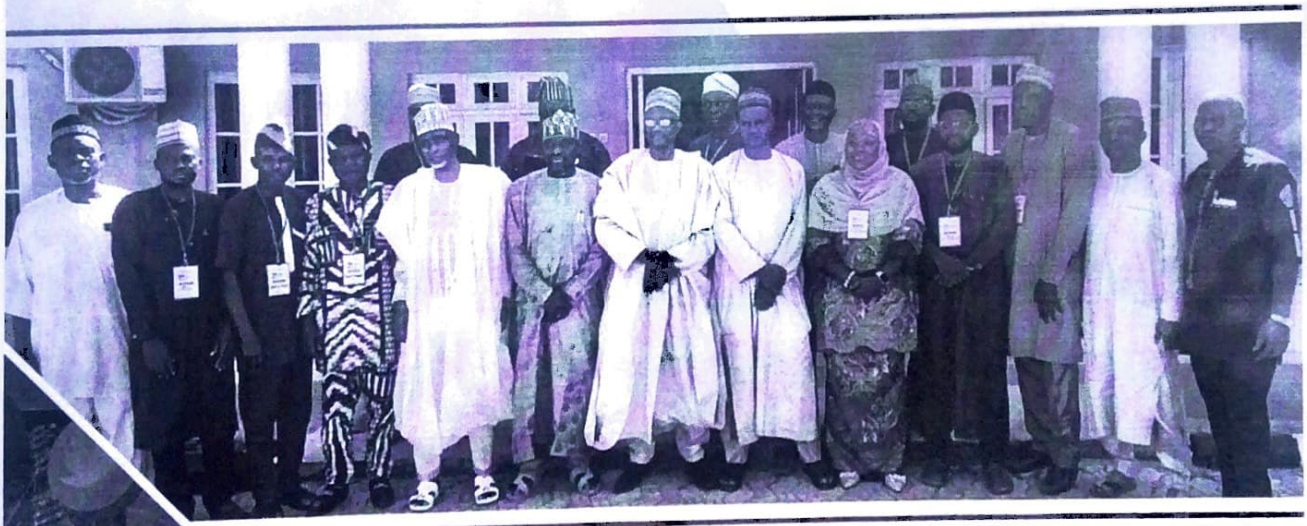
NIGERIAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION
NIGER STATE CHAPTER

2023 CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS

FAKE NEWS

6TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE AND AGM 2023

THEME:
COLLABORATIVE APPROCHES IN CURBING THE EFFECTS OF NEW MEDIA ON FAKE NEWS PROPAGANDA



3RD-7TH DECEMBER, 2023

NEW LECTURE THEATRE, SCHOOL OF SECONDARY EDUCATION, SCIENCE PROGRAMMES, FEDERAL COLLEGE OF EDUCATION, KONTAGORA, NIGER STATE.

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FROM THE EDITORIAL CREW

We are delighted to bring out the Maiden Issue of Nigerian Library Association, (NLA), Niger State Chapter's compiled Book of Proceedings. This is a compilation of Papers Presented at the Chapter's 6th Annual Conference held at Federal College of Education, Kontagora, Niger State.

High quality research is leading to corresponding high-quality theories that are finding their place in the real world of application. Nigerian Library Association, Niger State Chapter brings forth an opportunity for researchers in Librarianship Profession to create knowledge for application in emerging issues that will result to massive development in the society. The conference with a theme "Collaborative Approaches in Curbing the Effects of New Media on Fake News Propaganda" was carefully carved out and was intended to provide forum for exchange of ideas among professional colleagues towards finding tenable solutions to current issues in the global information value chain.

I owe a heartfelt thanks to all the article contributors for a very fascinating research output which promised to constantly thrive upon high quality research. Cases published in this issue have gone through internal editorial committee's review and the comments received from experts have helped to improve upon the quality of work. In this pursuit, I extend my immense gratitude to a very dedicated team of editors for their relentless and untiring efforts in this regard. We are also indebted to our external reviewers who have spared their valuable time despite their tight schedules and contributed immensely towards the success of this publication.

