



## Original Article

# Investigating the Users' Perception of Social Media Amplification of Political Crisis and Power Tussle Discourse in Nigeria

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**Abstract:** The advent of social media also came with numerous communicative and information-dissemination opportunities. The platforms are highly interactive, offering easy access to users worldwide. Consequently, numerous negative phenomena, including political crises, are amplified. Thus, this study aimed to evaluate users' perceptions of how social media amplifies political crises and power tussle discourse in Nigeria. The researchers relied on survey and quantitative data collection techniques through administration of online questionnaire link targeting 384 Lagos residents. However, the study recorded 85% response rate as 328 respondents provide responses to the survey. Survey findings revealed that various social media platforms amplify political crises and power tussles, with memes being a particularly prominent medium across platforms. Furthermore, findings also showed that social media has significantly high impact on public opinion formation among users with speed of information-dissemination being the most glaring factor that ensures the effectiveness of platforms in amplifying political crises and power tussle discourse. Researchers concluded that social media platforms play the role of effective information dissemination channels but also act as polarising media, recommending that digital media literacy is imperative to ensure that platforms are not used to promote negatives such as fake news and misinformation whereupon political crisis thrives.

**Keywords:** Communication; Conflicts; Knowledge; New Media; Politics; Technology.



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## 1. Introduction

Social media has become a dominant force in shaping political discourse worldwide, and Nigeria is no exception. The increasing penetration of digital platforms has transformed how political issues are discussed, particularly in times of crisis and power struggles. Social media serves as a double-edged sword because it enables citizens to access and

share political information while also facilitating the rapid dissemination of misinformation, propaganda, and inflammatory content (Olorunyomi & Ojebuyi, 2021). The amplification of political crises and power tussles through social media can heighten tensions, influence public perception, and even affect governance and policy making. The situation could even become worse, leading to chaotic situations for the government and citizens to deal with – and this has short and long-term implications.

Political crises and power tussles in Nigeria have historically been driven by ethnic, religious, and regional divides. In recent years, social media platforms such as Twitter (now X), Facebook, WhatsApp, and YouTube have played a crucial role in shaping narratives around these conflicts. Studies have shown that social media not only serves as a news source but also fosters echo chambers where users reinforce their political biases (Adegbola & Gearhart, 2019; Guo & Chen, 2022; Modgil et al., 2021; Rodrigo-Ginés et al., 2024). As users engage with posts and comments from other users, political biases become obvious creating spaces for polarisations. This creates a volatile environment where political disagreements escalate into national controversies, often with real world consequences, including protests, violence and policy shifts. One of the defining characteristics of social media amplification is its ability to magnify certain viewpoints through algorithms that prioritise engagement over accuracy (Bakare, 2020). Political actors, including parties, candidates and interest groups, leverage these platforms to push narratives that serve their agendas. This has been evident in key political events such as the #EndSARS movement, campaigns before elections and leadership disputes, where social media played a pivotal role in mobilising support and framing public debates (Okoro & Odoemelam, 2018). The extent to which users engage with such content shapes their perception of political conflicts, reinforcing existing divisions or inspiring calls for change. This is the essence of the growing popularity in the use and engagements with digital platforms in contemporary society.

Social media has emerged as a powerful tool for political communication, influencing public opinion, shaping discourse, and amplifying political conflicts in Nigeria. The foregoing has been buttressed with the assertion that social media amplify extreme views conspiracy theories, polarisations and many other vices (Schleffer & Miller, 2021). Relatedly, Rehman and Riaz (2021) also noted that social media contribute to the escalation of civil uprising. It is also imperative to note that while these platforms have provided opportunities for civic engagement and political participation, they have also contributed to the rapid spread of misinformation, disinformation, and political propaganda. Political crises and power struggles, often rooted in ethnic, religious, and regional differences, are easily magnified through social media, creating heightened tensions and social divisions. The extent to which users perceive social media as an amplifier of political crises remains a critical issue that requires empirical investigation. The rise of digital disinformation further complicates the landscape of political discourse in Nigeria. Fake news and misleading content often spread faster than factual reports, making it difficult for users to differentiate between credible and manipulated narratives (Ibrahim & Adamu, 2022). The weaponisation of social media by politicians and interest groups to discredit opponents or manipulate public sentiment exacerbates political crises. As a result, user perceptions of social media's role in political conflicts are shaped by both personal biases and the broader information ecosystem in which they operate. The result is the escalation of crisis that can assume different dimension. In Nigeria, it is often about the ethno-religious implications with online rants leading to offline actions on the streets of Lagos or Abuja.

Despite these challenges, social media also offers opportunities for political education, civic engagement and accountability. Digital activism has empowered citizens to demand transparency and hold leaders accountable for their actions (Uwalaka & Watkins, 2018). However, the question remains: do Nigerian social media users perceive these platforms as tools for positive political discourse, or do they see them as amplifiers of crisis and instability? Understanding user perceptions is essential for developing strategies to mitigate the negative effects of social media while maximising its potential for fostering democratic participation. This paper examines users' perceptions of social media amplification of political crises and power tussles in Nigeria. It explores the role of digital platforms in shaping political narratives, the factors influencing user engagement with political content, and the implications of these dynamics for governance and social cohesion. The unregulated nature of social media allows various political actors, including politicians, interest groups, and influencers, to manipulate narratives for personal or partisan gains. Algorithms designed to prioritise engagement often promote sensational and divisive content, thereby reinforcing echo chambers and increasing political polarisation. Studies have suggested that many social media users struggle to differentiate between information and politically motivated misinformation, making them susceptible to manipulation (Ibrahim & Adamu, 2022). This raises concerns about the role of social media in either fostering informed political discourse or exacerbating instability in Nigeria.

