Effects of Fake News and Propaganda on Management of Information on Covid-19 Pandemic in Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

This study measured the effects of fake news and propaganda on managing information on COVID-19 among the Nigerian citizenry. This study examined sources of information on COVID-19 available to the people, evaluated reasons behind spreading fake news, examined how fake news has affected the spread of COVID-19 pandemic in Nigeria, established the consequences of fake news on managing COVID-19 pandemic and as well identified ways to contain fake news at a time like this in Nigeria.It is a survey with a sample size of 375 participants selected using simple random technique. Instrument of data gathering was questionnaire widely distributed in the six geo-political zones of Nigeria using Survey monkey. Data was analysed using frequencies, counts and percentages, tables and charts. Findings revealed that people rely more on radio, television, and social media for information on COVID-19. Fake news is spread by people mostly for political reasons and intention to cause panic. In Nigeria, fake news has led to disbelief of the existence of the virus thereby leading to violation of precautionary measures among the citizenry and lack of trust in the government. Concerted effort on the part of the government is required to give public enlightenment on the danger of fake news. Also, directorate of anti-fake news should be established to censor and reprimand sources of fake news. People should always check source of information to confirm its credibility and be weary of sharing unconfirmed information especially on the social media.

1. Introduction

It will be an understatement to say that the recent global pandemic – COVID-19 which caught all the nations of the world unawares came with so much jittery and nostalgia. Since it began in Wuhan, China in December, 2019, many lives have been lost to this virus. Families have been thrown into mourning, national economies have witnessed downward movement, businesses have been paralysed, social life in suspension and the future looks bleak with no hope of how soon normalcy would return to the nations. It is obvious that nations of the world are yet to come

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to terms with how to contain this deadly virus that has no respect for age, race, colour or religion. Despite the fact that the emergence of this deadly disease brought the whole world to a standstill, one thing that kept moving is information. There has been series of information disseminated via different media ranging from the radio to television, newspapers, internet social media and man to man. These information keep coming in form of news but one question that easily comes to mind is how genuine and tangible are these news. It is no exaggeration that in every situation, there are individuals that thrive on fake news and propaganda. These individuals engage in such act sometimes for personal gains. They always like to take advantage of situations especially trending on matters of great concern to people and blow it to suit their needs.

What is fake news? Fake news is false information purposely spread to deceive people (Lazer, et al., 2018, Cornell University Library, 2020). Fake news is simply fabricated information (news) without an element of originality or with intent to mislead. Most of the time, fake news is spread by individuals who have nothing to do with the original story and this has been the case since the outbreak of this pandemic. On the other hand, propaganda though synonymous with fake news can be referred to as disinformation. Propaganda or disinformation has been defined by Stanley (2015) as 'politically motivated news that is directed to depress on citizen engagement and genuine political participation'. Stanley further explained that the goal of propaganda is to incite people to action and dampen information processing characterised by deliberation and reflection. Another subset of fake news is misinformation.

Misinformation is false, inaccurate, or misleading information that is communicated regardless of an intention to deceive (Merriam-Webster Dictionary, 2020). The emergence of social media as a key source of news content has fuelled further the spreading of misinformation thereby making palpably false news look as if they are legitimate (Gottfried & Shearer in Pennycook & Rand, 2019). Pew Research Center (2016) reports that 62% of American people get their news from social media. Whether propaganda, disinformation, misinformation or fake news, one peculiarity they all share is the intent to deceive and mislead because they all refer to news that has no basis in reality (Dollinger, 2017). Schneider cited in Dollinger (2017, para. 6) concludes by stating that "We are living in the midst of a sea of information that includes half-truths, manipulated information, opinion and advertising masquerading as news," "Often, this information has some basis in reality, but has been distorted in a way that is totally misleading".

