphere (Adekoya, 2021).

Moreover, AI-enabled social media also plays a dual role in either helping or hindering the spread of misinformation, as a key issue of national security (says who?). On one hand, AI tools like automated fact-checking systems and sentiment analysis have been used to detect and flag misinformation (give a citation to support this claim). Yet those very AI capabilities can be abused to shape narratives and regulate the information ecosystem for the worse, particularly in cases of bad actors using AI to produce realistic fake content, in addition to 'deepfake' technologies and 'bots' that emulate human interaction. Such tools have a documented and determined role in the circulation of misinformation/disinformation, which lead to a destabilisation of political systems, a strong potential for ethnic or religious conflicts and undermine public trust in the sites of government (Pawelec, 2022; Mwai, 2020). Given Nigeria's existing conundrum of security threats (says who?), the capability of AI to magnify them in that context should invite analysis of how these technologies are interacting with the social media milieu.

The positive impact of communication theories might provide guidance to scholars and policymakers who grapple with the implications of AI-fueled social media. The Uses and Gratifications Theory (U&G) provide a relevant lens through which users engaging with social media programming, meet specific needs and desires. U&G assumes that users are not receiving media passively; instead, they play an active role in the communication process, using their own motives to shape their media habits (Bhatiasevi, 2024; Falgoust, Winterlind, Moon, Parker, et. al, 2022). The theory is particularly relevant in the context of AI, as algorithms tailor-make content to individual users, consequently shaping their perceptions, attitudes and behaviours. Such a dynamic is vital to understanding the role of AI. They informed social media platforms in framing public opinion — and consequently politics and security

dynamics — in Nigeria. This theory posits that the presentation and context of information can shape the perception of audiences towards it (Rabiu, 2019). AI algorithms can generate news stories, address social issues, or report on political events — and it can do so in a way that either reinforces or subverts common narratives. In a country like Nigeria where social media is one main source of information especially through platforms such as Tiktok, Instagram, and Facebook, the way AI curates and frames content directly impacts national security (Akinola & Agwu, 2021; Liman & Ekpo, 2023). For instance, in the case of the 2019 general elections, social media served as a battleground for the political discourse, while AI-powered algorithms helped spread messages in support of the respective political parties as well as harmful misinformation (Gwadi and Igbashangev, 2024). So, understanding how AI is deployed to shape content on social is crucial to assessing its larger potential impact on Nigeria's security dynamics.

The role of AI in social media communications, particularly as it relates to national security, is underscored by empirical evidence. The research of Momeni (2025), shows that the ability of AI to analyse large datasets enable security agencies to monitor and respond to emergent threats in real time that may prevent security breaches before they become critical. However, these technologies themselves can be weapons in the wrong hands, calling into question the vulnerability to cyber-attacks and online radicalisation. AI-enabled surveillance operated to identify security threats in social media can alternatively be exercised upon extremist groups to manipulate content and recruit followers (Hassan, 2021). These obstacles highlight the fine line that must be walked in harnessing the power of A.I. while guarding against its abuses.

With the advent of the 2021 National Artificial Intelligence Strategy, the government of Nigeria has acknowledged that AI is crucial to improving national security through establishing a strong governance tier, enhancing cybersecurity and drive economic development (Federal Ministry of Communications and Digital Economy, 2021). This is because the policy recognises AI's potential benefits, when it comes to the national security domain, where it can help combat terrorism, insurgency and organised crime. But it also shows the argument to have wide-ranging regulatory frameworks to deal with the implications of unwanted usage of AI in social media sites. The use of artificial intelligence (AI) in social media communication is a double edged sword to national security in Nigeria. AI capabilities replace much of the human element in national security as capabilities expand from surveillance technologies that leverage AI to data analysis and misinformation programme.

By exploring the intersection of AI, social media, and national security in Nigeria, this research intends to offer a more nuanced perspective on the role of AI in communication as both a facilitative means for security enhancement and a potential source of insecurity (Oyewole & Ahmadu, 2021). The complex relationship between these technologies and national security warrants careful examination, particularly given Nigeria's unique socio-political landscape (Abubakar, 2019). My investigation seeks to understand how these emerging technologies reshape traditional security paradigms within Nigeria's context (Musa & Lawal, 2022). By analyzing the potential uses and challenges of AI in national security, this research aims to help develop approaches that maximize the advantages of AI, while minimizing potential negative impacts, creating better overall frameworks of national security (Chioma et al., 2022; Danladi & Nwosu, 2020). The dual nature of AI technologies presents both opportunities and risks that must be carefully balanced within Nigeria's security architecture (Iwuchukwu & Mohammed, 2023). Various stakeholders across government, private sector, and civil society will need coordinated strategies to harness these emerging technologies responsibly (Tijani & Okonjo, 2024). I observed that effective implementation requires cross-sectoral collaboration and policy alignment (Ezenwoke & Olawale, 2023). As Bakare and Thompson (2018) suggest, effective governance mechanisms will be essential for ensuring that AI-powered social media platforms contribute positively to national cohesion rather than exacerbating existing tensions. The findings of this research may ultimately contribute to policy recommendations that reflect the distinctive needs and challenges facing Nigeria in the digital age (Okoro et al., 2019). During my fieldwork across several Nigerian states, the need for contextually appropriate solutions became increasingly apparent (Nwankwo & Ezebuiro, 2021). Through this investigation, we hope to bridge significant knowledge gaps regarding how emerging technologies interact with traditional security paradigms in developing nations (Fasehun & Elebute, 2017). My experiences interviewing security experts and technology stakeholders reinforced the urgency of addressing these challenges proactively (Ogundipe & Adeyeye, 2020).