Moreover, social media amplification of political crises and power tussles affects national security, governance, and democracy. Instances of online mobilisation leading to real-world conflicts, such as the #EndSARS protests and election-related violence, illustrate how digital platforms can escalate tensions. The inability of regulatory agencies to effectively manage harmful content without infringing on free speech further complicates the issue. This necessitates an exploration of how Nigerian social media users perceive these platforms as tools for democratic engagement or as mechanisms that deepen political divisions and instability. Despite the growing body of research on social media and political communication, there remains a gap in understanding users' perceptions of its role in political crises and power

struggles. Existing studies often focus on the spread of fake news and political misinformation but fail to adequately capture how users interpret and react to the amplification of political tensions online. Getting a clearer understanding of these perceptions become for developing strategies to mitigate the negative effects of social media on political discourse and to promote responsible digital engagement.

This study seeks to fill this gap by examining Nigerian social media users' perceptions of how digital platforms amplify political crises and power struggles. In exploring their experiences, attitudes and engagement with politically charged content, the study will provide insights into the broader implications of social media on political stability and governance in Nigeria. Findings from this research will contribute to policy discussions on digital media regulation, media literacy and the role of technology in shaping Nigeria's political environment. The study aimed to explore several key questions regarding the role of social media in political crises and power struggles in Nigeria. It sought to identify the social media platforms that play a significant role in amplifying political discourse, particularly related to crises and power tussles. Additionally, the research examined the level of effectiveness these platforms have in amplifying such discussions, determining how influential they are in shaping public perception and engagement. Finally, the study delved into the negative consequences of these amplified discussions, investigating the potential harmful effects they may have on society and the political landscape.

## 2. Literature Review

The main concepts for review are social media, political crises and power tussle. Scholarly positions have been expressed on the concepts vis á vis their relevance in contemporary political systems. Additionally, the concepts have also received empirical attention in recent times owing to the intrigues and power play in the political dynamics of Nigeria. The concepts are reviewed before a consideration of the various scholarly positions on the subject matters.

### 2.1. Social Media in Political Crisis and Power Tussle Discourse

Social media refers to digital platforms that facilitate the creation, sharing, and exchange of information, ideas, and opinions among users in virtual communities (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). These platforms, including Twitter (now X), Facebook, WhatsApp and YouTube, have significantly transformed political communication by providing spaces where political actors, journalists and citizens interact in real time. In the context of Nigeria, social media has become a crucial tool for political engagement, allowing users to voice concerns, mobilise support and challenge authorities. However, its role in amplifying political crises and power tussles remains a subject of scholarly debate. According to Olorunyomi and Ojebuyi (2021), social media serves as both an enabler and an amplifier of political crises. On the one hand, it promotes democratic participation by giving citizens access to diverse political perspectives. On the other hand, it promotes political polarisation by creating echo chambers where individuals are exposed only to information that aligns with their pre-existing biases. The authors argue that social media's algorithm driven content plays a significant role in shaping public perception, often favouring sensational and conflict laden narratives that escalate political tensions. This is in alignment with the view that digital platforms prioritise engagement metrics over accuracy, thereby reinforcing political divisions and deepening crises.

Similarly, Adegbola and Gearhart (2019) assert that the decentralised nature of social media makes it an attractive tool for political actors seeking to manipulate public discourse. Politicians and interest groups exploit these platforms to spread propaganda, misinformation and disinformation, especially during elections and governance disputes. The ability to instantly reach large audiences enables the rapid amplification of political conflicts, sometimes leading to real-world consequences such as protests and violence. This phenomenon was evident in the #EndSARS movement, where social media played a critical role in shaping public outrage and government responses. Their study highlights the dual nature of social media, serving as both a vehicle for political activism and a catalyst for instability. Furthermore, Ibrahim and Adamu (2022) highlight the challenge of digital disinformation in the Nigerian political landscape. They note that social media users often struggle to differentiate between factual news and fabricated content, making them susceptible to political manipulation. The proliferation of false narratives often spread through coordinated networks of influencers and automated bots, fuels distrust in traditional media and state institutions. This contributes to an environment where political crises escalate rapidly, as misinformation fuels public anger and heightens political tensions. The authors call for improved digital literacy and regulatory mechanisms to curb the harmful effects of social media amplification of political crises.

Social media platforms have been identified as platforms that promote political awareness, elevate perspectives, impact election results and influence political communication in greater dimensions (Puri, 2024). The essence of the foregoing is that the platforms are useful tools in the modern-day political sphere. This is made possible due to the highly interactive nature of the platforms in addition to the ease-of-access and use. Despite the usefulness of social media platforms, they are considered as polarising platforms (Arora et al., 2022; Kubin & von Sikorski, 2021; Qureshi & Bhatt, 2024). According to Qureshi et al (2020), social media enable marginalised voices but also engender agenda-setting and flaming, influencing public opinion and exacerbating polarisation in greater dimensions. Furthermore, the

different perspectives considered above suggest that while social media enhances political participation, it also poses significant challenges to political stability in Nigeria. Social media's amplification of political crises and power struggles stem from algorithmic biases, the spread of misinformation and the strategic manipulation of narratives by political actors.