For instance, at the inception of the pandemic, there was a wide rumour that the 5G technology is the source of the COVID-19 pandemic. This rumour has led to the setting ablaze of mobile phone masts in Birmingham, Merseyside and Belfast (Omand, 2020). This is how dangerous and misleading fake news could be. At the onset, some of the rumours circulated in Nigeria held that the ''virus can only survive in cold weather and because Nigeria in is the tropical, the virus cannot survive here''; ''the virus attacked Chinese because they are in the habit of eating life animals'' and since we do not engage in such, it cannot spread to our country''; ''anyone that consumes alcohol in large quantity will not be attacked by the virus''; ''COVID-19 is just a flu and all you need is vitamin C tablets and Omega H3 capsules'' and so there is no reason to panic. These and many other rumours had made the citizenry throw caution to the winds until the realities began to play out. Such kind of misleading news no doubt can wreck havocs and even constitute obstacles

to effective management of the pandemic. The one million question begging for answer is: are we fighting just the Coronavirus or the fake news virus which has also eaten deep into our society?

2. Statement of Problem

It is obvious from the on-going that in the management of COVID-19, the place of information cannot be jettisoned but in the process of spreading and accepting information via various news media, people need to be cautious of distorted news. This study therefore seeks to measure the effects of fake news and propaganda in managing information on Covid-19 among Nigerian citizenry. The outcome of this study may shed light on how to identify fake news and uphold the truth even in the face of the outrageous pandemic.

3. Objectives of the Study

The general objective of this study is to measure the effects of fake news and propaganda in managing information on COVID-19 among the Nigerian populace. To achieve this, the following five specific objectives would guide the study:

(a) Identify the sources of information on COVID-19 pandemic available to citizenry.
(b) Investigate reasons for spreading fake news.
(c) Examine how fake news has affected the spread of COVID-19 pandemic in Nigeria.
(d) Establish the consequences of fake news on managing covid-19 pandemic in Nigeria.
(e) Identify ways to curtail fake news at a time like this.

4. Review of Related Literature

4.1 Meaning and Types of Fake News

Fake news can simply be described as stories that are mere fabrication, falsehood, propaganda or hoaxes intended to misinform or deceive people. Most often than not, fake news aim at manipulating people's opinions and actions in order to create wrong impression which sometimes are dangerous to the people. Sharing fake news has become a major concern across the globe. Authorities have described fake news the way they perceive it. Cambridge dictionary (2020) defines it as false stories that appear to be news spread on internet or using other media, usually created to influence political views as a joke. Others sees fake news as fictitious information presented to the public under the guise of it being factual information with the intention to mislead or misinform the reader (Gelfert, 2018; Allcott & Gentzknow, 2018; Svard & Rumman, 2017). There are categories of fake news.

Arakelian (2020) identifies three broad categories of fake news. These are mercenary fake news, fake news with an agenda and satirical fake news. Mercenary fake news is created to put money in someone's pocket. Examples are some adverts especially on websites and YouTube channels. While fake news with an agenda promotes a cause or idea, best example of this is political propaganda. The third which is the satirical fake news consists of satirical stories created for purposes of humour as well as, in many cases, political or social commentary. In the view of Wardle (2017), seven types of Fake news exist and these are: false context, misleading content, false connection, satire or parody, fabricated content, impostor content and manipulated content. Zimdars (2016) identifies four categories of fake news to include:

- Fake, false or regularly misleading websites that are shared on facebook and social media. Some of these sites rely on distorted headlines and decontextualized or dubious information in order to generate likes, shares and profits.
- Websites that may calculate misleading and/or potentially unreliable information.
- Websites that sometimes use clickbait-y headlines and social media descriptions.
- Satire/comedy sites which can offer important critical commentary on politics and society, but have the potential to be shared as actual or literal news.

