



Combating the Menace of Fake News and Hoaxes in Nigeria for National Security: Intervention of the Information Professionals

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ABSTRACT

Misinformation and disinformation, popularly known as 'fake news' have assumed a disturbing dimension in recent times. Its damaging implications cut across every fiber of a people's communal life; from politics to religion, from business to social life. Perhaps, the most pronounced area of concern over fake news, particularly in Nigeria is national security, which unarguably is, the greatest challenge of the country at the moment. National security is a sine qua non for economic development and the total wellbeing of a nation. This paper therefore adopted a conceptual framework to basically examine the implications of the menace of fake news for national security. Effort was made to x-ray the conceptual overview and historical evolution of fake news, the strategies for curbing fake news as a way of promoting national security and consequently national economic development. Tips on how to identify fake news were equally suggested. The paper submitted that, fake news is fueling electoral violence, ethno-religious conflicts, leadership mistrust, jungle justice, among others. Consequently, the paper recommends that, efforts must be made by all relevant stakeholders to ensure that Nigerians are sensitized to understand the dangers posed by fake news as it threatens not only the peace and security, but the very corporate existence of the country.

Keywords: News, National Security, Insecurity, Information Professionals.

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I. Introduction

National security has become a serious issue of concern in Nigeria because there is high level of insecurity in the Land. Even with the Global Peace Index (GPI) 2019 report which states that, the average level of global peacefulness has improved very slightly in the 2019, more than ever before, Security challenges in Nigeria have continued to threaten the peace and progress of the Nigerian State. No time has the country ever encountered such enormous security threats that pose great danger to its very existence as a sovereign nation like the present time. There is literally no part of the country that is immune to the devastating effects of insecurity. The activities of the

deadly Boko Haram especially in the North-East, banditry, terrorism, insurgency, farmers/herdsmen clashes are daily occurrences across Northern Nigeria while in the South, kidnapping and armed robbery is everywhere. According to the Global Peace Index (2019) which measures the relative position of nations' and regions' peacefulness, Nigeria is one of the least peaceful places on earth. The Global Peace Index (GPI) which measures peacefulness across three domains; safety and security, ongoing conflict, and militarization ranked Nigeria 148 out of 163 countries in the world. In Sub-Saharan Africa, Nigeria seats among the top five least peaceful countries in the region alongside, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Central African Republic, Somalia, and South Sudan. This state of acknowledged insecurity in Nigeria has continued to

impact negatively on every sector of our national life especially the economy. (Addendum I refers.)

Several factors such as absence of institutional capacity, disconnection between the people and government, the failure of security agencies in term of sharing information, ethno-religious/tribal conflicts among others have been identified as being responsible for the state of insecurity in Nigeria. However, one seemingly silent factor that has emerged as the greatest threat to security in Nigeria is the phenomenon of fake news.

Fake news is a fabricated information that mimics media content deliberately created and circulated with the intent to deceive. It is a medium through which social vices like hate speech is circulated to fuel ethno-religious crises, political tension, tribal sentiment, character assassination and corporate deformation. The primary aim of promoters and mongers of fake news is to instigate acts capable of causing disunity among people. It was hate speech and fake news that contributed largely to the genocide that ravaged Rwanda in 1994. Like a wide fire, the damaging implications of fake news to national security is indeed unquantifiable. Unfortunately, more than ever before, the media for spreading fake news are available, accessible and affordable. With the emergence of information and communication technologies, particularly the social media, fake news is created at will and disseminated with great ease. This situation portends great danger to national security.

Given the obvious recent ugly developments resulting from fake news across many countries of the world, it is perhaps little wonder that “fake news” has become a major preoccupation for international organizations, policy-makers, the media and media actors, civil society, the academia, and libraries in particular as the established custodians of authentic, reliable and verifiable information. But what really is ‘fake news’? How did it come about? What implications does it have for national security? And how can it be curtailed with the view to promoting national security? Providing plausible answers to these questions by the information professionals is the focus of this paper.