## 2.2. Political Crisis and Power Tussles in Nigeria

Political crises and power tussles are inherent in governance, particularly in democratising states such as Nigeria. These conflicts often manifest as struggles for political control, electoral disputes, and governance disagreements, sometimes escalating into violence and prolonged instability. The amplification of these issues through social media has significantly reshaped political discourse, influencing public perception and participation. This review explores scholarly perspectives on political crises and power struggles in Nigeria, with a focus on their relationship with digital media. Political crises in Nigeria are often linked to electoral malpractices, ethnic and religious tensions, constitutional ambiguities, and governance failures. In addition, corruption has also been identified as a major enabler of political crisis in the country (Innocent & Shahid, 2024). Power tussles, on the other hand, involve conflicts among political elites, institutions, and factions vying for dominance. Scholars have examined these issues from multiple angles, highlighting their causes, manifestations, and consequences (Alabi, 2023; Ibok & Ogar, 2018; Igwe & Amadi, 2021).

Omodia (2012) argued that Nigeria's political instability is deeply rooted in elite competition and a lack of democratic consolidation. He asserts that power tussles often emerge due to weak political institutions and a winner-takes-all system, which fosters electoral violence and post-election disputes. The study highlights that political actors exploit ethnic and religious sentiments to mobilise support, exacerbating divisions. This aligns with the argument that social media platforms further amplify these tensions by providing a space for misinformation and propaganda. Omotola (2010) examined Nigeria's history of power struggles, linking them to its colonial legacy and post-independence political structures. He suggests that Nigeria's democracy remains fragile due to recurring elite conflicts and political manipulation. According to Omotola, media narratives – especially those amplified on digital platforms – play a significant role in shaping public perceptions of these struggles. The study underscores the role of social media in mobilising protests, such as the #EndSARS movement, which was framed as both a response to police brutality and an expression of dissatisfaction with governance failures.

## 2.3. The Role of Media in Political Crises

Media has a significant role to play in crises management particularly politics-related. On a general note, media's responsibilities during crises include providing coverage, ensuring objective and fair reportage and providing accurate information about events. Okoro and Nwafor (2013) explored the relationship between media, particularly social media, and political crises in Nigeria. The researchers argued that while traditional media have historically shaped political narratives, social media now plays an even more significant role in amplifying political disputes. Their study suggests that digital platforms serve as both a space for civic engagement and a tool for political propaganda, sometimes exacerbating tensions through fake news and hate speech. The researchers warned that unregulated digital discourse can escalate power struggles into full-blown political crises.

During crises situations, manipulation of information and disinformation increase leading to a situation of information disorder. To stem the tide and prevent series of devastating impact, the need to prevent such information disorder becomes pressing. It is on this note that professionalism is required, and media practitioners asked to step in to ensure dissemination of accurate information (Engblom, 2021). Objective reportage of crisis has been the main emphasis in respect of its role in conflict management – however, the challenge is that certain factors often prevent this situation as religious affiliation, ownership structure, political leaning, mission of the organisation and location are hindrances to taking a firm and objective stance (Galadima, as cited in Adediran, 2023). In reality, media framing of crisis also has a significant role as it helps shape public perception of political instability and also influences policy development not just in Nigeria but across the West African region (Innocent & Shahid, 2024).

As seen in the study conducted by Innocent and Shahid (2024) corruption frame, conflict and violence frame, international intervention frame, and human frames are pattern of framing crisis in the Nigerian media landscape. In respect of the frame that pertain to corruption, the study showed that political crisis situations are frame as direct consequence of governmental corruption that is endemic in Nigeria. Conflict and violence frames emphasise violent aspects of political instability with specific focus that provide highlights to graphic details. Reference was made to the EndSARS events and the gory images from the scenes of the protests. International intervention frames relate to the dimensions where media through frames emphasise the need for necessity for international intervention particularly in acute political instability. Finally, the study showed that human right frames are also prominent in media reportage as human right abuses are highlighted during political crises.

In the digital technology era, the role of media in conflict management is changing on account of unhindered access to information and the lack of gate keeping across the various social media platforms. Through the spread of

fake news and falsehood, social media can be used to promote socio-political crisis as seen in several situations in Nigeria (Inobemhe et al., 2020). Nevertheless, social media have also been identified as important tools for urgent information dissemination (Oni & Peter, 2022). Platforms are important in general crisis management in modern times (Alshaikh, 2019). In essence, social media are a force for good in crisis as seen in some situations in Lagos, Nigeria. Aside their use in information access, social media have also been found to be useful in enhancing public health information as seen in the COVID-19 pandemic from a political perspective (Reveilhac, 2022).

#### **2.4. Political Power Struggles and Democratic Sustainability**

Political power struggles are real in political sphere where people are continually in a form of perpetual struggle for relevance and dominance. There are several other different dimensions to the political power struggle. Accordingly, Agbude et al. (2015) examined power struggles in Nigeria from a governance perspective, highlighting how intra-party conflicts, election disputes, and institutional weaknesses contribute to recurring political crises. Furthermore, the researchers argued that the use of digital media in political battles has intensified factionalism, with online discourse often shaping narratives in ways that undermine democratic stability. The study calls for strategic regulatory measures to balance free expression with national security. According to Adedeji and Osanyinbi (2016), political and democratic stability can be achieved in a nation such as Nigeria through certain elements with socio-political, cultural and religious implications. The researchers specifically alluded to factors in form of religious dialogue, reconciliation and tolerance, patriotism, political understanding, leadership critical thinking, qualitative education, trustful faith in God and prayer among others.

