

## **A DISCOURSE ON THE APPROACHES TO CURBING THE SPREAD OF FAKE NEWS**

**JOEL C. UGWUOKE (PhD)**  
**Department of Mass Communication**  
**University of Nigeria, Nsukka**  
[Chinedu.ugwuoke@unn.edu.ng](mailto:Chinedu.ugwuoke@unn.edu.ng)  
[priesthood.jc@gmail.com](mailto:priesthood.jc@gmail.com)

### **Abstract**

*The global media culture we live in presently has brought with it the challenge of fake news. In such world of powerful images, words and sounds that increase incidences of fake news, media and information literacy provide the required skills for critical reasoning and evaluation of news and information. However, this paper took a look on whether Media and Information Literacy are enough to handle the menace of fake news. Using secondary sources, this paper opines that in as much as media and information literacy are an answer to the issue of fake news, it is not “THE” answer due to congenital attachment of fake news with journalism and the socio-cultural colourations of news and, or media consumers. It concluded by recognizing the usefulness of media and information literacy in curbing fake news but should be applied in a broad spectrum of understanding of the socio-cultural information drive of the population while building the required social structure that will propel meaningful engagement in nationalism or “WE-existence”. It recommended political education for politicians and electorates on avoidance of provocative utterances that encourage fake news and inclusive socio-political structures by government to avoid the spread of fake news by sections of the country.*

**Key Words:** Approaches, Media, Literacy, Information, Fake News.

### **Introduction**

There was a time in Nigeria, when family or group of families gathered together to watch the NTA 9’oclock news and, or drama, “Tales by Moonlight”. There was also a time when you needed to go to the vendors for a copy of the newspaper or placed an order for it. Today, things have changed: we now access our TV, radio, and newspapers at a click of the button. Now, live streaming of news events, YouTube, audio and visual podcasts, online newspapers, magazines and assorted social media platforms are at the disposal of the members of the public, virtually at no cost.

The advent of technology has not only fulfilled the global village prediction of Marshal McLuhan but has made information and communication the pivot upon which the society revolves. Human existentiality and support, to a very high degree, hinge on receiving and giving of information (communication exchange). The vortex information releases from the social media, coupled with the complexities of the society have created a high level of media consumption.

The society has thus, placed their trust on the responsibility of the media to survey and correlate the environment and subsequently distil and disseminate discriminate information on which they rely for rational decision that affect them. This ultimately confers on the media the bastion of such information drive.

The media to their credit have discharged this duty over the years in different circumstances. However, members of the society as voracious information and knowledge-seekers have exerted increased pressure on the media to provide more of the news or information needed for different purposes. To fulfil this task, the social media become veritable tools. However, as the old saying goes, everything that has advantage has disadvantage; the arrival of ICTs and social media have brought along with it, the issue of Fake News.

Tibor (2003) notes that, “information is available in unimaginable large amount and variety through multiple media but of uncertain quality”. There is, now, in this era of ‘user-generated media

contents,' a global media saturation with an increasing uncertainty in quality production that requires literacy to navigate. The uncertainty here connotes confusion occasioned by fake news, particularly the social media because of its user-generated nature. Most sites and platforms resort to the use of unconfirmed news sources, stunts, fabrications, unfounded stories and outright falsehood.

Although the issue of fake news is not a recent affair, its' wave of havoc with the arrival of social media have become of interest to the academics in the area of media and information literacy. There is a growing concern among the publics about the effects of fake news that is attracting a wake-up call for literacy in media and information available to the members of the society.

### **What is Fake News?**

It is true that the main stream or traditional media tend to be more professional and trust worthy, the transient and complex nature of the 21<sup>st</sup> century society has led people to find, access, give and navigate the Information Mountains via assorted digital platforms. It is this information drive that gives impetus to fake news. Hence, fake news can be defined as the dissemination of planned story, half-truth or lies with the intention to achieve an agenda. Fake news seeks to superimpose negative meaning in a news item in order to influence the audience into believing the untruth. It is a conspiracy theory that the more atrocious a news item or event is, the better.