II. Fake News: a Conceptual Explanation

The phrase “fake news” is made up of two simple words; ‘fake’ – meaning, something not genuine, but meant to be taken as genuine; and ‘news’- meaning, information about current event. Therefore, one can literarily say that, fake news is information/news that is not genuine which is presented as, and is expected to be believed as being genuine. However, this definition may seem too simplistic and narrow, so we explore available literature for the opinions of other scholars from various backgrounds on the concept of fake news. According to McGonagle (2017), fake news is information that has been deliberately fabricated and disseminated with the intention to deceive and mislead others into believing falsehoods or doubting verifiable facts. In this regard, to the information professional, fake news and hoaxes is disinformation that is presented as, or is likely to be perceived as news. A type of yellow journalism or propaganda that consists of

deliberate disinformation or hoaxes spread via traditional media or online social media.

In the same vein, Alawode, Olorede and Azeez (2018) view fake news as news articles that are intentionally and verifiably false and could mislead readers. The authors explained that, fake news includes false information that can be verified as such, created with dishonest intention to mislead readers.

So far, the core deducible elements of fake news are the ‘falsefulness’ of news content and the intent to deceive or mislead. Therefore, a false content that is created in error and circulated without the intention of misleading the consumers may be dismissible since no human system is immune to mistakes. It is against this background that Claire Wardle cited in Ogbette, Idam, Kareem and Ogbette (2019), identifies seven but discussed six types of fake news;

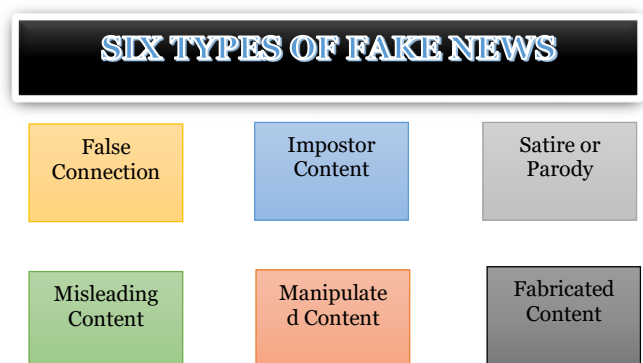


Fig.1. Different Types of Fake News

- Satire or Parody - no intention to cause harm, but has potential to fool
- False Connection - when headlines, visuals or captions do not support the content
- Misleading Content - misleading use of information to frame an issue or an individual
- Imposter Content - when genuine sources are impersonated with false and made-up sources
- Manipulated Content – when genuine information or imagery is manipulated to deceive, as with doctored photo
- Fabricated Content – when news content is 100% false, designed to deceive and do harm.

From the foregoing, it is clear that fake news takes different forms, from the harmless to the harmful. This understanding is needful in discussing ‘fake news’ as a societal vice. Therefore, we define fake news as deliberately manipulated or fabricated information or news content carefully disseminated with the intent of causing anxiety, uproar, incitement and harm at either individual or communal scale. It was in the fall of 2016 during the presidential elections in the United States of America that fake news began to dominate news headlines and fuel public discourse. But how did it all began?

III. A Brief About Fake News

Information fabrication otherwise known as ‘fake news’

is not new. Misinformation, disinformation and propaganda have been features of human communication, but never before, has there been a technology to so effectively disseminate it. In 1450, the invention of a movable printing press by a German blacksmith, Johann Gutenberg dramatically facilitated the production and dissemination of news – the fake and the authentic alike. Accordingly, Standage (2017) believes that “fake news has been known since the earliest days of printing. In the 16th and 17th centuries, printers would crank out pamphlets, or news books, offering detailed accounts of monstrous beasts or unusual occurrences” with the motive of attracting patronage and readership. According to Posetti and Matthews (2018), “with the emergence of radio and television, satirical news evolved. Fake news and hoaxes have been in existence and have been trending even before the advent of the Internet. Fake news in the information world can be referred to as fictitious articles created and spread by rumor mongers to deliberately deceive readers knowingly or unknowingly. Unfortunately, the social media and other fake news outlets publish and circulate fake news to increase readership and sales of their commodities to generate revenue for economic gains and benefits. Their acclaimed benefit in many cases is a disadvantage to the society.