We sincerely hope that the readers will find the research outputs interesting, relevant and intellectually stimulating leading to building up diverse outlook about contemporary issues.

Associate Prof., A.O, Ahmed
Editor-in-Chief

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WELCOME REMARK BY THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE NIGERIAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION (NLA) NIGER STATE CHAPTER AT THE 6TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE ASSOCIATION HELD AT THE SCIENCE LECTURE THEATRE, FEDERAL COLLEGE OF EDUCATION (FCE) KONTAGORA, NIGER STATE FROM 3RD – 7TH DECEMBER, 2023.

The Chairman of the Occasion & the Keynote Speaker, Prof Farouk Haruna Rashid, Provost FCE Kontagora and the management team, the Royal Father of the Day, HRH Alhaji Muhammadu Barau Mu'azu (Sarkin Sudan) Emir of Kontagora, Lead Paper Presenter, Professor Katamba Abubakar Saka, University Librarian, FUT Minna, the Chief Host & the College Librarian, Mallam Samaila B. Mohammed, heads of libraries present, senior professional colleagues, the guests, past and present executives, members of this great Association, the Press Corp/Media Crew, the college community, all participants, ladies and gentlemen.

It is with so much delight and gratitude to Almighty ALLAH that I stand before you as the Chairperson to welcome you to the 6th Annual Conference of the Nigerian Library Association, Niger State Chapter.

The theme of this year's conference is "Collaborative Approaches in Curbing the Effects of New Media on Fake News Propaganda". As we may be aware, fake news is a growing problem in today's world, and it can have serious consequences. Fake news refers to deliberately fabricated information presented as legitimate news. It often aims to mislead and manipulate public opinion for various agendas, posing a significant threat to credibility and trust in the media. Fortunately, there are several ways to combat the spread of fake news. According to a study by Stanford University, one of the best ways to counter fake news is to limit person-to-person spread. This can be achieved by increasing awareness of available tools for factchecking, educating children to be analytical early on in life, making media literacy part of the basic education curriculum, and viewing the fight against fake news as a civic and moral responsibility. We believe that at the end of this conference, which includes paper presentations and demonstrations on curbing fake news, we will come out with recommendations and guidelines on how we can reduce the effects of fake news on society and this will be captured in our conference communique.

Let me also use this opportunity to acknowledge the efforts of my team of Vibrant Executives and the Local Organizing Committee who have been working assiduously despite their tight schedules to ensure the success of this conference. May Almighty ALLAH be with you and reward you all. Thank you for your attention and God bless!

Dr. Fatimah Jibril Abduldayan (CLN)
Chairperson,
NLA Niger State Chapter.

A KEYNOTE ADDRESS DELIVERED BY PROF. FAROUK HARUNA RASHEED, PROVOST, FEDERAL COLLEGE OF EDUCATION, KONTAGORA AT THE 6TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF NIGERIAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION, (NLA) NIGER STATE CHAPTER. HELD AT THE SCIENCE LECTURE THEATRE, FEDERAL COLLEGE OF EDUCATION (FCE) KONTAGORA, NIGER STATE FROM 3RD – 7TH DECEMBER, 2023.

PROTOCOL

Please permit me to begin by expressing how delighted I feel, to be approached to offer the Keynote Address at this spectacular event. I write with great joy and candor, to commend the leadership of the Nigerian Library Association (NLA), Niger State Chapter for deeming it fit to choose Federal College of Education Kontagora (FCEKG) as their choice for this year's conference. Their decision for Kontagora, despite the much worries on the state of insecurity that is ravaging this part of the country is truly laudable. Indeed, the Chapter Executive Council must be commended for organizing such a thoughtful conference at a time I consider to be a critical juncture for the information industry, not only in Nigeria, but across the African continent and indeed the globe.

