

Fake News and Criminal Law in Nigeria: Towards A Comparative Analysis

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Abstract

The advent of “new media technology” has been linked with fake news and has brought about change in society, virtually in all spheres of society be it politics, economics, or health life of the society. This new media technology linked with fake news has disrupted and placed a barrier on democracy and the right to freedom of expression. However, this study is geared towards a comparative analysis of fake news and criminal law in Nigeria, citing other countries in the international system on how they have been tackling fake news using the instrumentality of criminal law. The study is based on qualitative research with the adoption of secondary data i.e., the use of library, journals etc. The study believes that criminalization strategy is needed to fight against fake news that can cause damages to the society. Aside criminalization strategy, the study also argues that cultural and educational strategy should be taken into consideration to reduce the menace of fake news. Inoculation theory formed the study’s theoretical foundation and gives a concrete explanation on the cultural and educational strategy which is geared towards media literacy. Th study recommends that, all important shareholders such as the INEC Officials, Security Agents, Telecommunication Corporations, Journalists, Civil Defense Organizations, Liberians, and other Information Professionals and Health Practitioners, as well as the Academia, should have roles to play in addressing the menace of fake news in Nigeria and that online media should be regulated.

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1. Introduction

The perception of “fake news” has raised significant attention in recent years, developing from its ironic fictional origins into a passionately criticized Internet phenomenon. Whether labelled as rumors, “counter knowledge,” misinformation, “post-truths,” “alternative facts” or just mere lies, these false speeches of fact naturally are published on Web sites and spread across social media for profit or social influence. While fake news propagators are regularly taken to task in the court of public opinion, we are unaware of any legal structured discussion of the unique legal issues surrounding the spread of fake news (Klein D.O & Wueller J.R, 2017)

However, this study aims to analyze the role of criminal law in tackling fake news using the Nigerian legal system. The study also examines some states in the international system on legal initiative put in place to tackle the menace of fake news in relation to the Nigerian legal system. The study believes that criminalization of fake news carrier is imperative to tackle the phenomenon. Also, aside the legal precedents of fake news phenomenon, the study also put into consideration some socio-cultural and educational solution to curb the menace of fake news in Nigeria.

2. Conceptual Clarifications on “Fake News”

The term “fake news” is any information that is considered as “false, often sensational information disseminated under the appearance of news reporting”. The term is drawing global attention over the years due to its increased usage by 365% in the Collins Corpus (Towers, 2018). According to Ethical Journalism Network (EJN), fake news is information deliberately fabricated and published to deceive and mislead others into believing falsehood or doubtful messages (EJN., 2017).

The British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) also defines fake news as “completely false information, photos

or videos purposefully created and spread to confuse or misinform; information, photos or videos manipulated to deceive, or old photographs shared as new; satire or parody which means no harm but can fool people” (BBC, 2019).

Fake news is a multifaceted phenomenon that can be defined based on three parameters as postulated by Wardle (2017): “the type of content created and shared; the intentions of those behind this, and the forms of dissemination”. Wardle (2017) further identified seven different categories of fake news in the following order: “satire/parody, misleading content, impostor content, fabricated content, false connection, false context and manipulated content”. In an additional way, one can breakdown the seven categories into two broad forms of fake news, namely, High-profile fake news (McGonagle, 2017; Tower-Clark, 2018); and Low-profile fake news (McGonagle, 2017; Mendel, 2015).

High-profile fake news refers to confusing information and other contents that emanate from prominent sources while low-profile fake news is simply the opposite of high-profile fake news, that is, disinformation that emerges from indirect, or ordinary sources.

Fake news is also contextual in nature. Consequently, the core elements of fake news are the ‘fatefulness’ of news content and the commitment to trick or mislead. Therefore, false content that is generated in error and distributed without the purpose of misleading the consumers may be dismissible since no human system is invulnerable to mistakes. It is alongside this contextual that Ogbette, Idam, and Kareem (2019), proposes six types of fake news and they include the following.

- “Satire or Parody - no intention to cause harm but has potential to fool the audience”.
- “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 abovementioned, fake news takes diverse forms, from inoffensive to damaging. This thought is needful in discussing ‘fake news’ as societal wickedness. Therefore, this study sees fake news as intentionally or unintentionally manipulated or fabricated info or news content judiciously disseminated with the commitment to causing anxiety, disturbance, provocation or unprovocative contents, and harm or no harm contents at either individual or communal measure. It was in the drop of 2016 during the presidential elections in the United States of America that fake news began to dominate news headlines and fuel public dissertations.

