

Stop Fighting The Unknown! Managing Fake News Though Media Literacy

Kabucua John^{1*}, Nyakundi Nyamboga² and Nguri Matu³

¹School of Communication, Journalism and Publishing- Moi University-Kenya

²Nyakundi Nyamboga, PhD. Lecturer, School of Communication, Journalism and Publishing -Moi University-Kenya

³Nguri Matu, PhD. Lecturer, School of Communication, Journalism and Publishing -Moi University-Kenya

Abstract

The quandary of fake news continues to scare governments, media, journalists, nongovernmental organizations and audiences across the world. Various institutions and individuals have developed mechanisms to spot and counteract fake news that range from anti-fake news laws, social media policies, facts checking applications and reverse search technologies. However, fake news remains an enigma to the world of communication and information management [1]. One management strategy that has been overlooked over the years is media and information literacy as proposed by Grunwald Declaration on Media Education in 1982 by 19 nations during the UNESCO's International Symposium on Media Education. This theoretical review paper focuses on the role of media literacy in managing fake news [2]. Since most of the fake news spotting and counteracting practices have focused on the place of journalists, media houses, governments and social media owners without definitive success, this study focuses on empowerment of the consumer of fake news though media literacy [3]. The review concludes that, if audiences of fake news are empowered through media literacy, then they can source, process, consume and archive information only after verification. This study recommends a paradigm shift from focusing all the attention on spotting and counteracting fake news from media, journalists, legal systems and social media owners to empowerment of news consumers though media literacy [4].

Keywords: Fake news • Media literacy • Information literacy • Journalists • Managing

Introduction

To date, there is no comprehensive solution to fake news despite innumerable efforts to enact anti-fake news laws, regulate face book, Twitter and other social media by governments across the globe (Leetaru 2019) [5]. Fake news is neither a technology nor a legal problem; it is fundamentally information and media literacy problem (Leetaru 2019; Tandoc, Ling, Westlund, Duffy and Lim 2018). Target audiences of fake news lack basic information literacy skills like sourcing, processing, consuming and archiving news; they fight an unknown enemy[6] (Wagner and Boczkowski 2019). In the war against fake news, success lies squarely on empowerment of target audiences through information and media literacy (Tandoc, Ling, Westlund, Duffy and Lim 2018). Recently, fake news phenomenon has gained prominence following its alleged influence in the 2016 General elections in United States (Ong, Tapsell and Curato 2019;[7] Wahutu 2019; Jamieson, 2018; Silverman 2016).

However, the concept of fake news is not new but one that can be traced back to as early as 13th century BC when Rameses the Great crafted and shared propaganda on how the Egyptians had won the battle of Kadesh (Weir 2009).[8]Rameses painted pictures of himself butchering his enemies on the walls of the temples. However, this was a case of disinformation since the Egyptians-Hittites treaty indicates that the Battle of Kandesh ended as stalemate (Weir 2009).[9]Rameses used fake paintings of himself killing his enemies to propagate perceptions of how he had defeated the Hittites. Out of fake news, Mark Antony committed suicide in the first century BC when he heard that queen Cleopatra VII of Egypt had shared false news on how he committed suicide following his defeated in the Battle of Actium (MacDonald 2017).[10] Therefore, during the first century BC, fake news referred to deliberately and maliciously shared lies. Since, fake news is normally well

timed, based on half-truths and calls for action by the target audience [11] (Jun, Meng and Johar 2017), Mark Antony who had been defeated, and whose rumors of suicide had been shared by a close confidant got into the bandwagon, believed it and committed suicide (MacDonald 2017).

In the 19th century, fake news on the Great Moon Hoax was published by The New York Sun (Weir 2009). This fake news featured an astronomer and imaginary colleague who purportedly observed a lunar animal. This fake news attracted new subscribers to the paper and even when they admitted that it was a fiction, there was negligible backlash. The intention of fake news in the Great Moon Hoax was to entertain and not to mislead (Weir 2009).[12] This indicates ancient use of hoax as fake news; its intention is to entertain rather than to mislead the viewers or readers (Verstraete, Bambauer and Bambauer 2017). In addition, fake news had a scheming intention of attracting readership to the paper. Moreover,[13] it was also clear that correction of fake news did not necessarily result in audience backlash (Nyhan and Reifler 2010).

