Trends and Effects of Hate Speech and Fake News on National Integration in Nigeria

Victor Olusegun Babatunde
Department of Mass Communication,
Kwara State University, Malete, Nigeria
babatundev@gmail.com

Abstract

This study was predicated on the need to analyse the influence of radio coverage This paper examines the menace of hate speech and fake news and their effects on national integration in Nigeria. The paper solely relies on secondary data through the review of relevant literature to examine the common trends of hate speech and fake news with their corresponding effects in the society. Among other effects, the paper indicates that hate speech and fake news constitute serious effects on national integration in Nigeria because they heighten ethnic and religious tensions, undermine trust and unity, polarize society, and pose risks to peace and security. Therefore, the paper recommends that government should introduce a legal framework to guide the use of the media and spell out appropriate sanctions for offenders to stem the rising tide of the hate speech and fake news phenomena. Also, there is need for a robust literacy on the use of media for both information producers and consumers in Nigeria thereby ensuring proper use geared towards national integration.

Keywords: *Hate Speech, Fake News, Media, Cultivation, National Integration*

Introduction

Hate speech and fake news have emerged as critical challenges in Nigeria, particularly with the advent of social media platforms. These trends have been fueled by factors such as political polarization, ethnic and religious tensions, and the ease of disseminating information online. The hate speech and fake news phenomena are key components of the era of information disorder which possess the potentials to undermine national integration in any country of the world.

Hate speech is often directed towards gaining political power, relevance and recognition. It is mostly common during electioneering process and has the potentials to lead to electoral violence. Also, hate speech is so pervasive in Nigeria to the extent that many citizens are susceptible to it because people who usually complain of being insulted by other ethnic groups often use even more hateful words against their

assailants (Ogbuoshi, Oyeleke & Folorunsho, 2019). Hence, hate speech portends a damaging effect on the political and socio-cultural life of any community.

The hate speech phenomenon which is believed to be largely perpetrated on the social media, portend grievous risk in any society where it exists. According to Spencer-Smith (2018), the perpetration of hate speech on social media is damaging both to the wellbeing of users and also to an open, egalitarian society. Hence, the social media offers an ideal platform to adapt and spread hate speech and foul language easily because of its decentralized, anonymous and interactive structure. Therefore, the prevalence of hate speech and foul language on social media bordering on political and national issues, and even social interaction in Nigeria, especially on the popular social networking sites has become worrisome (Alakali, Faga & Mbursa, 2017).

Similarly, fake news could also constitute threat to national integration and political stability in any society. According to Apuke & Omar (2020, p. 322), "fake news in Nigeria leads to disunity and uneasy coexistence, undermines democracy, exacerbate distrust, violence and division. It also weakens the confidence of the populace towards the mass media as well as the Nigerian system." Although the real-world consequences of fake news has not been really analyzed, there are predominant public apprehensions concerning the effects of fake news. A growing concern is that fake news may result in confusion in the fact-checking process and eventually undermined an informed public in any country (Jang & Kim, 2018). Therefore, the consequences could be unimaginably devastating when hate speech and fake news are allowed to thrive unchecked in any society.

The complex nature of Nigeria and its cultural diversities have predisposed the country to political and ethno-religious conflicts which have been aggravated through the hate speech phenomenon. According to Orounye (2012), politics and ethno-religious conflicts were the two main elements that have nurtured and sustained hate speech's continual existence in Nigeria. This has popularized politically induced ethnic and religious conflicts in the country. To worsen the situation, Auwal (2018) noted that sites that promote hatred against particular ethnic, religious, racial, or sexually-oriented groups have proliferated on social media. This has, by implication put the country in a precarious situation particularly with the persistent agitations and threat for disintegration and/or secession among different ethnic nationalities in the country.

In addition, the propagation of political hate speech through news reportage could result in infraction on certain rights of the victims such as the right to be voted for which determines political attainment. Hate speech has the potential to infringe on racial gender and religious equality among political actors in any society (Oriola, 2019). Hence, at the long run, hate speech promotes diversity and causes disunity in a multi-ethnic society such as Nigeria.

