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Leveraging Social Media Monitoring Platforms to Address Youth Unemployment and Crime-Driven Insecurity Among Students in the University of Nigeria, Nsukka (UNN)

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Abstract
The dual challenges of youth unemployment and crime-driven insecurity represent critical threats to the academic stability and socioeconomic development of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka (UNN). This study investigates the potential of social media monitoring platforms as a technological intervention to mitigate these issues. Utilizing a quantitative research design, the study surveyed 384 undergraduate and postgraduate students across various faculties. The research examines students' usage patterns of platforms like Twitter (X), WhatsApp, Telegram, and Facebook for security alerts and employment opportunities. It further explores the correlation between proactive social media monitoring and reductions in victimization, as well as improvements in job accessibility. Findings reveal a significant positive correlation ($r = 0.68$, $p < 0.05$) between the use of verified campus monitoring channels and perceived safety. However, the study identifies a "digital trust gap," where students are skeptical of official channels due to misinformation. Regarding unemployment, 62% of respondents reported accessing gig economy opportunities through informal monitoring groups, yet structural unemployment remains high. The study concludes that while social media monitoring is a potent tool for real-time situational awareness and networking, its efficacy is hampered by the lack of a centralized, verified digital framework. Recommendations include the establishment of a UNN-integrated digital security hub and a verified employment linkage bot to streamline information dissemination.

Keywords: Youth Unemployment, Crime-Driven Insecurity, Social Media Monitoring, Digital Surveillance, UNN, Quantitative Analysis

1. Introduction

The Nigerian university system, once a bastion of safety and a guaranteed pathway to employment, currently faces a precarious reality defined by rising insecurity and rampant youth unemployment. The University of Nigeria, Nsukka (UNN), as a microcosm of the larger Nigerian society, is not immune to these challenges. Recent years have witnessed an uptick in cult-related activities, petty theft, and harassment within the campus and its host communities, creating an atmosphere of fear that disrupts academic pursuits. Concurrently, the rate of unemployment among graduates and current students seeking to supplement their finances continues to soar, exacerbating frustration and, in some instances, driving vulnerable youths toward criminal enterprises as a survival mechanism.

In the digital age, social media platforms have transcended their original purpose of social networking to become critical infrastructures for information dissemination, crisis management, and economic opportunity. Social media monitoring, the process of identifying and determining what is being said about a brand, individual, or situation online; has emerged as a vital tool for intelligence gathering. For university communities, these platforms offer real-time data that can be leveraged to preempt security threats and identify economic opportunities. However, the systematic application of these monitoring tools to address the specific twin evils of unemployment and insecurity remains underutilized in the Nigerian academic context.

The problem this study seeks to address is the disconnect between the high penetration of social media usage among UNN students and the low utilization of these platforms for structured security monitoring and employment generation. While students are hyper-connected, the information ecosystem is often chaotic, filled with unverified rumors that fuel panic rather

than safety, and scam job offers that exploit desperate students. This study aims to quantify the efficacy of existing social media monitoring behaviors among UNN students and propose a data-driven framework for leveraging these platforms to enhance campus security and economic outcomes.

The objectives of this study are to to ascertain the extent to which structured social media monitoring mitigate crime-driven insecurity and alleviate youth unemployment within the UNN community? Specifically, this study seeks to: (1) Determine the extent to which UNN students utilize social media for security awareness and job hunting;

(2) Analyze the relationship between social media monitoring intensity and perceived safety on campus; and (3) Assess the impact of digital networking on accessing legitimate employment opportunities among the student populace.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Youth Unemployment and Insecurity in Nigerian Universities

Youth unemployment in Nigeria has reached alarming levels, with the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) frequently reporting rates exceeding 30% for the youth demographic. In the university context, this economic disenfranchisement creates a fertile ground for insecurity. Scholars like Udam and Okoro (2019) [9] have argued that the "idleness" associated with strikes and lack of economic engagement directly correlates with increased cultism and cybercrime on campuses. The university environment, designed for learning, becomes a contestable space where survival of the fittest prevails, often manifesting in theft and violent confrontations.

2.2 Social Media Monitoring Technologies

Social media monitoring involves the use of algorithms and human intelligence to track keywords, hashtags, and geolocation data. In Western contexts, universities utilize tools like Geofeedia or Hootsuite to monitor campus chatter for distress signals (patrolling the "digital campus"). In Nigeria, the approach is more informal, relying heavily on WhatsApp group broadcasts and Twitter trends. Eke (2020) [2] notes that while these informal channels are fast, they lack the verification protocols necessary for effective crisis management, often leading to the spread of "fake news" which can exacerbate security situations.