When the leadership of the Niger State Chapter of the NLA approached me to deliver the Keynote Address, I did not hesitate in accepting the invitation for two reasons. First is my inseparable attachment to my very amiable and caring wife, who happens to be a librarian by both training and practice. Her passion for the profession has made me to see myself as a librarian. Right from when I was the Provost of the College of Education in Minna, she has always made sure that I participate in their programs. Interestingly, her professional support to my academic sojourn has constantly propelled me to achieve many academic feats.

The second is the theme for the conference: "***Collaborative Approaches in curbing the effects of New Media and Fake News Propaganda***", which clearly appears to be timely and quite inspiring especially because of its immense relevance in today's dynamic information landscape. You would all agree with me that when we delve into the concepts of new media and fake news, there is a tendency to center the discourse on the machinations and intrigues of externally-generated vulnerabilities and external adversaries. While the term 'new media', often referred to as digital media is hard to define using a single, uniform definition because the term evolved with the development of technology, it is a concept that usually takes definite form when a comparison is made between the old and new mediums of communication.

Contextualizing the concept in the digital era for example, new media are seen as those electronic communication channels that have triumphed over traditional media like radio, recordings, and paper books, thereby paving better ways for instant communication. New media has made profound impact on the dissemination of information. They have undoubtedly, paved way for the rise of digital platforms, thereby transforming the way we access, consume, and share information. Few examples of new media are social media platforms, blogs, and online news outlets that have democratized information dissemination, providing a voice to the masses. Though, the democratization they brought came with some challenges, chief among them being the rise of fake news propaganda.

In other words, false narratives, misinformation, disinformation and carefully crafted propaganda are major threats not only to the credibility of information but also, to the very fabric of our social discourse. In other words, they have the potential to undermine the very foundations of informed decision-making. In an era where information flows ceaselessly and boundaries between fact and fiction blur, collaborative approaches are paramount to safeguarding the integrity of our information landscape and, by extension, the foundations of our collective peaceful existence.

However, what exactly could be the reason why some people engage themselves in fake news and propaganda activities? Truth remains that, a complex interplay of individual, societal, and contextual factors are the reasons. Quite often, when people share or interact with online information, they are influenced or persuaded by the originators of that information. This is especially true because when sharing information on social media occurs, it is likely to be spontaneous and rapid, rather than being a considered action that people spend time deliberating over. While some people engage in fake news propaganda to promote political ideologies or to acquire financial/economic gains, others do so to popularize certain social and religious beliefs, or to achieve certain strategic goals. Sadly, the consequences usually make the truth hard to find, and could be the leading sources of danger to personal security. They all unfold in intricate and multifaceted ways that leaves some lasting negative impact on individuals, societies,

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and institutions. They penetrate all levels of the social sphere such as religious, political, and traditional and thus inhibit collective national development.

But, how do we address the malaise? Attempting to combat the consequences/effects of new media and fake news propaganda requires a unified and collaborative approach to be instituted. The approach shouldn't be a mere strategic option but a necessity especially because no single entity – be it government, libraries, the media, or civil society can address the problem of fake news propaganda in isolation. Partnerships that transcend traditional boundaries must be forged, that would work harmoniously to fortify our information ecosystem.

To achieve these, the government has to play a crucial role in enacting robust regulatory frameworks and policies that would promote media literacy, ensure transparency in information dissemination, limit the spread of disinformation, and hold purveyors of fake news accountable. Also, the media, being the Fourth Estate of the realm must put hands in gloves with factchecking organizations to ensure that accurate information is shared.

In addition, technology also has a role to play especially since innovations like artificial intelligence, machine learning, and blockchain technology can be harnessed to detect and counter the spread of fake news while libraries and librarians have to share ideas on, or perhaps, play active roles in this struggle especially since fake news has, among other consequences, exacerbated divisions within our social fabric, deepened polarization in our political landscape, and fueled widespread social resentment.

That is why I see fake news propaganda as a serious problem that is beyond the issue of climate change or even terrorism. Unfortunately, to distinguish facts from fiction has never been an easy task especially because falsehoods spread faster than truths in the age of social media. Undoubtedly, it is a corrosive social vice that demands urgent attention and concerted efforts to mitigate its destructive impact on the integrity of information, public discourse, and the cohesion of our communities.