Other examples of fake news in ancient days included; The German corpse Factory of the 20th Century propagated by anti-Germans in World War I, and the War of the Worlds drama by Orson Welles (Cantril 2005).

In the 21st Century, fake news has reincarnated to depict various other typologies. Use of the term fake news by President Donald Trump to refer to any news or medium that opposes his political agenda has made both media and governments shun it (Murphy 2018; Habgood-Coote 2018). On several occasions, Trump has referred to media and their content as fake news bringing another perspective to the term. It is on these bases that the United Kingdom banned use of the term 'fake news' in 2018 (Murphy 2018; Habgood-Coote 2018) [14].

The Concept of Fake news

It is on grounds of variation in conceptualization of the term 'fake news' that scholars have tried to unearth working definitions (Gelfert 2018). For instance; Tandoc, Lim and Ling (2018), analysed operational definitions in 34 articles that used the term 'fake news' directly between 2003 and 2017. Based on levels of facts and deception, the findings from this study classified fake news as; news satire, fabrication, news parody, manipulation, advertising and propaganda (Tandoc, Lim and Ling 2018). Therefore, according to Tandoc et

*Address for Correspondence: Kabucua John, 1School of Communication, Journalism and Publishing- Moi University-Kenya, Tel: 0723998805, E-mail Id: joekabucua@yahoo.com, joekabucua@gmail.com

Copyright: © 2021 John K, et al. This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License, which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited.

al., (2018), fake news is any news that was not factual but presented as facts and/or had a deliberate intention to deceive [15].

Steinberg (2017) broadly categorized fake news into two; misinformation and disinformation. According to Steinberg (2017) fake news was any misleading content that varied by impact and motivation. Fake news comprised of satire, hoax, clickbaits, propaganda, error, conspiracy theory, misinformation, bogus content, pseudoscience and sponsored content (Steinberg 2017) [16]. To him, dissemination of false information is disinformation that makes part of his concept of fake news. In the same accord, the deliberate creation and sharing of information that one assents to as false is fake news (Steinberg 2017). [17] Therefore, Steinberg conceptualized fake news as sharing of false information unknowingly or knowingly, intentionally or unintentionally and as the deliberate creation and sharing of false information. This has informed the discourse of fake news widely applied in politics; any news judged as false is labeled fake news (Jamieson 2018) [18].

Sill, to Gelfert (2018), fake news is the deliberate presentation of false and misleading claims as news with a deliberate design to mislead. While some see fake news as propaganda, hoax, trolls and satire (Verstraete et al., 2017), others see fake news as news stories that have no factual basis but are presented as facts (Alcott and Gentzkow 2017) [19]. In addition, Housh defines fake news as "content that is deliberately false and published on websites that mimic traditional news websites" (Housh 2018, 1)".

Common in all these typologies of fake news is the deliberate objective of fake news to mislead or deceive. Fake news can be motivated by factors like politics, fun, business rivalry, or desire to cause panic (Silverman 2016). Whether fake news is in the form of propaganda, trolls, hoax, satire, pseudoscience or error, the underlying factor is its deliberate intention to mislead [20].

News has been defined as, an account of interesting, significant and recent occurrence (Habgood-Coote 2018), factual account of an event that affect a significant number of people (Robinson and DeShano 2011) and as a report of current and credible event (Vamanu 2019). The concept of fake news adopted in this paper is therefore based on its application in journalism[21]. Journalists are socially and professionally entrusted with the social responsibility of providing truthful, accurate, reliable and independent information to their audiences (Kovach and Rosenstiel 2007). Key in the principles of journalism is objectivity and accuracy. Therefore in this paper fake news refers to any disinformation presented as facts with a deliberate intention to mislead its target audiences [22].

Advances in Counteracting Fake news

Fake news is a global problem that has affected both developed and developing countries (Silverman 2017). Since human beings rely heavily on information in making crucial decisions about their health, wealth, politics and religion its quality is imperative (Wahutu 2019) [23]. Use of fake news in forms of satire, propaganda, trolls, hoax, error, pseudo-science or conspiracy theory can result in both misinformation and disinformation (Tandoc, Lim and Ling 2018). Negative impacts of fake news range from panic during the great moan hoax, suicide of Mark Antony after his defeat in the Battle of Kandesh (MacDonald 2017) [24], Martians invasion panic in Orson Wells drama broadcasted in radio Milles (Weir 2009), Panic about the Chinese human factories in World War I, measles epidemics in Texas (Hotez 2016), execution of the former president of Iraq-Sadaam Hussein, Cambridge analytica influence of the 2013 and 2017 general elections in Kenya, to alleged influence of the outcome of 2016 General elections in America where Hillary Clinton lost to president Donald Trump (Silverman 2016), just to mention a few [25].