2.3 Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on two theories: **Social Capital Theory** and **Uses and Gratification Theory**. Social Capital Theory, popularized by Putnam, suggests that social networks have value. In the context of this study, the "bridging" social capital formed online can provide access to safety information and job referrals. Uses and Gratification Theory explains why students choose specific platforms; they actively seek out media that fulfills their needs for surveillance (security alerts) and personal identity (professional networking). This framework assumes that students are active, rational agents who can be directed to use social media more effectively if the right incentives and structures are provided.

2.4 Research Gaps

While extensive literature exists on social media's role in political mobilization (e.g., #EndSARS) or general communication, there is a paucity of quantitative studies specifically linking social media monitoring tools to the simultaneous reduction of physical crime and unemployment within a specific university demographic. Most existing studies are qualitative or anecdotal; this research fills that gap by providing empirical data on the correlation between digital monitoring behaviors and tangible security/economic outcomes.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study adopted a quantitative research design, specifically a cross-sectional survey method. This design was chosen to capture a snapshot of current behaviors, perceptions, and outcomes regarding social media usage, insecurity, and unemployment among the student population at a specific point in time. The quantitative approach allows for the statistical testing of relationships between variables, providing generalizable results.

3.2 Population and Sampling

The population for this study comprises all regular undergraduate and postgraduate students of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. According to recent administrative data, the estimated student population is approximately 36,000. To determine the sample size, the Taro Yamane formula was applied:

$n = N / (1 + N(e)Z)$

Where n is the sample size, N is the population (36,000), and e is the margin of error (0.05). This calculation resulted in a sample size of 395. To account for potential non-response or invalid entries, the sample was increased to 420. A multi-stage sampling technique was used, first stratifying by faculties, and then using simple random sampling to select respondents within departments.

3.3 Data Collection Instrument

Data was collected using a structured questionnaire titled "Social Media, Security, and Employment Questionnaire (SMSEQ)." The instrument was divided into four sections: Demographics, Social Media Usage Patterns, Perceptions of Insecurity, and Employment Status/Job Seeking Behavior. The questions utilized a5-point Likert scale (Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree) to measure intensity and perception.

3.4 Validity and Reliability

The instrument was validated by three experts; two from Social Science Education and one from Measurement and evaluation at UNN. A pilot study was conducted with 30 students outside the study sample, yielding a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of 0.82, indicating high internal consistency reliability.

3.5 Method of Data Analysis

The collected data was coded and analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25. Descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations) were used to analyze demographic data and general usage patterns. Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) was used to test the relationship between variables, and Multiple Regression Analysis was employed to predict the impact of social media monitoring on the dependent variables (security and employment). The

significance level was set at 0.05.

4. Results and Analysis

Out of the 420 questionnaires distributed, 384 were returned valid and usable, representing a response rate of 91.4%. This high response rate was achieved through the use of both physical distribution in lecture halls and digital forms distributed via class WhatsApp groups.

4.1 Demographic Characteristics

Table 1: Demographic Distribution of Respondents

Variable	Category	Frequency (n=384)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	188	49.0
	Female	196	51.0
Age	16-20 years	112	29.2
	21-25 years	205	53.4
	26+ years	67	17.4
Study Level	Undergraduate	310	80.7
Variable	**Category**	**Frequency (n=384)**	**Percentage (%)**
	Postgraduate	74	19.3
Residence	On-Campus (Hostel)	145	37.8
	Off-Campus	239	62.2

The demographic data shows a balanced gender distribution and indicates that the majority of respondents (62.2%) live off-campus, where security challenges are typically more acute than within the university hostels.

4.2 Descriptive Analysis of Variables

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics on Social Media Monitoring and Insecurity

Items	Mean ($\bar{x}$)	Std. Dev.	Remark
I rely on social media (WhatsApp/Twitter) for real-time security alerts on campus.	4.25	0.85	Agreed
I verify security information seen on social media before acting on it.	2.80	1.12	Undecided
Social media monitoring groups have helped me avoid dangerous locations (e.g., Hilltop, Green House areas).	3.95	0.92	Agreed
False alarms on social media cause more panic than actual security incidents.	4.10	0.88	Agreed
Grand Mean	**3.78**	**0.94**	**Agreed**

Table 2 reveals a high reliance on social media for security intelligence (Mean = 4.25). However, the low mean for verification (2.80) highlights a critical vulnerability: students consume security information rapidly but rarely verify it, leading to the high agreement that false alarms cause panic (Mean = 4.10).

4.3 Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis 1 (H_0): There is no significant relationship between social media monitoring intensity and perceived safety among UNN students.