On the other hand, Fake news has recently raised a lot of concerns because of its prevalence in contemporary democratic politics. It spreads like wide-fire and difficult to contain or correct as its capacity to distort the eventual truth makes it a threat in a democratic set up (Wilson & Umar, 2019). This is because news plays an important role

in democratic societies, unlike many other types of information. It is a key source of accurate information about political and societal affairs, which informs public opinion making and deliberative processes. Hence, if news is "fake," it misinforms the public and pollutes democratic debates (McGonagle, 2017). In Nigeria, the proliferation of fake news on social media has reached an unprecedented level, putting the country in a precarious situation. This trend gained prominence during the build-up to the 2015 General Elections (Ogbuoshi *et al.*, 2019). This shows that the catastrophic spread of this phenomenon is capable of disrupting the existing unity in any society if left unchecked.

Although there have been studies on the effects of hate speech and fake news on macroscopic society (Ogbuoshi *et al.*, 2019; Okoro & Emmanuel, 2019; Pate & Dauda, 2019; Salihu, 2019; Pate & Dauda, 2019; Wilson & Umar, 2019), their effects on national integration have not been given required attention. Hence, this establishes paucity of literature on the effects of these phenomena on national integration particularly in a multi-cultural, multi-ethnic and divergent country like Nigeria. Therefore, the focus of this paper is to examine the effects of hate speech and fake news on the attainment of national integration in Nigeria through the interrogation of relevant literature. Thus, the basic questions which the paper considers pertinent to interrogate are: What are the trends of hate speech and fake news in Nigeria? Then, what are the effects of hate speeches and fake news on the attainment of national integration in Nigeria?

Conceptual Explanations

The prevalence of information disorder through its popular manifestations – hate speech and fake news is closely associated with the social media phenomenon which has been said to have facilitated these maladies (Takwa, 2017; Lucas & Tergema, 2018).

Hate Speech

Hate speech is defined as any speech that disparages an individual or a group based on their race, color, ethnicity, gender, handicap, sexual orientation, nationality, religion, or other characteristics. This demonstrates how hate speech denigrates people and exposes them to ridicule in public (Ezinwa, Ngwu, Odii & Ekwu, 2016). This is to say that hate speech degrades individuals or group and brings them to public ridicule.

According to the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (2013, p. 4) hate speech includes:

(a) the spread of any notion that promote tribal or cultural supremacy or hatred;
(b) inciting hatred, contempt, or prejudice against individuals who belong to a group on the basis of their race, colour, ancestry, or internal or cultural background;

(c) expression of insults, ridicule, or slander of individuals or groups or justification of hatred, contempt, or prejudice on the basis of the factors in (b) above, when it clearly amounts to promotion of hatred or prejudice;
(d) threats or incitement to violence against individuals or groups on the grounds in (b) above;
(e) involvement in groups and activities that encourage and instigate racial prejudice.

Also, Ojebode (2018, p. 5) observes that hate speech results from a conscious effort to denigrate a person or group by turning them into a thing with no significant value. According to him, it involves sentimentalizing a group of individuals by choosing the most irritating trait about them and writing it on their forehead as their name, identity, or other word by which they should be recognized. This means that hate speech is not an inadvertent action, but a deliberate and conscious attempt to debase an individual or group so as to reduce them to a mere object or thing of insignificance.

Generally, hate speech has a wide description which sometimes extend to embrace words that are insulting to people in government or minority groups, or demeaning to prominent individuals in the society. Hate speech reaches its peak at critical times such as during election campaigns (Alakali *et al.*, 2017). Democracies have apparently proven to be susceptible to hate speech and its negative impacts at various stages of development and consolidation. In support of the above submission by Alakali *et al.*, Mohan & Barnes (2018), also said that the majority of hate speech and incitement to hatred occurs during election campaigns. In addition, Adelakun (2017) cited in Oriola (2019) affirms that the period of 2015 and 2019 electioneering campaigns in Nigeria witnessed the renaissance of hate speech due to the widespread use of cruel political propaganda among political actors. Hence, it is safe to say that hate speeches thrive more during electioneering processes and portend a great danger to national integration.

Fake News

Fake news has become a common and highly contested phenomenon. For instance, it has been a regular part of the American political discourse since the 2016 election. The phrase was initially used by academics and journalists to discuss indications of coordinated propaganda tactics, possibly carried out by foreign operatives, as a contributing factor in Trump's shocking electoral triumph (Caplan, Hanson & Donovan, 2018). Equally, Ogbuoshi *et al.* (2019) affirmed that fake news became prominent in Nigeria during the build up to the 2015 general elections.

