Media, Fake News and Political Stability in Nigeria: An Appraisal of Perceptions and Attitudes of Journalists

CIBOH, Rodney S.

Department of Mass Communication, Benue State University, Makurdi

rodciboh
@gmail.com

UGONDO, Peter I.

Department of Mass Communication Kwararafa University, Wukari

peterugondo
@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This study undertakes a survey to establish Nigerian journalists' perceptions and attitudes to the problem of fake news and its potential for destructive and divisive effects on the country's political stability. A structured questionnaire was used to elicit information from 400 Journalists. Findings shows that fake news have become part of the global news network. Journalists in Benue state are much aware of this syndrome but are not insulated from it. The motives of money, political interest, desire to be popular and the rush to breaking news underscores the spread of fake news among journalists. The paper concludes that fake news can creep into the main line media (radio, television, newspapers and magazines) when the journalists are driven by the desire to stay ahead of others – make headlines and front pages, gather and submit stories to fulfil all righteous without close examination of the sources of such information and verification. When journalists allow politics, money and popularity drive their trade of serving public interest fake news will definitely dominate the air waves and news pages with colossal effect on political stability.

Key words: *Fake news, media, political instability, Journalism, Journalists.*

Introduction

The stability of democratic societies seems vulnerable to fake news. The situation calls to question the perception and attitude of journalists who are essential support players in democratic societies towards this social phenomenon. Fake news has become a defining characteristic of modern life, and is so pervasive and it has sadly, become the currency of politicians, reporters, corporate executives, and other power-brokers (Keyes, 2004). Journalists in particular, are not just bystanders watching an evolving avalanche of disinformation and misinformation but they find themselves in its pathway too (UNESCO, 2018).

Fake news is increasingly dominating the media content both mainline, online and social media (Agbese, 2017). The scenario seems likely to detract from the credibility which many place on popular news media (Ugwuanyi, 2017) and distort political stability of the country. It is a social phenomenon linked to misinformation and manipulation, and that has been facilitated by the rise of the Internet and online social media in recent years. Fake news is now viewed as one of the greatest threats to democracy, journalism, and freedom of expression. It has weakened public trust in governments and its potential impact on the contentious "Brexit" referendum and the equally divisive 2016 U.S. presidential election (Glasser, 2016).

Globally, public trust in the media has been in freefall. This 'implosion of trust' (Edelman 2017) has been observed in part in the migration of audiences from traditional news media (newspapers, TV and radio) to online and alternative news sources such as blogs, Twitter and Facebook. Ugwuanyi (2017) notes that the prevalence of fake news in Nigeria is high and most Nigerians see reports on popular online news platforms as credible.

However, fake news is not a new phenomenon. For *The Economist* (2018), it is as old as the newspaper industry. The first occurrence of fake news was reported in the 16th century. There was the 'Yellow Journalism' with its overtly concocted and sensational stories several decades ago (Ujah, 2018). But recently, it has surged back onto our radar screens, in the wake of the digital transformation of news from offline to online distribution and the rise of social media as a news distribution channel (Martens, Aguiar, Gomez-Herrera and Mueller-Langer, 2018). In this digital age, it is hardly surprising that people easily put their messages – in text, audio or video – online and for the whole world to see. In their exploitation of the communication opportunities provided by the Internet, disinformation and fake news have become part of the global news network.

In Nigeria, fake news according to Centre for Information Technology and Development (CITAD, 2018), is freely disseminated in both print and broadcast and widely spread in the social media. Since the turn of this century, the volume, frequency and acerbity of fake news has continued to grow, creating tension and diverting national attention from issues of common interest to divisive voices that is ready to tear the fabrics of the country (CITAD 2018).

Nigerian cyber space becomes the most favourable medium for spreading rumour and negative mobilization leading the country into more and more fractious politics.

The free flow of fake news in our society today is appalling. The basic danger in fake news is that it makes people doubt almost every news or information and this can be very destabilising to any society (Ujah, 2018). More worrisome is the fact that several news media were derided as fake for making the mistake of publishing unverified rumours and their editorial process exposed for low-level checks failure (Ojei, 2018).Falsehood is proliferating rapidly with countless photographs, opinions, and hours of footage published. While readers are overwhelmed by the flood of information, the older markers of veracity (respected publications, official sources) have not kept up, nor has there been a commensurate growth in the ability to counter false or fake news (Vasu, Ang, Anne-Teo, Jayakumar, Faizal & Ahuja, 2018). However, research attention towards examining the perception and attitudes of journalists towards fake news has not received much attention in the literature. There is therefore the need to examine the perception and attitudes of journalists towards this fake news.