It is out of such instances that media, governments, non-governmental bodies and international bodies like the United Nations have tried to come up with strategies to combat fake news either individually or in conventions (Jamieson 2018). Efforts to combat fake news have ranged from anti-fake news legislations (Silverman 2016), UN warnings on infringements of freedom of expression in combating fake news, hefty fines on media houses, ban on the use of the term fake news, regulation of Face book and Twitter,

corrections and apologies, and use of fake news organizations like Snopes and Fact check.org [27].

Communication practitioners have fruitlessly adopted various approaches to counteract fake news as recommended by different scholars. For instance, Verstraete et al., (2017), recommended the following approaches to combating fake news; first, legal interventions on fake news that involve state sponsored sanctions like enactments of laws and enforcement. Second, market regulation that involves controlling the price mechanisms that acts as a motivation for the wrong behavior like creation and dissemination of fake news [28]. The gains one get from crafting and disseminating fake news are reduced or eliminated. Third, architectural interventions that involves monitoring and changing the code of creation and dissemination. Fourth, social norms for instance by raising community standards on misinformation and falsehood (Verstraete et al., 2017). Self-regulation and controlled regulation of values like honesty, truthfulness, and accuracy reduces the reckless behavior of creating and sharing unverified information. These approaches are majorly source driven and the receiver of information is less or not involved at all. Media literacy on the other hand promotes the empowerment of the news receiver to access, evaluate, synthesize and use particular information (Cook, Lewandowsky and Ecker 2017) [29].

However, these counteractive practices have been faced with myriads of challenges explaining why fake news still thrives across the globe.

Significant Challenges and Missing Links in Counteracting Fake News

As Sunstein (2009) observes, people tend to follow those that are like-minded resulting in creation of echo chambers. Echo chambers amplify fake news further reconfirming the biases held by a particular group about an issue. People are likely to believe fake news if it comes from a socially acceptable person (Nikolov, Oliveira, Flammini and Menczer 2015)[30].

Creation of social bots that manages people's accounts and automatically performs certain tasks like sharing has also been a major challenge in counteracting fake news (Ferrara, Varol, Davis, Menczer and Flammini 2016). Bots and cyborgs are apps allowed to manage people's social media accounts automatically (Lokot and Diakopoulos 2016). These enhance the speed of sharing, viewing, clicking and attaching emotional graphics on target fake news. Since social bots and cyborgs have no cognitive abilities, they automatically disseminate all content to all contacts assigned (Ferrara et al., 2016). It is because of the veracity of these bots that use of security applications like 'CAPCHA' has gained popularity in online platforms that fight fake news [31].

Wagner and Boczkowski (2019), assert that the argumentation patterns of fake news easily bait audiences and convince them to believe. Fake news makes references to higher authorities that are least likely to be questioned. There are also half-truths that bait the already familiar and anxious audience to seek more information to satisfy ongoing suspense (Tandoc et al., 2018). The timing of fake news is also well placed to the most apt time when the highest convictions can be made (Wagner and Boczkowski 2019). Since human beings are asymmetrical updaters and they want to hear information that supports or affirms already held beliefs, fake news is narrow targeted to a particular audience. Fake news also ends with a call for action by the target audience, an indication that there is always an objective that a purveyor want fulfilled by the news (Cooke 2007). Patterns of fake news make it difficult for audiences both journalist and laymen to substantiate because it highly mimics the truth (Dentith 2017; Robinson and DeShano 2011) [32].