What then is fake news? According to McGonagle (2017), fake news is disinformation that is presented as, or is likely to be seen as, news; it is content that has been purposefully constructed and spread with the objective to confuse and mislead people into believing lies or rejecting verified facts. Allcott and Gentzkow (2017, p. 213) defined fake news as ‘news articles that are intentionally and verifiably false, and could mislead readers’. Also, Lazer *et al.* (2018, p. 1094) defined fake news as

'fabricated information that mimics news media content in form but not in organizational process or intent.' These show the potentials of fake news in undermining social cohesion and national integration in Nigeria. Hence fake news cannot be said to be an inadvertent attempt to deceive or mislead an audience, but often a deliberate attempt to misinform.

However, Ojebode (2018) perceives fake news as a false report that was created by someone's imagination for either malicious or innocent reasons. He is of the opinion that any news that does not support the goals, methods, and ideologies of a particular politician is fake news in that politician's view. He added that distributing incorrect or misleading information is neither a Nigerian issue nor innovation. Corroborating this, Tandoc, Lim & Ling (2017) agree that the fake news phenomenon has a long history and has been used by scholars to describe a number of things, such as political satire, news parody, propaganda and even misleading advertising.

National Integration

National integration is not a new concept in Nigeria as it has been part of the country's aspirations since its independence in 1960. For instance, a bid to achieve national integration in Nigeria led to the establishment of the National Youth Service Scheme (NYSC) by the Gen Yakubu Gowon's administration after the Civil War. Also, successive governments in Nigeria have contributed their quota to the struggle for the attainment of national integration in the country at one time or the other. However, the integration crisis in Nigeria has continued and is evident in the minority question, religious bigotry and conflicts, ethnic politics, indigene-settler tension, resource control, youth restiveness and violence and the demand for a (sovereign) national conference about the terms of the nation's continued amalgamation (Onifade & Imhonopi, 2013). According to Tahir cited in Mile (2019), society or group of people is said to have become integrated or united when individuals in the society are perfect substitute for each other subject only to variations deriving from distinctions, of class, status and occupation. In the view of this scholar, this in practical terms means that the interest of the members in the community in spheres of national life can be represented by any one individual(s) and the reservations which people might have, relate only to relative success or failure and not to any primordial notions of his or their identity.

To corroborate this, Chukwurah, Nwanchukwu, Nnamani and Okeke (2020) assert that national integration is a cultural phenomenon tied to the development of a state, the foundation of Nigeria state was nurtured on British realm with the motive of oneness but problem of consensus brought numerous political problems that pitched one ethnic group against another. Chukwurah *et al.* added that Nigerians cannot nurture peace and harmony on a defective base of political marginalization in all the regions.

More so, Manasseh, Kpenbeen and Myaga (2018) said national integration is the terms used when citizens of a country are conscious of the fact that they have common identity,

regard themselves as one and work together to ensure the development of their country irrespective of differences in class, ethnicity, religion, political affiliation or any other differences that may exist between them. In line with this, Edosa (2014) states that national integration simply means the forging of agreement among the members of a state on the extent of unity they wish to have as well as the type of political structure and institutions they desire. This, according to him, implies that integration promotes unity which encourages smooth interaction among the members of the given society based on certain established principles of fairness.

Effects of Hate Speech and Fake News on Society

The hate speech and fake news phenomena have enormous effects on the society. For instance, they have the potentials to incite violence in any society. Justifying this, Fasakin, Oyero, Oyesomi and Okorie (2017, p. 951) aver that hate speeches are speeches that ridicules or attack an individual or a group of people. This is in Fasakin *et al.* view forbidden in the law of some countries because it incites violence or prejudicial action against or by a protected individual or group, or because it disparages or intimidates a protected individual or group. Hate speech and fake news which are twin information disorders in this era of post truth possess robust potentials to incite violence in society, thereby causing disaffection among individuals or group. This degenerates to disunity and by so doing affecting national integration in the society.