Statement of the Problem

The role of the media in society is anchored on the principles of truth and accuracy, independence, fairness and impartiality. They manage through enterprise, wit, energy and intelligence to move close to the truth of the event and to shape their understanding into language and a form that can be understood by all (Ciboh, Iyorkyaa&Torwel, 2018). Thus, getting the facts right is the prime principle of journalism through which public trust is earned and public interest served. But today, fake news is a global epidemic and a threat to global peace and security, and a threat to democracy. It is a phenomenon capable of undermining confidence in the media and putting the society in trouble (Mohammed, 2018). This is contrary to the social responsibility of the media in setting high standards of professionalism, truth, accuracy and objectivity as well as avoiding the dissemination of materials that might lead to crime, violence or civil disorder.

From time immemorial, especially from the 20th century, news has always been a commodity vulnerable to manipulation in various guises: forgeries, manufactured facts strange to real facts, outright and cooked up falsehood dressed up as truth, etc (Agbese, 2017). Such forms of media practice were labelled as yellow or junk journalism. Today, falsehood is proliferating rapidly with countless photographs, opinions, and hours of footage published. While readers are overwhelmed by the flood of information, the older markers of veracity (respected publications, official sources) have not kept up, nor has there been a commensurate growth in the ability to counter false or fake news (Vasu, Ang, Anne-Teo, Jayakumar, Faizal & Ahuja, 2018). The situation is

compounded by the modern information gathering and disseminating system in this digital age.

Getting rid of fake news from the media particularly the main stream media of radio, television, newspapers and magazines is a task editors and reporters need to take seriously. Mainstream journalists need to identify and prevent fake news from getting into their publications. What would save a news medium from being used as a purveyor of fake news is a strict regime of fact checking by editors and reporters (Agbese, 2017). Inexamining fake news and political stability, there is need to focus on the content creators - the journalists - rather than news consumers. A focus on journalists' perception and attitude allows the determination of the media industry challenges and remedies to the spread of fake news that causes political instability. That is, how journalists perceive fake news, what is their attitude to it and what is the impact of fake news on political stability in Nigeria.

Against this backdrop, this study undertakes a national survey to examineNigerian journalists' perceptions and attitudes to the problem of fake news and of its potential for destructive and divisive effects on the country's political stability.It seeks to establish the perceptions and attitudes of journalists about the growing phenomenon of fake news; and the evolving innovative interventions by journalists thatwould address the complex challenges of fake news.

Objectives of the study
The study is guided by the following objectives
(i)   To determine the level of awareness and involvement of Journalists in fake the spread of fake news.
(ii) To identify the various forms of fake news prevalent among news media in Nigeria.
(iii) To find out the drives for fake news among journalists in Nigeria.
(iv) To establish the threats fake news poses to political stability in Nigeria.
(v) To identify possible remedies to the fake news challenge in Nigeria.

Scope of the study
Although the outlook of the study is national, it is delimited to registered journalists in Benue state, Nigeria. This delimitation however does not pose any threat to the findings of the study because all the key media institutions (both print and electronic) in Nigeria are represented in Benue state through establishment of offices and correspondents. Thus, the control of journalists through ownership, editorial policy and industry trade association (Nigerian Union of Journalists) ethical code is central and applicable to all across the states. Again, the scope does not indicate local or ethnic dimension since the journalists (especially correspondents) cut across ethnic and regional divide of the country. The industry tools and values are same in the country. Also, the

conditions and issues for the spread of fake news and its political implications are same across states of the federation.