3. Fake News Narrative Statute and Solutions

Possible solutions to the menace of fake news can move at different levels. However, the possible solutions should not be based on criminal law or legal proceedings alone. Some cultural/educational solutions are also imperative. Though, the criminalization of the menace is also part of the strategy that should be taken into consideration.

3.1 Cultural/ Educational Strategy: The Inoculation Theory

Inoculation theory offers an in-built solution to fake news phenomenon by tendering the possibility of a “vaccine” against fake news (van der Linden et al, 2017). Inoculation theory was originally brain-busted by William McGuire with a notion to encourage attitudinal confrontation as against persuasion and propaganda, in a way of analogy to biological immunization. To demonstrate further, inoculation theory was based on the injections that deal with a destabilized dose of a virus which can convene resistance against future infection by triggering the construction of antibodies. However, inoculation theory suggests that the same can be attained with “mental antibodies” and information. In other words, by preventively exposing people to a destabilized version of a (counter)-argument, and by consequently countering that argument, attitudinal confrontation can be convened against any persuasion attempts (Papageorgis & McGuire, 1961).

Significantly, however, inoculation model has usually positioned around protecting the kinds of beliefs that

everyone automatically knows to be true, while little is known about how inoculation works with reverence to more debatable issues (McGuire, 1964; Wood, 2007; van der Linden et al., 2017). In two modern studies, van der Linden et al. (2017) and Cook, Lewandowsky, and Ecker (2017) noticed that inoculating people with facts against misinformation was effective in the context of a highly politicized issue e.g. global warming, regardless of prior attitudes. Equally, Banas and Miller (2013) were able to inoculate people with facts in the framework of “adhesive” 9/11 conspiracy theories.

With this understanding, therefore, inoculation theory is vital in addressing issues regarding fake news in the society. Inoculation theory has to do with sensitization i.e., sensitizing people about what needs to be factual in society as against the dissemination of misinformation that creates tension, unrest as well as fear in society. People need to be inoculated or educated about the danger of fake news and make them understand the factual news that needs to be known instead of propagating fake news. Arguably, inoculation theory can only be seen as vaccination to fake news, it is a mental vaccine to tackle misinformation. In inoculating people about the danger of fake news, “media literacy” is therefore imperative.

3.2. The Criminalization Strategy

Crimes are distinguished from other acts or omissions which may give rise to legal proceedings by the prospect of punishment. It is this prospect which separates criminal law from the law of contract and offence and other aspects of civil law. The formal threshold at which the criminal law intervenes is when the conduct in question has a sufficiently serious social impact to justify the state, rather than (in the case of breach of contract or trespass) the individual affected, taking on the case of the injured party. The American Model Penal Code (Louis; Richard; Alexis; and Raphael, 2017) provides a good restatement (definition) of the proper purposes of the criminal law, namely:

- To forbid and prevent conduct that unjustifiably and inexcusably inflicts or threatens substantial harm to individual or public interests.
- To subject to public control people whose conduct indicates that they are disposed to commit crimes.
- To safeguard conduct that is without fault from condemnation as criminal.
- To give fair warning of the nature of the conduct declared to be an offence.
- To differentiate on reasonable grounds between serious and minor offences.

The primary purpose or function of the criminal law is to help maintain social order and stability. The Texas criminal code for example proclaims that the purpose of criminal law is to “establish a system prohibitions, penalties, and correctional measures to deal with conduct that unjustifiably and inexcusably causes or threatens harm to those individual or public interests for which state protection is appropriate.” (Texas Constitution and Statutes; New York’s Penal Law, 2021).

However, since fake news is perceived as danger to the society and individuals, criminal law is called into play. In essence, a need for punishment arises in correspondence with the value of the interests harmed by fake news, as the wide dissemination of fake news today is ensured by the advent of social media.

4. An overview of criminal law measures against fake news in selected countries

The urge for criminalization of fake news is now global. Many countries have taken initiatives to criminalize fake news. In addition to the United States, these include Argentina, Brazil, Canada, China, Egypt, France, Germany, Israel, and Japan; Kenya, Malaysia, and Nicaragua; Russia, Sweden, and the United Kingdom (Law Library of Congress, 2019). However, for the purpose of this study, only some of these initiatives brought shall be comparatively analyzed one after the other.

