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Public Knowledge and Attitude Towards News Misinformation on Social Media Platforms in Nigeria: Social media users' knowledge and response to misinformation

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Abstract:
The rapid expansion of the digital landscape has fundamentally reshaped how individuals consume information, positioning social media as a primary news source. However, this shift has simultaneously fostered an environment highly conducive to the unchecked spread of online news misinformation, commonly termed "fake news." This study investigates public knowledge of, exposure to, and behavioral attitudes toward news misinformation on social media platforms in Nigeria. Utilizing a survey research design, an online questionnaire was administered to a randomly selected sample of 425 university students and media practitioners across Lagos, Ogun, and Ondo States, yielding 388 valid responses. The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including simple percentages and mean scores.

The findings reveal an overwhelmingly high awareness of misinformation, with 97.2% of respondents confirming direct exposure to false content. Online news blogs and gossip forums were identified as the most prevalent hubs for spreading information disorders, while entertainment/celebrity news and political topics ranked as the most common subject areas contaminated by falsehoods. In terms of audience response, the majority of participants (55.4%) actively attempted to verify suspect stories through credible channels. However, a significant knowledge gap persists, with a notable portion of the sample failing to understand what constitutes misinformation or actively ignoring the issue. The study concludes that while general awareness is high, technical and critical verification skills remain limited. It recommends the implementation of fair regulatory policies, robust public sensitization campaigns, and regular social media literacy training to build resilience against digital information pollution in Nigeria.

Keywords: Social Media, News Misinformation, Digital Literacy, Information Disorders, Fake News, Audience Response, Nigeria

Introduction

The advent of the digital age has fundamentally reshaped how individuals consume information, with social media platforms increasingly serving as primary news sources globally. Reinforcing this stance, Babatunde and Ayanwale (2025) submit that this profound shift, while democratising access to information, has simultaneously fostered an environment highly conducive to the rapid and widespread dissemination of false and misleading content, commonly referred to as "fake news".

Social media platforms have significantly altered news consumption patterns in Nigeria, particularly among young adults (Usman, et al., 2022; Aondover, et al., 2024; Babatunde & Ayanwale, 2025). WhatsApp and Instagram have emerged as the most frequently used platforms for news consumption among undergraduates in Nigeria, with a considerable dedication of time spent on these platforms for news (Oni, et al., 2024). The Reuters Institute's Digital News Report (2024) indicates a fragmentation of news use across online platforms globally, with WhatsApp playing a major role in many countries, and TikTok gaining significant importance, surpassing X (formerly Twitter) for news consumption for the first time (Newman et al., 2024).

In Nigeria, TikTok is used for news by 23% of respondents, showing a 6-point increase (Newman & Fletcher, 2024). Facebook also remains a substantial source, although its reach for news has declined over time globally (Newman & Fletcher, 2024). These trends suggest a shift towards visual and video-led platforms and private messaging apps for news consumption in Nigeria.

The digital age has profoundly reshaped information consumption, with social media becoming primary news sources globally. This shift has unfortunately fostered an environment conducive to the rapid spread of false and misleading content, often termed "fake news" (Babatunde & Ayanwale, 2025). According to Akindoyin (2024), the World Economic Forum's Global Risks Report (2024) and the World Health Organization have identified misinformation as a major global threat, significantly impacting public health, democratic processes, and social cohesion. The COVID-19 pandemic starkly illustrated these implications, affecting health decisions, eroding institutional trust, and exacerbating public health crises (Akindoyin, 2024). This highlights the urgent need to understand how misinformation operates and how the public responds to it.

Misinformation is defined as false or inaccurate information, regardless of intent to deceive, while disinformation refers to deliberately deceptive content (Wardle, 2017; O'Connor & Weatherall, 2019, Adams, 2023). This distinction is crucial as it highlights the malicious intent behind the creation and spread of certain false narratives. Furthermore, malinformation refers to content that is based on fact but is used out of context, often to mislead, harm, or manipulate perceptions (Broda & Strömbäck, 2024). In other words, although all disinformation is a form of misinformation, not all misinformation is disinformation, emphasising the varying degrees of intent behind the spread of false

content. Understanding these distinctions is vital for developing targeted interventions and for analysing public responses.

Types of misinformation include false connections, misleading content, false context, imposter content, manipulated content, and fabricated content (Wardle & Derakhshan, 2017). The speed of digital dissemination, coupled with low public understanding of social media algorithms, contributes to the rapid spread of misinformation (Tandoc et al., 2021; Pennycook & Rand, 2021; Ajewole, 2023).

The World Economic Forum's Global Risks Report (2024) has identified misinformation and the technology facilitating its spread as a major global threat, a concern consistently echoed by the World Health Organization, which has prioritised addressing this issue. This rapid and unchecked proliferation of false narratives calls for the urgent need for a deeper understanding of how misinformation operates and how the public responds to it. This is a significant and multifaceted threat to democratic processes, public health, and social cohesion worldwide.