Quite interestingly, librarians are custodians of knowledge and guardians of truth. They have a pivotal role to play in addressing the issues that surround fake news and misinformation and the theme for today's discourse underscores the importance of collaborative efforts in navigating the complex terrain of combating fake news propaganda.

It calls for a unified approach that involves libraries and librarians, educational institutions, media organizations, and the broader community. For the librarians, they have the expertise in information literacy, and are well-positioned to lead initiatives that promote critical thinking and discernment. In other words, they have all it takes to empower their patrons with the requisite skills to evaluate sources, verify information, and navigate the ocean flow of information that is available online.

On a conclusive note, addressing the challenges posed by new media and fake news propaganda demands a united front. As we engage in discussions and collaborative initiatives over the course of this conference, I would remind us all to always reaffirm our commitment to the principles of truth and accuracy in our daily dealings. Let our actions reflect the understanding that, in the face of fake news, misinformation, and propaganda, collaboration is not merely beneficial but imperative. With the illustrious lineup of faces here this morning, I have much conviction that this conference would be a very wonderful and historic event. I believe our presence is a reflection of our shared commitment to advancing one of the vital roles of librarians in addressing a debilitating challenge of the new media era. We all have to acknowledge that the battle against fake news propaganda is not the responsibility of a single entity but a collective duty that requires collaboration, innovation, and sustained commitment. Together I trust that we can fortify the foundations of truth and ensure that libraries remain beacons of reliable information in the digital era.

As deliberations unfold, let us leave here with a shared commitment to building a future where the free flow of accurate information prevails over the insidious spread of falsehood. It is only through doing so that we can forge a path toward a more informed, resilient, and democratic society.

May this conference be a catalyst for positive change.

Thank you.

Prof. Farouk Haruna Rasheed,
Provost, Federal College of Education, Kontagora, Niger State.

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THE ROLE OF PUBLIC LIBRARIES IN THE FIGHT AGAINST FAKE NEWS IN NIGERIA

BY

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ABSTRACT

The paper examined the role that public libraries play in addressing the menace of fake mews in Nigeria. In recent years, the dissemination of fake news through various media channels has posed a significant threat to the country's social and political landscape. Public libraries as trusted institutions for information dissemination and literacy promotion, have the potential to serve as pivotal agents in combating the spread of fake news. The paper emphasized various roles played by public libraries in combating the spread of fake news such as providing access to credible information resources, offering information literacy programs and collaborating with various organizations. The paper highlights the challenges faced by public in actively fighting the menace of fake news to include lack of fund, rapid spread of fake news in the digital era and librarians lacks training on how to identify and checkmate the spread of fake news. The paper concludes by emphasizing that librarians need to be trained to identify and address the menace of fake news

KEY WORDS: Fake news, Fight, Information, Public Libraries and Role

Introduction

Information plays a paramount role in the development and progress of an individual and society at large. Information empowers individuals in a society by expanding their knowledge which enables them to make informed decisions. Also, for nations, information serves as a foundation for effective governance, policy formulation, national security, economic development, and social cohesion. Isachenko, (2018) mentioned that information is one of the basic values of modern society. The author also stressed that information is the major factor that enhances the economic well-being of a society.

As a result of the importance of information to people and society at large, it becomes necessary that citizens have access to accurate, timely, and relevant information for personal growth, decision-making, education, innovations, and economic growth. Despite the importance of information to individual and society, there has been widespread fake information or fake news. The term fake news can be defined as misleading information presented as reliable news. Aboyade et al. (2022) view fake news as fabricated information that mimics media content deliberately created and circulated with the intent to deceive.

There are several factors responsible for the spread of fake news in Nigeria such as political affiliation, lack of media literacy, religious factors, lack of digital skills, poor reading culture, social media and digital platforms, fun, and high illiteracy rate. Also, Otulugbu (2020) stressed that monetary gains, sake of relevance, and inadequate guidelines regulating the use of the Internet are also factors that facilitate the spread of fake news. Fake news can be disseminated using various media such as traditional media, social media, and websites.