According to Leets (2002), hate speech damages the person's dignity and causes embarrassment, sorrow, and psychological or emotional suffering. This simply means that hate speech debases the members of the society that are at the receiving end of the continuum. Similarly, Nemes (2002) asserts that hate speech can make people feel hurt, distressed, afraid, embarrassed, and alone. While hate speech towards particular groups of people can lead to issues with inequality and isolation, it also gives them a sense of fear, which prevents them from participating in society and expressing their thoughts (Alkali, *et al.,* 2017). Hate speech leads to inequality and isolation among the general citizenry because it causes unnecessary divisions among various strata of the society. The deprivation and shame brought on by hate speech, according to Nielsen (2002), might silence the "victims" and thereby reinforce social hierarchies. But, according to Parekh (2006, p. 213), it can also make victims aggressive and dangerous.

This has a resultant effect on society because the victims of hate speech could dislocate the social order thereby leading to a full blown crisis. For instance, Nigeria has witnessed different crisis in some states of the federation occasioned by the spread of hate speeches. A case in point was the Sharia crisis (riot) in Kaduna State shortly after the country’s return to democracy which almost engulfed the entire nation. The genesis of this crisis was a careless report by the *Thisday Newspaper* on Miss World Beauty pageant hosted in Kaduna, Nigeria that year.

In the same vein, Ojebode (2018, p. 9) reveals that there is increase in the number of Nigerians spreading hate messages across the globe by producing and circulating videos, audios and texts to provoke people to arms. He added that the consequences

could be devastating when fake news is allowed to circulate with hate speech. Ojebode concludes that Nigerians have been witnesses of massive destruction of lives and property linked to fake news and hate speech. Thus, one can safely submit that hate speech and fake news have debilitating effects on social cohesion and national integration in Nigeria.

According to the News Agency of Nigeria (2017), the immediate past Governor of Kaduna State, Malam Nasiru El-Rufai noted that fake news and hate speech pose the greatest risks to national security and asked for coordinated measures to combat them. He said that social media had been used to instigate violence, necessitating restrictions on the new practice of using social media to exacerbate national crises. Therefore, hate speech and fake news pose damaging threats to a country's security architecture since they could instigate internal aggression amongst divergent ethnic or ideological groups.

However, fake news is reported to have aggravated herders and farmers crises in Nigeria. The farmers/herdsmen problems in Nigeria are being exacerbated, according to the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), by misleading news spreading on social media. According to the media outlet's article, "fake photographs circulating on social media that users are erroneously alleging portray inter-communal violence are escalating already high tensions in Nigeria" (Adekunle, 2018 cited in Ogbette, Idam, Kareem & Ogbette 2019, p. 97). For instance, an article in one of Nigeria's top news agencies claimed that Danladi Ciroma, the head of the Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association, claimed that the attacks in Plateau were retaliation for the death of 300 cows. Since these cows were not discovered, Mr. Ciroma reportedly remarked that no one should anticipate peace in the region. Despite Ciroma's denial of the claim and the media outlet's purported apology (Adekunle, 2018). This shows that hate speech and fake news can destabilize peaceful coexistence in society. That is by altering the already existing peaceful atmosphere and togetherness in an area.

Theoretical Underpinning

The paper is explained within the core assumptions of the Cultivation theory of the mass media. According to Gerbner, Gross, Morgan and Signorielli (1994, p.23), cultivation is "the independent contributions television viewing makes to viewer's conceptions of social reality. The 'cultivation differential' is the margin of difference in conceptions of reality between light and heavy viewers in the same demographic subgroups." Cultivation theory is a broad theory that relates media content with particular outcomes. The theory has two components. The first is that the content of television programmes - either "fiction" such as soap operas or "fact" such as news - present a systematic distortion of reality. That is, the world as it is portrayed on television differs in important and occasionally dramatic ways from how the real world is constituted. The second component is that frequent exposure to these distorted images results in their internalization. Hence, the more people watch television, the more they develop values, attitudes, beliefs, and perceptions that are consistent with the world as it is portrayed on television (Shrum & Lee, 2012). This implies that the mass media

possess enormous influence on the perception of the audience member since they tend to perceive social reality as portrayed on the media.

One of the shortcomings of the cultivation research has been the treatment as a uniform activity that ignores variations in viewers, the content to which viewers are exposed and the contexts in which they view the variety of viewers (Cohen & Weimann, 2000). This simply means that there are other factors that determines the level at which the exposure of the audience to media content could influence their conception of social reality. This is because the audience are not passive as obtainable during the powerful media effect era, but are also involved in the effect process due to their peculiar needs and other relevant factors at any point in time.