Conceptual Clarification

Defining fake news is fraught with difficulties. The phrase is inherently vulnerable to being politicised and deployed as a weapon against the news industry, as a way of undermining reporting that people in power do not like (Wardle &Derakhshan, 2018). Reuters (2017) classifies the definitions of fake news into

i.   News that is made up or 'invented' to make money or discredit others;
ii.   News that has a basis in fact, but is 'spun' to suit a particular agenda; and
iii. News that people donot feel comfortable about or donot agree with

Similarly, the European Union High Level Expert Group (2018) defines fake news as disinformation that includes all forms of false, inaccurate, or misleading information designed, presented and promoted to intentionally cause public harm or for profit. The addition "for profit" includes commercial click-bait but the report explicitly excludes hate speech and satire. According to Alcott & Gentzkow (2017) fake news is intentionally and verifiably wrong or false news produced for the purpose of earning money and/or promoting ideologies.

The study however, considers fake news as either an unintentionally incorrect, such as a newspaper printing an erroneous fact and subsequently issuing a correction or an intentionally incorrect information. Thus, all forms of false, inaccurate, or misleading information are designed, presented and promoted to intentionally cause public harm as fake news.

Literature Review

Fake news is entails either an unintentionally incorrect, such as a newspaper printing an erroneous fact and subsequently issuing a correction or an intentionally incorrect information. Fake news is nothing new. According to Kaminska (2017) it began since at least the Roman times when Antony met Cleopatra. Octavian waged a propaganda campaign against Antony that was designed to smear his reputation. This took the form of "short, sharp slogans written upon coins in the style of archaic Tweets. These slogans painted Antony as a womaniser and a drunk, implying he had become Cleopatra's puppet, having been corrupted by his affair with her. Octavian became Augustus, the first Roman Emperor and "fake news had allowed Octavian to hack the republican system once and for all (Ireton &Posetti, 2018, p. 1)

The invention of the Gutenberg printing press in 1493 dramatically amplified the dissemination of disinformation and misinformation, and it ultimately delivered the first-large scale news hoax – 'The Great Moon Hoax' of 18355. The New York Sun published six articles about the discovery of life on the moon, complete with illustrations of humanoid bat-creatures

and bearded blue unicorns. Conflicts, regime change, and catastrophes then became markers for the dissemination of disinformation (Thornton, 2000).

From the 20th century, especially with the advent of radio and television, to the arrival of the internet in the late 20th century, followed by social media in the 21st century, dramatically multiplied the risks of misinformation, disinformation, propaganda and hoaxes. Similarly, Agbese (2018) says news has always been a commodity vulnerable to manipulation in various guises: forgeries, manufactured facts strange to real facts, outright and cooked up falsehood dressed up as truth, etc. In the 20th century yellow journalism was the curse of the news media. In the eighties we had a virulent new form of yellow journalism in Nigeria. We called it junk journalism.

But while the historical impact of fake news have been well documented, Wardle and Derakhshan (2017) argue that contemporary social technology has escalated the information pollution at a global scale with a complex web of motivations for creating, disseminating and consuming these 'polluted' messages; a myriad of content types and techniques for amplifying content; innumerable platforms hosting and reproducing this content; and breakneck speeds of communication between trusted peers.

However, the direct and indirect impacts of information pollution are difficult to quantify. Since the results of the 'Brexit' vote in the UK, Donald Trump's victory in the US and Kenya's recent decision to nullify its national election result, there has been much discussion of how fake news is influencing democracies. More concerning, however, are the long-term implications of disinformation campaigns designed specifically to sow mistrust and confusion and to sharpen existing sociocultural divisions using nationalistic, ethnic, racial and religious tensions (Wardle &Derakhshan, 2017, p. 4).

The problem of fake news according to Tambini (2017, p.19) is not in fact a single problem. It is several symptoms of the ongoing transformation of news and journalism and wider political and social changes. These require action, but not actions that are controlled by governments, because governments may succumb to the temptation to create media systems that suit their political interests. Fake news travels faster and further on social media sites. A narrow definition would be limited to verifiably false information. Fact-checking can expose false news items and identify the sources of these articles. Most empirical social science research on fake news follows this narrow definition because it requires an identifiable and well-defined set of false news articles and sources to measure the reach and impact of false news (Alcott & Gentzkow, 2017; Fletcher et al, 2018).

Fake news is threatening the very foundation of our national unity. According to Mohammed (2018), in Nigeria today, the hate being spewed on radio stations across the country is so alarming and detrimental to the unity and well - being of our country . Fake news is capable of destabilizing the system, inciting people to violence and weakening the people's confidence

in their government. The Minister of information cited a German newspaper description of this phenomenon that "for a society in which people are informed mainly through the media – and form their political opinions through it – this process is threatened when lies spread through the media . When it is no longer clear what is false and what is correct, people lose their confidence in the state ".