USA

Most states’ fake news reporting statutes developed in measure from the American Law Institute’s Model Penal Code, which adopted a criminal provision for “false public alarm” in 1962. That provision stated that, a person is guilty of a crime if he initiates or circulates a report or warning of an impending bombing or other crime or catastrophe, knowing that the report or warning is false or baseless and that it is likely to cause evacuation of a building, place of assembly, or facility of public transport, or to cause public inconvenience or alarm (America

Law Institute Model Penal Code, 1980). As of 1980, seven states had enacted laws substantially identical to the Model Penal Code offense, while four others had proposed such provisions (Tompros L.W, Richard A. Crudo, Pfeiffer A, Boghossian R., 2017).

Today, most states have fake news reporting statutes, many of which are like the American Model Penal Code. But some states' statutes are expressively wider. For example, Delaware's and Kentucky's misinformation reporting statutes impose liability for circulating a knowingly false report that is likely to cause public fear or inconvenience, whether the speaker knows about the likelihood of harm or not (Tompros L.W, Richard A. Crudo, Pfeiffer A, Boghossian R., 2017).

Brazil

Brazil has yet to enact specific legislation targeted at safeguarding the neutrality of any type of news regardless of media and so far, has no legal definition of "fake news." Presently, the "Penal Code", "Electoral Code", and "federal law" are being used to fight the occurrence. Moreover, in the 2018 general elections, the Superior Electoral Tribunal passed a resolution that targeted fake news viewed as hate speech in an electoral advertisement during the electoral campaign. To address the problem, several bills of law dealing with this subject (fake news) are under debate in Congress.

The Penal Code punishes with detention from six months to two years and a fine to anybody carrying out fake news. The same punishment applies to anyone who propagates or divulges the imputation, knowing it is false.

Canada

According to LLC (2019), like Brazil, no law in Canada prohibits the dissemination of fake news unless that information is defamatory, covered by libel laws, or within the ambit of Canada's broadcasting regulations. However, Section 181 of Canada's Criminal Code prohibits the spreading of fake news, but that provision was declared unconstitutional in 1992 by the Supreme Court of Canada. No information was found specifically on fake legal news. The government provides a variety of official online sources of legal information that are publicly accessible, however, the following approaches are put into consideration to tackle fake news in Canada.

- The hate propaganda provisions in sections 318 and 319 of the Criminal Code can be used to deal with false news that promotes hatred.
- The defamatory libel provisions in section 300 of the Criminal Code prohibit people from knowingly publishing false information that has been designed to insult or that is likely to harm the reputation of someone.
- Federal regulations such as section 8(1) of the Broadcasting Distribution Regulations prohibit radio and television broadcasters from broadcasting false or misleading news and abusive comments that are likely to expose persons to hatred based on listed grounds.
- Some provincial laws, such as section 14 of Saskatchewan's Human Rights Code, prohibit publications that are likely to expose groups to hatred.

China

On August 29, 2015, China's National People's Congress (NPC) Standing Committee adopted the Ninth Amendment to the criminal law of the People's Republic of China (PRC). The amendment included into law a crime of speculating fake news that seriously disturbs public order through an information network or the media. This offense is a punishable offense that could lead to 7years imprisonment.

Also, on November 7, 2016, the PRC Cyber security Law was adopted by the NPC Standing Committee. Paragraph 2 of article 12 of the Law prohibits a series of activities from being conducted online, including manufacturing, or spreading fake news online that disturbs the economic and social order. Article 70 of the Law further offers that the publication or transmission of the information specified under article 12 paragraph 2, or information that is prohibited from publication or transmission under other laws or administrative regulations, is subject to penalties prescribed by relevant laws and regulations.

Egypt

The Egyptian Parliament's Communication and Information Technology Committee in 2017, revealed that

53,000 rumors had spread in Egypt in just sixty days. However, to combat this menace of fake rumors or news, several measures have been put in place which goes thus:

To combat the dissemination of false news, the government issues statements refuting false information circulated in the media or via online social networks. In September 2018 the Associated Press also reported that the Egyptian authorities had suspended or blocked five hundred websites that were suspected by the authorities of distributing false information. Furthermore, the Egyptian authorities have arrested several journalists and website administrators suspected by the government of publishing false news. For instance, in April 2018, State Security Prosecution summoned the editor-in-chief of the newspaper Al-Masry AlYoun and seven correspondents, accusing them of distributing false information. In another example, Adel Sabri, Editor-in-Chief of the Masr El-Arabiya website was detained and charged.