Finally, the arrival of the Internet in the late 20th century, followed by social media in the 21st century unimaginably escalated the dangers of misinformation, disinformation, propaganda and hoaxes”. In Nigeria, fake news – be it intentional or unintentional is equally not new. For instance, in November 1989, the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) announced the death of the first Governor General and President of Nigeria, Dr Nnamdi Azikwe. By the next morning, the news was on the front pages of most of the country’s newspapers. It took two days before Dr. Nnamdi Azikwe cleared the air about the state of his health and informed the world that he was still alive and the false claim was relatively contained. Thirty year later, rumors circulated that General Muhammadu Buhari had died during one of his lengthy absences from Nigeria in 2017 on medical grounds and that he had been replaced by a clone called Jubril from Sudan. The supposed death of General Muhammadu Buhari in contrast spread like wildfire on Twitter, Facebook, WhatsApp and so many other social media platforms so much so that he had to address the claim at a news conference (News wires, 2019).

Indeed, both errors and fraudulent contents now go viral through peer-to-peer distribution, while news satire is regularly misunderstood and re-shared as straight news by unwitting social media users. Hence, we now live in a world with computational propaganda, state-sponsored ‘sock-puppet networks’, troll armies, and technology that can mimic legitimate news websites and seamlessly manipulate audio and video to create synthetic representations of any number of sources (Posetti & Matthews, 2018).

The spread of fake news on the Internet is further necessitated by the internet’s ever-growing and connected nature and the preference for speed over accuracy and impact. Because internet content providers and distributors

are in zero-sum, winner-takes-all battle for attention and patronage, they do all within their reach to boost traffic. Unlike the print media that exercise due diligence before reporting any news, the online media are usually overwhelmed by the frenzy of the opportunities of the new technology so much so that (Adeleke, 2016) alleges that, many journalists would rather publish first and verify later. This scenario is what is fuelling the spread of fake news in Nigeria and the world over with its accompanying negative security implications.

IV. Implications of Fake News to National Security

It is no longer news that, Nigeria is presently facing diverse and grievous security challenges. According to Oderinu, Zubair and Bakare (2019), weak security system, porous borders, persuasive material, inequalities and unfairness, unemployment/poverty, corruption and ethno-religious conflicts and so on has been advanced as the causes of these insecurity in Nigeria. Additionally, Salami, Adeyemo and Olawoyin (2018) summarize the causative factors of insecurity in Nigeria to include; absence of institutional capacity resulting in government failure; disconnection between the people and government; weak and poorly funded military establishment, and non-prosecution of perpetrators of violence in Nigeria. As a result of all these, the country has continued to witness a surge in banditry, terrorism, armed robbery, insurgency, kidnapping, militancy, farmers/herdsmen clashes among others.

National security is the decision -making process concerned with the identification of potential and actual threats, and the mobilization of resources in frame that properly ensures the safety and stability of the nation state, while simultaneously enhancing the promotion of national development. Security could be tagged as development, without it, the nation cannot develop economically, socially, scientifically, and technologically. The dynamics of our society has since altered the configuration of security to now include consideration for societally generated crises such as terrorism, riots, demonstrations, secret cult-related criminal acts, drug trafficking, inter and intra-ethnic strife, religious intolerance, armed robberies, kidnapping, advance fee fraud and a host of others that threaten lives and property, and indeed the peace and tranquility in the society (Oloyede & Esimokha, 2018). At the moment, nothing seems to threaten the peace and tranquility of the Nigeria State like the menace of fake news because it has emerged as the propeller to the forces that engender insecurity. This position was acknowledged by the Minister of Information Layi Mohammed (2018, quote news) who submitted that fake news threatens the peace, security and corporate existence of Nigeria, describing it as a time bomb waiting to explode.