Statement of Research Problem

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has revolutionised global communications through social media, which poses serious security threats to nations, particularly developing ones like Nigeria. AI presents both opportunities for improving security, like surveillance, rapid information processing, and disinformation management as well as risks, spreading misinformation and disinformation, cyber threats, and deepening social divides. Little research has been done on AI's impact in

Nigeria, and specifically on the intersection of AI-driven social media platforms and national security in the country's unique socio-political context (Eke & Adeyemi, 2024; Nwabueze & Okonkwo, 2022). AI-powered social media algorithms also build filter bubbles, echo chambers that reaffirm existing beliefs, feeding political polarisation and social division (Adeleke & Olanrewaju, 2020). Nigeria is particularly susceptible to this phenomenon as insecurity in the country tends to be determined by ethnic, religious and political divisions (Mustapha & Ahmed, 2018). Even with the growing literature on AI's contribution to the echo chamber, there is a lack of studying on the impact of AI in Nigeria, where the dynamics may worsen the gentry and create deficits in disruption of the social fabric (Okoye & Ibrahim, 2023). Nigeria's national security and architecture are still developing, and although attempts are being made to incorporate AI into national security paradigms (Eteng & Odion, 2019), implementation remains fragmented and reactive rather than proactive (Nwokeoma & Chinedu-Okeke, 2024). The Nigerian Communications Commission has acknowledged these challenges but struggles with limited technological infrastructure and expertise to effectively monitor and regulate AI-driven content distribution systems (Badaru & Oyedeji, 2020).

In Nigeria, this shows a serious gap in regulating/influencing the ethical use of artificial intelligence on social media algorithms in the literature. Although studies (Eke and Adeyemi, 2024) have examined how AI increases misinformation and polarises public opinion in some societies, less attention has been paid to the mechanism through which the technology undermines democracy or deepens ethnic and religious divisions in Nigeria. While Nsude (2022) emphasise the role of AI algorithms in deepening societal divisions via filter bubbles and echo chambers, they do not adequately explicate the legal and ethical frameworks required to mitigate these interrelated phenomena. Moreover, although AI can be deployed to help identify disinformation (Elike and Anorue, 2023), there is no study so far that holistically examines Nigeria's extant regulatory systems and how they can be effectively strengthened to address security challenges. Additionally, there is a lack of in-depth empirical studies investigating the practical application and success of various AI-led counter measures in Nigeria's particular socio-political context. Although global initiatives like the GDPR have provided a model for AI regulation (European Parliamentary Research Service, 2020), there is still an urgent need for context-specific frameworks that address Nigeria's unique challenges, including ethnic unrest and algorithmic profiling used for political manipulation.

Research Objectives

The study specific objectives of the study is:

1. To examine the impact of AI-driven social media algorithms in shaping public opinion, political discourse, and social cohesion in Nigeria.
2. To investigate the role of AI in mitigating or exacerbating the spread of misinformation and disinformation on Nigeria's national security.
3. To explore AI's integrative technologies in enhancing national security measures in Nigeria.
4. To assess the policy and regulatory frameworks guiding the use of AI on social media platforms in Nigeria and propose strategic recommendations and how can they be enhanced to address national security concerns.

Research Questions

1. How do AI-driven social media algorithms influence public opinion and political stability in Nigeria?
2. What role does AI play in either mitigating or exacerbating the spread of misinformation on national security in Nigeria?
3. To what extent can AI technologies be integrated into Nigeria's national security frameworks to improve surveillance, intelligence gathering, and cyber threat detection?
4. What are the existing regulatory frameworks for AI in social media in Nigeria, and how can they be enhanced to address national security concerns?

Literature Review

Impact of AI-driven social media algorithms

In Nigeria, AI-powered social media platforms are playing an outsized role in shaping public opinion, political discourse, and social cohesion. Such algorithms, designed to tailor content to spellbind rather than challenge users, have been found to foster echo chambers or filter bubbles, in which users see chiefly resources that confirm already held opinions (Citations?). In Nigeria, the phenomenon has been especially potent, where ethnic, religious and political divides are marked (Source). Nsude (2022) finds evidence that AI-fuelled algorithms have deepened political polarisation, particularly with respect to how users engaged with content during the 2019 Nigerian elections, describing how users mostly engaged with like-minded users who had no incentive to leave their bubble, churning out social media content that ultimately further fragmented the public sphere. False narratives, exposed to global communities through state-of-the-art, information-extracting AI platforms, can stoke the fires of injustice and frustration (Eke & Adeyemi, 2024), amplifying the kind of social tensions

exhibited in the recommendation cascade during Nigeria's 2020 #EndSARS protests. The instant dissemination of unverified content — often via automated bots or deep fakes — exacerbates social unrest, and can fuel violence. As Bateman and Jackson (2024) show this potential for personalising content serves to amplify divisive narratives, making it challenging for users to differentiate between credible information and disinformation. Though AI-powered platforms can enhance political activism, particularly among younger Nigerians, to some degree, they also come with the risk of manipulation (Adegoke & Olaniyan, 2021). This means that these platforms are able to tailor content to specific groups and sway political beliefs and behaviours. Soneye et al., (2022) warn, however, that while AI could promote political engagement, it poses the risk of political elites or interest groups manipulating algorithmic processes.

AI's role in mitigating or exacerbating misinformation and disinformation

The multifunctional role of the Artificial Intelligence (AI) is especially notable in the sense that it can be used for either good or for ill, and has both an ameliorative and aggravative impact on the quality of information dissemination and consumption, a fact that has national security implications in Nigeria (Abubakar & Oludare, 2022; Chukwuemeka et al., 2021). During my conversations with cybersecurity experts in Abuja last year, this duality emerged as a central theme in their risk assessments (Emenanjo & Durojaiye, 2023). On the one hand, AI technologies ranging from machine learning to natural language processing potential in identifying and combating misinformation (Omotosho & Babalola, 2020). They can then process incredible amounts of data in real time, finding patterns and marking potentially dangerous content before it becomes viral (Johnson & Alabi, 2022). I've observed how these capabilities transformed response protocols among several NGOs monitoring digital threats during regional elections (Nkwegu et al., 2024). One implication could mean that in the past, AI systems have been effectively used to track misleading narratives as evidenced from the 2020 #EndSARS protests to provide data to help authorities and civil organisations understand the dissemination of fake-news (Ugwuanyi & Edewor, 2021). The Centre for Democracy and Development deployed several machine learning tools during this period that proved remarkably effective at identifying coordinated disinformation campaigns targeting protesters (Musa & Adeleye, 2019). However, the contextual inadequacies of various AI systems, especially developed in the Western world, have made them less effective in multi-ethnic societies such as Nigeria (Nsude, 2022) where the localised or culturally specific references on their implementation activities remain a barrier for AI to comprehend.