With the dissemination of false news. The website was also fined 50,000 Egyptian pounds (about US\$2,855) by the Supreme Council for Media Regulation for disseminating false information. In its efforts to combat the dissemination of false information on social media networks, the Egyptian authorities have detained some individuals, accusing them of the dissemination of false news on Facebook and Twitter. For example, Amal Fathi, Wael Abbas, and Haytham Mohammaden were all charged with using social media to spread false information.

In an extra measure to prevent the dissemination of false news, the Egyptian Public Prosecutor had announced the creation of a new hotline for citizens to file complaints against false news posted by media outlets or by individuals on social medial networks.

5. Nigeria as case study (Nigeria and fake news)

Nigeria is characterized by various security threats in different parts of the country. These threats are usually occurring in terms of numerous conflicts, universal and extensive spread of corruption, devastating poverty, weak institutions, and coercions of secession as well as apparent marginalization, anger, hatred, and economic challenges in a time when a preference for untrue information is rising. I.e., post-truth era (Harsin, 2018; Pate, 2018). These concerns are indecently terminating relationships, intensifying hostilities across communities, and threatening democratic existence in the country (Pate, 2018). Debatably, all of that is enabled by the rebellion in information and communication technologies (ICT) that have democratized the basic access and dissemination of information across space and time (Ibrahim and Adamu, 2016; Pate and Idris, 2017).

However, the shape of fake news in Nigeria was aided by the arrival of the internet; the rise of “populism” politics in diverse parts of the world like the 2016 US presidential election, the rise of dictatorial leaders, and the Brexit referendum have been said to have made fake news to be an issue of concern in Nigeria as well as the international system at large (Gonagle, 2017).

Although, in Nigeria, fake news be it deliberate or accidental is not a new phenomenon. In November 1989 for instance, the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) publicized the death of the first Governor-General and President of Nigeria, Dr. Nnamdi Azikwe Adebani (2021), by the following morning, the news was on the front pages of most of the country’s newspapers. Thirty years after Azikwe’s saga, reports also spread that, President Buhari (the current president) had died during one of his long absences from Nigeria in 2017 on medical grounds and that he had been replaced by a clone called Jubril from Sudan. It took two days before Azikwe was to clear the air about the state of his health and informed the world that he was still alive, and the false claim was relatively contained. The imaginary death of Mohammed Buhari spread like a virus on Twitter, Facebook, and WhatsApp, to the extent that he had to speak on the claim at a news conference (Wires, 2019)

Truly, both blunders and fake content went viral through peer-to-peer distribution, while news sarcasm was regularly misunderstood and re-shared as straight news by unaware social media users. Hence, we now live in a world with computational publicity, state-sponsored “sock-puppet networks”, troll armies, and technology that can impersonate legitimate news websites and effortlessly manipulate audio and video to create a fake representation of any number of sources (Posetti, J. & Matthews, A., 2018).

Also, “false information in Nigeria is undermining medical advice, proffering fake cures, inciting panic and being used for political point-scoring” (Hasan, 2020). For example, in the world of today, the COVID-19 pandemic has been occurring at a time when bringing out facts from the friction is massively difficult. In Nigeria, a spread of misinformation and disinformation has accompanied the “virus tsunami”, provoking fear and accommodating vulnerabilities. Many Nigerians simply refused to believe the existentialism of the virus.

In addition to this, at the beginning of the Ebola epidemic in 2014, fake news also spread across the country. This includes advice, allegedly from the “Atta of Igala” (a traditional king) that, using salt water to bathe could eradicate the disease. According to Hasan (2020), this false information led to two deaths. Eight people were lost in Nigeria during this epidemic. However, this form had already re-emerged during the COVID-19 pandemic. According to Lagos health officials, as stated by Hasan (2020), three people were hospitalized after overdosing on chloroquine. This followed rumors, generally accepted by the former US President Donald Trump, that the drug could treat the virus. Fear of the unknown and a deluge of information in the digital space creates fertile ground for fake news. Nigerians may be mainly vulnerable not because they are exceptionally naive, but because of weak communications between the government and the ruled, high devotion for miracle healing, and a run-down health care system. Moreover, the threat of fake news was even increasing recently than in 2014. False information is more cultured than ever and its potential spread much wider. In 2015, Nigeria had 76 million internet subscribers. By 2019, this had increased to 122 million (Hasan, 2020). This shows that there are lots of people exposed to the internet where misinformation is being propagated. This means that the already over-burdened Nigerian Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) does not just have to combat COVID-19 but also fake news. A review by the Centre for Democracy and Development since the virus reached Nigeria suggests that transmitters of fake news have sought to incite panic and panic buying, proffer fake cures, undermine medical advice, promote hate speech particularly individuals of Chinese origin, and promote polarization along political lines.