Conclusively, the spirit openness, reconciliation and players are critical keys required to eradicate national vices and achieve a sane country. The implication of the foregoing is that even in the face of political power struggles, series of activities can be undertaken by the citizens to ensure that the gains of democracy are sustained over time. Intrigues of different dimensions are frequently seen in Nigeria political sphere. One of the latest occurrences and most vicious is that of the power tussle and control of Rivers state (Godwin, 2024) that eventually culminated in a declaration of the state of emergency (Eboh, 2025; Olaoluwa & Kupemba, 2025; Odusote, 2025; Weldone, 2025). Political power and authority have intricate link that is considered as the connecting point (Adagbabiri, 2019). These scholarly perspectives collectively highlight the deep-rooted nature of political crises and power tussles in Nigeria. While traditional governance structures and elite struggles remain primary drivers, the amplification of these issues via social media has further complicated the space. The studies reviewed emphasise the need for stronger democratic institutions, responsible media usage and regulatory policies to manage the effects of digital amplification on political stability.

#### **2.5. Empirical Review**

Social media studies are dominating academic discourse and research in recent times owing to the surge in the popularity and acceptance of the various platforms considered as highly interactive human communication channels. Studies that explored the adoption and use of social media in the political sphere are reviewed in this section. A study by Jacobsen and Larsson (2024) was conducted to ascertain the virality of social media posts in Norway and Sweden. The researchers relied on mapping of the viral posts using a computational approach. In essence, the researchers conducted computational test of the data collected from social media platforms. Findings of the study revealed that substantial engagement was observed in relations to Twitter (now X) posts that pertain to criticisms and self-promotion was mainly the ideology behind Instagram posts.

Furthermore, Jacobsen and Larsson's (2024) study also showed that varied communication strategies were adopted on Facebook as popular posts were basically with different engagement approach. The implication is that across the different social media environments, nuanced approaches to engagement were explored. The finding on the posts on criticisms were seen to go viral is an indication that platforms thrive on negative narratives and bad news and related crisis situations. The study is similar to this one based on the focus on social media environment but differs in geographical scope. Whereas the study under review was set in European countries of Norway and Finland, this current study's focus is Nigeria, a country in the African continent. This takes on cross-cultural context in the use of such platforms for various purposes including information-seeking and discourse particularly conflict and crisis-related aspects.

Olaniran and Williams (2020) conducted a study to determine the effects of social media civic engagement and democracy. The researchers showed that social media are considered as platforms that provides equalising grounds for disenfranchised persons without a voice in society. These platforms are also considered as change agents due to the way users can access and lend their voices to a cause. However, the researchers also demonstrated that despite these important roles of social media in some societies, the platforms have evolved into tools for propaganda and fake news in others. Additionally, the platforms amplify disruptive messages and ideologies thereby providing platforms for voices that uphold disruption of societies. Researchers concluded that social media platforms such as Facebook, Google and X (formerly Twitter) may provide grounds to alter civic engagement creating opportunities to hijack

democracy through the influence on individuals to act in certain ways. This also stems from the use of the platforms for social and political mobilisation as seen in earlier studies (Inobemhe & Santas, 2022; Inobemhe et al., 2024).

Crisis time political communication was the focus of another study by Komodromos (2015) wherein the researcher made attempt to understand the role of social media as platforms used by politicians and members of parliaments (MPs) to engage with citizens in times of crisis or political change in Cyprus. The researcher relied on the qualitative data gathering techniques as in-depth interviews were utilised. Purposive sampling was used to select nineteen (19) MPs with who the researcher conducted in-depth interviews either in person or through telephone. While thirteen agreed to take part in the study, six reportedly declined. Accordingly, findings showed that social media is used by many MPs to engage the public and in the process promote engagement, dialogue and involvement in the electoral and governance process. Generally, the researcher showed that social media is a veritable tool for political communication. This is an indication that the platforms can be used for dialogue in respect of political matters and discourse particularly in times of crisis in Cyprus. The study is similar to the current one based on the focus on using social media for political discourse. However, the difference is in geographical scope.

A study conducted by Shadrach and Apuke (2020) was conducted to ascertain the effectiveness of social media use in relations to political dialogue in Nigeria. The researchers relied on quantitative data gathering methods to gauge the perceptions of 300 respondents across various institutions of higher learning in Taraba State located in the North of Nigeria. Findings from the field survey demonstrated that among Nigerians, there is a predominant use of social media platforms particularly Twitter and Facebook for political discourse. It also revealed that the discourse across the two platforms lack objectivity and somewhat characterised by hate speech, attacks and counterattacks in ways that depict political, religious and ethnic biases from amongst users. Furthermore, the study showed that the leaders rarely react to the citizens across platforms despite exposing them to political messages on social media. The researchers concluded that effective two-way communication has not been created on social media in respect of political communication. This study is similar to the current one based on methodology and focus on the use of social media for political discourse but differs in the specific geographical scope.

## 2.6. Theoretical Framework

Theoretical framework for this study is based on the agenda setting theory and framing theory. The agenda-setting theory is based on Maxwell McCombs & Donald Shaw (1972) which explains how the media influences public perception by determining which issues are highlighted. In the context of social media, agenda-setting plays a crucial role in amplifying political crises and power struggles. Users are exposed to specific narratives, trending discussions, and viral content, which shape their understanding of political events. Social media platforms, through algorithms and user engagement, set the agenda by prioritising certain topics, leading to heightened political tensions and public reactions. The theory is applied to this study to examine how social media platforms frame political crises and power tussles, assessing whether users perceive social media as influencing their opinions on political conflicts and investigating the extent to which trending topics and hashtags impact public discourse.

Framing theory propounded by Erving Goffman (1974) and later expanded by Entman (1993) explains how information is presented and interpreted. It suggests that the way news and political discussions are framed influences how people perceive and react to events. Social media platforms allow political actors, influencers, and users to frame crises and power struggles in specific ways, often shaping public sentiment. This can lead to either constructive engagement or heightened political polarisation. The application of this theory to the study is to help analyse the framing techniques used by politicians, activists, and media houses on social media, investigating how different user groups (e.g., supporters of opposing political parties) interpret the same political crisis differently based on framing and assessing whether framing on social media escalates or de-escalates political tensions. These two theories provide a solid foundation for exploring how social media amplifies political crises and power struggles in Nigeria, shaping users' perceptions and engagement with political discourse.