The Eagle Online (2018) reported that The British Broadcasting Corporation also raised concerns over what it called the "fake news" phenomenon and the possible impacts on the 2019 general elections in Nigeria. The news organization observed that there were instances when people faked the stories of BBC and other credible media organizations, and that the phenomenon had constituted a huge challenge globally, particularly in Africa and Nigeria, because of people's trust and belief in the social media. It therefore, advocated for increased standard of education and media literacy as a panacea for stemming the spread of fake news.

The BBC also observed that after the violence in Plateau state communities in 2018 that left more than 200 people dead in the country, fake pictures were circulated on social media which users falsely claim depict inter-communal violence inflamed tensions in Nigeria.A gruesome image of a woman facing down in a pool of blood with a gaping shoulder wound was purported to be from the attacks. It had hundreds of retweets on Twitter, but it first appeared on the internet in 2011 in a story about domestic violence in Nigeria. Another image appeared to show half a dozen people that were killed in the attacks. But on closer inspection, the picture was not taken in Nigeria, and was actually the scene of a 2015 traffic accident in the Dominican Republic (BBC, 2018).

 Since it is likely that more fake news stories will surface about the crisis, particularly in the run-up to next year's presidential election, The BBC (2018) provided five ways ofstopping the spread of misinformation:

i. Check the source: Fake social media accounts often try to appear as if they are from legitimate news sites, so check that every account you share information from is genuine. Verified accounts on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram have a blue tick.

ii. Look at multiple sources: Although this isn't foolproof, it's nonetheless worth checking multiple reputable new sources when trying to verify if what you're seeing is real. Ask yourself: Are trusted news outlets also reporting this information?

iii. Verification tools: There are dozens of tools online that can help determine the authenticity of a picture or a video. Google, Bing and Tin Eye all offer a reverse image search, which can tell you where images have been used before. Video verification is trickier, but tools like InVid allow you to select video from Facebook and YouTube to see if or where these videos have been used before.

iv. Check metadata: If you have an original video or picture, you can check

the metadata which will give you a wealth of information, including where and when the image or video was taken plus the device make and model. Unfortunately, when images and videos are uploaded to social media platforms their metadata is stripped out.

v. Think before you post: It sounds obvious, but be careful not to add to the problem of fake news. Before you post, ask yourself if you're sure the information you're about to post is real

Regarding the wide range of implications of fake news on political stability, and the responses of media organisations to fake news, most would agree that besides media organisations, journalists have an ethical obligation to serve the public interest by safe guarding political stability and make apositive contribution towards stemming the tide of fake news in the society. It is worth exploring the perception and attitude of journalists towards this growing phenomenon and establishing the industry-based actor strategies in curbing fake news.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on the Social Responsibility Theory of the mass media. The theory owes its origin to the Hutchins 1947 commission on freedom of the press (McQuail, 2005). But the first formal theory of social responsibility of the press was developed by Siebert,Peterson and Schramm (1956).One pivotal assumption of the theory is an emphasis on the media's responsibility to use its powerful position toensure appropriate delivery of information to audiences. It explains how media should ideally operate in a given system of social values and posits that the media must be free of government control but in exchange, must serve the public by maintaining the stability of the society (Baran, 2012). Accepting and fulfilling certain obligations to society, meeting these obligations by setting high standards of professionalism, truth, accuracy and objectivity as well as avoid disseminating materials that might lead to crime, violence or civil disorder are some of the core assumptions of the theory.

The concept of fake news, albeit inexplicitly, underscores the principles of socialresponsibility. This highlights the crucial role of the media in shapingpolitical stability by safe guarding the state against falsehood. It holds that political instability is predicated on misinformation or fake news. Therefore, if guided by these core assumptions or principles of the social responsibility theory, journalists are expected to disseminating information that would not engender political instability in the country.

More specifically, social responsibilityentails the necessity for the journalist to keep political stability as a top priority.Thus, social responsibilityin the context of booming fake news necessitates a survey of journalists' perception and attitude about social responsibility in the context of fake news. it highlights the participation of journalists in facilitating political instability and by

extension establish what policy measures they see as appropriate in stemming the growing tide of fake news in the society.