The bandwagon effect occurs when fake news is repeatedly shared and discussed on social media (Neely-Sardon and Tignor 2018; Pogue 2017; Bluemle 2018). The social nature of human beings drives them to agree with and be part of a commonly agreed agenda. When people share unverified information over time, it is likely to be believed as factual (Jun et al., 2017) [33]. Emergence of social media groups in WhatsApp and Facebook where people share information of interest has also challenged the war on fake news (Lokot and Diakopoulos 2016). Worse still, there are closed social media groups that require passwords and authorization to join and or access

information there in. Members of such closed groups share information that appeals to each other. In such groups, those scoring low in expressivity are domineered by the vocal minority (Wahutu, 2019 [34]). Even when information shared is questionable, the domineered join the bandwagon silently or through suppressed applause like through emotional graphics (Jun et al., 2017). Since the needs and interests of such groups are known, fake news purveyors propagate particular information tailored to their needs. Due to high self-confirmation biases in members of closed groups, they rarely question information that supports their larger perceptions (Neely-Sardon and Tignor 2018). Stamping fake news in closed social media groups has therefore been a challenge in the modern information age.

The war on fake news by media has centered on correction and making the truth louder (Leetaru 2019; Bluemle 2018 Neely-Sardon and Tignor 2018). However, corrections of fake news may fail. Scholars have affirmed that correction of fake news does necessarily mean attunement in the minds of the audiences (Nyan and Reifler 2010). Correction of fake news may reinforce previous held position about an issue especially when relayed by a prejudiced party. When fake news is corrected by media on air, it may expose new audiences to the initial version amplifying it further (Ong and Cabañes 2019). Fake news purveyors target the audience of mainstream media for amplification and authentication. Since conventional media is more trusted than new media, airing of a fake news item boosts its believability by a larger audience (Robinson and DeShano 2011). Journalists have both social and professional responsibility of gate keeping and only airing verified information (Gelfert 2018). Therefore, there is need for media literacy in audiences and journalists[35].

The legal approach to counteraction of fake news adopted by majority of nations across the globe has not completely succeeded in combating fake news menace (Jamieson 2018). Nations of the world have enacted anti-fake news laws spelling hefty monetary fines and long imprisonment sentences for contraveners (Silverman 2016). The move to enact anti-fake news laws has been met by opposition from bloggers and journalists with the United Nations issuing a warning on it trampling on the gains on freedom of speech[36].

Media stations have also turned to technological approaches like use of reverse search applications and reliance on verification organizations like Snopes and Fact check.org (Habgood-Coote 2018). Facebook has also deleted accounts related to fake news purveyors and issued warnings on the same. Officials from face book have also been summoned various governments with promises to regulate content (Jamieson 2018). Over the years most of the research on fake news has focused on social media, politics, economies, algorithms, echo chambers, racism, propaganda and anti-fake news laws (Silverman 2016; Cooke 2017; Gelfert 2018; Bluemle 2018; Neely-Sardon and Tignor 2018; Leetaru 2019), few studies have paid passable attention to the role of media literacy in fake news management. As a result, fake news continues to wreak havoc in politics, health, economies and democracy in various nations across the world (Wahutu 2019)[37].

Role of Media Literacy in Counteracting Fake News

One approach to counteract fake news that has been highly recommended by scholars but whose adoption still remains low is media literacy (Neely-Sardon and Tignor 2018; Pogue 2017; Bluemle 2018). According to Tornero (2008), media literacy is the ability of an individual to access, evaluate, analyse and even create media content. Where access refers to the ability that audiences or journalist have in reaching to and using various forms of media. In the same accord, evaluate in this case refers to the ability of the journalist or audience to find, identify and select specific information that suits their private needs (Tornero 2008). Information literacy refers to the technical skills that go to the development and distribution of media content (Waheed 2008). However, there is a thin line that separates the two. Media literacy empowers information users with ability to evaluate news through parameters like honesty and factualness of the sender or source (Tornero 2008). When parties that interact with news information are empowered with knowledge and skills of information sourcing and processing, identification and counteraction of fake news is made easier (Bluemle 2018)[38].

Tornero (2008) affirms that media literacy equips people with skills in critical thinking, communication, problem solving and autonomy. An individual is able to interact with news and develop a strong stand based on evidences. Unhealthy habits in the process of communication for instance, increase in unverified information and misinformation make media literacy essential. Since all citizens interact with news of some kind in their daily activities, there is need to equip them with information processing skills and make them critical information consumers (Jun, Meng and Johar 2017). It is though media literacy that news consumers can protect themselves from negative effects and objectives of fake news (Ong and Cabañes 2019) [39].

In order to combat fake news audiences ought to have a clear understanding of the news media and how it works (Tornero 2008). This gives them the power to challenge faulty news sources, processes of news production and evaluate news for accuracy and believability. Media literacy develops a strong desire for information evaluation, synthesis and criticism (Waheed 2008).

