

IMPLICATIONS OF FAKE NEWS AND POST-TRUTH ON THE CANONS OF JOURNALISM: A THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract: The rise of fake news and post-truth poses significant challenges to the canons of journalism, which are the guiding principles that journalists adhere to in their pursuit of truth and the dissemination of reliable information. This study explores the implications of fake news and post-truth on the canons of journalism, namely accuracy, objectivity, fairness, and public accountability. Fake news undermines the canon of accuracy by spreading false information that is often difficult to distinguish from legitimate news. Journalists must employ fact-checking tools, collaborate with experts, and transparently correct errors to ensure the accuracy of their reporting. Post-truth challenges the canon of objectivity, as it blurs the line between news and opinion. Journalists need to maintain their commitment to impartiality, providing multiple perspectives and fostering open dialogue to counter the manipulation of facts. Addressing the challenges posed by fake news and post-truth requires a collective effort involving journalists, media organizations, educators, and policymakers. Strengthening media literacy, supporting independent journalism, promoting ethical reporting practices, and holding social media platforms accountable are essential steps in preserving the integrity of journalism. By upholding the canons of accuracy, objectivity, fairness, and public accountability, journalists can navigate the complex media landscape, counter the effects of fake news and post-truth, and fulfill their vital role as purveyors of truth and guardians of democracy.

Keywords: Fake news, Journalism, Objectivity, Post-truth, Propaganda.

1. INTRODUCTION

The explosion of digital media and social networking has revolutionized the way people access and consume information. While this transformation has provided numerous benefits, it has also given rise to the phenomena of fake news and post-truth. These phenomena pose significant challenges to the traditional canons of journalism, which emphasize truth-telling, objectivity, and verification.

Fake news refers to fabricated information that mimics the form and style of legitimate news, with the primary intention of misleading readers or viewers (Allcott & Gentzkow, 2017). Post-truth, on the other hand, is a political and social environment in which objective facts are less influential in shaping public opinion than appeals to emotion and personal belief. These phenomena have gained prominence in recent years due to the proliferation of unverified information on social media platforms, which allows false narratives to spread rapidly and reach large audiences.

Fake news has gained research attention as it has a huge impact on democracy (Allcott & Gentzkow, 2017). In fact, past studies found many adverse effects of fake news. It was found that fake news further polarizes already divided societies. For instance, in Nigeria, Sadiku (2018) reported that in June 2018, the gruesome murder of over 86 people in 11 communities in Barkin Ladi, Rirom and Jos South Local Government areas of Plateau state was spread on social media as a retaliation carried out by the Miyetti Allah group. However, a new report revealed that the killings had nothing to do with the Miyetti Allah group. By then, the spread of fake news stories associated with the killings caused further deaths in the Plateau state of Nigeria. Similar research conducted in the US found that in 2016 there was a reported US “Pizza Gate conspiracy theory” where leaked party Emails of Democratic National Party was disseminated online during the US Presidential campaign, leading to speculations that the leaked emails contained an oblique reference to pedophilia and human trafficking, focusing on the family of a pizza restaurant in the Washington DC area, without a substantial proof. This misinformation caused harassments, threats as well as inciting citizens to commit a shooting at a Pizza parlor. Consistent with this finding, research reported that fake news was spread during the US 2016 elections, suggesting that Pope Francis endorsed the Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump. This fooled millions of readers around the world as well as caused chaos and panic among Americans (Tandoc, 2018). Likewise, in 2016, a piece of fake news suggesting that Israel threatened Pakistan with nuclear weapons surfaced online causing a lot of confusion (Goldman, 2016).

We live in a digital world, surrounded by a deluge of information. The media has made us more connected than ever in one sense, and yet we seem disconnected from each other in a fundamental sense. In this new information age, we are always surrounded by information, a large part of which is reliable with the more significant chunk unverifiable. Thus, discerning truth from untruth has become a herculean task. Citizens, development practitioners and other stakeholders around the world have raised concerns about the prevalence of misinformation in contemporary politics mainly because of its characters and manifestations. The fact that misinformation can be quickly spread and difficult to correct, popularity it has gained in global politics, its capacity to distort the truth, render it useless and replace it with damaging information, and the threat it poses on democracy re-emphasize the need for corrective measures.