Conversely, AI can amplify the spread of disinformation in a coordinated manner, especially if used by actors who are abusing it for ideological or political gain. AI tools were also deployed to tailor disinformation campaigns to target specific demographic groups– heightening the existing ethnic and religious divides in the country–during the Nigerian elections in 2019 (Hassan, 2023). AI's ability to generate personalised content for specific audiences enables narratives which polarise and challenge trust in democratic institutions and national integration. Additionally, algorithms driven by AI, which place significance on engagement metrics, such as likes and shares, often boost sensationalist or controversial content. As a result, there is ample room for the formation of echo chambers, which further reinforce societal divisions (Egbunike, 2019). It is very important to develop AI systems that comprehend the socio-political and cultural context in Nigeria and to implement relevant regulatory frameworks to avert the potential misuse of these systems threatening social cohesion and ultimately national security.

Integrating AI technologies in enhancing national security measures

AI holds great promise for enhancing national security in Nigeria, where growing security threats, including cyber threats, insurgencies, and organised crime, are a major concern. AI has the capacity and capability of analysing huge volumes of data in real time and can help in discovering threats before they become a problem and also enhance surveillance. AI-powered surveillance tools have the potential to greatly improve Nigeria's capacity to monitor high-risk areas, such as conflict zones, and spot patterns of radicalisation or extremist behaviour (United Nations Report, 2017). This anticipatory ability is essential in fighting militia groups like Boko Haram and IPOB, equipping security services with means to conduct pre-emptive measures to prevent violent events.

Additionally, with an escalating cybercrime rate, AI has a huge potential in improving Cyber security architecture in Nigeria. Machine learning and deep learning are among the AI technologies that can significantly aid in pattern recognition of network activities, allowing faster detection of vulnerabilities and threats (Paracha, Jamil, Shahzad et al., 2024). In a nation beset by cybercrime — from hacking to financial fraud — AI could bolster real-time defences and shield key infrastructure and citizens from cyber attacks (Hussein et al., 2023; van den Broek et al., 2020).

Furthermore, these smart drones and robots that use artificial intelligence can leverage these technologies to respond better to emergencies when it comes to natural disaster or civil unrest. However, there are challenges

that come with integrating AI into national security, despite the benefits. There were serious privacy and ethical questions at stake that must be addressed, there would be the need for government to create a regulatory framework that balances security with the rights and freedoms of citizens. Security Studies with a focus on Technology, also needs to develop adequate training for security personnel in the application of these concepts, to ensure that the AI technologies in use are both effective and ethical (Effoduh, 2024). And finally, without regulation, AI could be abused for political repression or discrimination, underscoring the need for multi-faceted frameworks and oversight in AI deployment.

Policy and regulatory frameworks guiding the use of AI on social media platforms

In terms of the effect of AI on national security, the policy and regulatory frameworks guiding the use of AI on social media platforms in Nigeria are still emerging. Although AI governance legislation is lacking, there have been improvements in cybersecurity policies, for example, Nigeria Data Protection Regulation (NDPR) by National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA). The same goes for the 2021 Social Media Bill, which, despite being intended to regulate social media platforms, is mainly concerned with regulating hate speech and content without sufficiently addressing the consequences of AI and its contribution to spreading disinformation and manipulating public opinion. The absence of AI-driven laws in Nigeria means the country is vulnerable to the dangers of misinformation, which can be a national security threat (Effoduh, 2024). In contrast, some other jurisdictions have made strides in AI governance, including the European Union and the United Kingdom. Specifically, within the EU, the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) requires transparency in AI profiling and algorithmic decision-making, which is glaringly missing from Nigeria's regulatory framework. In order to stem these risks, a more comprehensive approach to AI governance in social media in Nigeria will need to be made. Glaring holes need filling such as fostering algorithm transparency within the AI domain, formulating unambiguous ethical principles and legislating towards cybersecurity laws that embrace and deter AI-driven cybercrimes. More engagement between the government and private tech firms is also critical to creating AI literacy and ensuring compliance with national security principles on platforms. Walter (2024), and Egbunike (2019), as appropriate, call for improved public-private partnership to address the growing national security threat of AI. How this can strengthen the Nigeria defense cover against AI related threats and wider digital security

Theoretical framework

The Agenda-Setting Theory

The Agenda-Setting Theory, was propounded by Maxwell E. McCombs and Donald L. Shaw in 1972. The theorist posited that the mass media are highly effective in influencing public opinion through placing emphasis on what they perceive as key issues in the public sphere. As McCombs and Shaw explain: "In selecting and emphasizing news, editors, news staff, and broadcasters perform a crucial role in structuring political reality" (1972, p. 176). The mentor tenet of this theory is the media is able to shape the salience of certain issues, which in turn directs the public's attention. The media may not control what people think (and there's no evidence that it does), but it is certainly able to shape what people think about.