The security challenges nations contend with are inextricably linked with their history, culture, social structure and economic conditions (Oloyede & Esimokha, 2018). The implications of fake news traverse almost all the social vices associated with the Nigerian society to fuel one form of crises or the other ranging from electoral

disruptions/violence, ethno/religious conflicts, economic instability, leadership mistrust, jungle justice, character assassination among others. How does fake news fuel these vices and insecurity in Nigeria?

V. Electoral Violence

Election is an indispensable element of a genuine and meaningful democratic process. It promotes competitive politics, guarantees political participation and entrenches rule of law. However, over the years, elections in Nigeria have been marred by disruptions and violence leading to the loss of many lives and properties. The unfortunate thing about some of the violence is that they were instigated by news that were never real. McGonagle, (2017) believes that, unlike other types of information, news plays a particular role in democratic societies; it is a key source of accurate information about political and social affairs, which informs public opinion and deliberative processes. If news is 'fake', it misinforms the public and democratic debate is polluted at the very source thereby leading to unpopularity of electoral victories with the attendant potential of rejection and revolt by the people.

Most of the panics and anxieties that characterize elections in Nigeria are generated and transmitted by peddlers of fake stories and rumor mongers who have no incentive to be honest. Using the instrumentality of the social media, they fabricate false insightful materials about political parties, political actors, and electoral body to cause tension in the country. In some cases, they go the extent of concocting and spreading fake election results which are not authenticated by the electoral umpire, thereby fueling widespread violence when the original results go contrary to the already circulated fake ones.

The negative impact of fake news on electoral processes is not peculiar to Nigeria. According to McGonagle (2017), fake news is often blamed for having a disruptive impact on the outcomes of elections and referenda and for skewing democratic public debates, with the 2016 US Presidential elections and Brexit referendum often cited as examples. Indeed, fake news has been flagged for fuelling propaganda, hate speech and electoral violence.

VI. Ethno/Religious Conflicts

Ethno/religious conflicts are unarguably the greatest source of violence in Nigeria. There are about 250 ethnic groups speaking over 500 different languages across the length and breadth of Nigeria. Greater number of Nigerians owe their allegiance first to their tribe/ethnic group, followed by their religion with very little interest in the entity called Nigeria. The ethno/religious fabric of the Nigerian system is so delicate that it is at the centre of every widespread violence in country.

According to News Wires (2019), manufactured lies in the guise of news endangers the delicate ethno-religious fabric of Nigeria. Fabrication of stories inciting the Country's largely Muslim north against the predominantly Christian south, is one of the traditional fault lines often used by proponents of restructuring the current federal

system. The menace is threatening the peaceful co-existence of Nigeria and this should be a matter of great concern.

There is plethora of fake stories circulated through the social media with the ultimate mission of inciting fear, anxiety, suspicion, disunity across ethnic groups in Nigeria. A recent statement credited to Alhaji Gidado Siddiki, the leader of the Miyetti Allah Group, with a bold headline South East will boil any moment from now because of their stubbornness where he was alleged to have said that, "since they (the south easterners) are claiming to be stubborn, and had refused to give them their lands in peace, it will be taken by force and entire south east will be raided and taken over by the herdsmen (Siddiki, 2019). Expectedly, the news turned out to be what Claire Wardle described as "False Connection" (when headlines or captions do not support the content). Similarly, a certain story about the Fulanis disguising to attack people in some parts of Osun State is still trending on various WhatsApp platforms at present. The statement reads;

"Alert! Alert!! Alert!!!: good day, please pass this message to everyone in Osogbo and its environs. ... from 7pm every day, their gate should be well locked. The Fulanis now dress in Yoruba outfits with dangerous weapons in their hands (with the) plans to come in and kill. If there is a knock on the gate from 7pm adult should attend to the person. Please don't open and don't talk. Let the person talk first. Tell your children also. Sent as received" (ASUP Ede Politics & Social WhatsApp Platform).