One of the most significant implications of fake news and post-truth on journalism is the erosion of trust in media institutions. Misinformation and disinformation campaigns have contributed to a growing skepticism and cynicism among the public towards traditional news sources (Smolla, 2009). This decline in trust is further exacerbated by the increasing polarization of media consumption habits, as individuals gravitate towards ideologically-aligned news outlets that often reinforce existing beliefs and biases. As a result, objective journalism is undermined, and the ability of the press to serve as a reliable source of information and a watchdog for democracy is diminished.

Another consequence of fake news and post-truth is the blurring of lines between opinion and fact. The rise of opinion-driven journalism and the 24-hour news cycle has contributed to a media environment in which personal beliefs, emotions, and biases often take precedence over objective reporting and fact-checking. This shift towards subjectivity is particularly problematic in a post-truth era, as it creates fertile ground for the spread of misinformation and polarizing narratives. The erosion of the distinction between fact and opinion undermines the journalistic canon of objectivity, making it increasingly difficult for the public to discern between reliable and unreliable information (Menczer, 2016).

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study are to:

- i. Investigate the extent to which the proliferation of fake news and the prevalence of post-truth narratives impact the credibility of journalism practice in Nigeria;
- ii. Examine the roles of post truth narratives in shaping public perceptions of news media credibility and the subsequent implications for journalistic norms.

Research Questions

The following research questions were formulated based on the objectives of this study;

- i. To what extent do the proliferation of fake news and the prevalence of post-truth narratives impact the credibility of journalism practice in Nigeria?
- ii. What are the roles of post truth narratives in shaping public perceptions of news media credibility and the subsequent implications for journalistic norms?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Concept of Fake News

Literally, the term fake news consists of two words 'fake' which implies something not genuine, but meant to be accepted as true, and 'news' which means information about current events. Therefore, it can be said that fake news is information or news that is not genuine but presented and expected to be conceived as being true. Scholars have conceptualized fake news in many different ways but with almost the same meanings. Goldman (2016) define fake news as a situation when misinformation takes the form of a news story to approximate the legitimacy which society associates with real news. Many scholars focus on the intention behind fake news when defining the term. McGonagle (2017) defines fake news as information that has been deliberately fabricated and disseminated with the intention to deceive and mislead others into believing falsehoods or doubting verifiable facts. In this regard, it is disinformation that is presented as or is likely to be perceived as news. Allcott and Gentzkow (2017) view fake news as news articles that are intentionally and verifiably false and could mislead readers. Tandoc (2018) provide a wider range of fake news category namely news satire, news parody, fabrication, manipulation, advertising, and propaganda. Relating those mentioned categories to fake news, the authors argued that there is a piece of fake news in the form of satire often found in comedy programs, fake news using parody for humorous purposes based on fictitious, fairly implausible news material, fake news as fabricated news, with no factual basis and disguised as real news in order to disinform audiences, fake news in forms of manipulated images and videos intended to create false narratives, fake news in the shape of advertising, but disguised as genuine reports and fake news as propaganda aimed at manipulating audiences' political orientations and attitudes (Tandoc, 2018). The definitions of fake news, thus far, suggest that the core deducible elements of fake news are falsity of news content and the intent to deceive or mislead.

Claire (2011) identifies seven types of fake news; Satire or parody (no intention to cause harm but has potential to fool), false connection (when headlines, visuals or captions don't support the content), misleading content (misleading use of information to frame an issue or an individual), false context (when genuine content is shared with false contextual information), imposter content (when genuine sources are impersonated with false, made-up sources), manipulated content (when genuine information or imagery is manipulated to deceive, as with a doctored photo) and fabricated content (new content is 100% false, designed to deceive and do harm).

Fake news is a global issue right now; there is an ongoing discussion about fake news and its impact on global affairs. There are several reports that Russia planted fake news stories to influence the outcome of the United States elections. Also, social media was abuzz with certain 'Pizzagate' scandal- a news story claiming that Hillary Clinton and her campaign chairman John Podesta were the ringleaders of a pedophilia ring running out of Washington DC. The story was proven fake when The New York Times and the Washington Post tracked it down and debunked it (Adeleke, 2016). One of the main subjects of attack of the fake news phenomenon is Facebook, the world's largest social network with a monthly active user base of 1.7 billion, more than the population of China and the United States combined. The platform has been used to peddle all kinds of news stories, all in a bid for platforms to rake in advertising revenue. For long, Facebook (or rather Mark Zuckerberg) denied its fake news problem. However, after a lot of pressure, it finally to do something about it by introducing a fake news signal that makes it easy for users to report and identify fake news. The flagged fake news will then be reviewed by Facebook's fact checkers, an army of third party journalists from media organizations (Adeleke, 2016).