In addition, Baran and Davies (2012, p. 340) emphasize that cultivation analysis, a theory developed by George Gerbner during the 1970s and 1980s, addresses macro-level questions about the media's role in society, although it represents a hybrid combining aspects of both macroscopic and microscopic cultural theories. According to them, some researchers regard it as a possible prototype for future research, whereas others consider it a poor example of how to do research. Hence, the core assumption of the cultivation analysis theory in the view of these scholars is that television, and by extension media, "cultivates" or create a worldview that, although possibly inaccurate, becomes the reality because people believe it to be so.

In relation to this paper therefore, the cultivation analysis theory states that heavy exposure to mass media contents causes individuals to develop an illusory perception of reality based on the most repetitive and consistent messages of a specific medium. Hence, the persistent exposure of Nigerians to hate speech and fake news on the media, may lead them to develop a false perception of reality about national integration based on repetitive messages about these phenomena on different media platforms.

The Trends of Hate Speech and Fake News in Nigeria

Hate speech in Nigeria often targets specific ethnic, religious, or political groups. It can range from derogatory statements to incitement of violence and has been observed across various platforms, including social media, traditional media, and public speeches. This shows that the media, both old and new could be channels through which hate messages are diffused to the audience both advertently and inadvertently.

Hate speech involves attacks on a person or group based on attributes such as gender, ethnic origin, religion, race, disability, or sexual orientation. In law, hate speech is any speech, gesture or conduct, writing, or display which is forbidden because it may incite violence or prejudicial action against or by a protected individual or group, or because it disparages or intimidates a protected individual or group (Ukwueze & Ogbonna, 2015). To corroborate this, Ezinwa *et al.* (2016, p. 257) assert that hate speeches are universally used to describe any communication that denigrates a person, or a group based on certain considerations and it could be in form of speech, gesture, conduct, writing, or display.

It is important to note that the hate speech phenomenon has taken an extensive dimension in Africa as a result of poor regulations which has made it infiltrated everywhere in the continent. It has become a significant aspect of electioneering campaign today that numerous election related conflict in Africa are attributed to hate speech (Ezeibe, 2015). Noticeably, hate speech has eaten deep into the cores of Nigerians and it has continued endlessly. According to Ezeibe, (2015), the hatred especially between the three major ethnic groups that make up Nigeria has intensified as the use of hate speech continues unregulated. Also, Adisa, Udende, Ibrahim and La'aro (2017) reveal that the effects of political activities in Nigeria show that hate speech has become more vivid in the successive democratic dispensation than in the previous years. These trajectories call for an urgent attention by all stakeholders to address this phenomenon so as to prevent another Rwandan experience in Nigeria.

Likewise, the spread of fake news has been facilitated by the widespread use of social media platforms. False information, rumors, and manipulated content circulate rapidly, leading to misinformation and distrust among different groups within the country (Asemah, 2019). Hence, the persistent spread of fake news is raising a lot of concerns in Nigeria which if unchecked could lead the country to unnecessary chaos.

Thus, given that fake news is more likely to be completely believed in view of their scandalous and sensational nature coupled with their appeal to the sentiment of the public, government and news managers are confused in making the true position prevailed over fake news that have been perceived as real (Ugwuanyi, 2017). This means that fake news has a bullet kind of effect on those who come in contact with it. To buttress this, Dubawa (2019) sees fake news or false information as fraudulent, inaccurate or false verbal or visual messages disseminated for public attention through the conventional or social media, hugely to mislead, dis-inform or misdirect.

The Effects of Hate Speech and Fake News on National Integration in Nigeria

The prevalence of hate speech and fake news has detrimental effects on national integration in Nigeria, impacting social cohesion, inter-group relations, and overall stability. For example, ethnic-induced hate speeches are said to have shaped the people's daily lives. All the ethnic nationalities such as Yoruba, Igbo, Hausa, Kanuri, Ijaw, Efik, Ibibio and the over 250 others who make up the Nigerian entity have hate tags for one another (Adisa *et al.*, 2017). Hence, hate speech and fake news result in divisions leading to absence of social cohesion and national integration in the Nigerian society.