People who spread fake news such as social media activists, influencers, and self-styled warriors are using their social media platforms and fringe websites to proliferate misinformation, propagate conspiracy theories and promote the denial of COVID-19. Their motivation is simply to grow their online followers and basically for economic reasons. These among many other issues are what Nigeria is currently facing.

5.1. The criminalization of fake news in Nigeria

As measure of the political philosophy in Africa, the threat of fake news has been “lip-serviced” before now. Anytime the government tried to tackle the hazard, it was either seen as being anti- opposition, or aiming to silence critics or aiming to violate fundamental human rights of the people. However, fake news and hate speech legislation is widely seen as an effective way of limiting the menace that could emanate from the threat (Scheffler, 2015).

The first effort to respond to fake news and hate speech in Nigeria since the fourth republic was in 2011 via the “Terrorism Prevention Act”. But this was not evidently well-defined until the end of the former President Jonathan’s tenure, when the “Cyber Crimes (Prohibition, Prevention, etc.) Act” was approved into law in May 2015. It was meant to curb the spread of fake news and hate speech among many other things on social media, deal with the dissemination of “racist” and “xenophobic” resources to the public through various social media platforms (e.g., Facebook and Twitter); “allow for the seizure of electronic communication by way of court order by a judge, give the president the power to designate certain computers as national security threat” etc. (CyberCrime Prohibition Act 2015).

With the advent of the current administration of President Muhammadu Buhari, the reactions to these threats have been by “unconventional and conventional means”. “The unconventional means are through the limitation of access to the social media, arrests and detentions, while the conventional means have been through the sponsor of legislations.” (Thompson, Nwaorgu, Afolabi, Aduradola, Odozor, & Ademola, 2019).

Also, article 59 of the Nigerian Criminal Code (1960-1990) talks about publication of false news with intent to cause fear and alarm to the public. 59(1) of the article states that, “Any person who publishes or reproduces any statement, rumor or report which is likely to cause fear and alarm to the public or to disturb the public peace, knowing or having reason to believe that such statement, rumor or report is false, is guilty of a misdemeanor and liable on conviction to imprisonment for three years.”

However, examples of citizen prosecuted on accusations of vending Fake news and Hate Speeches since the advent of Cyber Crimes Act, (2015) and the Nigerian Criminal Code (1960-1990) are as follow:

- Emmanuel Ojo (Blogger): Arrested by the Ogun state government for an alleged post on the wife of the former Governor of Ogun State, Mrs. Olufunso Amosun, over money laundering allegations (Oyewo, 2015).
- Seun Oloketuyi (Blogger): Arrested by the federal government of Nigeria for publishing false news

about some Nigerian Bank Managing Directors (Nwobodo, 2015).

- Ahmed Salkida: Declared wanted and Arrested by the Nigerian Army over links with a Boko Haram Video showing some of the abducted Chibok School Girls.
- Nsibiet John (Ink News Paper): Arrested and detained for reporting that the state deputy governor pockets N250 million monthly as security vote. He was later released on bail by a magistrate court (Cletus, 2017).
- Dr John Danfulani (Lecturer and Activist): Arrested and charged under section 417 and 418 of the Penal code for a Facebook post deemed as inciting by the Kaduna State government (Nicholas, 2017).
- Gloria Ballason (Lawyer): She was threatened to be arrested and prosecuted by the Kaduna State governor for an article titled “Kaduna: When Government Kills” published in the Blueprint Newspaper of 28 November 2016. She sued the government and damages were awarded for her to the tune of N50, 000 (\$139) against the governor for breached of her Fundamental Human Rights (Nicolas, 2017).
- Biodun Baba (Primary School Teacher and Internet User): He was arraigned before a Magistrate Court in Ilorin, Kwara State for allegedly making uncomplimentary and inciting post on Facebook against the former Senate President, Bukola Saraki etc.