Another WhatsApp platform, trended this excerpt;

General T. Y. Danjuma (a former military General of Nigeria) has stated unambiguously that President Buhari is the direct founder and sponsor of Miyetti Allah and had concluded plans to provide safe havens for all West African Fulanis in the entire SOUTH and MIDDLE BELT (part of Nigeria). He made it clear that war had already been declared, going by spate of relentless killings, lamenting that the helpless victims are predominantly Christians.

The retired General warned that, Buhari has used Tinubu to divide south-west and that plans are underway to overrun Yoruba kingdom and make them subordinate to Hausa-Fulani Oligarchy.

...(there is) information that Imo State shall be the hotbed because of its central location and once it is captured, the entire SE/SS (South East and South South) is gone. And that Imo governorship election shall be used to ignite the Holocaust" (Random Reflections WhatsApp platform)

Similar fabrications abound on Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, Instagram and other social media platform, in some cases, even in the print media. To credit such fallacious statements to a former General like T. Y. Danjuma is not only ridiculous but dubious. The 2019 governorship election in Imo State had come and gone, and there was no holocaust in neither Imo nor any part of the entire Southern Nigeria. The devastating implications of circulating such fake news is that it causes panic and is capable of triggering violence across ethnic and religious divides thereby endangering national security.

VII. Leadership/Public Mistrust

Fake news is also used as instrument for gaining political advantage especially during electioneering. In this circumstance, political actors and their supporters peddle all manners of propaganda and fake stories to smear and dint the public image of their opponents. In order words, they engage in carefully planned and systematic character assassination to diminish public perception of individuals perceived as obstacles. Where this ‘unholy project’ is successfully executed, it could turn the people against their leaders and may result to widespread violence. A good example of this scenario can be drawn from the incidence of January 2012 when the Federal Government of Nigeria under the leadership of Dr. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan of the Peoples’ Democratic Party (PDP) announced the removal of fuel subsidy which led to the some hike in the prices of petroleum products. The opposition party responded almost immediately by mobilizing Nigerians against the then Government, claiming that no such thing as fuel subsidy existed in Nigeria; that it was a ploy by the PDP led Government to loot the treasury of the Nation. What ensued was a massive revolt, demonstrations and crisis that crippled economic activities in the country for days; and a subsequent loss of a re-election bid by Dr. Ebele Jonathan in 2015.

Following the electoral victory of the opposition the All Progressive Party (APC), most Nigerians were shocked when the President Buhari led administration announced a hike in the prices of petroleum products citing subsidy as the reason. Although, the opposition had achieved their main motive of winning the 2015 presidential election, the January 2012 crisis with its attendant implications on the nation’s economy, loss of lives and properties and character assassination would have been avoided if not for propaganda and peddling of fake news. A recurrent claim against the incumbent President Muhammad Buhari who is a moslem from the north, is that he has what some people call “Islamization and Fulanization’ agenda to extend Sharia law across the country, and to establish Fulanis as land owners across the nook and cranny of Nigeria. Some of these stories are capable of igniting distrust in the President by the citizens of the country. Standage (2017) believes that, ‘the flowering of fabricated stories corrodes trust in the media in general, and makes it easier for unscrupulous politicians to peddle half-truths’ which is always detrimental to the overall welfare of the people.

VIII. Jungle Justice

Security is a comprehensive protective system put in place to ensure that lives and properties of citizens are safe and secured. In recent times, the phenomena called jungle justice has been on the rise, resulting to the unnecessary loss of lives of citizens in very uncanny ways. It is a form of public extrajudicial killings, where an alleged criminal is publicly humiliated, beaten or summarily executed by a crowd. The spread of fake news is obviously one of the fueling factors contributing to the rising cases of jungle

justice. Ogbette et al (2019) reported that a dozen people were killed in India just because of fake news of hoax messages. The victims were lynched after they were falsely accused of child abduction based on fake news circulated via WhatsApp platforms. Such cases abound in Nigeria where people are victimized for unverified allegations by mischief makers spread through the social media.