In addition to the already mentioned the Columbia Journalism Review (2020) establish three more types of fake news to be: authentic material used in the wrong context, imposter new sites designed to look like brands we already know; and manipulated content. Looking at the various categorisations by the authorities mentioned, one fact that is clear and common to all is that fake news is laced with falsehood and intent to deceive or misinform. Therefore, fake news can be described as lies or misleading information that is being spread with the intent to deceive or mislead. In spreading fake news, often, fake news cites mix together facts from verified news outlets with false information thereby making it difficult for the people to separate facts from falsehood when confronted with both (Los Angeles City College Library, 2021). However, spreading of fake news is not peculiar to Nigeria. Even in developed nations such as the United States of America, it has been affirmed that 23 percent of U.S. adults have shared fake news, knowingly or unknowingly, with friends and others (Pews Research Center, 2016).

4.2 Identifying Fake News and Propaganda about Covid-19

Generally, International Federation of Library Associations (2017) highlights eight different ways to identify fake news. These include: considering the source of the news, check the author, check the date, check your biases, read beyond, supporting sources, is it a joke and ask the experts. These tips can help to identify fake news. Beyond general fake news, how can one identify fake news about COVID-19? According to University of Toronto News (2020), fake news about Covid-19 can be identified using the following tips:

- Consulting fact checking organisations. Some of the organisations include: All Sides.Com;

Duke Reporters Lab.Org; FactCheck.Org; and so on.
- Visiting reputable health focused websites and looking closely at news source for potential bias or hoaxes
- Consulting COVID-19 information guide. This guide is a comprehensive online guide with advice for spotting inaccurate information about COVID-19 pandemic. The guide provides resources for fact checking the myriad of information on COVID-19 available on the social media and the web. Tools used to provide the guide are: Google's Fact Check Explorer for COVID and the Corona virus; and World Health Organization's Health Alert on WhatsApp. The guide includes weekly fact checks that address common Covid-19 myths and false claims with evidenced base answers. It is being updated as soon as new information and resources on the pandemic are available. The guide is created by Vincci Lui, a Librarian at University of Toronto Gerstein Science Information Centre.

Also, Africa Check (2020) reiterates that some of the steps to checking facts in any information/news received are: reading past the headline, identifying the source/origin of the information, verifying the content, search if other outlets are reporting the same news or information, beware of bias, and thinking before sharing. It must be noted that fake news can come inform of the following: Click bait, Propaganda, Satire/parody, Sloppy journalism, Misleading headings, Biased or slanted news. Regardless of how it is received, the fact remains that individuals are responsible for their actions.

4.3 Impact of Fake News and Propaganda on Management of Covid-19 Information

In spite of the global efforts made by health professionals, no particular treatment has been found as cure for the Covid-19 pandemic. Amidst the hullabaloo of this outbreak, distorted and exaggerated news have been widely disseminated. Some of this distorted information has misled individuals into taking actions that are inimical to their well-being. For instance, Omand (2020) reports the death of a couple in Arizona who took Chloroquine phosphate – an addictive use to clean fish tanks simply because they heard in the news that the President of America – Donald Trump said that the age long antimalarial drug called Chloroquine could be used to treat COVID-19. This action is as a result of distorted information.

In the words of John Naughton (2020), 'fake news about COVID-19 can be as dangerous as the virus'. This affirmation is supported by CNBC Africa (2020) where it quoted Hiten Patel (2020) saying that though there are 'reliable and accurate information on how to combat the disease more important than ever, unfortunately fake news is spreading faster than the virus'. Akinyemi reports in Vanguard newspaper of March (2020) that in some parts of Nigeria, some people washed their mouths and body with hand sanitizer due to fake news that were spread on social media. On the other hand, majority of the populace are yet to believe the reality of COVID-19 pandemic hence their lackadaisical attitude in adherence to global safety measures laid down by health professionals and federal government of Nigeria. Other ways in which fake news can affect mankind includes spreading of alternative facts about a situation, spreading of misleading stories related to medical

treatments, circulating information harmful to health, false claims, fear, bullying, political and so on (Fédération Professionnelle des Journalistes du Québec, 2020; Austin Community College Library Services, 2020). From the on-going, it is obvious that fake news is destructive and to avoid being part of those that spread fake news or propaganda, people must be ready to take action.