5.2. The tension between the criminalization of fake news and freedom of expression

The right to freedom of expression or speech provided in the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria is strong, complete and without restrictions. The Constitution offers: “every person shall be entitled to freedom of expression, including freedom to hold opinion and to receive and impart ideas and information without interference.” (Nigeria Constitution, Section 39(1), 1999) Nevertheless, the right to freedom of expression does not exist in void. The misdemeanor of “defamation” can be instituted against a dialogue or expression that is false with monetary damages and a public apology awarded if the case is successful. Furthermore, a piece of news that is defamatory or libelous may be punished with imprisonment for two years under the Criminal Code.

Freedom of expression is a fundamental human right which is universally celebrated and rooted in the Constitution of many democratic nations, following Declaration of Human Rights by the United Nations. Other legal sources for freedom of expression can be found in the International Bill of Rights, African Charter on Human and Peoples Right, International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and the European Convention on Human Rights etc. For example, “the European Convention on Human Rights” offers “right to freedom of expression and right to hold opinion without interference within the law” (ECHR, 1950). However, the advent of information and digital technology has helped interrupt the ideas of freedom of expression enshrined in these International legal instruments. Due to the dissemination of digital technologies, access to news has become easier and cheaper than ever in history and news consumption has grown. The tension with the digital dissemination of information is how to legally deal with the consequence of infringements associated with the social media without infringing on freedom of expression and press freedom. The tension is based on how best to legal laws for fake news can be put in place without infringing on fundamental freedoms of expression enshrined in the national Constitutions and International legal instruments on human rights which remains a hurdle to cross. In other words, how would it be possible to provide legal framework to deal with the problem of spread of fake news by social media through the Internet without substantially infringing on fundamental rights, especially the freedom of expression guaranteed by the Constitution and international human right documents?... Free speech and right to freedom of expression norms online would seem to make countering fake news difficult having regard to the provisions of the Constitution and Articles of the international human right instruments.

The idea of Internet is reached by people who engage in hazardous information to instill fear, anger and hate without limit; perhaps hiding under the right to freedom of expression and to hold opinions contained under the Constitution and international legal instruments. It is for this understanding that John Perry Barlow (1996) called the Internet “a world where anyone, anywhere may express his or her belief, no matter how singular and dangerous, without fear of being coerced into silence or conformity”. Regardless of the tension between fake news and freedom of expression, there is still need for legal precedents for criminalizing fake news on social media because people who spread misinformation usually hid under the umbrella of freedom of speech. These legal proceedings among the socio-cultural solution can still be achieved without any violation of the fundamental human rights of the people that are enshrined in the national constitutions as well as the international human rights instruments.

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

There is a yardstick that links fake news and tension or unrest in all spheres of Nigeria system, be it political, socio-economic and health wise of the country. Social media influencers, individuals, bloggers, political elites especially during election period have always weaponized fake news factory for their own gain. However, this study concluded that legal measures like sanctions, regulations of social media, licensing and registration of media houses covering news exercises should be taken into consideration.

This study recommends that, all important shareholders such as the INEC Officials, Security Agents, Telecommunication Corporations, Journalists, Civil Defense Organizations, Liberians, and other Information Professionals and Health Practitioners, as well as the Academia, should have roles to play in addressing the menace of fake news in Nigeria.

Telecommunication firms should construct new products for identifying and limiting the spread of fake news on their platforms (e.g., Online Media, Television Stations, and Radio Stations etc.).

Also, important shareholders should develop a participatory and transparent initiative for creating a better understanding of the effect of disinformation and propaganda on democracy, freedom of expression, and civic space, as well as appropriate responses to the phenomena.

It is believed that fake news is economically moved. Therefore, one of the most actual ways to fight it is by removing the economic enticements for traffickers of fabrication who make money by masked as authentic news publishers and posting tricks that get people to visit their sites. This could be achieved based on regulating online media.

Like many other developed countries cited in this study, license control of any individuals providing internet news information services to the public be it on websites apps, online forums, blogs, microblogs, social media public accounts, instant messaging tools accounts, instant messaging tools or live broadcasting must obtain a license for internet news information services and operate within the scope of activities of the license. However, providing internet news information without a proper license should be punishable by a fine.

Lastly, based on the theory of inoculation provided for this study, there should be a proper sensitization or education for the general populace on the negative implications of fake news to the Nigerian society and look inwardly towards prosecuting the carriers of fake news without violating their fundamental human rights.

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