Fake news is false or inaccurate information deliberately hatched with the intention to deceive and cause people to take an action. The sources of fake news use many tools like; satire, irony, ridicules, exaggeration and false information to achieve their aim. Sometimes, past truths are twisted to connect present circumstance to influence or shape public opinion. It is an appeal to emotions, personal or group interest than reasons. It is completely false information both in text, photo or video, purposely created and disseminated to confuse, mislead or misinform the public to achieve a purpose. Fake news is the act of spreading information, facts, arguments, rumour, half-truth, satire, sketches, illustrations and outright lies to influence public opinion.

Gallagher and Magid (2017), define fake news as "any information that is deliberately meant to be wholly or largely false or misleading". They conclude that fake news is a symptom of much larger problem, including inadequate media and information literacy as most high school students are unable to distinguish between advertisement and real news stories. They further attributed the high rise of fake news to the inability of those in authority to tell "the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth".

### **Effects of Fake News**

Fake news has been around for a century. It became popularized by the maverick president of the United States, Donald Trump in 2016 following the United States presidential election. The dangers and wild-fire effects at which fake news travel was succinctly captured by a US author Mark Twain, more than a century before the prevalence of internet and social media, when he stated that, "a lie can travel half-way around the world while truth is putting on its shoes".

Similarly, Jonathan Swift, noted that "falsehood flies, and the truth comes limping after it". Collins (2017), states, "we predicted that facts will win but never predicted that facts will stop mattering - it is still worth fighting falsehood with facts but I don't think that is enough anymore". He further stated that "messages that reinforce our beliefs are more powerful and seductive than messages that are true". The implications of these statements are that fake news is fast gaining ascendancy than truths or facts.

Anderson and Rainie (2017) observe that "the rise of fake news and proliferation of doctored narratives that are spread by humans and robots online are challenging publishers and platforms". Indeed, the problem of fake news is not like fixing the problem with your TV. It is complex and works through a social matrix and therefore, needs consistent monitoring of an educated population to be immune to.

The dangers of fake news on global socio-political economy are becoming increasingly disturbing. Wold Governments have started pushing for laws that will help curb the problem of fake news. *Financial Times* of April 8, 2018 reports that the Malaysian government is considering a six years jail term for peddling fake news while noting that "the ease with which malevolent propaganda spread is alarming". Presently, social media giants, Facebook and WhatsApp are tinkering on policy control and training of consumers on tracking fake news contents.

Talking of the effects of fake news; begin with, it has broken down trusted information sources and assaulted the functional logic of social networks. It creates temperamental tendencies on users. Those who consume fake news can get angry at any time and anger leads to violence. A fall out of violence will

be the destructions of life and property of both the government and the private individuals. Several thousands of naira have been lost to fake news. Fake news creates and fuels crisis. This is evidenced on the continual farmers-herder's crisis across many states in Nigeria.

The use of fake news creates confusion and misunderstanding on important social and political issues leading to discrediting and blackmailing of political opponents and misrepresentation of historic facts. It is even worst with political rascality, bogus claims and blatant lies exhibited by some politicians. In Nigeria, fictitious messages about political figures and historical misrepresentation of regions are employed during campaigns to score cheap political point. In general, fake news dislocate and, or influences electoral process that will ultimately impinge on the democratic values.

In a society where socio-political opinion of the people rests on the media, fake news becomes not only social menace but enemy of the state. It creates in the population a situation where they can no longer tell what is false or correct and subsequently, lose confidence in the state. And because information can no longer be trusted, citizens are faced with the problem of reliable information upon which they can make political decisions. It is simply, a threat to democracy. Perhaps this is what is happening with the present government in Nigeria.

Economically too, fake news takes its tolls. Jain (2018) pointed out that fake news made British stock market rise by 5% in 1803 and 50% in Bitcoin, about 4 billion US dollars in 2018 when the false death of its founder, Vitalik Buterin was reported in social media. In Nigeria, market forces are controlled by rumours on one government policy or the other, and this can scare foreign investors. It results also in panic buying, hoarding and faking of goods that ultimately increases prices. Recently, the issue of recessed economy or inflation was heightened by fake news. Several reports of Nigerian economic situation fly about both in the traditional and social media.

Fake news gradually erodes business concerns and consumers' confidence in products and companies. Rival companies can create falsehood to de-market one another and edge out business opponents. A case in point was the Indomie noodle that was rumoured to be poisonous when late Professor Dora Akunyili was the Director-General NAFDAC. This was disproved by NAFDAC. The dangerous effects of fake news are multifarious and such must be fought to a standstill.