Media literacy for counteracting fake news has become more imperative with increased access to the internet and mobile devices. Today, untrained sources can record videos and share across a wide spectrum through social networks reaching millions of consumers; the modern day citizen journalism (Ong et al., 2019). Today, people are getting news from social media before confirming it on conventional media. Social media is setting the pace for mainstream media. Actually, some people only depend on social media for news (Ferrara et al., 2016). Consequently, big chunks of news escape the gate keeping process in media stations through social media (Cooke 2017). Journalists also get to learn of certain fake news after it has made rounds on social media platforms. Since, a huge percentage of conventional media audiences are on social media, they are able to access such disinformation with some completely believing it. Correcting fake news long after it has been engaged and shared may not cancel what is printed in the minds of the audiences (Nyan and Reifler 2010). Therefore, there is need to train the audience on media literacy empowering them to access, evaluate and synthesize news by themselves (Tornero 2008). Media literacy minimizes the direct impact of fake news as audiences are able to filter the information they consume. Debates on fake news are also better informed helping citizens make decisions based on factual and verified information. Audiences in closed social media groups and blogs are also able to counter fake news and state the correct and verified version of the stories (Waheed 2008). Since governments and media houses do not have adequate infrastructures and personnel to penetrate all BlogSpot and social networks, media literacy comes in handy. According to Tornero (2008) media literacy is able to penetrate to small groups and units where audiences engage each other at similar levels [40].

The Grunwald Declaration on Media Education was agreed upon in 1982 by 19 nations attending the UNESCO international symposium (Tornero 2008). In the symposium, it was noted that both education and political systems had a duty to promote citizens media literacy and make them appreciate the phenomena of communication (Tornero 2008). The declaration recommended development of educational media programs in all nations. The vision of this declaration was to empower citizens with media literacy skills making them able to evaluate information by themselves. However, three decades later, media literacy is yet to be appreciated as an important measure of combating disinformation by both political and education systems across the globe (Neely-Sardon and Tignor 2018) [41].

In order to counteract fake news, media literacy should be integrated in curriculums and academic programs (Waheed 2008). Media literacy ought to be taught from a tender age so that people grow up with skills on access, evaluation and processing of information (Tornero 2008). Disinformation does not discriminate on the basis of age. Children are some of the victims of disinformation and training them on how to identify and counteract fake news is crucial to development. Furthermore, when media literacy is integrated in school curriculums, its implementation is assured since governments through education departments supervise implementation of curriculums (Waheed 2008). Equality of access to knowledge and skills on media literacy is also assured for the marginalized.

Public awareness campaigns on fake news are other avenues for media literacy (Tornero 2008). Although fake news has been a problem to both governments and citizens across the world, discussions about it are suppressed (Ong et al., 2019). There have been minimal public engagements on the topic to give it the necessary prominence. Public campaigns on fake news motivate public discussions on its nature and characteristics (Vamanu 2018). Engagement on issue therefore enlightens the participants and raises curiosity. Media literacy empowers citizens to discuss, appreciate, focus on the consequences and come up with customized solutions to fake news (Cook 2017; Lewandowsky and Ecker 2017).

As Cooke (2017) affirms, media literacy advocates for inoculation approach to counter disinformation. To inoculate from disinformation, citizens are exposed to certain versions of fake news closely related what they are likely to be exposed to later as the true version of fake news (Cook et al., 2017). Exposure to different versions of a fake news story makes audience become more skeptical and critical with incoming information. Audiences are therefore able to question any news that they consume before they trusting it. Having been exposed to similar information, audiences are able to vary their perspectives of new information as they weigh (Bluemle 2018). They also take time to verify information reducing the chances of being misinformed.

Teachers also take up a major position in media literacy approach to counteraction of fake news (Cooke 2017). Successful literacy programs must be anchored on well endowed teachers. If teachers appreciate the role and need for media literacy in combating fake news in the society, imparting similar skills in learners becomes easy (Neely-Sardon and Tignor 2018). Curriculum implementation lies squarely in the hands of the teachers. It is the teachers who assess the needs and the continuous progress of learners in media literacy skills acquisition. Teachers also synthesize the programs for the learners making it palatable and manageable. Media literacy skills therefore require the appreciation and endorsement of teachers and trainer of trainers (Cook et al., 2017). When teachers understand media literacy programs transferring the same to learners of different levels become easy.

Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) should also take up a central role in promoting media literacy to counteract fake news (Tornero 2008). Since NGOs are perceived as neutral by both governments and media organizations, they stand a better position to educate the masses on fake news. NGOs are also able to penetrate the marginalized in the society making such education well distributed (Waheed 2008). NGOs are also able to run continuous programs and evaluate the uptake of such programs in more than one country giving them a better picture of its appreciation and impact.

Publishing houses like TV, radio, Newspaper and magazine stations can also enhance media literacy (Blumle 2018). Through their media, publishing houses can set aside airtime or space in newspapers and magazines to promote media literacy (Ferrara et al., 2016). Educational content on media literacy is distributed through various channels in languages that audiences make out easily. Holding discussions, reviews, editorials and call in engagements about the topic of fake news serves to enlighten the audience on the issue (Bermúdez 2018). Media stations also give the topic of fake news certain angles and frames to enhance its prominence and engagement by the audiences (Steinberg 2017). If media make fake news an agenda for discussion and confer a certain status to it, the government and NGOs will also pay attention to it (Allcott and Gentzkow 2017). This increases awareness and attention to fake news by major stakeholders.

Waheed (2008) further asserts that media literacy can be enhanced through international conventions. The United Nations and other international bodies of interest organize conventions where media literacy and fake news is discussed. In such conferences, experts, practitioners and scholars are engaged to bridge the gap between theories and practice (Tandoc et al., 2018). Engagement of media literacy and fake news at an international level also draws the attention of both the media and governments. It is also conventions that scholars meet to exchange ideas on emerging issues on the topic of fake news and the challenges expected in future (Tandoc et al., 2018). Conventions will therefore open up discussions on various schools

of thought held by scholars and practitioners on counteraction of fake news through media literacy. New knowledge and perspectives will therefore emerge in conventions.

Challenges Facing Media Literacy in Counteracting Fake News

The 1982 Grunwald Declaration on Media Education continues to experience slow acceptance across the world (Tornero 2008). Media literacy has not been prioritized by governments, international bodies, non-governmental organizations, teachers and students (Tandoc et al., 2018). The subject of media literacy and fake news is perceived as a preserve of media workers (Cooke 2017; Blumle 2018). In the same vein, societies have bestowed the responsibility of sourcing, processing, disseminating and archiving news to journalists (Wahutu 2019). Content presented on radios, newspapers, magazines and other news channels is perceived as the gospel truth and is more trusted compared to social media (Silverman 2016). However, the contemporary upsurge of fake news that permeates the gate keepers in newsrooms thwarts this normalcy (Jamieson 2018). Jamieson further affirms that news stations have been charged in court, fined and forced to apologize for broadcasting fake news. Authentic and conventional media have also been termed as 'fake media' and their content labeled as fake news for instance; President Trump of the US has termed some media stations and their content as 'fake news' (Silverman 2017; Allcott and Gentzkow 2017; Jamieson 2018).

The challenge of inadequate resources to train teachers also weighs heavily on media literacy. Teachers spearhead teaching and training in all literacy programs. The Grunwald Declaration of 1982 recommended that teachers be trained to impart knowledge and skills on media literacy to learners in their hands (Waweed 2008). Ensuring that all teachers acquire the necessary skills in media literacy equals imparting the same continuously to learners who pass by their hands. Since media literacy does not form a major part of their training, teachers require media literacy training before they can impart on the students. However, lack of necessary resources like funds, trainers of trainers and infrastructure has impeded this approach over the years. In addition, poor attitude of teachers with limited understanding of the Grunwald Declaration obstructs this endeavor (Tornero 2008). It is only a limited number of teachers in learning institution that have acquainted themselves with the 1982 Grunwald Declaration on Media Literacy. Media literacy is not a prerequisite for teacher qualification. It is also clear that media literacy does not form a considerable part of the teacher training curriculum administered in most of the teachers training colleges. This declaration has also not received adequate publication to attract enough attention in the world. Grunwald Declaration on media literacy has therefore not been fully embraced (Tornero 2008). As a result, teachers have poor attitude towards the declaration and its content.