Also, hate speech and fake news could constitute threat to social cohesion and national integration in Nigeria. On this note, Ojebode (2018, p. 9) believes that spreading fake news and hate speech is a deliberate and calculated attempt to mislead, intimidate, demean and defeat a person or a group of people. According to him, combining fake news and hate speech together form a lethal weapon in the hands of

agents of hate who come in various forms. He added that there are massive online influencers whose stock is hate and fake news, and they have large following. The implication here is that when hate speech and fake news are allowed to thrive unchecked in any society, they could degenerate to a full blown conflict among the diverse ethnic nationalities particularly in heterogeneous societies like Nigeria.

Besides, it has been observed that the spread of hate speech heightened ethnic and religious tensions in Nigeria (Fasakin *et al.,* 2017). This means that hate speech amplifies existing ethnic and religious tensions, deepening divisions within the society. It can exacerbate conflicts, lead to violence, and hinder peaceful coexistence among different ethnic and religious groups. The complex nature of Nigeria predisposes it to ethno-religious conflicts which has almost become a recurring decimal in the nation. This crisis is oftentimes instigated by the spread of hate messages from one religious or ethnic group or the other. This has a way of deepening the already existing divisions in the country and as a result impeding peaceful coexistence among the divergent groups in the country.

Furthermore, fake news has a catastrophic effect on national integration in Nigeria because it undermines trust and unity (Apuke & Omar, 2020). This is in the sense that the dissemination of fake news erodes trust in institutions, media, and information sources. It hampers efforts to foster unity and cooperation, as individuals and groups become suspicious of one another, hindering the process of national integration. It is pertinent to state that the absence of trust and unity in any country breeds suspicion and infightings amongst the divergent ethnic and religious entities. In such environments, unity and cooperation would be unattainable and a mere mirage, and at the long run deters national integration.

In addition, hate speech and fake news are disastrous to any nation because of their potentials for violence and unrest. Hate speech and fake news can contribute to the escalation of violence, communal clashes, and even threats to national security. They create a fertile ground for incitement, radicalization, and the emergence of extremist ideologies. Nigeria has experienced manifold communal, inter-ethnic and ethno-religious violence such as the Zangon Kataf; Tiv and Jukum; Ife and Modakeke; Farmers and Headers crises, amongst a host of others. At the moment, the different geo-political divisions are grappling with peculiar security challenges such as: *Boko Haram Insurgency* in the North-East; *Banditry* in the North-West; *Cattle Rustling/Farmers-Headers imbroglio* in the North-Central; *Secessionist Threat (IPOB)* in the South-East; *Pipeline Vandals* in the South-South and *kidnappings* in the South-West. These are sometimes exacerbated by the spread of hate speeches and fake news, which have deleterious effects on national integration in the country.

Conclusion

The foregoing discourse has shown that hate speech and fake news are largely perpetrated on the social media and constitute a serious threat to social cohesion and national integration. Therefore, hate speech and fake news have profound effects on national integration in Nigeria. This is because they heighten ethnic and religious tensions, undermine trust and unity, polarize society, and pose risks to peace and security. Hence, the paper makes the following recommendations:

i. The government should introduce a legal framework to guide the use of the media and spell out appropriate sanctions for offenders to stem the rising tide of the hate speech and fake news phenomena.
ii. There is need for a robust literacy on the use of media for both information producers and consumers in Nigeria thereby ensuring proper use geared towards national integration.
iii. The government should embark on a value re-orientation initiative that will promote dialogue, understanding and respect among diverse groups in Nigerian society through relevant bodies such as the media and the National orientation Agency (NOA) so as to achieve a good national integration.

References

Adeleke, I. D. (2016). *Nigeria has always had a fake news problem, but why have we decided not to talk about it?* Retrieved from http://www.google.com/amp/venturesafrica.com/nigeria- fake- news-problem/amp

Adisa, R., Udende, P., Ibrahim, A. & La'aro, O. (2017). Media, politics and hate speech: a critical discourse analysis. *e-Academia Journal, 6* (1), 240-252

Alakali, T. T. Faga, H. P. & Mbursa, J. (2017). Audience perception of hate speech and foul language in the social media in Nigeria: implications for morality and law. *Academicus – International Scientific Journal, MMXVII* (15), 161-178

Allcott, H. & Gentzkow, M. (2017). Social media and fake news in the 2016 election. *Journal of Economic Perspectives, 31*(2), 211–236.