5. Methodology

The research design adopted for this study is survey. Study population comprises Nigerian citizens from the age of 16 years and above in all the 6 geopolitical zones regardless of their gender, qualification and profession. This is because we believe that from age 16, individuals are already mature to understand what a pandemic is and so they can relate with what COVID-19 stands for and the dangers it poses to humanity. Therefore, the study was targeted at people aged 16 and above using simple random sampling technique. Instrument of data gathering was questionnaire administered through Survey Monkey. Survey Monkey is an online survey tool use to gather data for research purposes. The platform used to administer the questionnaire for the study is the social media specifically, the whatsApp. Over a period of 6 weeks, questionnaire was shared among the targeted group via whatsApp platform. 375 people responded to the questionnaire. However, some questions were not answered by respondents hence the variation in the total numbers indicated on some tables and figures. Result of data was presented using frequencies, counts, percentages, tables and charts.

6. Result of Findings

Results on the gender distribution of the correspondents revealed that there are females (201: 53.6%) and males (174: 46.4%) respondents.
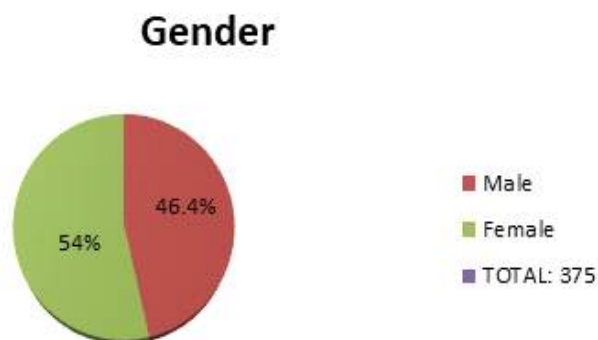
Fig. 1. Gender of Respondents

Also, the age distribution of the respondents as revealed in table 1 indicates that there are respondents within the age range of 46-55 years (138:37.5%), 36-45 years (81:22%) and 56-65 years (79:21.5%) than in other age range categories. The inference to be drawn from this is that majority of the respondents are within the age range of 46-65 years. This may be due to the fact that this category of people is in the active work environment and are likely to be more active on social media; hence their interest in the study and their availability to respond to the research instrument which was distributed using the social media (WhatsApp).

Table 1. Age range of Respondents

Age	Frequency	Percentage
16 - 25 years	24	6.52%
26 - 35 years	34	9.24%
36 - 45 years	81	22.01%
46 - 55 years	138	37.50%
56 - 67 years	79	21.47%
66 - 75 years	10	2.72%
76 years and above	02	0.54%
Total	368	100%

Table 2 revealed that most of the participants in the study were from the South- Western geopolitical zone of Nigeria with response rate of 271(63.3%). This may be due to the fact that the level of awareness about COVID-19 was more pronounced in the South-West, Nigeria at the time of the study.

Table 2. Geographical Zones of Respondents

North Central	54	14.79%
North East	6	1.64%
North West	7	1.91%
South East	33	9.04%
South West	231	63.3%
South South	34	9.32%
Total	365	

Information gathered on the highest qualification possessed by the respondents in **Fig. 2** showed University graduates with response rate of 281(76%) as highest participants. Of course this is not surprising as majority of people that depend on social media for daily interactions, getting in touch with friends and family, disseminating information and accessing news around the world are college students (Pews Research Center, 2016; Best Colleges.com, 2021) and so use of social media has become part of daily living.
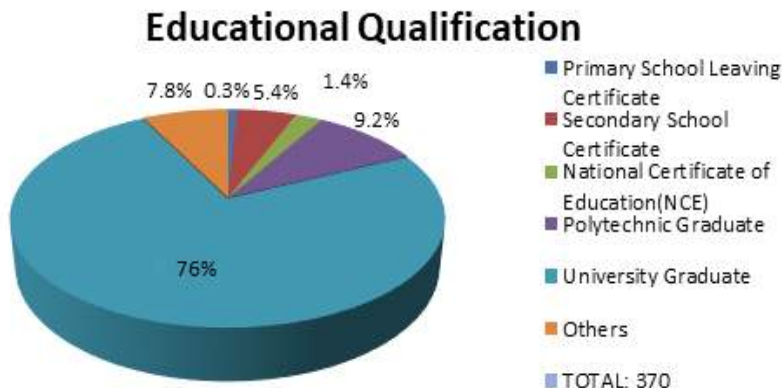
Educational Qualification