### **Media and information literacy, what it is!**

Some schools of thought, (Ward, 2006) believe that media and information literacy are the same. He argues that trying to append definitions to both concepts is a matter of semantics. In the light of the above, media literacy and information literacy are sometimes used interchangeably. However, the two concepts are actually not the same. There is a thin line separating the two, though both are intended to achieve one aim: safety of audience in their acquisition and usage of information and knowledge. For the purpose of this presentation, we will attempt a working delineation between the two variables.

Livingstone (2003) observes that for the safety and effective use of information and communication technologies, the population of the society need to acquire necessary skills and abilities. She further defines media literacy as "the ability to access, analyse, evaluate and create messages across a variety of contexts". Oregon State Library Oregon Commission on Children Families defines media literacy as "the ability to access, analyse, evaluate and create media in a variety of forms. It is the ability to think critically about all the messages that inform, entertain, and sell to us, and then, make the most appropriate choices for ourselves and families". They pointed out that literacy is leveraged on the understanding that the media have both positive and negative effects and as such, ability to navigate the volumes of information by asking deeper questions concerning the information.

According to Tibor (2003) "study of media literacy is an interdisciplinary subject that employ the tools and methods of sociology, psychology, political theory, gender and race study, as well as cultural studies, arts and aesthetics". The European Commission in 2003 conceptualizes media literacy to mean building a better understanding of how the media work in the digital world and the need for citizens to understand the economic and cultural dimensions of media. The Commission equally define media literacy as, "the ability to access the media, to understand and to critically evaluate different aspects of the media or media contents and to create communications in variety of contexts".

Gallagher and Magid (2017) define media literacy as the ability to distinguish fact from opinion and to understand how media can sometimes be used to persuade people. They observe that media literacy is important because it is the basis for being an informed critical thinker in a technological plural world.

The Centre for News Literacy, Stony Brook University, in its glossary, defines news literacy as “the ability to use critical thinking skills to judge the reliability and credibility of news reports, whether they come via print, television or the internet.” According to the Association of College and Research Library (ACRL) and the American Library Association, “information literacy is a set of abilities requiring individuals to recognise where information is needed and have the ability to locate, evaluate, and use effectively the needed information”.

Hobbs (2006) explains that, “the issue of how people comprehend, interpret, critically analyse and compose texts becomes research subject in the field of literacy theory; cultural studies, history, psychology, library and information science, medicine and public health, linguistics, rhetoric, communication and media studies”.

Perhaps one of the outstanding definitions of media literacy is offered by Aufderheide (1992) as “a movement which is designed to help to understand, to produce and negotiate meanings in a culture of images, words and sounds”. She further avers that a media literate person and everyone who aspires to be so called should have “the ability to decode, evaluate, analyse and produce both print and electronic media with critical objective of having an autonomous relationship with the media”. This definition contains the critical issue of “meaning” in communication both in electronic and print and audience independence to deconstruct realities against what is painted by the media. This is a critical approach to the definition and study of media literacy: An overall development of an informed, critical understanding of media consumers with both educational and technological savvy to analyse, evaluate and create their own contents both in electronic and print. This is referred to as emerging technology literacy. Shapiro and Hughes (1996) put it as:

the ability to ongoingly adapt to, understand, evaluate and make use of the continually emerging innovations in information technology so as not to be a prisoner of prior tools and resources, and to make intelligent decisions about the adoption of new ones. Clearly this includes understanding of the human, organizational and social context of technologies as well as criteria for their evaluation.

The assumptions of the forgoing definitions are that media literacy involves the audience ability to expose themselves to media contents, critically examine them, deconstruct or produce their own news items that is disseminated in the media. The definitions promise a reposition of media users from a passive to active user, from a passive destination to a participatory encoder of information. The potency of emerging technology literacy is a redefinition of literacy generally.

Tibor (2003) contends that the concept of literacy includes visual, electronic and digital forms of expression and communication. Equally, Cordes (2009) cited in Tibor (2003) is of the view that “literacy has a broadened scope and it is tied to technology and culture, and that the ability to become and remain literate requires a long term commitment”. In this case, to be media literate requires technology savvy and critical evaluation skill as a default qualification. Therefore, for the members of the public to be literate media wise requires a painstaking effort in media education.