Apuke, O. D. & Omar, B. (2020). Fake news proliferation in Nigeria: Consequences, motivations, and prevention through awareness strategies. *Humanities and Social Sciences Reviews, 8*(2), 318-327

Asemah, E. S. (2019). Fake news and its implications for sustainable national development in Nigeria. *Nigerian Journal of Communication, 17*(1), 111-128.

Auwal, A. M. (2018). Social media and hate speech: Analysis of comments on Biafra agitations, Arewa youths' ultimatum and their implications on peaceful co-existence in Nigeria. *MCC, 2*(1), 54-74

Auwal, A. M. (2015). Communication and conflict in Nigeria: what role for the media. *Global Advanced Research Journal of Educational Research and Review, 4* (8), 154-160

Baran, S. J. & Davies, D. K. (2012). *Mass communication theory: foundations, ferment and future (Sixth Edition).* Boston: Wadsworth Cengage Learning

Caplan, R., Hanson, L. & Donovan, J. (2018). *Dead reckoning: navigating content moderation after "fake news."* United States: Data and Society Research Institute

Chukwurah, D. C., Nwanchukwu, T. S., Nnamani, D. O. & Okeke, M. I. (2020). National integration and challenges of nation building in Nigeria. *International Journal of Academic Management and Science Research (IJAMSR), 4*(3), 22-28

Cohen, J. & Weimann, G. (2000). Cultivation revisited: Some genres have some effects on some viewers. *Communication Reports, 13*(2), 99-114

Dubawa (2019). *Fake news: If it's too bad to be true, maybe it is.* Retrieved from https://dubawa.org/fake-news-if-its-too-bad-to-be-true-maybe-it-is/

Edosa, E. (2014). National integration, citizenship, political participation and democratic stability in Nigeria. *An International Journal of arts and Humanities (IJAH), 3*(3), 61-82

Ezeibe, C. C. (2015). *Hate speech and electoral violence in Nigeria.* Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/325258444

Ezinwa, C. A., Ngwu, C. C., Odii, C. & Ekwu, O. C. (2016). Perceived influence of hate campaigns on the voting behaviour of Nigerian electorates in 2015 General Elections. In D. Wilson *Mass Media and Electoral Process in Nigeria* (pp. 253 – 265). Uyo: ACCE

Fasakin, Oyero, Oyesomi & Okorie (2017). Hate speech and the 2015 General Elections in Nigeria. *International E – Journal of Advances in Social Sciences, III* (9), 948-953

Firoozi, H., Mostafaye, F. and Khaledian, M. (2014). The Strategic Role of the Mass Media in Strengthening the Discourse of Moderation and Rationality. *International Letters of Social and Humanistic Sciences,* 25: 26 – 32

Folarin, B. (2002). *Theories of mass communication: an introductory text (Revised Edition).* Abeokuta: Links Publications

Gerbner, G., Gross, L., Morgan, M. & Signorielli, N. (1994). Growing up with television: The cultivation perspective, In J. Bryant & D. Zillmann (Eds.), *Media effects: Advances in Theory and Research (pp. 23-37).* Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum

Jang, S. M. & Kim, J. K. (2018). Third person effect of fake news: Fake news regulation and media literacy interventions. *Computers in Human Behavior*, *80*: 295-302

Lazer, D. M. J., Baum, M. A., Benkler, Y. *et al.* (2018). The science of fake news. *Science, 359*(6380), 1094–1096.

Leets, L. (2002). Experiencing hate speech: perceptions and responses to anti-Semitism and anti- gay speech. *Journal of Social Issues, 58* (2), 24-31

Lucas, J. M. & Tergema, T. S. (2018). Hate speech in readers' comment and the challenge of democratic consolidation in Nigeria: A critical analysis. *Malaysian Journal of Media S*tudies, *20*(2), 23-38

Manasseh, H. T., Kpenbeen, G. G. & Myaga, B. (2018). Culture and national integration in Nigeria. *Multidisciplinary Journal of Research Development, 28*(1), 1-7

McGonagle, T. (2017). "Fake news": false fears or real concerns? *Netherlands Quarterly of Human Rights, 35* (4), 203-209

Mohan, V. & Barnes, C. (2018). *Countering hate speech in elections: strategies for electoral management bodies.* Arlington, VA: International Foundation for Electoral Systems

News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) (2017, September 27). Hate speech, fake news biggest threat to national security – El-Rufai. *Today.NG.* Retrieved from https://www.today.ng/news/nigeria/17635/hate-speech-fake-news-biggest...

