

Military Social Media use and Conflict Communication in Nigeria

UWALAKA, Temple, PhD

Department of Arts and Communication
University of Canberra, Canberra, Australia

NWALA, Bigman, PhD

English and Communication Studies
Ignatius Ajuru University of Education
Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria

Abstract

Contemporary war and conflict research have often centred on media representation and the relationship between the media and military actors. While this provides insights into the dynamics of contemporary war and conflict, these approaches to mediatised war and conflict fail to engage with how social media enables militaries to communicate directly to their target audience by circumventing legacy media. Consequently, this paper interrogates the military use of social media for national security communication. The discourse creates a research trajectory on Nigeria by investigating the themes from the Nigerian Military social media posts regarding their involvement and progress in the conflicts in Northern Nigeria. Using qualitative content analysis technique, this paper analysed 10,750 posts, comments, and tweets from the Defence Headquarters Nigeria (@DefenceinforNG) Facebook and Twitter pages. Findings showed that social media play a significant role on how the Nigerian Military communicates their involvement and progress in the conflicts in Northern Nigeria. Data further showed that the Nigerian military social media pages are used for deterrence and demoralisation of the insurgents as well as trust building with the Nigerian public. It was, therefore, recommended, among others, that Nigerian military increase their social media use in conflict communication.

Keywords: Social Media, Military Social Media, War Communication, Nigerian Military, Nigeria