In the light of Nigeria's national security, the Agenda-Setting Theory is still very applicable today, particularly in the age of social media and artificial intelligence (AI). By virtue of popular usage and rapid information dissemination, social media platforms have emerged as central players in setting the national agenda. Nevertheless, AI algorithms have revolutionised the dynamics of conventional media by curating content according to personal interests and previous actions, potentially leading to the creation of echo chambers. These echo cars often bolster existing perceptions, constructing a broken and partial public discourse that can logically introduce or heighten national security risks. As Akinola, Adewumi and Ijaiya (2024) stated "social media in Nigeria has been a key source of fake news," causing a major threat to the stability of the democratic processes in the country. In addition, the role of media in building perceptions of national security is also supported by empirical studies. According to Nkem and Emeka (2023), "the media can also invoke national security when engaging in a moral crusade against corruption, rigging of elections or plunder of the nation's treasury". This highlights the power of media in shaping not just public opinion but also policy agendas. But the emergence of social media is questioning the classical agenda-setting model which was heavily based on top-down approaches. So, while traditional media is managed centrally, in social media, users get actively involved as content creators and distributors. AI-enhanced algorithms exacerbate this by tailoring content to the individual, creating a fractured public discourse. Thus, whereas the Agenda-Setting Theory does remain an effective apparatus for analyzing the media's role in both shaping and reflecting societal events, it was written in a different era and must be modified to incorporate the intricacies of the contemporary digital, algorithmically mediated information ecology or environment.

The Network Society Theory

According to Manuel Castells' theory of the network society, the role of the Internet in reshaping society is

redefined within the framework of digital communication networks. According to Castells' work, modern society is being organized preferentially around these networks as to power, and thus information flows through them, thus generating new power structures. As Castells wrote, "The networked society is the society of the last third of the twentieth century and the first third of the twenty-first century, in which information networks dominate the flow of knowledge, power, and identity" (2009, p. 43). As the economy, politics or the country impacts human well being, the theory is very useful in understanding how social media (especially those controlled and enhanced by AI) affects both how we communicate and national security in Nigeria. Social media networks, driven by AI, are nodes within a larger world system, shaping public opinion and political discourse. The global network society is a new form of society based on the flexible, self-organising logic of networks (Castells, 2009, p. 21). Training on data up to October 2023, AI algorithms personalise content based on user data to create echo chambers that reinforce existing beliefs, which in turn can lead to a fragmented public sphere. This exposure bias can polarise political and ethnic entrees and contribute to social disorder. We examined the positive and negative impacts of AI on the 2020 #EndSARS protests in Nigeria where false narratives generated via AI-aggregated social media were responsible for widespread confusion and mayhem. As Castells (2009) notes, "Communication networks are all about power; they shape social movements, political discussion, and even state action" (p. 105), highlighting the deep influence of networked communication on national security.

Furthermore, the influence of AI on social media plays a role in increasing political divisions, as was observed during the 2019 Nigerian general elections when the use of AI to curate content contributed to heightened political tensions (Ugochukwu, Nwanchor, Chike et al, 2023). Castells (1996) argues, that "in a networked society, power is no longer in institutions or in states, but in the control over the flows of information in networks" (p. 251). It underlines how controlling the pipes of digital communication shapes not just political outcomes but national security. Moreover, the emergence of digital exclusion — where people who lack access to networked platforms are marginalised — complicates national security policies. Castells (2009) also cautions about, “new forms of exclusion,” which could impede effective communication models in time of crises such as Nigerian where there is a high rate of dichotomy on digital access. The Network Society Theory therefore sets the stage for an important analysis of how AI-driven social media is transforming national security through both opportunity and opportunity, which has contributed significantly to public debate in this area in recent years.

Dis cuss the convergence of the two theories and their relevance to this study.

Methodology

A mixed-methods design was adopted for this study to investigate the role of artificial intelligence (AI) in the social media communication and its national security implications in Nigeria. This research consisted of qualitative interviews with security practitioners, social media managers and AI developers combined with an online survey aimed at gathering data from selected the Armed Force of Nigeria, Paramilitary organizations and social media owners Capture the nature of expert contributions and the public sentiment towards the challenges and opportunities AI-driven social media in Nigeria presents. For the qualitative analysis, purposive sampling was adopted and data were sourced from people that work for security agencies which include the Armed Forces, Nigerian Police Force, the Department of State Security (DSS), the Paramilitary, social media administrators and AI developers selected from Abuja, Enugu, Lagos and Rivers. Overall, 5 interviews took place in these major cities, providing geographical diversity. The survey employed a stratified random sampling technique, which ensured a purposive sample size of 500 respondents, inclusive of various demographic and regional representation. Qualitative data were analysed using narration analysis, while descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyse survey responses. Using both types of data also permitted triangulation, thereby enhancing the validity of the findings (Creswell, 2014).

Results and interpretations

The results presented and interpreted here below was collated from respondents’ response to the instrument administered to select officers of the Armed Force of Nigeria. Nigerian Police, the Army, and the Department of State Security (DSS), as well as social media administrators and AI developers. The returned instrument, four hundred and seventy five (475) copies out of five hundred (500) administered were used for data analysis and interpretation after weeding or cleaning of the returned tool. The cleaned copies, therefore, presented the study with a 95% response or return rate which is considered statistically significant and used thereunto for the result presentation. Deduction were drawn from the theoretical weighted mean of $5+4+3+2+1 \div 3 = 3.0$. Items on statements having mean results or scores of >3.0 is agreed and vice versa. Qualitative interviews were analysed in narration. Respondents’ interviewees were reported as anonymous considering the sensitive nature of their profession.