Fig. 2. Educational Qualification

As revealed in **Fig. 3**, majority of the respondents are public servants followed by a few (37, 10%) private practitioners and others. The reason for this may due to the fact public servants are more at risk of being infected by the reason of their jobs which involve interaction with different kinds of people at work, hence their interest in responding to the questionnaire.
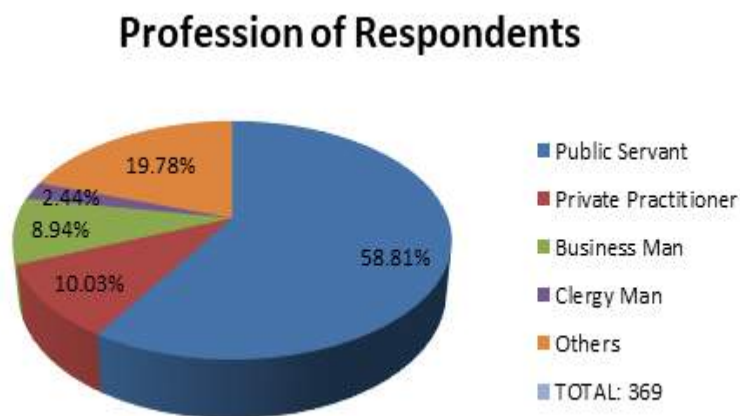
Profession of Respondents

Fig. 3. Profession of Respondents

6.1 Sources of Information on COVID-19 Pandemic in Nigeria

To establish the various sources of information on COVID-19 available to the people, respondents were asked to indicate their sources of awareness information on the pandemic. This will enable a clear justification of the credibility of their source of information. The data is presented in **Table 3**.

Table 3. Sources of Information on Covid-19 Pandemic in Nigeria

Source	Freq.	Percentage
People	39	10.96%
Newspapers	39	10.96%
Social media(Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram & Twitter	87	24.44%
Internet	26	7.30%
Radio and television broadcast	147	41.29%
Handbills, fliers and billboards	3	0.84%
Community team leaders	2	0.56%
Civil society and NGOs	0	0.00%
State health officers	9	2.53%
Religious leaders	2	0.56%
Local government official	0	0.00%
Hospitals	2	0.56%
Others	0	0.00%
Total	356	100%

Table 3 revealed Radio and Television broadcast as the major sources of information on COVID-19. This is not surprising. It is very unlikely that there will be a home in Nigeria today, whether in rural or urban areas without a radio or television. These two media though serve as sources of entertainment to the people; they also remain reliable sources of information to them. Respondents were further asked of their opinion about the credibility of the various sources of information available on COVID-19. The result is presented in **Fig. 4** Credibility of Information on Covid-19 provided in Nigeria.
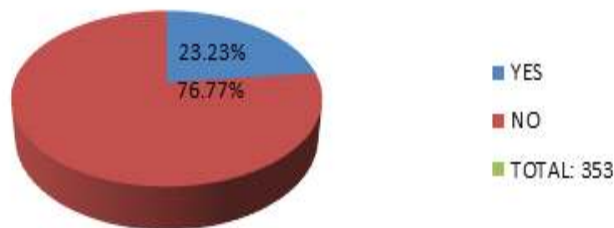

Fig. 4. Credibility of Information on COVID-19

Interestingly, majority of respondents affirmed that not all information on Covid-19 is credible.