There have been various instances in Nigeria when fake news was circulated. For example, The Guardian Newspaper (2023) reported that in 2019, false information was spread that President Muhammed Buhari, had died and had been replaced by a clone from Sudan. According to the writer this information caused panic and confusion among huge segments of the populace. Fake news is striving in Nigeria as a result of the evolution of Information Communication Technology, mobile phones, high illiteracy rates, unhealthy political and industry rivalry, pornification of online news outlets, and low level of digital literacy. The consequences of fake news on the society are enormous. According to the University of Victoria Library (2023), the spread of fake news can have both personal and academic consequences such as calling into question the credibility of information sources, providing false misleading information that is used to make a decision,

confirming biases, and leads to lack belief in scientific findings. In an ideal situation, citizens as expected to be equipped on how to identify fake news and their sources, unfortunately, this is not the situation. Young (2020) opined that many citizens do not yet have sufficient skills to navigate the flood of information they access to know if such information is true or false. To combat this issue of fake news and its consequences. It becomes imperative that relevant stakeholders such as telecommunication companies, the media, teachers, information providers, and libraries have a responsibility to address the menace of fake news.

A public library serves as a place where valuable and equitable information is provided and accessed. Public libraries have emerged as crucial institutions in promoting information literacy and curbing the spread of fake news in Nigeria. Public libraries can curb the spread of fake news through the provision of extensive resources, information literacy programs, and collaboration with schools and communities. This paper therefore examines the role of public libraries in Nigeria in curbing fake news.

Historical Background of Fake News

The history of fake news can be traced back to ancient times. Throughout history, fake news has been used to advance certain agendas. Posetti and Mathews (2018) mentioned that in Circa 44 BC during the Roman Empire, there was Octavianus's propaganda campaign against Anthony to spear Antony's reputation. Furthermore, the invention of the Gutenberg printing press in 1943 dramatically amplified the dissemination of misinformation and it ultimately delivered the first large-scale news Hoax called The Great Hoax of 1835. The invention of printed papers made it easier for individuals and organizations to spread false information. Also, the arrival of the internet in the late 20th century which was closely followed by the invention of social media in the 21st century dramatically multiplied the spread of fake news. (Posetti and Mathews, 2018).

The term "fake news" is made up of two words fake which means something that is a fact but is expected to be taken as a fact; and news which means information about events and ideas. The phrase fake news was coined in the year 2016 when BuzzFeed's media editor, Craig Silverman noticed a completely made-up story that seemed to originate from one small Eastern European town. He and a colleague started to investigate and shortly before the US election they identified at least 140 fake news websites that were pulling in huge numbers on social media during the US presidential election This event began the modern phase of misinformation which is popularly referred to as fake news (Wendling, 2018).

Types of Fake News

There are different types of fake news. These include:

Satire or Parody: These are articles or stories whose main aim is to be humorous but it is mistaken as real news. According to Low, *et al.* (2022) satirical is factually incorrect but the intent is not to deceive but rather call out, ridicule, or expose behavior that is shameful and corrupt. A contemporary example of satire would be many comedy skits – especially the ones in which popular actors impersonate famous politicians, thereby raising a laugh at the latter's expense but usually doing it in a relatively gentle way, in which everyone is on the joke together including the person being caricatured.

Misinformation: This refers to false or inaccurate information that is spread without the intention of deceiving the receivers of the information. Misinformation could be a result of misunderstanding, rumors, and outdated information. Budak *et al.* (2019) view misinformation as factual inaccurate, distorted, and contextual information to shape biased narrative. For instance, the World Health Organisation (2020) acknowledged that the new coronavirus pandemic was followed by an infodemic and tsunami of misinformation.