The spread of the fake news phenomenon on the internet is caused by the internet's ever connected nature and the preference for speed over accuracy. Because internet content providers and distributors are in Zero-sum, winner-takes-all battle for attention and advertising revenue, they will do any and everything to boost traffic. Unlike print publications that usually have the luxury of time before reporting a breaking story the next day, online publications are necessitated by the franticness of the world in which they find themselves. On the internet, you either go fast or go home. Many journalists, because they are competing for attention and mindshare, are forced to publish first and verify later, and this is what is hurting our world (Adeleke, 2016). However, Nigeria has this problem too but there's not a lot of discussion going on about it. New sites and blogs publish stories without first authenticating the sources. Fake news stories are usually sensational in nature and so are very likely to spread quickly. And because the platforms containing the news already have a massive reader base that looks to them for information, the stories will most likely be believed by the people that read them. These people will, in turn,

share the story on social media (because who doesn't like to pride themselves on being one of the first to know), and the show, sadly, goes on and on. Sometimes, even after the story has been debunked, the fake news still prevails (Adeleke, 2016).

Concept of Post-truth

The concept of post-truth has emerged as a buzzword in recent years, reflecting a trend in the political and social discourse where emotion and personal beliefs have taken precedence over facts and objective truth. Post-truth refers to a condition where objective facts are less influential in shaping public opinion than appeals to emotion and personal beliefs.

The term post-truth was first coined in a 2010 essay by cultural historian Steve Tesich, who described it as a condition where "people are no longer interested in pursuing truth or even in finding out what is true." Post-truth has become more prevalent in the political and social discourse in recent years, and in 2016, it was declared as the word of the year by the Oxford English Dictionary. It is defined as "relating to or denoting circumstances in which objective facts are less influential in shaping public opinion than appeals to emotion and personal belief."

According to Posetti (2016), the implications of post-truth are significant and far-reaching. In a post-truth era, facts and objective truth are no longer a priority in shaping public opinion. Instead, public opinion is shaped by appeals to emotion, personal beliefs, and subjective perspectives. This has led to a situation where false information and fake news can gain traction and influence public opinion, leading to social and political polarization, mistrust in institutions, and a breakdown of democracy.

There are several factors that have contributed to the rise of post-truth. One of the primary factors is the increasing fragmentation of the media landscape. The rise of social media and the decline of traditional media have created an environment where people are exposed to a wide range of opinions and perspectives, often without any filter or fact-checking. This has led to the proliferation of fake news, conspiracy theories, and misinformation, which can easily go viral and influence public opinion.

Another factor contributing to post-truth is the erosion of trust in institutions. Institutions such as the media, government, and academia, which were once seen as authoritative sources of information, have lost credibility in the eyes of many people. This has created a vacuum where people are more likely to rely on their own personal beliefs and emotions, rather than objective facts and evidence.

The Motivation for Fake News Sharing Among Nigerians

Few studies have paid attention to the motivation for fake news sharing among Nigerians (Wasserman et al., 2019; Pate, 2019; Tandoc, 2018). Based on these studies, the motivations for fake news sharing among Nigerians could be categorized into themes; individual motivation, contextual or cultural motives and trusts in the network.

Wasserman et al., (2019) found that the desire to be "in the know," motivates fake news sharing, suggesting that sharing "fake news" is a form of social currency. This means that Nigerians see news sharing as "a sense of civic obligation," even if the information might later be proven to be false as in the event of the Ebola prevention tip message stated earlier, "the hurt done by not informing others outweighs that of informing them". The authors also found that sharing news is seen as contributing to social cohesion –users doing so are motivated by the emotional impact the news is seen to have, the relevance it might have for the receiver and the sender's intention to 'provide advice or warning.' It was also found that information is democratic, therefore, it should be shared not minding if it is well authenticated or not. Undoubtedly, these motivations are unique to Nigerian people who are often described as those with much altruistic attitude. Nigerians often have this characteristic of helping one another which is evident when sharing information, not minding if it is true or not as far as it contains precautionary measures on certain issues. They also believe that access to information is unequal, prompting the desire to democratize information through widespread sharing.