### **Approaches to Curbing the Spread of Fake News**

A synthesis of the aforementioned definitions of media literacy reveal a concurrency of statements on the ability to access, evaluate and use information; corroborating the position of Wards (2006) that it is a matter of semantics in trying to differentiate between media and information literacy. However, information literacy has a closer tie to library science, while media literacy is more related to media contents, industry and social effects. The two have different academic backgrounds and adopt different approaches in analysis (<https://milunesco.unaoc.org>).

The strength of information literacy is brought to the fore in a recent research by Toff and Nielson (2018) titled, “I Just Google It: Folks Theories of Distributed discovery”. They concluded that the consumers of news apply three complimentary theories in their attempt to make sense of their information environment, namely: “The information is out there”, “I don’t know what to believe” and “News find me”.

The three theories speak volumes on the instructiveness of information and media literacy. For one, it is very dangerous for the audiences of news to wait for the news to find them. In that case, they are atomized, waiting for the hypodermic power from the barrel of the news source to penetrate them, thus, helpless with the effects of the information.

Second, to be confused about not knowing what to believe is the height of it all - Fake news at work. Possibly the barrage of news have created an overload that is not verifiable. Not knowing what to believe is really a state of perplexity and disillusionment caused possibly by repeated unsubstantiated or fabricated story.

Third, the information is out there, is a descriptive statement of the age we are in – the age of social media, powered by the internet. A situation where everyone is a journalist, in what is referred to as citizen journalism- where, “the information is out there”, seeking its destination to confuse. This is our bane - fake news.

### **The Media and Information Literacy Approaches**

Lending his voice on the importance of media literacy in the fight against fake news, Polizzi (2018) argues that everyone has a responsibility to learn critical literacy online and off line. He identified specifically, parents, teachers and educational system, journalism and news providers, social media, academics as core in this fight. This wholesome responsibility opined by Polizzi hinge on the fact that social inclusion and democratic activism depends on the ability to access, evaluate and exchange information among the citizenry.

The imperative of media and information literacy in curbing fake news cannot be overemphasized. Perhaps, it is the most portent antidote in that it combines information and media literacy.

Professor Devin Haner, emphasizing the need for media literacy posits that “real news can position itself as a cure for fake news”, according to him, fake news is a “symptom rather than a disease”. Stringer( 2018) has articulated the opinion of Damaso Ryes, Director of Community Partnership and Engagement at the News Literacy Project, USA, on Media Literacy as “a cure” or “ vaccine” to fake news.

First, information and media literacy builds an understanding of the role of the media in the society as well as essential skills of inquiry and self-exposure necessary for democratic citizenship through a frame work to access, analyse, and evaluate messages in a variety of forms from print, video to the internet.

It enables people to interpret and make informed judgement as users of information and media. Media literacy allows the receiver of news or information the understanding of what is at stake, the source or originator and react favourably to the information and, or the source of the information. This is a good gauge to filter fake news since fake news has a source or originator and has a message to pass across. An understanding of the source and the message will enable appropriate reaction. It removes gullibility of fake news in the era of technology and social media by equipping the citizens with the required skill for news evaluation and deconstruction. Information and media literacy enable the people to critically analyse, create, give and receive information intelligently and react critically, not sentimentally to public issues.

Harping on the importance of media and information literacy against fake news, Shellenbarger (2016) observes that recent study by Stanford University has called for teaching of internet literacy for youth after their research shows that most young people were unable to distinguish between real and fake news.

There is however, an angle to information and media literacy. There are those who believe that media literacy as good as it is, is not enough to handle the issue of fake news. Their reason is that fake news is not just a product of media but a cumulative effect of a dysfunctional socio-political and cultural structure of the society.

### **Media policy and law approach**

Since society undergoes changes and never static and the media landscape is equally dynamic; the desirability of an evolving media policy and regulation in the midst of minute by minute changes in ICTs cannot be over emphasized . The argument is that while Media and Information literacy empower consumers, there are others who do not only argue about their limitations but posits that media literacy might actually be a contributor to fake news – a position that has angered proponents of media and information literacy. Therefore its application should be anchored on broader campaigns. This means that the government should develop a robust multiple mechanism to identify and counter fake news and hate speeches. In this case, media policy and regulations take the front burner in checkmating fake news.