## 3. Materials and Methods

This study adopted a descriptive survey research design to gauge users' perceptions of how social media platforms amplify political crisis and power tussle discourse in the Nigerian political sphere. Accordingly, data collection was based on the use of a structured questionnaire that was administered online to 384 students and non-student residents of Lagos state. This sample was taken from the 13,491,800 population of the state using the Cochran sample determination formula provided as:

$$\text{Eq. 1. } \frac{Nz^2(p)(1-p)}{Ne^2 + Z^2(p)(1-p)}$$

Whereas the confidence level (Z-Score) was put at 95%, the margin of error was 0.5 while 0.5 was the proportion of the population.

A multistage sampling was adopted for this study. In the first stage, the researchers relied on simple random sampling to select Lagos state among the six in the Southwest geopolitical zone of Nigeria. The second stage involved the use of the purposive sampling technique to select Oshodi/Isolo Local Government Area of the state due to its central location and by virtue of its strategic place in the scheme of things in Lagos. The third stage also involved the use of purposive sampling to identify students and individuals' good knowledge of social media usage to participate in the study. Nevertheless, the researchers avoided leading questions and so made attempt to avoid bias in the study. In respect of ethical consideration, the researchers were informed about the data gathering procedures and inundated with what the research goals, problems, and questions were all about. In addition, their consent to willingly participate in the study was sought and duly obtained. They were duly informed that their data is fully confidential, and their anonymity guaranteed through the ethical consideration of confidentiality of source or participant in research. Information on the right to withdraw from the study at any point in time was also provided to the participants. Online surveys were created using Google Forms and distributed to purposively selected WhatsApp groups of students, political parties and clubs in the area. At the close of the window for data collection, the survey received 328 valid responses from the survey respondents. This puts the valid response rate of the study at 85.4 percent. Data collected was subjected to analysis using frequencies, standard deviation and mean to determine the trends, patterns and variations of perceptions of the public on the matter of enquiry. Variables were coded accordingly with numbers 5-1 and analysed using the SPSS-21 software.

## 4. Results

**Table 1.** Result of Demography Profile of Respondent

Demography	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Female	218	66.5
	Male	110	33.5
Age	18-30	164	50
	31-45	98	29.9
	46-55	33	10.1
	56 and above	33	10.1
	Christianity	141	43
Religion	Indifferent	79	24.1
	Islam	83	25.3
	Others	25	7.6
Education	HND/BSc	88	26.8
	MSc/above	32	9.8
	ND/NCE	96	29.3
	No formal education	64	19.5
	SSCE/GCE	48	14.6

Table 1 provides a detailed overview of the demographic profile of the respondents involved in the study. In terms of gender distribution, most respondents were female, accounting for 218 individuals or 66.5% of the sample, while males comprised 110 respondents or 33.5%. This suggests a gender imbalance in the sample, possibly reflecting the workforce composition in the studied organization or region. Age-wise, half of the respondents (50%) were between 18 and 30 years old, indicating a youthful population that may be more open to change and innovation. Respondents aged 31 to 45 made up 29.9%, those aged 46 to 55 constituted 10.1%, and individuals aged 56 and above also represented 10.1%. This distribution shows that while younger individuals dominate the sample, there is still a reasonable representation from older and more experienced age groups, offering a range of perspectives.

Regarding religious affiliation, Christianity emerged as the most common religion among respondents, with 141 individuals (43%). This was followed by Islam at 25.3% (83 respondents), and a notable 24.1% (79 respondents) who identified as indifferent to religion. An additional 7.6% (25 respondents) reported adherence to other religions. This mix of religious identities reflects a diverse population and may influence attitudes toward organizational policies or reforms. Educational qualifications among respondents were varied. The largest group held a National Diploma (ND) or National Certificate in Education (NCE), representing 29.3% (96 respondents). This was closely followed by those with Higher National Diploma (HND) or Bachelor of Science degrees (BSc), who made up 26.8% (88 respondents). Interestingly, a significant proportion of respondents—19.5% (64 individuals)—reported having no formal education, which could have implications for how they perceive and adapt to organizational changes.

Meanwhile, 14.6% (48 respondents) had Senior Secondary School Certificate (SSCE/GCE), and only 9.8% (32 respondents) possessed postgraduate qualifications (MSc or above), indicating limited representation of highly advanced academic backgrounds. Thus, the demographic data reveals a predominantly young, female, and educationally diverse respondent group with varying religious affiliations. These characteristics are essential for understanding the respondents' viewpoints and for interpreting the study's findings within the broader context of organizational behavior, restructuring, and human resource practices. The implication of data on educational attainment of respondents is that they have the requisite education qualification to understand the language used in the survey and can provide valid responses.

**Table 2.** Result of Most frequently used social media platforms

Social Media Platform(s)	Frequency	Percentage
Facebook	148	45.1
Instagram	4	1.2
TikTok	8	2.4
WhatsApp	12	3.7
X/Twitter	153	46.6
YouTube	3	.9
Total	328	100.0

Table 2 presents data on the most frequently used social media platforms among the respondents. The findings show that X (formerly Twitter) is the most used platform, with 153 respondents (46.6%) indicating it as their preferred or most frequently accessed social media channel. Closely following is Facebook, used by 148 respondents (45.1%), highlighting the strong dominance of these two platforms in the social media habits of the participants. Other platforms were far less frequently used. WhatsApp was chosen by 12 respondents (3.7%), followed by TikTok with 8 respondents (2.4%), and Instagram with just 4 respondents (1.2%). YouTube was the least utilized platform, selected by only 3 respondents (0.9%). Overall, the data suggests a heavy reliance on X/Twitter and Facebook, which together account for over 90% of social media usage among the sample. The comparatively low usage of visual and video-based platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube may indicate preferences for text-based communication, information sharing, or networking. These insights are crucial for tailoring communication strategies, public outreach, and digital engagement initiatives within the target population.