Media control, lack of trust in the news media, unemployment, gossip, rumor, and satire have been identified as some of the contextual and cultural reasons that drive fake news sharing among Nigerians. For example, Wasserman et al., (2019) found a link between a lack of trust in the news media and the sharing of false news. Thus, a significant relationship exists between higher levels of perceived exposure to disinformation and lower levels of media trust. Similarly, Pate (2019) found that the general distrust of elites and politicians, absence or late arrival of official information on issues and the low capacity

of the conventional media to gather, process and verify immediate and distant information in real-time contributes to the spread of fake news in Nigeria. The same authors also found that government stringent control and the severe commercialization in the broadcast media which excludes alternative ideas and opposition has forced many to respond via social media thereby spreading fake news (Pate, 2019). Other contextual factors that could contribute to Nigeria's susceptibility to fake news are the lack of job opportunities for youths. According to Wasserman et al. (2019), it was revealed that many who access smartphones and social media in Nigeria are young and often jobless, giving them a lot of idle time online. They get a lot of false information and share it quickly amongst themselves, sometimes without even reading it. This, combined with the ever-present discord between Nigeria's ethnic groups, can spell trouble where fake news is concerned. Furthermore, past research has also attributed cultural influences such as the long-standing importance of informal sources of information such as gossip, rumor and satire play a role in the likelihood of media users to share news found on social media which sometimes lead to the spread of fake news.

A recent study has shown that WhatsApp is the leading social media platform for sharing fake news in Nigeria because it is the most trusted communication for family and friends. Hence, people tend to trust information shared by family members and friends more than strangers (Wasserman et al., 2019). This suggests that they are more likely to share misinformation about entertainment, political news, job adverts, religious matters, ethnic issues, crime and those that have elements of patriotism and emotions (Wasserman et al., 2019). In Nigeria, sharing 'fake news' is a sign of trust between the sender and recipient: 'What is shared –and reciprocated –is more than just news or information; it is also a marker of trust, fellow-feeling and mutuality' (Tandoc, 2018).

In this current study, awareness of fake news includes users' knowledge about the features of fake news and skills in identifying them. We argue that critical information evaluation skills can help combat the effects of fake news. Thus, the lack of aptitude among the audience to verify news shared on social media could lead them to consume potentially false information.

Effects of Fake News and Post-truth in Nigeria

In recent years, the spread of fake news and the rise of post-truth have become significant challenges for societies worldwide. Nigeria, as one of the largest and most populous countries in Africa, is not exempt from these issues. The proliferation of false information, deliberate misinformation, and the erosion of objective truth pose serious threats to democracy, social cohesion, and public trust in Nigeria. According to Olaniran and Adeyemi (2020), the following are some of the effects of fake news and post-truth in Nigeria;

- Fake news and post-truth have profound impacts on Nigeria's political landscape. The spread of false information can manipulate public opinion, sway elections, and undermine the credibility of democratic processes. Politicians and interest groups often exploit fake news to advance their own agendas, disseminating misinformation to gain power or discredit opponents. The consequences include a loss of public trust, polarization, and the potential for political instability.
- Fake news has the power to fuel social divisions and exacerbate existing conflicts in Nigeria. Misinformation, especially when it targets ethnic, religious, or regional groups, can inflame tensions and incite violence. In a country as diverse as Nigeria, where ethnic and religious identities are strong, false information can easily provoke communal clashes, exacerbate mistrust, and weaken the social fabric.
- The spread of fake news can have significant economic repercussions in Nigeria. False information related to investment opportunities, market trends, or government policies can manipulate financial markets, causing instability and leading to financial losses for individuals and businesses. Additionally, rumors and misinformation can harm the reputation of companies and discourage potential investors, negatively impacting economic growth and development.
- The impact of fake news on public health in Nigeria cannot be underestimated, especially during health crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic. False information about treatments, vaccines, and preventive measures can endanger lives by promoting ineffective remedies or discouraging people from following expert advice. Furthermore, fake news can also spread panic, hinder emergency response efforts, and contribute to the escalation of public health emergencies.

The effects of fake news and post-truth in Nigeria are far-reaching and multifaceted. They permeate politics, social cohesion, the economy, and public health, ultimately undermining the foundations of a democratic society. Combating fake news requires a multifaceted approach, including media literacy programs, fact-checking initiatives, responsible journalism, and effective regulation of online platforms

Implications of Fake news and Post-truth of the Canons of Journalism

In recent years, the rise of fake news and post-truth has challenged the traditional canons of journalism. The objective truth and accuracy in reporting have been replaced by subjective perspectives and personal beliefs. The traditional canons of journalism, which include accuracy, objectivity, fairness, and impartiality, have been challenged by the rise of fake news and post-truth. Fake news refers to the deliberate spread of false information, while post-truth refers to a condition where objective facts are less influential in shaping public opinion than appeals to emotion and personal belief.