Methodology

This study employs survey to study perceptions and attitudes of Nigerian journalists about the growing phenomenon of fake news and its divisive effects on the country's socio-economic and political stability. A structured questionnaire was used to elicit information from the respondents. The population of the study is 453 registered journalists in Benue state (NUJ, 2018). This comprises journalists in the print and electronic media, ministry of information and correspondents. These correspondents are form online media, wire services, radio, television, newspapers and magazines.

Since the population size was manageable, there was no need to determine a sample size especially for a survey of perception and attitude of journalists towards the fake news phenomenon which seeks to employ the questionnaire as instrument for data collection. Accordingly, a questionnaire was constructed and administered through the Nigerian Union of Journalist (NUJ) Benue State Council office. The copies of the questionnaire were distributed according to the appropriate size of each chapel of the Benue State council of the NUJ. However, not all the copies of the questionnaire were filled and returned but about 90% return rate (400 copies of the questionnaire) was achieved.The 400 copies of the questionnaire administered were all retrieved and the result presented and discussed as follows.

Results and Discussion

To begin to discuss fake news and political instability in Nigeria from the perception and attitudes of journalists, we first established the level of awareness and involvement of journalists in the spread of fake news.

Fig. 1: Levels of awareness and involvement in fake news
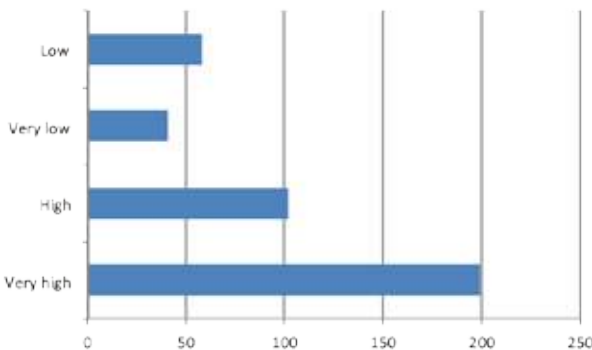
Source: Field Survey, 2018

It is clear that journalist's level of awareness and involvement in fake news is on the crescendo. Be it intentional or unintentional, those in the craft of news production are much aware that fake news exists. The journalists are also involved in its production and propagation. Although mostly considered as a social media phenomenon (Silverman, 2016), journalists working in mass media channels like radio, television, newspapers and magazines are also involved in fake news. Ideally, this ought not to be because the practitioners are trained professionals. Journalistic training nourishes self-regulation and eschews threat to national security. It is only in social media that the digital revolution has turned every of its user a journalist. About two-thirds of the respondents said their level of awareness and involvement with fake news was very high even as about one-fifth said their awareness of fake news was high.

Fig 2: Forms of fake news Committed
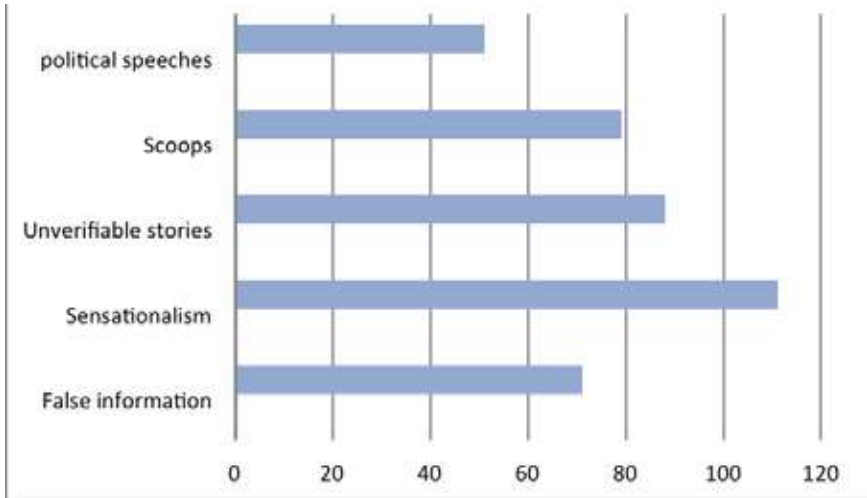
Source: Field survey, 2018.