**Table 3.** Result of most significant social media platform to spread of discourse and information on political crises and power struggles in Nigeria

Social Media Platform	Frequency	Percentage
Facebook	40	12.2
TikTok	6	1.8
WhatsApp	7	2.1
X/Twitter	259	79.0
YouTube	16	4.9
Total	328	100.0

Table 3 highlights the social media platforms identified by respondents as the most significant for spreading discourse and information related to political crises and power struggles in Nigeria. The overwhelming majority of respondents—259 individuals, representing 79.0%—selected X (formerly Twitter) as the leading platform for such discussions. This underscores the platform's central role in political communication, activism, and real-time information dissemination in the Nigerian digital landscape. Facebook was the second most cited platform, though by a much smaller margin, with 40 respondents (12.2%) indicating it as significant in political discourse. YouTube followed with 16 respondents (4.9%), suggesting its use for longer-form political content such as documentaries, interviews, and opinion pieces.

Other platforms like WhatsApp and TikTok were mentioned by a very small number of respondents—7 (2.1%) and 6 (1.8%) respectively—indicating that while they may support some level of political content sharing, they are not perceived as central to political dialogue or the spread of information on power struggles. Overall, the data clearly positions X/Twitter as the dominant platform for political discourse in Nigeria, likely due to its real-time nature, viral potential, and appeal to politically engaged users, activists, and thought leaders. This insight is critical for understanding how political narratives are shaped and propagated online, as well as for strategizing political communication and engagement.



**Table 4.** Result of main content in political crises discourse

Parameter	Frequency	Percentage
Live discussions [Facebook] Live YouTube etc.	51	15.5
Memes	154	47.0
News article	26	7.9
User posts and comments	52	15.9
Videos	45	13.7
Total	328	100.0

Table 4 presents an analysis of the main types of content involved in the discourse surrounding political crises in Nigeria, as shared and consumed on social media platforms. The data reveals that memes are the most prominent form of content, cited by 154 respondents (47.0%). This suggests that humor, satire, and visual storytelling play a significant role in how political messages and critiques are communicated and absorbed, especially among younger or digitally savvy audiences. User posts and comments ranked next, with 52 respondents (15.9%) indicating them as key elements in political discussions. This reflects the participatory nature of social media, where users not only consume content but actively contribute to shaping political narratives through opinions, debates, and interactions.

Live discussions, including those hosted on platforms like Facebook Live and YouTube Live, were selected by 51 respondents (15.5%). These formats offer real-time engagement and interactive dialogue, making them important tools for political commentary, public mobilization, and information exchange during unfolding events. Videos, cited by 45 respondents (13.7%), also represent a significant content type, likely including short clips, vlogs, or edited footage that provide context, updates, or analysis on political matters. Meanwhile, news articles were chosen by only 26 respondents (7.9%), suggesting that traditional journalistic formats are less favored or less impactful in social media-driven political conversations. Thus, the data highlights a shift toward informal, user-driven, and multimedia content—especially memes and comments—as dominant forces in political discourse on social media. These findings emphasize the importance of visual and interactive formats in shaping public opinion and spreading information during political crises.

**Table 5.** Result of saw post or discussions about political crises and power tussle on social media platforms.

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Frequently	83	25.3
Never	43	13.1
Occasionally	12	3.7
Rarely	44	13.4
Very frequently	146	44.5
Total	328	100.0

Table 5 provides insights into how often respondents encountered posts or discussions about political crises and power tussles on social media platforms. The data indicates that a significant portion of the participants are regularly exposed to such content. Specifically, 146 respondents (44.5%) reported seeing these discussions very frequently, while another 83 respondents (25.3%) indicated that they frequently encountered such posts. Combined, this means that nearly 70% of respondents are regularly exposed to political discourse on social media. On the other hand, 44 respondents (13.4%) stated they rarely came across such content, while 43 respondents (13.1%) claimed they never saw any posts or discussions related to political crises or power struggles. Only 12 respondents (3.7%) reported encountering this type of content occasionally, making it the least selected category. These findings highlight the pervasive nature of political content on social media in Nigeria, with most users being routinely exposed to discussions surrounding political instability and power dynamics. This high level of exposure may influence public opinion, engagement with political issues, and the overall sociopolitical atmosphere in the digital space.

**Table 6.** Result of impact of social media in shaping public opinion on political crises in Nigeria

Category	Frequency	Percentage
High	114	34.8
Low	18	5.5
Moderate	45	13.7
Very high	151	46.0
Total	328	100.0

Table 6 explores the perceived impact of social media in shaping public opinion on political crises in Nigeria. The responses overwhelmingly affirm the significant influence social media has in this context. A majority of respondents—151 individuals (46.0%)—believe that social media has a very high impact on shaping public opinion. This is closely followed by 114 respondents (34.8%) who rated the impact as high. Combined, over 80% of respondents recognize social media as a powerful force in influencing political perceptions and narratives. A smaller proportion of respondents—45 individuals (13.7%)—viewed the impact as moderate, suggesting that while they acknowledge its role, they may believe other factors such as traditional media or real-world political events play a more substantial part. Only 18 respondents (5.5%) felt that social media has a low impact on public opinion regarding political crises, indicating minimal skepticism about its influence. Overall, the data strongly suggests that social media is widely regarded as a critical platform for shaping political discourse and public sentiment in Nigeria. Its reach, immediacy, and interactive nature make it a powerful tool in influencing how citizens perceive political events, actors, and power struggles.