The implication of this is that participants are aware that some of the available information on Covid-19 is manipulated to misinform the people.

6.2 Reasons for Spreading Fake News and Propaganda

Furthermore, the study sought to identify the reasons behind peddling of fake news at all. Therefore, respondents were asked to indicate from a list of options presumed reasons for spreading fake news. **Fig. 5** presents the findings:
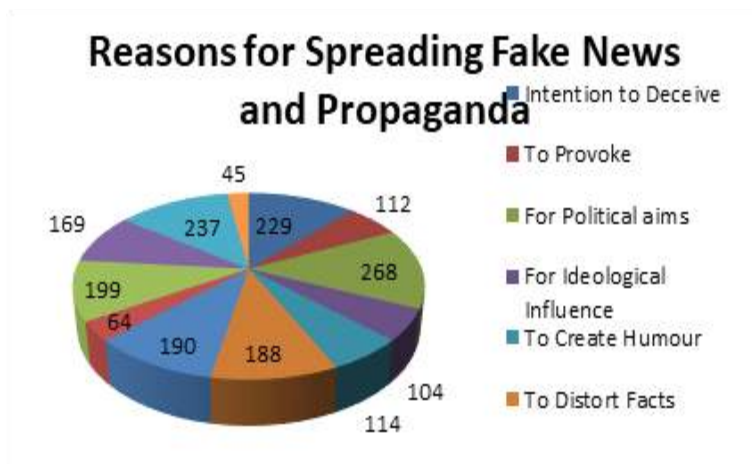
Fig. 5. Reasons for spreading fake news and propaganda

Amongst other reasons advanced for the spread of fake news and propaganda, **Fig. 5** revealed political reasons (268), causing panic (237), intention to deceive (229), dubious reasons (199), attracting attention to oneself (190) and to distort facts (188) as major variables.

6.3 How Fake News has affected the Spread and Management of COVID-19 in Nigeria

Table 4 presented data on different ways fake news has affected management of information on COVID-19 in Nigeria. Multiple choice answers were presented to respondents. 25% response rate was used as the rule of thumb for the study and out of all; the above listed 10 options attracted more than 25% responses each. As indicated above, the greatest effect of fake news on COVID-19 information management is 'disbelief'. It is not surprising that next variable to this in the ranking is 'violation of precautionary measures' put in place by government. The implication of this is that level of spread will be high while period of prevalence of the pandemic may be prolonged in the country.

Table 4. How Fake News has Affected Management of Information on Covid-19 Pandemic in Nigeria

S/N	Ways	Freq.	Percent.
1	Many do not believe COVID-19 is in Nigeria	297	84.14%
2	There has been violations of precautions (social distancing, wearing of face mask, hand washing etc)	283	80.17%
3	It has led to distorted information on treatment of the virus	208	58.92%
4	Many believe the virus cannot survive in hot temperate region like ours	253	71.67%
5	People think it is a way of syphoning money by the government	283	80.17%
6	Some people believe data figure of victims is suspicious	275	77.90%
7	Anxiety among the citizenry	157	44.41%
8	It has heat up the nation's polity	118	33.43%
9	Speculation on the origin and reasons for COVID-19	122	34.56%
10	People with similar symptoms like cold, catarrh, sneezing, coughing, fever etc are often mistakenly diagnosed as COVID-19 patients	268	75.92%

6.4 Consequences of Fake News on Managing COVID-19 Pandemic in Nigeria

Having explored how fake news has affected the spread and management of COVID-19 in Nigeria, the study also examined the attendant consequences of these effects on the management of the pandemic. Respondents were asked to indicate what they thought to be consequences of fake news on managing the global pandemic in Nigeria and **Fig. 5** presents data obtained.