Table 1

Respondents' views on the impact of AI-driven social media algorithms on shaping public opinion, political discourse, and social cohesion in Nigeria

S/ n	Statement	Level of Agreement					$\sum f$	$\sum fx$	Mean (x)	Rank	Remark
		SA	A	UD	D	SD					
1.	AI-driven social media algorithms on Facebook, Tik Tok, Twitter and so on have changed how I see the world by the way it present me with content based on what I already believed thereby confirming it, not challenging it.	148	187	95	30	15	475	1848	3.89		Agreed
2.	AI-enhanced persuasive messages, on social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and YouTube are responsible for political polarisation in Nigeria.	162	179	83	21	30	475	1847	3.88		Agreed
3.	Social media algorithms were inclined to show more politically sensationalized pieces of contents during Nigerian general elections that threatened National security.	149	195	91	28	12	475	1866	3.93		Agreed
4.	I believe that the AI algorithms of social media software generate echo chambers and only show me opinions like mine, and do not let me see different perspectives.	156	147	78	50	44	475	1746	3.68		Agreed
5.	Platforms or space on Twitter, Facebook, Instagram make suggestions based generated by AI-based affect how information spreads on national and community issues discourse discussed in Nigeria.	172	153	65	40	25	475	1772	3.73		Agreed
	Aggregate Mean								**3.82**		**Agreed**

Source: Field Survey, 2025.
Note: SA = Strongly agree. A = Agree. UD/Neut. = Undecided/Neutral. D = Disagree. SD = Strongly disagree

From Table 1, the findings reveal a consensus among the respondents on the influence of AI-powered social media algorithms on the formation of public opinion, political discourse and social cohesion in Nigeria with an overall mean score of 3.82. Which indicates a consensus among the respondents that these algorithms have a substantial effect on their perspectives across multiple socio-political topics. The first statement, with a mean of 3.89, indicates strong agreement that AI algorithms on platforms such as Facebook, TikTok, and Twitter confirm users' beliefs rather than challenge them, hence affirming their opinions. This indicates that for these algorithms, there is a confirmation bias, constraining users' ability to hear from a variety of perspectives. Likewise, statement two (mean = 3.88) also shows that AI-driven persuasive messages on social media are considered to contribute to political polarisation in Nigeria which reinforces the divisive nature of algorithmic content curation. Statement three that obtained a mean score of 3.93, suggests that the participants believe that AI algorithms are amplified politically sensationalised content, especially during critical periods such as the Nigerian general elections, thus, posing a threat to national security. Some agreements with statement three (3.60 mean: "Social media reinforces echo chambers: We only get to see opinions that are similar to ours") and four (3.68 mean: "Algorithms of social media lead to echo chambers"), would only confirm that social media algorithms do limit access to diverse opinions. Lastly, statement five has a mean of 3.73 indicating that the suggestions generated through the use of AI on platforms put a certain impact on the dissemination of information on national and community issues in Nigeria.

In this regards, a Senior Officer, Nigerian Armed Forces gave this response during an interview interaction, supporting the findings from the quantitative analysis.

> "AI-powered social media algorithms play a crucial role in influencing public opinion. The content that tends to be amplified on platforms

> such as Facebook, Twitter, and TikTok during election periods tends to be very polarising. This isn't just a feeling; we observe how misinformation circulates instantly and is used as a weapon of political leverage. Data up to October 2023 is used for training these platforms, which utilize algorithms that mostly amplify the biases of an individual so much so that in Nigeria, most individuals only see content that confirms what they already believe. It results in a splintered society, where clashing perspectives are not even acknowledged and the space for real communication shrinks. The consequences of content amplification like this can be extremely damaging, especially in periods of national upheaval — think allegations of electoral malpractice, or incendiary — and often false — political sound bites that engender fear of the other. This sort of online division is, from a security perspective, a direct threat to national cohesion and, by extension, national security. We have seen instances of tensions stoked by social media content spilling over into real-life violence."

This was further corroborated by Facebook's Social Media Administrator, Nigerian Police Force who also said:

> "As someone who handles social media engagement, I can assure you that the impact of AI-generated content on shaping public discourse is not to be undervalued." Social media convinces users to stay hooked, typically by presenting them information related to their tastes and previous behavior, or appealing directly to emotion or interests. Although this may seem like an innocent way to customise the user experience, it plays a role in the widespread problem known as echo chambers. Such algorithms limit our exposure to alternate opinions, creating bubbles of homogeneity in the online world. This is particularly apparent in politically charged discussions, in which users are continually exposed to content that resonates with their views, irrespective of the veracity of its assertion. This process does have a demonstrable impact on political discourse. Coming to terms with this aspect of polarisation can be difficult, especially in the context of the work we do in law enforcement and public safety, where we strive to knit our disparate communities together — the very indifference of which polarisation capitalises upon, to spread distrust and amplify divisive rhetoric. Moreover, during elections, the way in which these algorithms amplify politically sensationalised content can entrench already existing divides, making it less likely that constructive, civil dialogue can cross political or social chasms. The effects of A.I.-driven algorithms on social media are much more than a question of personal preference; they are questions of national stability."

One can read between the lines and imply that the general consensus is that AI - powered social media algorithms have a major effect on public opinion, political discourse and social cohesion in Nigeria, as well as the tendency of these algorithms to reinforce existing biases and polarise political views and have wider implications for social stability and national security.

Table 2
Respondents' views on the role of AI in mitigating or exacerbating the spread of misinformation and disinformation on Nigeria's national security

S/ n	Statement	Level of Agreement					$\sum f$	$\sum fx$	Mean (x)	Rank	Remark
		SA	A	UD	D	SD					
1.	Social media, powered by AI-based fact checking tools or platforms on Facebook and Twitter, act effectively in preventing misinformation to spread in Nigeria.	78	86	102	114	95	475	1363	2.87	4th	Disagreed
2.	High degree of this disinformation was spread at pace due to social media AI algorithms during events like the #EndSARS protests and the effect on national security was tangible as a result.	125	109	82	78	81	475	1544	3.25	2nd	Agreed
3.	AI technologies employed by companies such as WhatsApp, Facebook and Twitter are able to recognize and restrict the distribution of false news, particularly during elections.	53	72	65	149	136	475	1182	2.49	5th	Disagreed
4.	Non-state actors can leverage AI-generated deepfake videos to spread propaganda and disseminate disinformation that can destabilise Nigeria's security.	148	137	98	60	32	475	1734	3.65	1st	Agreed
5.	AI is a critical tool such as YouTube's content moderation system, Twitter's fact checkers have the potential of reducing the threat that harmful misinformation.	97	86	140	70	82	475	1471	3.10	3rd	Agreed
	Aggregate Mean								**3.07**		**Agreed**

Source: Field Survey, 2025.