Disinformation: This is intentionally false or misleading information that is spread with the main intention to deceive or manipulate people. Disinformation has been defined by McGonagle (2017) as information that has been deliberately fabricated and disseminated to deceive and mislead others into believing falsehoods or doubting verifiable facts; it is disinformation that is presented as or is likely to be perceived as news. People who spread disinformation use various strategies and methods such as the selective deployment of facts, use of unsourced content and false visuals, undermining of facts, creation of confusion, misattribution of quotes, and promotion of conspiracy theories, all of which led to serious consequences (Hassan, 2023). There have been several instances of disinformation in Nigeria. For example, it was widely circulated that ex-President Mohammed Buhari would take another wife in October 2019 and to validate this rumor, invitation cards were also distributed. ((Edwin and Yalmi, 2019).

Propaganda: Propaganda is information that is circulated to deliberately spread and promote a political agenda by using biased or misleading tactics Lewan. Hundeyin (2021) stressed that During Germany's 3rd Reich, propaganda minister Joseph Goebbels famously

remarked, "If you tell a lie big enough and keep repeating it, people will eventually come to believe it." This propaganda technique, which was successfully trialed during the 1930s and 1940s using the German population as Guinea Pigs, later found its way across the Atlantic into Africa where it became the mainstay of dictatorship after the dictatorship.

Clickbait: These are sensationalized headlines or articles that are designed to attract attention and generate clicks, often at the expense of accuracy or truth. According to the University of Oregon (2023), clickbait pieces are articles that feature headlines designed to get people to click on them often by presenting misleading information about what the work is about. Clickbait does not necessarily circulate fake news as the type of headline or accompanying posts can be technically true but never the less misleading.

Manipulated images: Manipulated images are another type of fake news. Manipulated images are visual misinformation created through images or video editing software, altering the context to mislead viewers. Juan-Jose and Vaillez (2022) noted that video images are rapidly gaining ground because the content can be easily adulterated which leads to fake news.

Pseudoscience: According to Media Literacy for Citizenship (2023) pseudoscience is purveyors of greenwashing, miracle cures, ant-vaccination, and climate change denial.

The Role of Public Libraries in Combating Fake News

Public libraries in Nigeria provide spaces and information resources where everyone is welcome to acquire and obtain their information needs regardless of their political or religious affiliation, sexual orientation, status, gender, educational qualifications, tribe, and profession. As one of the key institutions that is saddled with the responsibility of disseminating information, and knowledge and promoting intellectual freedom, public libraries are expected to be at the forefront in fighting against fake news.

Librarians can serve as guides and resources themselves. They are expected to help users navigate through the vast amount of information available and provide support in finding reliable information. Public libraries are expected to be able to identify trustworthy information sources. These include the utilization of fact-checking sites and library subject guides Madukwe (2023) pointed out that public libraries should be at the forefront in educating the general public about fake news because public libraries are in the business of acquiring unique skills to assist users by evaluating all kinds of information in whatever medium it

It is the responsibility of public libraries to educate the general public in Nigeria on how to search for information from credible sources in both traditional and digital media. The Wall Street Journal reported that a Stanford University study of nearly 8,000 students found that 82 percent of middle schoolers were unable to differentiate between "an ad labeled 'sponsored content' and a real news story on a website (Aggey,2023). Public libraries are also well-positioned to provide. Public libraries are expected to offer information literacy programs to educate users on how to critically evaluate information. These programs can teach patrons how they can assess the information that they encounter, encouraging patrons to think critically about sources, fact-checking, and identifying biases.

Equally, public libraries are expected to play crucial role in the curbing of fake news by providing online resource evaluation services. Public libraries can create online and offline guides that provide tips and tools for evaluating the credibility of information sources. There are ready-made tools that librarians can utilize in differentiating between reliable and unreliable information. Examples of such tools include: the Washington Post fact check and the currency, relevance, authority, accuracy, and purpose checklist (CRAAP) could be utilized in identifying fake news. comes.