There are also structural, intellectual and cultural gaps that encumber media literacy today (Bermúdez 2018). Although the subject of media literacy has gained prominence in the information age, there are no proper structural arrangements to fast track its implementation. Governments and policy formulators have not established proper configurations to help deliver media literacy to the people (Neely-Sardon and Tignor 2018). Such structures require, intellectuals like academicians, media labs, training equipments and working systems. There are also inadequate intellectuals to develop, implement, monitor and evaluate media literacy skills. Media literacy has not attracted enough epistemological engagements in the academia (Bluemle 2018; Cooke 2017). This makes the subject more primary hence low conceptualization by both the academy and the society. There is need for more empirical research and engagement among academicians, media practitioners and audiences.

Finally, scholars have lamented that there is no conceptual framework and theoretical model to implement the pedagogy of media literacy (Tornero 2008). Teaching and learning of media literacy needs a preconceived guideline of how various variables will interact with each (Neely-Sardon and Tignor 2018). The expected outcomes and projected intervening variables also need to be well articulated in the plan. A clear theoretical worldview on how media literacy works in counteraction of fake news also need to

be in place before the pedagogy is rolled out (Bluemle 2018). Preparation of teaching and learning materials, learners and teachers, objectives of the processes and learning outcomes also need to be clear. Lack of such theoretical and empirical conceptualizations of media literacy has made its uptake slow and poorly prioritized (Cooke 2017). In the same way, few scholarly works have looked at media literacy as lasting solution to the persistent problem of fake news (Leetaru 2019).

The Future of Counteraction of Fake News through Media Literacy

In conclusion, the problem of fake news has gained prominence following its alleged interference with 2016 general elections in US (Wahutu 2019). Presence of social bots, echo chambers, cyborgs and low media literacy levels continues to make fake news problem worse by day (Silverman 2017; Jun et al., 2017; Ong et al., 2019). Governments of the world have tried to counteract fake news through anti-fake news laws, court charges and sanctions but the menace remains undeterred (Wagner and Boczkowski 2019; Fairfield 2018). Most of the efforts to counteract fake news have been centered on journalists, policy makers, governments and media stations; little efforts are channeled towards audience empowerment (Leetaru 2019).

As Leetaru (2019) envisions, the future of counteraction of fake news is therefore in information, media and digital literacy. If audiences are given the power to source for news, process, consume and archive it, then the problem of fake news would be managed (Leetaru 2019). The Grunwald Declaration on Media Literacy of 1982 envisioned empowered audiences through media literacy (Waweed 2008). Although there have been challenges in implementation of this declaration, problems like structures, culture, intellectual, and pedagogy can be managed through policy, involvement and research. Media literacy will therefore ensure that both journalists and audiences can conceptualize the typologies of fake news, its propagation, dissemination, infrastructures, objectives and target audiences (Leetaru 2019; Bluemle 2018; Neely-Sardon and Tignor 2018). This paper forecast that it is not until when governments and other stakeholders advance media literacy that the fake news menace will be managed. If audiences are empowered to spot and counteract fake news, then the problem would be contained.