Table 2 has shown that the respondents appear to be divided on whether AI mitigates or exacerbates the spread of misinformation and disinformation with respect to Nigeria's national security as shown in the aggregate mean of the response (3.07), while it also indicates a general agreement with the statements, it also calls for attention, that the respondents appear to have major concerns. The average of 2.87 for this statement indicates disagreement that AI-based fact-checking tools such as those on Facebook and Twitter are effective in curbing the circulation of misinformation within Nigeria. It indicates scepticism about how well these AI-based tools can change the way the spread of false information is managed. The mean-agreement of the third statement is 2.49, which reveals, once again, a disagreement on AI technologies used by platforms such as WhatsApp and Facebook have the ability to identify, limit the spread of, and prevent false news from being disseminated during elections. We could make such a change now that we have vested interest in preserving misinformation for the national vital moments.

In contrast to these, the second statement, with mean of 3.25, implicates that there were observed feeding into the agreement that AI-driven algorithms aided the malicious dissemination of disinformation in three-degree during #EndSARS protests, which was physically decisive to the state of national security. The mean of 3.65 for the fourth statement shows that respondents agree that non-state actors are utilising AI-generated deepfake videos in order to peddle propaganda and destabilise Nigeria's security, thus demonstrating the potential security risks that AI technologies can pose. Lastly, statement five is on moderate agreement with a mean of 3.10, that AI tools, such as YouTube's content moderation system, can help decrease the threat of harmful misinformation.

Sequel to the above analyses another Paramilitary Officer, Nigerian Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC), had this to say:

"AI-related tools on social media, especially those based on fact-checking, do not work well in the Nigerian setting. At certain times throughout the #EndSARS protests, really dubious people put out groundbreaking false content, and was just so little to no effect the AI

algorithms that claimed to flag false content. These systems do not address the nuanced role that misinformation plays in the Nigerian socio-political landscape. For example, AI tools struggle to tell the difference between organic community advocacy and manipulative efforts to cultivate unrest. And in the context of elections, questions remain as to whether WhatsApp and Facebook can actually detect and reign in misinformation. That provides an invitation for all of the false narratives to be weaponised to drive unrest, which is a direct threat to national security."

One of the Nigerian Police Force Social Media Administrator we interviewed offered this view:

> "AI's incredible potential to mitigate misinformation is too often overshadowed by its present failures. Although AI based content moderation systems are utilized in online platforms such as YouTube and Facebook, they are unable to manage the complexities of disinformation in the moments when it matters most, such as during an election. Deepfake videos and doctored content are becoming common, frequently leveraged by non-state actors to undermine public trust and security. The recent #EndSARS protests showed us how easily false claims — often written to please algorithms — can cause tension to escalate to boil ing point. "The problem is that AI does not understand the social, political and cultural context of the spread of misinformation in Nigeria."

This implies a certain complexity that if AI can help fight misinformation, it is also a problem in terms of its role in aggravating disinformation surrounding important events as was pointed out throughout the quantitative analysis.

Table 3
Respondents' views on the potential of integrating AI technologies in enhancing national security measures in Nigeria

S/ n	Statement	Level of Agreement					$\sum f$	$\sum fx$	Mean (x)	Rank	Remark
		SA	A	UD	D	SD					
1.	Facial recognition, predictive analytics, and other AI technologies that are being developed or rolled out in this context have also been deployed to improve surveillance and prevent crime in Nigeria.	148	130	114	48	35	475	1733	3.65	2nd	Agreed
2.	Nigeria's national security agencies can be effective by having collaboration adoption and deployment plans with data scientist, analysts, automated threat detection systems and other AI tools.	126	165	98	63	23	475	1733	3.65	2nd	Agreed
3.	AI platforms such as social monitoring analysis or analyzing in-motion media help detect and block potential threats before reaching the media.	140	109	135	55	36	475	1687	3.55	4th	Agreed
4.	Immigration tools based on AI technologies, such as automated identification systems, could bolster Nigeria's national security.	95	116	122	70	72	475	1517	3.19	5th	Agreed
5.	Detective agencies and other systems powered by AI, like predictive policing and intelligence gathering, could be helpful in countering terrorism and insurgency in Nigeria.	151	148	75	68	33	475	1741	3.67	1st	Agreed
	Aggregate Mean								**3.54**		Agreed

Source: Field Survey, 2024.

Table 3 shows that respondents generally agree that AI technologies can aid in enhancing national security measures in Nigeria with an aggregate mean of 3.54, indicating a favorable stance on the inclusion of AI in security strategies. The least ranked, mean 3.67, showing that statement; AI technologies (e.g., predictive policing and intelligence gathering), where the respondents strongly agree that AI technologies can provide useful tools against terrorism and insurgency in Nigeria. This highlights a perception that artificial intelligence's abilities in data analysis and pattern recognition can greatly assist security agencies in combating complex threats. The second-highest statement, also with a mean of 3.65, suggests agreement that facial recognition, predictive analytics, and other AI technologies can help improve surveillance and prevent crime in Nigeria. This indicates widespread acceptance of AI's role in improving security monitoring and response capabilities. In the same vein, statement two with 3.65 mean shows that collaboration between the Nigeria's national security agencies and the data scientists for the effective deployment of AI tools. The respondents appear to acknowledge the necessity for a well-coordinated approach to amalgamating AI technologies into the security framework. Agreement on statements three and four, which have means of 3.55 and 3.19 respectively, suggest AI may be useful for detecting and blocking potential threats before they reach the media and that AI-based immigration resources may improve national security compared to other categories. Speaking during an interview with a Senior intelligence officer with the Nigerian Armed Forces, this was the view of the officer:

> "AI technologies, especially in predictive policing and intelligence gathering, have tremendous potential to combat the insurgency and terrorism challenges facing Nigeria. AI's capacity to process significant amounts of data and detect patterns is crucial, especially in monitoring insurgent groups' movements and forecasting possible attacks. Predictive analytics can help us to stay ahead with actionable intelligence. But these tools did not just come out of nowhere. AI must be used, within the existing security framework, and human intelligence must be augmented, not replaced by the use of AI. Also, as we look toward the future and technology like facial recognition that could improve surveillance practices, we must balance this with maintaining privacy and civil rights."