Figure 2 displays the various forms of fake news prevalent in the media today. It shows that fake news comes in form of political speeches, scoops, unverifiable stories, sensationalism and false information. Scoops constitute about one-fifth of the forms. These are gathered from social media posts or tweets and from classified information. Over one-quarter of the forms of fake news is sensational news. This form of fake news is triggered by the need to boost patronage and attract advertising revenue to a media house. When driven by such motive, truth and accuracy will be sacrificed.

A large chunk of fake news also stems from the use of unverified sources. Attribution is a quality of news, but in such circumstances, the kind of

sources relied upon are not authentic or authoritative enough to command believability. It is mischievous when a journalist cites a source that does not exist just to create an impression that it is coming from an authentic source.

Again, fake news also emanates from reporting political speech hook-line and sinker. Political speeches need critical assessment and verification to go as news. They are normally opinion pieces full of bias and propaganda to win the audience. In fact, opinions are presented as facts or truth. Figure 2 also shows a form of fake news that is outright false information but used to draw attention. Social media platforms abound with this kind of fake news.

Fig. 3: Sources of fake news
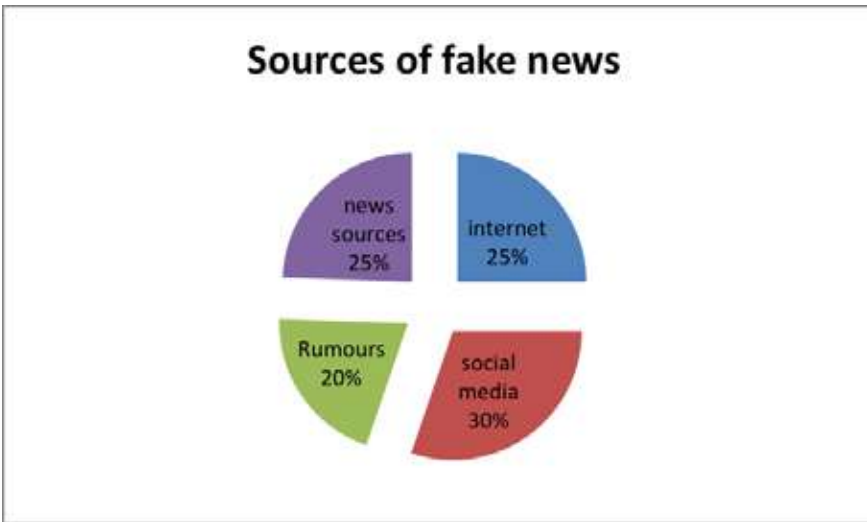
Source: Field survey, 2018

Fake news comes from diverse sources. Fig.3 shows that 30% of the respondents said fake news comes from social media platforms or online communities. This includes Facebook posts, tweets, sharing, uploading, podcasting, etc. One-quarter of fake news come from news sources and the internet. This calls for caution in the kind of news sources journalists should rely on. Also, not every material on the internet is factual or true. Some search engines and web pages could mislead a journalist in judging what is right and palatable for political stability.

Meanwhile, one-fifth of the respondents believed that fake news could originate from rumours. When rumours are making the rounds, there is need to cross check such information, interview many sources so as to establish the truth before broadcast or publishing.

Table 1: Motives for fake news

Response	Frequency	Percentage
To stay ahead of others	40	10
Pressure to publish	45	11.2
Politics	21	5.2
Money	15	3.8
To enhance popularity	66	16.5
All of the above	213	53.3
Total	**400**	**100**

Source: Filed survey

Table 1 shows the various motives for journalists' involvement in fake news. The drive to stay ahead of other news media in breaking news is one of the motives 10% of the respondents identified. Others 11.2% said the pressure to publish or meet deadlines paves way for fake news. The desire to be on the news stand on time or to fill blank spaces sometimes hinders journalists from investigating or confirming breaking stories. Politics and money are other motives for reign of fake news in the media. The value of a platform depends on the number of users it has (Rohn, 2013). Therefore, satisfying political interests and monetary gratification are part of the drive for fake news.

Of all the drives, the desire to achieve popularity is top priority for journalists (16.5%). However, over half of the respondents (53.3%) said all the mentioned drives do occasion fake news in the media.