Nigeria has attempted evolving a national communication policy and regulation twice in 1987 and 2004 respectively. The 1987 gave birth to what is referred to as the 1990 mass communication policy with attempt at reviewing it in 2003 that gave it another name, national information policy. Not until this point,

what we had was anti-media laws that were intended to stifle, muzzle and strangle the media. Media policy and regulations essentially targets the control or guidance of the media, practitioners and users for the public interest. In the context of this paper, the interest of the public is protection from the dangers of fake news.

Sabowale (2008) explains communication policy to mean a workable plan of action by the government and its agencies to harness the benefits of communication for the over-all good of the people. That is, the public interest. Communication policy is a set of principles and norms intended to guide the behaviour of communicative system which has a colouration of the originating society (Nwuneli, 1998). The communication policy of any nation is tailored towards advancing human life, moralism, corporate existence and collective consciousness. In this regard, Momoh (1998) is of the opinion that national communication policy should be couched on moralism and reciprocity. What this policy portends is that it redirects the actions of the citizens as users of the media. For example, article 3.5.2 of the Broadcasting code has it that a media organisation shall not air political adverts that tend to incite or hate biased. The fourth part state thus:

A media organisation shall refrain from publishing or airing abusive editorial comments or opinions that denigrate individuals or groups on account of disability, race, ethnicity tribe, gender or believe.

It is against this backdrop that effective media policy that will regulate various media channels in the country to mediatize in line to national interest and best international democratic practices.

However, these policies and regulations must be applied with understanding of the political economy of the internet, as these sites and platforms are wired as free market business economy as technology service providers and not as media companies. **Professional bodies and ethics approach**

Ethical behaviour refers to forms of behaviours and actions that are socially accepted as correct or normal. In this case, fake news and spread of such are to say the least, normal or correct given its huge negative attendances. For achievement of the desired goal of stamping out fake news or at least, curbing it, the professional bodies in the media have a role by ensuring that ethical standards of operation is adhered to. Such bodies include The Nigeria Union of Journalists, The Nigerian Guild of Editors, Radio and Television Workers of Nigeria, Nigerian Women Journalists, Newspapers Proprietors' Association of Nigeria.

The idea of professional and ethical approach means that media is fighting its fight against fake news. The tenets of ethics are truth, honesty and responsibility. Although the professional body may lack the legal power to enforce a breach of ethical code, it however, provides a pathfinder for good journalism. Haraja (2018) is of the view that "media ethics assist the media workers in determining what is right and how to choose the best from alternatives" this of course, gives a back up to media literacy that intend to give consumers the ability to know what and how to choose in the midst of fake and truth. The anchor of this approach is to introduce where it is lacking or update where it is available, professional ethical code that guides and controls the spread of fake news.

To this end, Umaru (2018) is of the opinion that "the media should promote ethically oriented interactions among the peoples of the country to reduce misconceptions" and by extension, fake news. By the definition of ethics as acceptable, rightful, correct, licit or good behaviour, users of the media, whether professional or citizen ought to know that peddling of rumour, lies or fake news is abominable. This approach emphasizes that the media has ethical, moral and professional responsibility to provide fair, unbiased and accurate information to the public. Ethical codes constitute a veritable tool as a means of internal mechanism of control against irresponsible journalism that include publication of half-truth, falsehood or fake news. That is to say, misinformation, disinformation, half- truth, post truth, alternative truth and fake news are not acceptable.

### **Fact-checking journalism approach**

This is an emerging cutting-edge control measure in the discourse against fake news. It is a post mortem action of gauging the veracity of a claim or publication before a mass production of news. It does the work of proof reading desk or copy desk or what is called now, Standard Desk. It is more than proofreading because it authorizes a full scale fact checking of a news claim or report. Fact checking is designed to critically evaluate news information to rid it of fake, rumour, hate speech or general deception

in news reporting. There are many fact checking sites available for the citizens to use in verifying whether a news story, particularly, the making rounds is true or false. Such include, [www.factchecknigeria.com](http://www.factchecknigeria.com), [africachecker.org](http://africachecker.org), [dubawa.org](http://dubawa.org). If someone makes a claim on the internet, social media or the mainline media, fact checker goes to work to track-check whether such claims are true or not. This approach has the challenge of the ability to use and manipulate the new technology in accessing and critically evaluating news to find out what is real or fake.