The first canon of journalism is accuracy, which requires journalists to report information that is truthful and verifiable. However, in a post-truth era, accuracy is often sacrificed in favor of sensationalism and clickbait. This has led to a situation where false information and fake news can be spread rapidly, leading to social and political polarization.

The second canon of journalism is objectivity, which requires journalists to report information without bias or personal opinion. However, in a post-truth era, objectivity is often difficult to achieve, as people are more likely to believe information that confirms their own biases and beliefs. This has led to a situation where journalists are accused of bias, and the public is skeptical of media outlets.

The third canon of journalism is fairness, which requires journalists to treat all sides of an issue with equal respect and consideration. However, in a post-truth era, fairness can be difficult to achieve, as false information and fake news can be given equal weight to objective facts and evidence. This has led to a situation where the public is confused and unsure about what to believe.

The fourth canon of journalism is impartiality, which requires journalists to remain neutral and avoid taking sides in an issue. However, in a post-truth era, impartiality can be difficult to achieve, as journalists may feel compelled to take a stand on an issue to counter false information and fake news. This has led to a situation where journalists are accused of taking sides, and the public is unsure about who to trust.

Journalists must adapt to the new reality of fake news and post-truth by embracing new approaches to reporting. One approach is to focus on fact-checking and verification, which involves verifying information before it is reported and correcting any errors that are made. Another approach is to engage with the audience and build trust through transparency and accountability. Journalists can also use new technologies, such as blockchain and artificial intelligence, to verify information and combat fake news. Blockchain can be used to create a decentralized system of verifying information, while artificial intelligence can be used to identify and flag false information and fake news.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on the Agenda Setting Theory. The theory suggests that media plays a pivotal role in shaping public perceptions and priorities by highlighting certain issues while downplaying others. In the context of fake news and post-truth, this theory takes on a new dimension.

As fake news and post-truth narratives gain traction in media spaces, they can manipulate the public agenda by diverting attention away from important, factual issues toward sensationalized or misleading content. This distortion of priorities can undermine the journalism canons of accuracy and objectivity. The media's ability to influence what the public considers important becomes compromised when false or misleading information is propagated.

Furthermore, the relationship between the Agenda-Setting Theory and fake news/post-truth also highlights the need for journalists to reassert their role as gatekeepers of reliable information. In an era where misinformation can spread rapidly through social media and online platforms, journalists must remain vigilant in adhering to the principles of verification and truthfulness. By doing so, they can counteract the influence of fake news and post-truth narratives on the public agenda, preserving the integrity of the journalism profession.

In conclusion, the Agenda-Setting Theory's connection to fake news and post-truth underscores the delicate balance between media influence and journalistic responsibility. Recognizing and addressing this relationship is essential for safeguarding the credibility and relevance of journalism in the face of evolving information landscapes.

3. METHODOLOGY

The secondary source of data collection was used in this study. This method of data collection refers to the process of gathering information that has already been collected and recorded by someone else or for a different purpose. It involves using existing sources of data rather than directly collecting new data from primary sources. Secondary data can come from various sources such as published works, online databases, surveys and studies conducted by others, institutional records etc.

4. FINDINGS

Research Question 1: To what extent do the proliferation of fake news and the prevalence of post-truth narratives impact the credibility of journalism practice in Nigeria?

The proliferation of fake news and the prevalence of post-truth narratives in Nigeria have had a significant and concerning impact on the credibility of journalism practice in the country. The spread of false information and the blurring of fact and opinion have posed serious challenges to the foundational principles of journalism.

Posetti (2016) noted that the credibility of journalism practice is compromised as fake news and post-truth narratives create confusion and mistrust among the public. Audiences may become skeptical of all news sources, including legitimate and well-established media outlets, leading to a general erosion of trust in journalism. He also noted that the rapid dissemination of fake news through social media and other digital platforms has made it difficult for audiences to discern between reliable and unreliable sources. This challenges the traditional role of journalists as gatekeepers of accurate information and puts the burden on the public to verify the authenticity of news stories.