Table 2: Challenges of fake news

Statement	Strongly agree	Agree	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Total
It affects journalists reputation	132 (33)	268 (67)	0	0	400
It affects the credibility of news medium	211(52.8)	189 (47.2)	0	0	400
It disorganises society	211(52.8)	189 (47.2)	0	0	400

Source: Field survey, 2018

From Table 2, respondents showed that level of agreement on some challenges of fake news syndrome. On all the three challenges, no respondent disagreed. One-third of the respondents strongly agreed that fake news do affect the reputation of journalists while two-thirds agree. Over half of the respondents (52.8%) strongly agreed that the credibility of the news medium is usually at stake with fake news and it causes instability in the society. from the views of the respondents, fake news syndrome can damage the credibility or reputation of the media and practitioners. Bennett (2017) observes that the numbers of citizens who have stopped following news produced by conventional

journalism organizations is growing. It also causes instability amongst news consumers as well.

Table 3: Remedies for fake news

Statement	Strongly agree	Agree	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Total
Educating news consumers on how to distinguish fake news	235 (58.8)	165 (41.2)	0	0	400
The main line media should adapt digital technologies for effective distribution of news	211(52.8)	189 (47.2)	0	0	400
Journalists should produce trustworthy, high-quality information	241(60.3)	159 (39.7)	0	0	400

Source: Field survey, 2018

Respondents unanimously agreed in Table 3 on some curative or preventive measures for fake news. On the whole, over half of the respondents' level of agreement on the three measures is very strong. They agreed that news consumersshould be educated on how to distinguish credible sources and stories from their counterparts. The main line media such as radio, television, newspapers and magazines should adapt digital technologies in news production and distribution. The presence of these mainline media on the cyber space or social media platforms will reduce the spread of fake news since news consumers will have available alternative platforms to confirm news stories.This will minimize the spread of fake news and promote the dissemination of trustworthy, high-quality information.

On the other hand, journalists should be guided by social responsibility in producing trustworthy, high-quality information. They should uphold the norms of journalistic practice and protect them from erosion.

Conclusion

True journalism is guided by standards of professionalism, truth, accuracy and objectivity. It avoids disseminating materials that might lead to crime, violence or civil disorder. Fake news is an aberration to the true standards of journalism. Journalists in Benue state are much aware of this syndrome but are not insulated from it. The motives of money, political interest, desire to be popular and the rush to breaking news underscores the spread of fake news among journalists.

Today, digitalmedia has escalated fake news at a global scale with a complex web of motivations for creating, disseminating and consuming news; a myriad of content types and techniques for amplifying content as well as innumerable platforms hosting and reproducing fake news. the only bastion of hope is the main line media forms like radio, television, newspapers and magazines whose

key operations (Journalists) are trained people and the practice is guided by strong ethical guidelines of ensuring socially responsibility. With the main line media, fake news can creep in only when the journalists are driven by the desire to stay ahead of others – make headlines and front pages, gather and submit stories to fulfil all righteous without close examination of the sources of such information and verification.

When journalists allow politics, money and popularity drive their trade of serving public interest, fake news will definitely dominate the air waves and news pages with colossal effect on political stability. The main line media are sources from which the public confirms the authenticity of news. but when the trust is lost, peacebuilding will be gone and chaos will be the order of the day.

Although hard to stamp out, fake news can be minimised when news consumers are educated on how to identify it and available mainline media online platforms that can be used to verify news information. Journalists on the other hand, should be guided by social responsibility in producing trustworthy, high-quality information. They should uphold the norms of journalistic practice and protect them from erosion.

References

Agbese, D. (2018). The dangers of fake news**.** Retrieved October 13, 2018 from https://www. dailytrust.com.ng/the-dangers-of-fake-news.html

Allcott, H. & Gentzkow, M. (2017). Social media and fake news in the 2016 election. *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 31(2), 211-236.

Baran, S. J. (2012). *Mass communication: Media literacy and culture*, 7th Edition. NewYork:McGraw Hill

BBC (2018). What is fake news and how can you identify it? Retrieved October 13, 2018 from https://www.bbc.com/news

CITAD (2018). Hate speech and fake news has caused more damage than good in our society. Retrieved October 13, 2018 from www.citad.org

Edelman (2017). Trust barometer reveals global implosion trust. Retrieved October 13, 2018 from www.edelman.com

European Commission (2018). A multi-dimensional approach to disinformation. Report of the Independent High Level Group on Fake News and Online Disinformation.