Public libraries can curb the menace of fake news by carefully selecting, acquiring, processing, and disseminating information resources from reputable publishers, organizations, and authors. This is achievable when public library management acquires materials that have been fact-checked, peer-reviewed, or obtained from trusted sources. According to Rashid (2023), libraries meticulously select materials from reputable publishers, databases, and academic journals, ensuring access to accurate information for patrons. This curation process is based on quality, authenticity, and reliability.

Empirical Review on Various Initiatives in Curbing Fake News

There are various approaches in curbing fake news. Apuke, *et al.* (2022) carried out a study on the effect of fake news awareness as an intervention strategy for motivating news verification behavior among social media users in Nigeria. Findings from the study revealed that fake news awareness was found to be an effective intervention strategy used to intensify the urgency and need to verify news before sharing.

Barakat *et al.* (2021) utilized an empirical approach to understand users' fake news identification om social media. The findings of the study revealed that expertise in social media use and verification behavior have

positive impact on fake news identification. While trust in social media as an information channel decreases this identification behavior.

Kim, *et al.* (2021) carried out a systematic review on fake news research through the lens of news creation, consumption, research efforts, challenges and future direction. The authors recommended the following approaches to counter fake news: developing a computational model that considers the characteristics of news consumption environment, understanding the diversity of news consumption through modern models and increasing consumers' awareness of the characteristics and impacts of fake news by providing access to reliable information and education.

Equally, Ng, *et al.* (2021) investigated the effect of platform intervention policies on fake news dissemination and survival in China. Findings from the study revealed that, fake news is disseminated in a less centralized and more dispersed manner and survives for a shorter period after a forwarding restriction policy is implemented.

Also, Rubal *et al.* (2022) carried out a study on the use of critical media and Information literacy to Combat Misinformation: n this study, 55 research articles out of 2077 articles from the year 2010 to 2020 were incorporated from three databases – Sage Journals, Science Direct, Taylor and Francis, for quantitative and thematic analysis. The findings from the study revealed that critical media, information, technological advancements and Governmental regulations on fake news spread can combat the spread of fake news.

Revez (2021) carried out a systematically review of the literature to identify the most recent library practices in the fight against fake news. After the extraction, with a final set of 27 documents, a multi-step qualitative analysis and a categorization were developed. Findings showed that most studies emphasized that libraries fight against fake news are mainly focused on providing information literacy instructions.

Strategies for Curbing the Menace of Fake News

To successfully curb fake news, public libraries must employ various strategies The first strategy that a public library should utilize is to provide and promote reliable sources of information. This can be achieved by ensuring that the public has access to current and reliable information in various formats. It is not enough to provide these information resources; users must also be aware of the resources. The provision of current information resources is an indispensable tool in fighting the menace of fake news rural dwellers in Nigeria may not have access to reliable and current information resources. Information resources can be promoted through displaying them. physically and virtually (websites and social media} By providing and promoting reliable information sources libraries can help users distinguish between reliable and unreliable information.

Secondly, public library management should conduct a survey to assess public attitudes and beliefs about fake news. Conducting surveys can enable libraries to gather data on the impact of fake news on their host community. Data gathered can be helpful to the library, researchers, policymakers, and educators working on strategies for curbing fake news. Surveys on citizens' attitudes and beliefs about fake news help public libraries tailor their programs and understanding to meet the information needs of users.

Typically, gathering data involves analyzing the spread and impact of fake news, identifying the sources and motivations behind it, and developing interventions to counteract its effects. This often involves conducting surveys, experiments, and content analysis research to better understand the prevalence and impact of fake news, as well as the factors that contribute to its dissemination. The use of surveys to understand the depth and effects of fake news by public libraries has some limitations such as limited sample size may lead to biased or incomplete results, difficulty in measuring the impact of fake news on society and the data collected may not capture the full complexity of the problem.