Indeed, the implications of fake news for national security are diverse and damaging. In recognizing the dangerous potentials of fake news, the United Nations (UN) Rapporteur on Freedom of Opinion and Expression, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) Representative on Freedom of Expression, and African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Right (ACHPR) Representative on Freedom of Expression and Access to Information, in a joint declaration of ‘Freedom of Expression and Fake News, Disinformation and Propaganda’ emphasized that, disinformation and propaganda may harm individual reputations and privacy, or incite to violence, discrimination and hostility against identifiable groups in society (International Specialized Mandate on Freedom of Expression, 2017). A recent report released by the BBC revealed that fake news was responsible for the escalation of farmers and herdsman’s crisis in most parts of the country.

In Nigeria and everywhere around the world, the negative impacts of fake news is growing so much so that some scholars fear that, the phenomenon may be at the foundation of the next world war. The issues surrounding fake news became a major preoccupation of the United Nations (UN) in the early days of the organization with the onset of the cold war. The problem was framed in terms of the threats posed to friendly relations between peoples and states by the systematic diffusion of deliberately false or distorted reports. (McGonagle, 2017) Back in 2013, the World Economic Forum’s Global Risk Report warned that misinformation could spark “digital wildfires” in our hyper-connected world.

Unarguably, fake news is a social phenomenon that is prominently promoting insecurity in Nigeria. Therefore, any sincere effort by the information professionals at tackling insecurity in the country must include strategies for curbing the menace of fake news comprehensively. In this regard, this paper proceeds to discuss some strategies for curbing fake news in Nigeria.

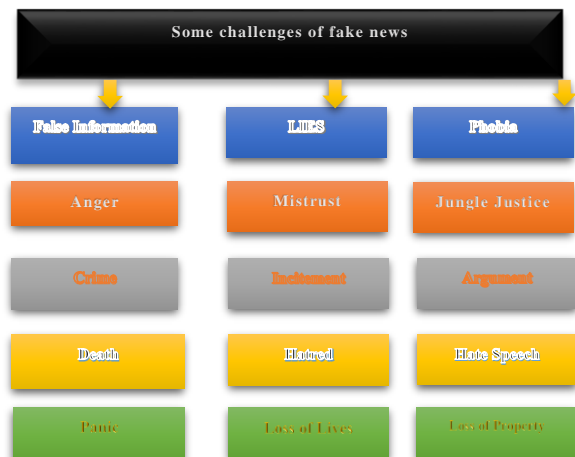


Fig. 2. Some challenges of fake news

IX. Strategies for Curbing Fake News in Nigeria

Fake news is harmful to our community, it makes the world less informed, erodes public trust (Mosseri, 2017) and threatens national security. Therefore, all relevant stakeholders – telecommunication companies, the media, librarians and other information professionals as well as teachers have a responsibility in addressing the menace of fake news. From the telecommunication perspective, it is believed that, most fake news is financially motivated; and one of the most effective approaches to fighting it, is by removing the economic incentives for traffickers of misinformation who make money by masquerading as legitimate news publishers and posting hoaxes that get people to visit their sites (Mosseri, 2017). Additionally, telecommunications companies should build new products to identify and limit the spread of fake news on their platform forms.

Also, relevant stakeholders should be supported in developing participatory and transparent initiatives for creating a better understanding of the impact of disinformation and propaganda on democracy, freedom of expression, journalism and civic space, as well as appropriate responses to these phenomena. Government must as well find a way to support its core traditional media for acceptability over social media. Nigeria in particular must ensure that its national newspapers and television stations are sustainable to practice quality journalism that will be acceptable and preferable to the people (Okogba, 2018). The need to rebuild trust in the traditional media is born out of the fact that political encroachment is having very negative impacts on most media houses in Nigeria, making most Nigerians to believe that every piece of news is either out rightly fake or fake with a touch of real.