Table 3: Pearson Correlation between Social Media Monitoring and Perceived Safety

Variables	N	Mean	Std. Dev	r-value	Sig. (p)	Decision
Social Media Monitoring Intensity	384	18.42	3.21	0.682**	0.000	Reject H_0
Perceived Safety	384	16.15	4.05			

*** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).*

The result ($r = 0.682$, $p < 0.05$) indicates a strong positive relationship. Students who actively monitor specific security channels (e.g., Student Union Government broadcasts, Security Department handles) report higher levels of perceived safety and situational awareness. The null hypothesis is therefore rejected.

4.4 Regression Analysis: Employment Outcomes

To assess the impact of using social media platforms (LinkedIn, Twitter, WhatsApp Groups) on finding employment or gig work, a regression analysis was conducted.

Table 4: Model Summary for Social Media Usage and Employment Access

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.543a	.295	.291	1.234

a. Predictors: (Constant), Professional Networking, Freelance Platform Usage, Skill Acquisition Monitoring

Table 5: Coefficients for Employment Access

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients (B)	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients (Beta)	t	Sig.
(Constant)	1.102	.312		3.532	.000
Professional Networking (LinkedIn/Twitter)	.421	.054	.385	7.796	.000
Freelance/Gig Monitoring	.315	.048	.292	6.562	.000

The regression analysis shows that social media usage variables account for approximately 29.5% (R Square = .295) of the variance in employment access. The strongest predictor was "Professional Networking" (Beta = .385). This suggests that while social media helps, it is not the sole solution to unemployment; structural factors likely account for the remaining 70% of variance.

5. Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study underscore the dual-edged nature of social media in the UNN environment. The strong positive correlation between monitoring and safety (r=0.682) aligns with Uses and Gratification Theory; students derive a sense of security from the "surveillance" gratification of these platforms. When a security breach occurs at the "Hilltop" or "Behind Flat" areas, WhatsApp statuses function as an ad-hoc emergency broadcast system. This corroborates findings by Eke (2020) [2] regarding informal digital policing. However, the lack of verification

(Mean=2.80) presents a significant risk. The spread of unverified rumors about "unknown gunmen" or cult clashes often leads to unnecessary suspension of economic activities and academic disruptions, ironically contributing to insecurity.

Regarding unemployment, the data reveals a "Gig Economy" shift. The significant regression coefficient for Freelance/Gig Monitoring indicates that students are increasingly bypassing traditional employment routes in favor of digital gigs found via social media. Students monitoring platforms like Twitter or Fiverr (promoted via campus influencers) are finding economic lifelines. However, the study observed that this is predominantly "survival employment" rather than career-building employment. The high R-square value suggests that while digital monitoring is effective, it is limited by the actual availability of jobs in the Nigerian macro-economy.

Furthermore, a concerning trend identified in the descriptive data was the prevalence of "job scams." Approximately 45% of respondents indicated they had encountered fraudulent job postings on social media platforms targeting UNN students. This highlights that while the platforms are leveraged for employment, the lack of a vetting mechanism (monitoring quality) poses a security risk, effectively linking the two variables of the study: unemployment drives students to scam-prone sites, creating insecurity.

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

6.1 Conclusion

This study concludes that social media monitoring platforms are indispensable yet sub-optimally utilized tools within the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. They currently serve as the primary nervous system for campus security and the most viable gateway to economic engagement for students. However, the ecosystem is chaotic. The effectiveness of these platforms is undermined by the proliferation of fake news, lack of centralized verification, and the prevalence of cyber-fraud targeting job seekers. The "Digital Trust Gap" identified—where students rely on information they do not fully trust—represents a critical failure point in campus administration strategy.

6.2 Recommendations

Based on the quantitative evidence, the following recommendations are made:

1. **Establishment of a UNN Digital Security Hub:** The university administration should move beyond traditional security patrol to digital patrolling. A dedicated, verified social media channel (integrated across Twitter, Telegram, and WhatsApp) should be established to issue real-time, verified security alerts. This would address the verification gap identified in Table 2.
2. **Creation of a Verified 'UNN-Link' Employment Portal:** To combat job scams and aid employment, the Student Affairs Division should partner with reputable tech firms to create a vetted digital job board. This platform should aggregate verified gig and internship opportunities, leveraging the "Freelance Monitoring" behavior identified in the regression analysis.
3. **Digital Literacy and Verification Training:** The General Studies (GS) curriculum should be updated to include modules on digital verification and Open Source Intelligence (OSINT) basics. Students need to be trained not just to consume information, but to verify the authenticity of security alerts and job offers.

Policy on misinformation: The University Senate should enact clear policies regarding the malicious spread of unverified security alarms that cause panic,

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