Another strategy to combat fake news by public libraries is organizing information literacy programs for various groups such as: skilled and unskilled workers, children, vulnerable citizens, and students. Information literacy programs could include organizing workshops, training, and educational initiatives aimed at equipping individuals. The use of information literacy as a tool to fight fake news has some challenges, such as a lack of education on information literacy skills and, the rapid spread of fake news makes it difficult for information literacy efforts to keep up with the constant influx of new fake information, some people belief any information that confirms their bias and misinformation from trusted sources. Sullivan (2019) stated that librarians were vague about the precise nature of the problem of fake news, solutions and lack specificity.

Equally, for public libraries to effectively combat fake news there is a need to collaborate with various groups such as government agencies, educational institutions, and community organizations. Collaborating with groups, libraries can pool resources, access expertise and extend the reach of their strategies in combating fake news may lead to a more comprehensive and impactful response to fake news. Banks (2016)

advocated that libraries should collaborate with journalists to increase media literacy. Using collaboration with organizations as a strategy to fight fake news in Nigeria by public libraries can have a few potential issues. Examples of such issues include public libraries excessively relying on external organizations for the provision of resources, public libraries having to align with the agenda of the organization, conflict of interest, and limited resources.

Furthermore, public libraries can provide fact-checking services to verify the accuracy of any information. This can be achieved by employing trained professionals collaborating with fact-checking organizations or visiting fact-checking websites such as Politifact, factcheck.org, Washington Post fact checker, snopes, fact check from Duke Reporters' Lab, and flack check. Also, there are also other tools to check pictures such as google reverse. One of the disadvantages of using fact-checking websites to verify information is that they have limited reach. The implication of this is that even if accurate information is available on various fact-checking websites, it may not be visible to many people especially those that do not have access to the Internet.

Lastly, public libraries should be at the forefront of debunking any fake news they come across. With this, they will be able to contribute to a more informed society and help individuals to make better-informed decisions. Issues such as lack of limited resources, lack of expertise, the rapid spread of fake news, resistance to change by citizens, and limited reach may affect the use of debunking fake news as a weapon to fight fake news in Nigeria by public libraries.

Challenges in Curbing Fake News

In curbing the menace of fake news public libraries in Nigeria may face the challenge of limited financial resources which may make it difficult for public library management to implement a comprehensive program that will address the issue of fake news in their community. Aondohemba (2017) noted that the funding and financial allocations to public libraries have remained poor for decades. Public libraries need adequate resources such as current information resources, Internet facilities to run various services, pay and hire personnel.

The rapid spread of fake news in the digital era, is another issue that may be faced by public libraries in fighting the menace of fake news. Andermann (2023) stressed that the equalization of access to information through advancement in technology has made it easier than ever for people to discover, consume, and share knowledge. Yet these same factors may result in public libraries struggling to monitor and counter the volume of fake news in society.

Another problem that may be faced by public libraries in fighting the spread of fake news is how to maintain neutrality and intellectual freedom. Public libraries are expected to uphold intellectual freedom by providing access to a variety of information resources. However, this function may be difficult to achieve if they are to censor or restrict any information especially if it has not been proven to be false.

Also, many public libraries staff lack adequate training on how to identify and address fake news effectively. The consequences of the lack of adequate training of librarians in curbing the spread of fake news are enormous. They include: a lack of skills to identify and evaluate fake news may result in the inclusion of unreliable sources of information in the library and their host community, may not be able to properly educate users on how to identify fake news, and may also lead to the spread of fake news.

Furthermore, poor Collaborative efforts between libraries and other information organizations is another challenge hindering effective strategies in curbing the menace of fake news. Public libraries are expected to collaborate with government agencies and private organizations to address the menace of fake news by providing accurate information to the various communities in Nigeria.

Also, language, religion, and cultural barriers may be a challenge in fighting the spread of fake news in Nigeria. Nigeria is a diverse nation with many languages and cultures. Citizens spread fake news in different languages, religions, and cultures. Public libraries in Nigeria may find it difficult to address fake news as a result of diverse communities in Nigeria.

Conclusion

Public libraries are crucial in fighting fake news by providing accurate and reliable information, collaborating with various organizations and educating citizens on how to evaluate sources. To effectively combat fake news, librarians need to be trained to identify and address it.

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