References

- Allcott Hunt and Gentzkow Matthew. "Social media and fake news in the 2016 election." *J Economic Perspectives* 31(2017): 211-36.
- Bermúdez Juan. "The Post-Truth temperament: What makes belief stray from evidence? And what can bring them back together? In C. G. Prado (Ed.), *America's Post-Truth Phenomenon: When Feelings and Opinions Trump Facts and Evidence* Santa Barbara CA: Praeger, (2018) pp. 87-109.
- Bluemle Stefanie. "Post-facts: Information literacy and authority after the 2016 Election." *portal: Libraries and the Academy* 18(2018):265-282.
- Cantril Hadley. *The Invasion from Mars*. Princeton." NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005.
- Cooke Nicole. "Post-truth, truthiness, and alternative facts: Information behavior and critical information consumption for a new age." *The Library Quarterly* 87(2017): 211-221.
- Cook John, Lewandowsky, Stephan and Ecker, Ullrich. "Neutralizing misinformation through inoculation: Exposing misleading argumentation techniques reduces their influence. *PLoS one* Dentith Matthew. The problem of fake news." *Public Reason* 8(2017):65-79.
- Fairfield Paul. "Lords of mendacity. In C. G. Prado (Ed.), *America's Post-Truth Phenomenon: When Feelings and Opinions Trump Facts and Evidence* Santa Barbara CA: Praeger, (2018); pp. 153-164.
- Ferrara Emillio, Varol Onur, Davis Clayton and Menczer Filippo. "The rise of social bots." *Comm ACM*, 59(2016): 96.
- Gelfert Axel. "Fake news: A definition." *Informal Logic* 38(2018): 84-117.
- Habgood-Coote Joshua. "Stop talking about fake news!." *Inquiry* (2018):1-33.
- Hotez Peter. "Texas and its measles epidemics." *PLOS Medicine* 13(2016);1
- Jamieson Kathleen. "Cyber war:How Russian hackers and trolls helped elect a President." Oxford University Press 2018.
- Jun Youjung, Meng Rachel, and Johar Gita. "Perceived social presence reduces fact-checking." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 114(2017): 5976.
- Kovach Bill and Rosenstiel Tom. *The Elements of Journalism: What News people Should Know and The Public Should Expect (1st rev. ed.)*. New York: Three Rivers Press, 2007.
- Leetaru Kalev. "A reminder that "fake news" is an information literacy problem—Not a technology problem." 2019.
- Lokot Tetyana and Diakopoulos Nicholas. "News Bots: Automating News and Information Dissemination on Twitter." *Digital Journalism* 4(2016): 682-699.
- Mac Donald Eve. "The Conversation," January 13, 2017.
- Murphy Margi. 2018.
- Neely-Sardon Angeleen and Tignor, Stefanie. "Focus on the facts: A news and information literacy instructional program." *The Reference Librarian*, 59(2018):108-121.
- Nikolov Dimitar, Oliveira Diego, Flammini Alessandro and Menczer Filippo. Measuring online social bubbles. 1. (2015); 38.
- Nyhan Brendan and Reifler Jason. "When corrections fail: The persistence of political misperceptions." *Political Behavior* 32(2010): 303-330.
- Ong Jonathan, Tapsell Ross and Curato Nicole. "Tracking digital disinformation in the 2019 Philippine midterm election." 2019.
- Ong Jonathan and Cabañes Jason. "When disinformation studies meets production studies: Social identities and moral justifications in the political trolling industry." *Int J Communication* 13(2019); 5771-5790.
- Robinson Sue and DeShano Cathy. "Anyone Can Know': Citizen Journalism and The Interpretive Community of The Mainstream Press." *Journalism* 12(2011):963-982.
- Silverman Craig. *This analysis shows how fake election news stories outperformed real news on Facebook*.2016.
- Steinberg Laurence. "Infographic: Beyond Fake News – 10 Types of Misleading News, July 26, 2017." Retrieved January 4. (2020)
- Tandoc Jr Edson, Lim Zheng and Ling Richard. "Defining "fake news:" A typology of scholarly definitions." *Digital Journalism* 6(2018): 137-153.
- Tornero Jose. "Media Literacy—New Conceptualisation, New Approach. In U. Carlsson, S. Tayie, G. Jauinot-Delaunay and J. M. Perez Tornero (Eds.) *Empowerment through Media Education—An Intercultural Dialogue*." Goteborg, Sweden: Nordicom, 2008. p. 106-108.
- Vamanu Lulian. "Fake News and Propaganda: A Critical Discourse Research Perspective." *Open Information Science* 3(2019):197-208.
- Verstraete Mark, Bambauer Derek and Bambauer Jane. "Identifying and Counteracting Fake news." *Arizona Legal Studies Discussion* (2017): 17-15.
- Wahutu James. "Fake news and "Journalistic rules of the game"." *African Journalism Studies* 39(2019):1.

32. Waheed Khan Abdul. Media Education, a Crucial Issue in the Building of an Inclusive Knowledge Society. In U. Carlsson, S. Tayie, G. Jaunot-Delaunay and J. M. Perez Tornero (Eds.)
33. Empowerment through Media Education—An Intercultural Dialogue Goteborg, Sweden (2008); p. 16.
34. Wagner Maria and Boczkowski Pablo. The reception of fake news: The interpretations and practices that shape the consumption of perceived misinformation. *Digital Journalism*, 7(7). (2019); 870–885.

How to cite this article: Kabucua John, Nyakundi Nyamboga and Nguri Matu. "Stop Fighting The Unknown! Managing Fake News Through Media Literacy." *J Mass Communicat Journalism* 11 (2021): 430.