Moreover, the impact of fake news and post-truth narratives on the credibility of journalism in Nigeria extends to the global perception of the country's media landscape. When misinformation circulates widely, it can tarnish Nigeria's reputation as a source of credible news, affecting its standing in the international community.

Research Question 2: What are the roles of post truth narratives in shaping public perceptions of news media credibility and the subsequent implications for journalistic norms?

Post-truth narratives play a pivotal role in shaping public perceptions of news media credibility, thereby triggering several implications for journalistic norms. Post-truth narratives often prioritize emotional appeal and personal beliefs over factual accuracy. As a result, the public's trust in mainstream news media, which adheres to evidence-based reporting, can be eroded. This challenges the journalistic norm of accuracy and truthfulness.

Olaniran and Adeyemi (2020) noted that post-truth narratives encourage subjective interpretations of news events, allowing individuals to select information that aligns with their pre-existing beliefs. This can lead to a polarized society where news consumption reinforces existing biases, affecting the journalistic principle of objectivity.

Post-truth narratives can lead to the creation of fragmented information bubbles, where individuals only engage with sources that validate their views. This hinders the journalistic norm of providing a comprehensive and diverse range of perspectives. Post-truth narratives often dismiss expert opinions and established facts in favor of populist rhetoric. This can undermine the journalistic norm of seeking authoritative sources and conducting thorough research.

Post-truth narratives tend to generate more sensational and emotionally charged content, capturing higher levels of audience engagement. This can pressure news outlets to prioritize clickbait over substantive reporting, challenging the journalistic norm of responsible and informative journalism. Post-truth narratives blur the lines between objective facts and subjective opinions, making it challenging for the audience to distinguish between credible information and misinformation. This challenges the journalistic norm of clearly differentiating between news and commentary.

Repeated exposure to post-truth narratives can normalize the acceptance of misinformation and falsehoods, making it harder for journalists to correct public misconceptions and fulfill their role as information gatekeepers.

5. CONCLUSION

The proliferation of fake news and the rise of post-truth have had profound implications on the canons of journalism. These challenges have disrupted the traditional notions of objectivity, accuracy, fairness, and accountability that form the bedrock of responsible journalism. In the context of fake news and post-truth, it is crucial for journalists and media organizations in Nigeria to navigate the evolving media landscape with integrity and a commitment to truth-telling.

The canons of journalism, including accuracy and verification, are essential for combating the spread of fake news. Journalists must adhere to rigorous fact-checking processes, seek multiple sources, and verify information before disseminating it to the public. This requires a dedication to upholding professional standards, even in the face of the pressure to publish sensationalized or unverified content.

Furthermore, journalists must prioritize objectivity in their reporting. While it is recognized that complete objectivity may be unattainable, journalists should strive to present multiple perspectives and provide balanced coverage of issues. This includes avoiding the amplification of false narratives or partisan agendas that may perpetuate the spread of fake news.

The canons of fairness and balance are also crucial in addressing the challenges of fake news and post-truth. Journalists should ensure that their reporting reflects diverse voices, avoids undue bias, and gives individuals and communities an opportunity to respond to allegations or misinformation. By promoting fairness and balance, journalists can counteract the divisive nature of fake news and foster greater understanding and dialogue within society.

Accountability remains a vital canon in the face of fake news and post-truth. Journalists have a responsibility to correct inaccuracies, issue retractions when necessary, and be transparent about their sources and methodologies. Additionally, media organizations should establish mechanisms for public feedback and address complaints or concerns promptly. By being accountable to the public, journalists can rebuild trust and credibility in an era where misinformation is prevalent.

In conclusion, the challenges posed by fake news and post-truth have significant implications for the canons of journalism in Nigeria. Upholding the values of accuracy, objectivity, fairness, and accountability is more crucial than ever. Journalists and media organizations must adapt to the evolving media landscape, embracing digital tools and fact-checking practices while remaining committed to the core principles of responsible journalism. By doing so, they can play a crucial role in combating fake news, preserving public trust, and ensuring the dissemination of accurate and reliable information in Nigeria.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made;

- i. There should be a comprehensive media literacy programme that equips individuals with critical thinking skills to discern credible sources from fake news and post-truth narratives. This can empower audience to make informed decisions to hold journalism accountable for upholding ethical standards.
- ii. There should be established partnerships between news organizations, fact-checking agencies, and tech platforms to collectively identify and debunk misinformation.

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