Furthermore, the International Specialized Mandate on Freedom of Expression and/or Media (2017) recommends that measures should be taken to promote media and digital literacy as part of regular school curriculum and by engaging with civil society and other stakeholders to raise awareness about the issue of fake news.

Finally, librarians as traditional information providers are at the very centre of all information businesses. They have significant role to play in curbing the fake news. According to Denise (2018), libraries have a long history of working to strengthen the information literacy skills of their patrons, and one can easily view the fake news phenomena as just the most recent iteration. The bigger landscape of fake news reveals a complicated issue that resonates the indisputable importance of critical and evaluative skills. In this regard, the intrusion of fake news has provided libraries and librarians with a challenging but unique opportunity to engage their user communities on a broad discussion on the subject of critical and analytical thinking as part of their information seeking behaviour in the current information environment. The emphasis must therefore continue to lay on promoting information literacy skills among user communities.

X. Tips on How to Identify Fake News

Separating fact from false can be really tasking. But getting the truth is a worthy course no matter what it costs. Here are some tips on how to identify fake news:

1. Consider the Source of the Information: click away from the story to investigate the site, its mission and its contact information
2. Read beyond the Headlines: most headlines are usually sensational in order to attract people's attention. Read beyond the headlines to get the details of the news.
3. Check the Author: do a quick check on the author to ascertain his/her credibility
4. Investigate the Article: if you are unsure about a news article, do some quick investigations. First check the date to ensure that it is current. Most fake news and hoaxes are just old stories been presented as new events.
5. Develop a Critical and Evaluative Mindset: fake news are usually sensationalistic. Go beyond the sensations and ask critical mental questions about the ultimate reason behind the story. Does this story sound truthful?
6. Examine the Evidence: credible new stories usually include sufficient facts and figures from credible sources. Therefore, critically examine the evidence to determine that something actually happened, or if the facts have been twisted to back up a particular point of view.
7. Look out for Fake Images
8. Using modern editing software, people now create fake images that look real to support their fake stories. You can use the Google Reverse Image Search to check if an image has been altered or used in the wrong context. Equally, Artificial Intelligence Technologies can be employed.
9. Search for Other Sources
10. As a general rule, always have at least two reputable sources for a story before you do anything with such story. Ensure you find other source(s) using search engines to confirm the story.
11. When in doubt, ask the professionals
12. You can visit fact-checking websites like FactCheck.org, International Fact-Checking Network (IFCN), PolitiFact.com, Snopes.com, among others to verify your facts.
13. Stay Away from Unverifiable News
14. As much as possible, information professionals should stay away from any news that you cannot verify its authenticity. Do not share it.

XI. Conclusion

If Nigeria must be progressive in the path of economic development, the challenges of insecurity must be reasonably curtailed. As it has been established in this paper, the menace of fake news is contributing to the escalation of the security woes of the country. It is fueling hatred, ethno-religious conflicts, political violence,

leadership mistrust, economic instability, inter-tribal anxiety, character assassination, and ultimately posing serious threats to national development. The spread of fake news has been given impetus by the emergence and dominance of information and communications technologies especially the social media within the present information environment of the 21st century. Indeed, the trend of fake news and hoaxes may be impossible to eradicate, but its negative implications can be reduced or managed if all stakeholders take committed responsibility in doing all that need to be done.

XII. Recommendations

In addition to the already suggested strategies for curbing the negative implications of fake news in national security, the following are recommended:

1. Librarians and other information professionals must carefully peruse, select, store, process, and disseminate information only from verifiable sources.
2. The media regulating agencies should insist on media professionalism from media houses and professionals in order to avoid using them as instruments for the spread of propaganda especially by the elite/political class.
3. The Federal Government through its agencies like the Ministry of Information and the National Orientation Agency (NOA) should intensify campaigns against fake news in Nigeria, particularly as it concerns national security. Jingles and quote news must constantly be employed to play down the trend of fake news and hoaxes.

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