### **Socio-political and Cultural Context of Information Approach**

Garba and Shaibu (2018), postulate that the communication system of any nation is largely influenced by her cultural, social, historical and economic indices. Boyd (2017) contends that clamour for increased media literacy and expert fact-checking and labelling of sites are likely to fail due to their lack of considerations of “cultural context of information consumption that were created over the last thirty years”, noting that “the problem on our hands is more lot bigger than folks appreciate”.

She stated further that the idea of empowering consumers to check source and to be critical about the information and source amount to futility since people will believe and reject what does not sync with their priors. Using America as a case study, Boyd concludes that the liberals label as fake news from sources that is pro- conservative and vice –versa and as well, forward such message if it is to their favour. Her argument was summarised on this quote that:

Addressing so-called fake news is going to require a lot more than labelling. It's going to require a cultural change about how we make sense of information, whom we trust, and how we understand our own role in grappling with information, quick and easy solutions may make the controversy go away but they won't address the underlying problems. This is a core factor tracking the issue of fake news.

Closely related to above contention is the issue of selective retention theory that allows one to select sources and information that reinforces already held beliefs. This is what Buckingham (2015), has referred to as “filter bubble” or the “echo chamber effect”, where one can filter out information that one dislikes or does not agree with and remains comfortable in the zone where everything confirms one's already held belief or information.

A compression of the forgoing is that in as much as media and information literacy is commendable in the fight against fake news, it is not enough and would be more successful when applied in connection to other considerations like free will, information habits of the people, government policies and media reforms.

We recall that the libertarian theory also known as the free press theory that emerged in the 17<sup>th</sup> century as a protest to the notion of kings being infallible and have a divine right to rule. It argues that people should be allowed to have access to all manner of information on the basis that as rational beings they can think for themselves and have the innate ability of differentiating between truth and falsehood.

John Milton in 1644 added impetus to this notion in his work entitled *Areopagitica* where he argued that man is capable of exercising reason. According to Ojobor (2002, p. 9), Milton's “argument brought the contemporary concept of ‘the open market place of ideas’ and the ‘self-righting process’: Let all with something to say be free to express themselves: the true and sound will survive; the false and unsound will be vanquished”. This means that real news and fake news should be allowed to compete before the audience.

Another scholar whose postulations accorded credibility to the libertarian theory was John Stuart Mill, who in his 19<sup>th</sup> century work *On Liberty* made the following assertion: “If we silence an opinion, for all we know, we are silencing truth... a wrong opinion may contain a grain of truth necessary for finding the whole truth... the peculiar evil of silencing the expression of an opinion is that it is robbing the human race, posterity as well as the existing generation; those who dissent from the opinion, still more than those who hold it.” (Ojobor, 2002).

Wogu (2013: 72) wrote that the argument of proponents of the free press theory is that “people should be allowed to publish freely and that humans as rational beings can separate good from bad, and truth from falsehood. It was therefore argued that information should be allowed to trade freely in an open market place of idea where truth will incontrovertibly overthrow falsehood”.

By implication, the libertarian theory recognizes that falsehood, or now fake news, are players in the marketplace of ideas and information. However, the theory holds that truth will overcome falsehood. By allowing the juxtaposition of truth and falsehood, the theory helps to provide a context for fake news. As in the case of apples and oranges, this theory recognizes and advocates the dishing out of all manner of information and tasks the rationality of people to know which is true or false. Therefore, by reducing the variables to just two, this theory makes it clear that information that is not credible is automatically fake news or that fake news is thriving because of the absence of real or truthful news or better still, according to the theory, fake is winning in the market place of ideas.

But the libertarian theory has been dogged by criticisms with some scholars believing that the theory is utopia, not practicable in any part of the world. As Okunna (1999: 130) puts it: “there is no system in the whole world which operates entirely under the principles of free press theory, not even in the advanced democracies of the Western World. This is because, in all societies, there are a number of legal controls which govern the operation of the mass media”. Pool (1973) in Ojobor (2002:10) asserts that “No nation will indefinitely tolerate a freedom of the press that serves to divide the country and to open the floodgates of criticism against a freely chosen government that leads it”.

### **Conclusion**

While we recognise the importance of information and media literacy in steering the rising cases of fake news and its socio- economic effects, we can safely conclude it is not a panacea. Although the social media provide fertile ground for fake news to thrive, it is not the cause of the problem. The issue of fake news is congenital to journalism as well as, a socio – cultural foundation of every given community. Therefore beyond the clamour for information and media literacy, labelling of social media sites, reforms, government policies, we need to build social structures that will propel the populations of human beings to meaningfully and grossly engage in nationalism or “WE-existence” in order to handle the issue of fake news and hate speeches.