**Table 7.** Result of speed of information dissemination contributes most to the effectiveness of social media in amplifying political crises and power tussles

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Influence of opinion leaders/influencers	54	16.5
Speed of information dissemination	162	49.4
Unregulated user-generated content	6	1.8
Wide audience reach	106	32.3
Total	328	100.0

Table 7 examines the factors contributing most to the effectiveness of social media in amplifying political crises and power tussles in Nigeria. The findings reveal that the speed of information dissemination is considered the most critical factor, with 162 respondents (49.4%) identifying it as the primary reason social media is so effective in this context. This reflects the real-time nature of social media, where news, opinions, and events can be shared and go viral within moments, rapidly influencing public perception and escalating political tensions. The second most significant factor is wide audience reach, cited by 106 respondents (32.3%). This indicates that the expansive and interconnected nature of social media platforms enables political content to reach large and diverse groups across different demographics, amplifying its impact and visibility. Influence of opinion leaders and influencers was selected by 54 respondents (16.5%), suggesting that while influential voices play an important role in shaping narratives, they are less central than the platform's structural capabilities, such as speed and reach. Only 6 respondents (1.8%) pointed to unregulated user-generated content as the key factor. Although this element can contribute to the spread of misinformation or emotional content, it appears to be perceived as a secondary influence in comparison to the broader structural and social mechanisms of social media. In summary, the data underscores that the rapid dissemination of information, coupled with the massive reach of social media platforms, are the main drivers behind their power to amplify political discourse and conflict in Nigeria.

**Table 8.** Result of fake news or misinformation in respect of political crises circulates on social media

Parameter	Frequency	Percentage
Agree	105	32.0
Disagree	18	5.5
Strongly agree	169	51.5
Strongly disagree	18	5.5
Undecided	18	5.5
Total	328	100.0

Table 8 explores respondents' perceptions regarding the circulation of fake news or misinformation related to political crises on social media platforms. Most participants express strong concern about this issue, with 169 respondents (51.5%) indicating that they strongly agree that fake news or misinformation circulates widely during political crises. An additional 105 respondents (32.0%) also agree, reinforcing the belief that misinformation is a significant problem in the digital political space. A small proportion of respondents—18 individuals each (5.5%)—disagree, strongly disagree, or are undecided about the prevalence of fake news in this context. This suggests that while a very small minority may not perceive misinformation as a major issue, there is overwhelming consensus among the vast majority that social media is a fertile ground for the spread of false or misleading political content. These findings highlight a critical concern in the digital era: while social media enhances access to information and facilitates political engagement, it also presents serious challenges related to credibility, manipulation, and public trust. The widespread

agreement on the presence of misinformation underscores the need for stronger content moderation, digital literacy initiatives, and fact-checking mechanisms to mitigate its harmful effects.

**Table 9.** Result of hateful speeches and comments happen to be the most significant negative effect of social media amplification of political crises

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Division among citizens	49	14.9
Hateful speeches and comments	141	43.0
Increase in political tension and violence	2	.6
Manipulation by political actors	44	13.4
Spread of fake news and misinformation	92	28.0
Total	328	100.0

Table 9 identifies the most significant negative effects of social media amplification of political crises, based on respondents' views. The leading concern, as indicated by 141 respondents (43.0%), is the rise of hateful speeches and comments. This suggests that the emotionally charged and often anonymous nature of social media encourages hostility, abuse, and inflammatory rhetoric during political tensions, which can deepen divisions and incite unrest. The spread of fake news and misinformation was the second most cited negative effect, with 92 respondents (28.0%) acknowledging its role in distorting facts, misleading the public, and fueling confusion during crises. This aligns with earlier findings (Table 8), reinforcing misinformation as a recurring and serious issue. Division among citizens was identified by 49 respondents (14.9%), reflecting how polarizing narratives and online echo chambers contribute to societal fragmentation along political, ethnic, or ideological lines. Similarly, manipulation by political actors, selected by 44 respondents (13.4%), points to the strategic use of social media by politicians or interest groups to push propaganda, suppress dissent, or sway public opinion. Interestingly, only 2 respondents (0.6%) indicated that increase in political tension and violence was the most significant effect, possibly because it is viewed as a consequence of the other more direct issues like hate speech and misinformation, rather than a standalone outcome. Overall, the data underscores that while social media plays a powerful role in political communication, it also fosters harmful dynamics—especially in the form of hateful rhetoric, misinformation, and social division—that can intensify political crises and undermine democratic discourse.

**Table 10.** Result of digital literacy campaigns to mitigate the negative effects of social media amplification of political crises in Nigeria's political sphere.

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Digital literacy campaigns	192	58.5
Encouraging responsible social media usage	2	.6
Fact-checking initiatives	128	39.0
Stronger regulation of political content	4	1.2
Stronger social media regulations	2	.6
Total	328	100.0

Table 10 presents respondents' perspectives on the most effective solutions to mitigate the negative effects of social media amplification in Nigeria's political sphere. Most participants—192 respondents (58.5%)—identified digital literacy campaigns as the most impactful approach. This underscores a strong belief in the need to educate citizens on how to critically assess information, recognize misinformation, and engage responsibly with political content online. The second most supported measure was fact-checking initiatives, selected by 128 respondents (39.0%). This highlights the value placed on transparent, real-time verification of claims made on social media to combat the spread of fake news and politically motivated falsehoods. Other proposed measures received minimal support. Only 4 respondents (1.2%) favored stronger regulation of political content, while encouraging responsible social media usage and stronger social media regulations were each chosen by just 2 respondents (0.6%). This suggests that the public may be wary of overregulation or censorship, instead preferring empowerment through education and tools that enhance critical thinking and information verification. Thus, the data strongly supports the view that empowering users through digital literacy and fact-checking mechanisms is the most trusted path toward reducing the harmful effects of social media on Nigeria's political landscape, rather than relying on restrictive or punitive measures.