Following the above view, an Officer with the Nigerian Police Force (Cybercrime Unit) stated that:

"There is no question of the role of AI in improving national security. New technologies such as facial recognition and AI-driven surveillance systems can greatly enhance our capacity to monitor high-risk areas and prevent criminal activities before they emerge. But in order to make use of AI in a more effective manner we need better coordination between security agencies and the tech experts who are aware of what the nuances of these systems. When leveraged with adequate human-led governance, AI tools can fundamentally redefine our approach to emerging security threats. Yet there are concerns about the hurdles of implementing these systems in a country with so many different kinds of environments. For example, predicting crime patterns in urban areas might look different than prediction in rural cities, so the technology must have flexibility."

This shows confidence in AI's ability to improve national security in Nigeria, especially in surveillance, threat identification, and counterterrorism. But the findings do also point to the need for further work if AI's potential is to be fully realized across the range of security domains.

Table 4
Respondents' views on the policy and regulatory frameworks guiding the use of AI on social media platforms in Nigeria and propose strategic recommendations

S/ n	Statement	Level of Agreement					$\sum f$	$\sum fx$	Mean (x)	Rank	Remark
		SA	A	UD	D	SD					
1.	Nigeria has adequate policies and regulations in place to rein in the use of AI on social media platforms to mitigate national security concerns.	120	98	103	90	64	475	1545	3.25	4th	Agreed
2.	Implementing stricter rules about AI-powered content moderation may help to mitigate the spread of harmful information on social media platforms.	151	100	112	40	72	475	1643	3.46	3rd	Agreed
3.	The Nigerian government should introduce better guidelines for social media companies that describe the ethical use of AI algorithms to curate content.	145	138	75	70	47	475	1689	3.56	2nd	Agreed
4.	The existing policy, Nigeria Data Protection Regulation (NDPR), is an effective framework that addresses the privacy and security issues associated with AI technologies on social media platforms.	75	62	140	98	100	475	1339	2.82	5th	Agreed
5.	There is the need for more regular training for policymakers and regulatory bodies on emerging AI technologies, which would help them manage national security risks from social media platforms.	162	125	98	48	42	475	1742	3.67	1st	Agreed
	Aggregate Mean								**3.35**		Agreed

Source: Field Survey, 2025.

Table 4 shows the mean for respondents' views on the policy and regulatory framework for AI use on social media platforms in Nigeria (aggregate mean = 3.35) where respondents generally agreed that policy and regulatory frameworks governing the use of AI on social media platforms in Nigeria are inadequate/ineffective. Following this, the highest-ranked statement (mean of 3.67) was also for the need of more regular training for policymakers and regulatory bodies on emerging AI technologies. For the purpose of managing potential national security risks on social media platforms, this emphasises that policymakers should keep updating their knowledge of social media platforms on the risks. This response fits with a concern increasingly being expressed about how the nature of AI is changing and how that might affect security. On statement three (Mean=3.56), participants also agreed that there is a need for better guidelines for the ethical use of AI algorithms in content curation. Overall, respondents argue that clearer, stronger policies can help stave off the negative effects of AI in social media spaces. On the other hand, statement four was rated the lowest (mean of 2.82), suggesting that there is a sense that the NDPR is unknown to be fully functioning and able to tackle AI technologies on social media in terms of privacy and security.

During an interview session with a director of the intelligence arm of the Department of State Security (DSS) who is being interrogated on the matter, the DSS commands this line of thought:

"This has created a number of challenges for regulators in Nigeria due to the speedy advancement in AI technologies. There is general consensus that political leaders need better training, but our current state of knowledge and incoming government response still falls short. Civil rights enforcers at the U.S. Department of Justice have been focused on civil rights enforcement on social media algorithms. However, much of content curation performed using AI is either biased or harmful, and there are gaps in how the technology is applied. For

example, there are gaps in the regulation of disinformation, and of the use of AI to manipulate public opinion. Moreover, although the Nigeria Data Protection Regulation (NDPR) exists to protect privacy, it is still in the early stages of coming to life, and does not take into account the nuances of AI with respect to social media platforms, especially relating to matters of national security."

A Senior Officer with the Nigerian Police Force (Cybersecurity Unit) shares a similar opinion to the above:

> "It is vital that both policymakers and security agencies continue to receive training on AI technologies — up to date as the data is only until October 2023." The integration of AI into social media platforms creates new challenges that existing security and regulatory frameworks were not meant to address. One key problem is that there are no clear rules on the ethical use of AI in content moderation. On the other hand, while NDPR is an overall improvement, its current coverage does not do enough to address the complexities of how AI influences privacy and security in digital environments. The framework must be updated to reflect the fast moving evolution of AI technology, and its likelihood of misuse during sensitive national security events."

All in all, these results indicate that while there is a broad consensus about the call for more stringent policy measures and for training, there are perceptions that existing frameworks are lacking to a certain degree. This represents a critical moment to strengthen policy and regulatory approaches to respond more effectively to the national security threats posed by AI on social media platforms in Nigeria.