### **Recommendations**

Regardless of the fact that people will believe or reject what does not align with their held opinion, this paper recommends that the National Orientation Agency should engage the politicians and electorate on political education on avoidance of provocative utterances that encourage fake news; and that there is also the need for an inclusive socio-political structure to be built by the government to avoid discontentment that warrants the spread of fake news by section of the country.

### **References**

- Aufderhide, P. (1992). Media Literacy. A report of the national leadership conference on media literacy. Washington DC. Aspen Institute. <http://www.medialit.org/reaching-room/article356.html>.
- Collins, K (2017). *Fighting fake news with media and information literacy*. John Jay College of Carmel Justice. <https://www.lib.ijay.cuny.edu>
- Cordes, S. (2009) Broad Horizons: *The Role of multimodel literacy in 21<sup>st</sup> century library instruction*. [http://www.aeffe.org/documents/07-RA-8 clan food.plf](http://www.aeffe.org/documents/07-RA-8%20clan%20food.pdf)
- Dana, B. (2017) *Did media literacy backfire?* Microsoft Research, data & society. January 5, 2017.
- Financial Times Opinion, *the dangers of global “fake news” backlash*, April 8, 2018. Accessed on 1/9/18.
- Gallagher, K. and Magid, L (2017). *Media literacy and fake news*. Commetsafetly.org
- Garba, K.A and Shaibu H. H (2018). *Towards an Integrated and Functional Communication Architecture for Nigeria Media Reflection on governance and Development on Nigeria* (ed). ACSPN Book Series 3. Canada: Canada University Press, Concord Ontario
- Goering, C.Z and Thomas, P.L (2018) (eds) *Critical Media literacy and fake news in Post-Touth America*. <https://brill.com/view/title/36>.
- Hajara, U.S (2018). *Media Ethics and National Security*. Digital Media, New order? Emergent Practices In The Nigerian Media Environment (ed). ACSPN Book Series 2
- Hobbs, R. (2006b). *Multiple visions of multi-media literacy: emerging areas of synthesis*, pp 15-26 in M. Mckena etal (eds). *International handbook of literacy and technology*.



- Jain (2018): *Is fake news bad for the economy?* Finance monthly. [www.finance-monthly.com](http://www.finance-monthly.com) is-ta. Accessed 1/9/18.
- Mason, P. (2017). *Why social media is like the railways – and must be saved*. The Guardian Jan, 2017
- Momoh, C. C (1998). *Philosophical Elements of National Communication Policy in Philosophy and Dimensions of National Communication Policy*, CBAAC, Lagos
- Nwuneli, O. (1998). *National Communication Policy some Economic Implications in Philosophy and Dimensions of National Communication Policy*, CBAAC, Lagos
- Pate, U.A (2018). *Ethics and Nation Building in Nigeria: The Media Dimension*. Media Reflection on Governance and development in Nigeria (ed). ACSPN Book Series 3
- Polizzi, G (2018). *Fake news and critical literacy in the digital age; sharing responsibility and addressing challenges*. London School of Economics and political Science [blogs.isc.ac.uk](http://blogs.isc.ac.uk).
- Shapiro, J. J and Hughes, S.K (1996) *Information literacy as a liberal art enlightenment proposals for a new curriculum*. <http://net.edulause.edu/apps/er/reviewArticles/31231.html>.
- Shellenbarger, S. (2016). *Most students don't know when news is fake*" [Shellenbaser@wsj.com](mailto:Shellenbaser@wsj.com). <https://davidbuckingham.net> > 2017/01/12 Accessed 3/9/18.
- Stringer, K (2018) *Rise of Fake News gives New Urgency to Media Literacy Education in American's Schools*. <https://www.the74million.org>.
- Toff, B and Nielson, R.K (2018). *"I Just Google It": Folk Theories of Distributed Discovery*. Oxford Academic Journal of Communication. <https://academic.oup.com>. Retrieved on 29/8/18.
- Ward D. (2006) *Revisioning information literacy for lifelong meaning*. Journal of academic Librarianship 32(4): 396-402.