Fletcher, R.; Cornia, A.; Graves, L. & Nielsen, R. K. (2018). *Measuring the reach of fake news and online disinformation in Europe*. London: Reuters Institute.

Glasser, S. B. (2016). Covering politics in a "Post-Truth" America. Retrieved October 13, 2018 from https://www.brookings.edu/essay/covering-politics-in-a-post-truthamerica/?utm_campaign=brookings-comm&utm_source=hs_email&utm_medium=email&utm_content=38712889

Jack, C. (2017). Lexicon of lies: Terms for problematic information. Data & Society Research Institute. Retrieved from https://datasociety.net/output/lexicon-of-lies/ [https://perma.cc/9QVJ-6A8Y].)

Kaminska, I. (2017). A module in fake news from the info-wars of ancient Rome. Financial Times. Retrieved from https://www.ft.com/content/aaf2bb08-dca2-11e6-86ac-f253db7791c6

Keyes, R. (2004). *The post truth era: Dishonesty and deception in contemporary life*. Ohio: St. Martin's Press.

Martens, B.; Aguiar, L.; Gomez-Herrera, E. and Mueller-Langer, F. (2018). The digital transformation of news media and the rise of disinformation and fake news. *JRC Digital Economy Working Paper 2018-02* Seville, Spain: European Commission

McQuail, D. (2005). *Mass communication theory: An introduction*. London: Sage Publications.

Mohammed, L. (2018). Fake news, biggest threat to 2019 polls. Retrieved October 13, 2018 fromhttps://theeagleonline.com.ng

Nigerian Union of Journalists, Benue State Council (2018). Membership list. Makurdi: NUJ House.

Nougayrede, N (2018). In this age of propaganda, we must defend ourselves. Here's how. Retrieved from https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2018/jan/31/propaganda-defend-russia-technology.

Ojei, F. (2018). Fake news, half truths and lies. Retrieved October 13, 2018 from pressreader.com

Pangrazio, L. (2017). What's new about 'Fake News'? Critical digital literacies in an era of fake news, post-truth and clickbait. *RevistaPáginas de Educación*. 11(1), *6 – 22*.

Reuters (2017). *Digital news report*. London: Reuters Institute

Rohn, U. (2013). Social network sites across cultures and countries: Proximity and network effects. *Qualitative Research Reports in Communication, 14*(1), 28-34.

Silverman, C. (2016). This analysis shows how viral fake election news stories outperformed real news on Facebook. *Buzzfeed News*. Retrieved October 13, 2018 from https://www.buzzfeed.com/craigsilverman/viral-fake-election-news-outperformed-real-news-on-facebook?utm_term=.todxjq3rN#.qdmV4Ao3X

Tambini, D. (2017). *Fake news: Public policy responses.* London: Media Policy Project, London School of Economics and Political Science.

The Eagle Online (2018). 2019 polls: BBC raises concerns over fake news. Retrieved October 13, 2018 from https://theeagleonline.com.ng

The Economist (2018). The true history of fake news. Retrieved October 13, 2018 from https://www.1843magazine.com

Thornton, B. (2000). The moon hoax: Debates about ethics in 1835 New York newspapers. Journal of Mass Media Ethics, 15(2), 89-100.

Ugwuanyi, S. U. (2017). Influence of fake news on perception of Nigeria's online newspapers. *Global Journal of Human-Social science*, 17(5), 1 – 12.

Ujah, O. E. (2018). Fake news and media integrity. Retrieved October 13, 2018 from https://guardian.ng/opinion/fake-news-and-media-integrity/

UNESCO (2018). *Journalism, fake news and disinformation*. Paris: Unesco.

Vasu, N.; Ang, B.; Anne-Teo, T.; Jayakumar, S.; Faizal, M. & Ahuja, J. (2018). Fake news: National security in the post-truth era. Retrieved October 13, 2018 from https://www.rsis.edu.sg/research/cens/.

Wardle, C. &Derekshan, H. (2017). Information disorder: Toward an interdisciplinary framework for research and policy making. Council of Europe report, DGI(2017)09