Fake news no doubt has affected management of information on COVID-19 negatively not only in Nigeria but in some other parts of the world. As revealed on **Table 5**, some of the grievous consequences it has in Nigeria included: reduction in public trust in the government and promotion of cynical view (266: 77.8%); violation of safety cautions (263:76.9%); increase in the rate of infection among the citizenry (249: 72.8%); wrong information on how to contain the virus (241: 70.5%); distorted information on the actual number of victims nationwide (216: 63.7%); stigmatization of affected persons and people with similar symptoms (209: 61.1%) and increase in digitally fuelled information amongst others. T Again, multiple choice answers were presented for this question and the rule of thumb for the study was used to select the above listed options amongst others. The implication of this result is that there is need for government to make conscious efforts to give public enlightenment on effects of fake news and propaganda.

Table 5 Consequences of Fake News on Managing COVID-19 Pandemic in Nigeria

S/N	Consequences	Freq.	Percent.
1	Reduction in public trust in the government and promotion of cynical view	266	77.8%
2	Violation of safety cautions	263	76.9%
3	increase in the rate of infection among the citizenry	249	72.8%
4	wrong information on how to contain the virus	241	707%
5	distorted information on the actual number of victims nationwide	216	63.7%

| 6 | stigmatization of affected persons and people with similar symptoms | 209 | 61.1% |
| 7 | Increase in digitally fuelled information | 147 | 44.41% |

6.5 Ways to Curtail Fake News

On ways to curtail fake news in the country, the below listed 7 options were presented to respondents as multiple choice answers. It is apparent from **Table 6** that public enlightenment on effects of fake news (51.45%) topped the list of ways to curtail fake news. However, it is not certain if the situation in Nigerian has not defeated this method of curtailing the spread of fake news because from observations, every effort of government in form of public enlightenment and sensitization against COVID-19 did not yield the expected result, perhaps due to lack of trust in the government of the day.

Table 6 Ways to Curtail Fake News

S/N	Ways to Curtail Fake News	Freq.	Percent.
1	There should be conscious effort by the government to give public enlightenment on effects of fake news and propaganda	177	51.45%
2	Establishment of anti-fake news centres to censor and investigate sources of fake news	44	12.79%
3	Government should apply punitive measures on persons found guilty	31	9.01%
4	Religious bodies should assist in enlightening their members on the dangers of fake news and propaganda	21	6.10%
5	NGO's should engage in campaigns against fake news	9	0.28%
6	Promotion of authoritative content about the Virus in newsfeed and reduce the visibility of misinformation	24	6.97%
7	World Health Organisation partnering with Technological Company such as Facebook, Google, Tencent, Baidu, Tik Tok, Twitter, Weibo, Pinterest as well as other online influencers to promote accurate information about covid-19	38	11.04%
	Total	344	100%

7. Discussion

The first section of the results focused on the demographic information of the respondents. Results on the gender distribution of the correspondents revealed that there are more female among the respondents. Also, the age distribution of the respondents revealed the largest population within the age range of 46-65 years. This may be due to the fact that this category of people is in the active work environment and prone to COVID-19 pandemic, hence their eagerness and interest in information, education and research. Secondly, the fact that this category of people has better access to information during the pandemic period could also be responsible for their interest in this study, hence their availability to respond to the research instrument. Moreover, information gathered on the highest qualification possessed by the respondents showed University graduate with

response rate of 281 or 76.0%. This may be due to the fact that only people who are sufficiently educated could understand the myths and facts about COVID-19 pandemic and thereby are able to give accurate and relevant information as regards COVID-19 pandemic. Results presented on occupation of the respondents showed that majority of the respondents (217,58.8%) are public servants while only a few (37,10.0%) are private practitioners. Most of the participants (63.3%) were found to be from South- West geopolitical zone of Nigeria. This may be due to the fact that the level of awareness about COVID-19 was more prevalent in the South-Western Nigeria than every other geopolitical zone at the time of the study. It is also possible that people from the South-West, Nigeria were more willing to participate in the study than people from other geopolitical zones.