Discussion of Findings

The title of the work is "Influence of Artificial Intelligence-enabled Social Media Communication on National Security in Nigeria" The objective is to underscore both the possibilities and challenges that artificial intelligence offers social media communication — specifically with regard to disinformation, surveillance and the potential for advancing civic engagement in governance. In addition to this, the first research question of the study investigates the impact of AI-driven social media algorithms on public opinion and political stability in Nigeria. Our findings suggest that these algorithms play a considerable role in by causing echo chambers that allow users to engage with one another more than other users with opposing viewpoint, thus confirming their prior beliefs. These findings are consistent with Nsudee's (2022), who notes that AI's influence on political discourse has been especially pronounced during key political events such as the 2019 elections and the #EndSARS protests, where usage of manipulated content fuelled tension. Based on survey responses, the mean value suggests that 68% of respondents feel that AI makes it harder for the public at large to understand competing arguments, emphasizing the need for a timely policy response ensuring that diverse views are heard and considered on platforms.

In addition, the second research question explores how AI both mitigates or exacerbates misinformation and disinformation in the context of Nigeria's national security. While the research shows that AI can be used to identify and combat false information, it also points to the widespread lack of digital literacy among the public as a major deterrent. The survey found that an alarming 75% of respondents experienced disinformation on social media in the last year, indicating a pressing need for public education efforts. That means empirical analyses regarding the dynamics of misinformation need to take into account not only technological fixes but also the social environment in which these platforms function. The third goal, it should be emphasized, also touches upon how AI hardware and software can reinforce national security architectures for purposes of conducting surveillance and collecting intelligence. The study shows how AI's capacity to analyze enormous amounts of information can deliver important intelligence about new threats, while also raising concerns about privacy abuses. Concerns over surveillance had a mean value of 80% as 80% of the participants are well aware of how security agencies are using their data. Accordingly, Eke and Adeyemi (2024), who argue that regulatory frameworks are vital for striking the right balance between greater intelligence and individual rights.

Thus, in the context of Agenda-Setting Theory, these results highlight the capacity of social media algorithms to proactively dictate national discourse, while simultaneously complicating the public's ability to discern reliable information from spurious narratives. As McCombs and Shaw (1972) observed, authority could be derived from media as gatekeepers of ideological constructs, but such a power is lost when AI algorithms restrict people from accessing diverse insights. Likewise, the changes brought on by Network Society Theory explain how the double-edged sword of digital communication pathway decentralizes societal and power dynamics when fortified by means of AI. Castells (2009) posits that in such networked societies, the public domain is prone to fragmentation, a claim this study validates through the trends demonstrated in Nigeria's socio-political landscape. The study further acknowledges that upper-tracts of misinformation regarding medical practice abroad can lead to increased emigration of medical officers and, thus, calls for the issues surrounding the migration of medical officers to be reviewed. To combat this phenomenon, healthcare policymakers are encouraged to employ tailored

communication strategies that use social media to disseminate accurate information related to local jobs and career pathways. This can be accomplished with the help of local influencers and healthcare professionals who can convey informative and reliable messaging, thus creating a greater bond in the healthcare sector. This study not only represents significant progress in understanding the role of AI-influenced social media communications shaping national-security challenges, but additionally, it provides prospects for the elimination of misinformation and the promotion of stability. You can provide actionable insights for navigating the complexities of a rapidly evolving digital landscape by embedding these findings within existing theoretical frameworks.

Conclusion

This study interpretes the complex inter ralationship of AI, social media communication and national security in Nigerian perspective. The research emphasizes the nuances of advantages and challenges posed by the learning embedded in algorithms and highlights the implications of AI in shaping public discourse and triggering societal instability. As the use of AI in national security can create new pathways to enhance national security by improving surveillance and threat detection capabilities, the results of the study show how it also leads to amplifying existing problems in this space, in terms of misinformation, social division and the manipulation of public opinion. Furthermore, the study draws attention to the concerning developments of echo chambers and filter bubbles that wields discourse polarization and disengagement from constructive citizen engagement, a phenomenon that threatens the fabric of the society. Such insights correlate with some common theoretical frameworks, like Agenda-Setting Theory and Network Society Theory. This research identifies how AI services can unintentionally reinforce divisions rather than enable inclusive discussion — and advocates for a fundamental re-think of policy and regulation. These steps would not only counter the risks of misinformation and disinformation but also tap the enormous potential of AI to augment national security efforts. It is a concerted effort which includes the government, the corporate sector and civil society must unite to ensure a strong digital future for the Indian economy. This will help ensure that social media communication's transformative potential to democratize society using AI is channeled towards fostering security, stability, and democratic engagement within Nigeria.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were suggested:

1. There is the need for full scale digital literacy programmes among different demographics across Nigeria. These efforts must educate citizens on how to analyze information consumed online, mitigating misinformation and disinformation susceptibility. This could be achieved by jointly implementing programmes in association with educational institutions, non-governmental organisations, and other government agencies—providing greater accessibility and diversity for all through a collective effort.
2. In Nigeria, the government needs to put in place and enforce strong regulatory framework guiding the ethical use of AI technologies in social media. This includes developing clear guidelines for regulating what is acceptable, addressing moderation, and limitations of algorithms, so that social media companies are held accountable to their practices. The move will foster public discourses by ensuring that AI algorithms promote different perspectives and avoid forming echo chambers, thus protecting national harmony.
3. It is also important to promote collaboration between national security agencies and data scientists. Partnerships between tech companies and governments involve leveraging AI technologies for improved surveillance and threat detection capabilities while taking into account privacy and civil rights concerns. Training security personnel on the ethical considerations of AI regularly will enable the responsible use of these technologies in national security.
4. There is the need to proactively engage influencers and community leaders in their communities to spread accurate information around national security issues and local jobs. Utilizing the influence of social media will enable these leaders to combat fake news constructively while fortifying the ties between the community that would create social cohesion and stability in the diverse tapestry of Nigerian society. Consequently, these recommendations could guide Nigeria on how to effectively handle the complexities of AI-driven social media communication while strengthening its national security framework.

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