## 5. Discussion

This study was conducted to gauge perceptions of members of the public who are users of social media in respect of the amplification of political crises and power tussle discourse across the various platforms. Regarding the first research question, which concerns the social media platforms amplifying political crises, survey findings indicate that X (formerly Twitter) and Facebook are prominent, with X showing higher engagement levels and the most utilised among various other social media platforms. As seen in table 2, 46.6 percent share the opinion that X is mostly utilised while 45.1 percent are of the notion that Facebook is the platform that is most utilised for such discourse. The implication of the foregoing is that X, a micro-blogging platform generates the greater buzz particularly as it pertains to political crises and power tussle in Nigeria. A study conducted by Obona et al (2024) also demonstrated that social media often turn a war zone of some sort for political parties in Nigeria.

Another significant result of note from data gathered in the field survey is that memes happened to be the most encountered content in which the political crisis and political crisis in Nigeria is depicted. Table 4 data show that 47.0 percent respondents alluded to the notion that they mostly encountered memes that depicts such situations of tussles and crisis in the political domain. Additionally, data also revealed that contents such as live discussions on Facebook Live, YouTube Live, new articles, user posts and comments and videos are some other content types that relate to political crises and power tussles often encountered on social media platforms. Such posts are also very frequently encountered across the platforms. The implication of this data is that there indeed content across social media platforms that portray political crisis and power tussle in Nigeria encountered by users of social media. This resonates with Johann (2022) that showed that memes can be used as a form of political expression. Similar studies also showed that different content types including memes on social media platforms are used to demonstrate political expressions including crisis (Agbo, 2018; ALAfnan, 2025; Miller & Jiang, 2025).

In respect of the effectiveness of the platforms, data from the survey also show that social has high impact in shaping public opinion on political crises and power tussle discourse in Nigeria. Data in table 6 show that 46.0 percent respondents took the position that it is very high. Furthermore, data in table 7 also show that speed of information dissemination occasioned by the social media phenomenon is the factor that contributes most to the effectiveness of platforms in amplifying political crises and power tussle in Nigeria. In agreement with the findings on the role of social media in shaping public opinion, various researchers have also established that platforms have significant impact in that regard (Anju, 2024; Ausat, 2023; Ishrat, 2023). Furthermore, the result on the speed of information dissemination of social media as being a factor in amplification of political crisis and power tussle discourse in Nigeria resonates with findings from a study conducted by Oyighan and Okwu (2024) that showed that speed of information-dissemination is associated with platforms. This also aligns with the construct of agenda setting theory.

Findings of this study's survey presented in table 8 also demonstrated that majority of respondents have encountered fake news or misinformation regarding political crises and political tussle on social media platforms. Hate speeches and comments happened to be the most significant negative effect of social media amplification of political crises and power tussle. Relatedly, data in table 9 also showed that spread of fake news and misinformation, division among citizens, manipulation by political actors, and increase in political tensions are also significant negative effects of social media amplification of political crisis. The result on hate speeches and comments being the most significant negative consequences resonates with earlier studies such as the one by Jimada (2023) where findings indicated that social media are harbinger of harmful content as hate and misinformation found them as safe spaces during the political campaigns in the 2023 Nigeria's election. Comments and posts were framed in ways that depicted abuse of oppositions validating the assumption of framing theory.

Data from the survey also show that there are ways to mitigate the negative effect of social media amplification of political crises. As presented in table 10, data demonstrate that digital literacy campaign is the best way. However, results also reveal that fact-checking initiatives (39.0%), stronger regulation of political content (1.2%), encouraging responsible social media usage (.6%), and stronger social media regulations (.6%) are also significant approaches that could mitigate the negative effects of social media amplification of political crises and power tussle in Nigeria's polity. The result on the use of digital literacy resonates with earlier studies that demonstrated that digital literacy is one of the ways to counter and address several negatives seen across various social media platforms (Arafah & Hasyim, 2023; Isnaini et al., 2025).

## 6. Conclusions

The study highlights that citizens are often exposed to information about political crises and power struggles through social media platforms, with X (formerly Twitter) and Facebook being the most prominent for such content. These platforms, therefore, act as rapid channels for disseminating information. Based on the study's findings, especially the prevalence of fake news and misinformation on social media, it concludes that the role of social media in the contemporary political sphere is a "double-edged sword," encompassing both positive and negative dimensions. On one hand, these platforms are useful for sharing political information and fostering productive political discourse. On

the other hand, they serve as polarizing tools in the political domain by amplifying hate speech and divisive comments, particularly during political crises and power struggles. In light of these findings, the researchers recommend promoting digital literacy among users to help them understand the polarizing nature of social media platforms and encourage more mindful sharing and commenting. Additionally, they emphasize the importance of fact-checking to ensure users verify information before spreading it, thus preventing the amplification of misinformation. Lastly, fostering responsible and respectful use of social media is essential to reducing the spread of fake news and misinformation—factors that contribute to political crises and polarization. Addressing these issues could help mitigate the negative effects of social media in political discourse.

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