In responding to the objectives of the study, findings revealed that among the sources of information on COVID-19 pandemic citizen relied more on, Radio, Television and Social media (Facebook,WhatsApp etc.) for their information needs. The fact that most of the respondents affirmed traditional media of radio and television as major sources of getting information about COVID-19 pandemic may be due to the fact that radio and television are sources of information available in most of the homes in Nigeria. It is very unlikely that there will be a home, whether in rural or urban areas, without either radio or television in Nigeria of today. The integrity of radio and television broadcast as source of information in this wise play a major role in fencing off fake news. However, it must be noted that 'junk' or 'yellow' journalism is a host to fake news and this can turn the colour of journalism lurid since fake news is an improved form of yellow journalism. (Agbese, 2017). The study also affirmed various reasons why people spread fake news. The most prominent reason advanced is political reason followed by intention to cause panic, deceive, for dubious intent, attraction to oneself and distortion of facts. The spread of fake news for political reasons may be due to apathy among the dominant parties in Nigeria as well as for the selfish interest of members of the political parties. Also, spreading of fake news to cause panic is usually with the intention of instilling fears in the people which ultimately may destabilize the society.

However, fake news has affected the spread of COVID-19 a great deal in Nigeria. Most of all, it has brought about disbelieve on the existence of the pandemic in the country; violation of COVID-19 precautionary measures by the people and lack of trust in government as most people believed it is a way of siphoning money by government. This spell a great danger for the people because the position of disbelieve and violation of safety measures can cause increase in the proliferation of the virus. In all, there are ways to curtail the spread of fake news. The study established that conscious efforts by government in giving public enlightenment on effects of fake news and propaganda as a major way of containing the spread of fake news in Nigeria. Establishment of anti-fake news center to censor and investigate sources of fake news was also attested to as a way to curtail fake news. How successful these might be is the question begging for answer as it's been observed that every effort of government towards in form of public enlightenment and sensitization against COVID-19 did not yield the expected the result, perhaps due to the lack of trust in the government of the day by Nigerian people.

8. Conclusion

This study has brought to fore the fact that people obtain information on COVID-19 chiefly from radio, television and social media. Even so, it affirmed that people peddle fake news and the major reasons for this include political bigotry, intent to cause panic, deceit and dupe. This further support previous studies that established fake news or misinformation as a global menace that can lead to poor decisions about consequential matters; be difficult to correct and can have lasting effects even after it is being discredited (Nyhan & Reifler, 2015; Chan et al., 2017). In spite of all that the federal government of Nigeria is doing at all level to curtail the spread of the pandemic, majority of the Nigerian populace are skeptical because of lack of trust in the government.

This has hitherto affected the management of the spread of the virus in Nigeria in that majority do not believe in the existence of the pandemic. As a result, many do not see the reason to observe the laid down precautionary measures. In view of the ongoing, the study recommends that:

- Public enlightenment program on effects of fake news and propaganda should be organized by the government. All tiers of government should be involved in executing this so that people at the grass root can also be carried along.
- Nigerian government should as a matter of urgency and necessity build trust in the people. Government's integrity should not be compromised with respect to time and situation. This can only be achieved through honest and transparent dealings.
- Directorate of anti-fake news should be established and managed by people with integrity. The directorate should be given the mandate to censor, investigate and reprimand sources of fake news.
- Punitive measures to be meted out to fake news peddlers should be passed into law.
- People should always check the source of information available to ascertain its credibility.
- Lastly, people should be weary of sharing unconfirmed information especially on the social media where the slogan 'please share with your friends and loved ones' has become a norm. Efforts should be made to verify information received before holding on to it. Some online professional checking tools include: All Sides. Com; Duke Reporters Lab.Org; FactCheck.Org; Politifact. Com; Snopes. Com (Benedictine University Library, 2020; Carlyle Campbell Library, 2020) and so on.

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