Nielsen, L. B. (2002). Subtle, pervasive, harmful: racist and sexist remarks in public as hate speech. *Journal of Social Issues, 58* (2)

Nemes, I. (2002). Regulating hate speech in cyberspace: issues of desirability and efficacy. *Information and Communication Technology Law, 11* (3)

Ogbette, A. S., Idam, M. O., Kareem, A. O. & Ogbette, D. N. (2019). Fake news in Nigeria: causes, effects and management. *Information and Knowledge Management, 9* (2), 95-99

Ogbuoshi, L. I., Oyeleke, A. S. & Folorunsho, O. M. (2019). Opinion leaders' perspectives on hate speech, and fake news reporting and Nigeria's political stability. In N. Owens-Ibie, M. Oji & J. Ogwezi (Eds.). *Fake News and Hate Speech: Narratives of Political Instability* (pp. 45 – 69). Ontario, Canada: Canada University Press.

Ojebode, A. (2018). *Fake news, hate speech and the 2019 General Elections – the redemptive role of the Nigerian media.* Being the text of the 13th Annual Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria (FRCN) Lecture Presented at Nicon Luxury Hotel, Abuja – Nigeria on November 29, 2018

Okoro, N. & Emmanuel, N. O. (2019). Beyond misinformation: Survival alternatives for Nigerian media in the "post-truth" era. *African Journalism Studies* Retrieved January 1, 2021 from https://doi.org/10.1080/23743670.2018.1551810

Onifade, C. A. & Imhonopi, D. (2013). Towards national integration in Nigeria: Jumping the hurdles. *Research on Humanities and Social Sciences, 3*(9), 75-82

Oriola, O. M. (2019). Mainstream media reporting of hate speech and press freedom in Nigerian politics. In N. Owens-Ibie, M. Oji & J. Ogwezi (Eds.). *Fake News and Hate Speech: Narratives of Political Instability* (pp. 100 – 121). Ontario, Canada: Canada University Press.

Orounye, E. D. (2012). The socio-economic impact of land resource conflict in Taraba State: A case study of Kona-Minda crisis in Northern Taraba. *International Journal of Environmental Sciences, 1*(2), 46-49

Parekh, B. (2006). *Hate speech: is there a case for banning?* Public Policy Research

Shrum, L. J. & Lee, J. (2012). "Television's persuasive narratives: How television influences values, attitudes, and beliefs," in L. J. Shrum (ed.) *The Psychology of Entertainment Media: Blurring the Lines between Entertainment and Persuasion (2nd Edition).* New York: Taylor and Francis, 147-167.

Spencer-Smith, C. (2018). *Policy briefing: Dealing with hate speech on social media.* United Kingdom: TalkPolitics Ltd

Takwa, Z. S. (2017). An overview on multiculturalism, diversity and reporting of conflicts in Nigeria. In U. Pate & L. Oso (Eds.), *Multiculturalism, diversity and reporting conflict in Nigeria* (pp. 8-21). Ibadan: Evans Brothers (Nigeria Publishers) Limited

Tandoc, E., Lim, Z. W. & Ling, R (2017). Defining 'fake news': A typology of scholarly definitions. *Digital Journalism,* 6(2), 137–153.

Ugwuanyi, S. U. (2017). Influence of fake news on public perception of Nigeria's online newspapers. *Global Journal of Human-Social Science, 17*(5), 4-12

Wilson, F. & Umar, M. A. (2019). The effect of fake news on Nigeria's democracy within the premises of freedom of expression. *Global Media Journal, 17*(32), 179-190

Author

- ***Victor Olusegun BABATUNDE is a lecturer in the Department of Mass Communication, Kwara State*** *University, Malete, Nigeria. He is a doctoral candidate in the Department of Mass Communication, University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria who holds a National Diploma, Bachelors and Master degrees in Mass Communication. Babatunde who is an associate registered practitioner in advertising (arpa), has an overwhelming passion for teaching, research and community service. His research interests include; Media and Society, Mass Media Effects, Broadcasting and Development Communication.*