In Nigeria, a nation characterised by a rapidly expanding digital landscape and a pronounced reliance on social media for news, these threats are particularly acute. Misinformation can exploit existing socio-political tensions, erode public trust in both governmental and media institutions, and significantly influence critical public decisions, including voting behavior and adherence to public health guidelines (Obi, 2023; Oyeleye & Ademosu, 2023). The unique socio-cultural dynamics and media consumption patterns in Nigeria necessitate a focused examination to understand the specific contours of this problem.

Pennycook and Rand (2017), found that individuals fall for misinformation because they fail to think analytically when faced with misinformation. This is particularly true with information that agrees with their prior knowledge and beliefs (Bode & Vraga, 2015; Rich & Zaragoza, 2016). As a result of the varying indicators of misinformation and fake news, authors have not been able to really established how audience member, especially the Nigerian public respond to misinforming materials on online blogs. This study will use available evidences from literature and the data from the sure to investigate the following research question:

1. Are Nigerian social media users aware of news misinformation on social media?
2. What are the various online platforms audience members encounter news misinformation in Nigeria?
3. What subject matters mostly constitute news misinformation on social media?
4. How do social media users respond to news misinformation they come across on social media?

Prevalence and Public Exposure to Misinformation on Social Media

The ability of Nigerian social media users to identify fake news remains a critical area of concern. While some studies suggest a general awareness of the phenomenon, the actual skills for discerning false information are often limited. Research indicates that the

proliferation and success of fake news are associated with its characteristics, such as being surreal, exaggerated, emotional, and clickbait, which motivate users to share it (Apuke, et al., 2023; Adams, et al., 2024). This implies that many users may struggle to look beyond these engaging features to evaluate content critically.

A study in Ebonyi State concluded that residents are susceptible to fake news due to low online media literacy, despite high social media penetration (Otukpa, et al., 2025). Furthermore, it was also observed that some social media users in Ebonyi State have conditioned their minds to accept as true only information from "known purveyors of fake news," which poses a significant risk. While 70% of Nigerians use social media, only 30% are reported to have the skills to critically evaluate online information (Ogbodo, et al., 2023). This highlights a substantial gap between social media usage and the critical literacy skills needed to navigate the complex digital information landscape effectively. The challenge is compounded by the fact that fake news often distorts, manipulates, and falsifies facts, making it difficult to distinguish from genuine reporting (Wei, et al. 2023).

Digital literacy levels in Nigeria vary across demographic groups, influencing misinformation recognition and susceptibility. Studies among postgraduate students from six Universities Southwestern Nigeria indicate significant demographic influences on digital literacy, with early-year students and middle-aged learners being more active users of digital resources (Olatunji, et al., 2023). While undergraduate students at the University of Lagos possess high digital literacy skills, their utilisation of digital information resources remains low, suggesting a gap between technical proficiency and effective, critical engagement with online content (Yila, 2024). This underscores Prensky's (2009) earlier observation that not all students are digitally adept, emphasising the importance of addressing digital literacy disparities.

Youths in Nigeria are particularly exposed to a considerable volume of information on social media, including misinformation and harmful content (Aduloju, 2024). While 93% of highly educated Nigerians believe they have encountered misinformation on social media, suggesting a higher level of awareness among this group, less educated individuals are statistically more likely to believe fake news (Uwalaka, 2022). This indicates that education plays a role in susceptibility. Young people who practice media literacy by checking sources and truthfulness of online information are more likely to vote, highlighting the link between digital literacy and civic engagement (Siegel-Stechler et al., 2025). However, youth without a college education or with poor financial situations are less likely to practice media literacy, pointing to inequities in opportunities to acquire these skills. The rural-urban divide is also a factor, with fact-checking efforts largely reaching urban populations while rural areas remain underserved (Oputa, et al., 2025). This uneven distribution of digital literacy and access to verification tools creates vulnerabilities across different demographic segments

Perception, Response and Influence of Misinformation on Social Media Users

Audience responses to misinformation vary, influenced by awareness, digital literacy, and psychological factors. Studies indicate varying levels of Awareness and Attitudes Towards Digital Literacy and regarding misinformation. While some users are aware of its existence,

many struggle to identify it (Brummette et al., 2019; Alashri et al., 2020). Digital literacy, encompassing the ability to find, evaluate, create, and communicate information online, is crucial for combating misinformation (Livingstone, 2008; Hobbs & Coiro, 2018). Lower digital literacy often correlates with higher susceptibility to misinformation (Guess et al., 2018).

Ognyanova et al. (2020) reports that audience responses can either be active (e.g., fact-checking, reporting misinformation, engaging in critical discussions) or passive (e.g., ignoring, uncritically accepting, or sharing without verification). Yang et al. (2024) also suggests that active behaviors are often driven by higher digital literacy, a sense of civic duty, or personal relevance, while passive behaviors might stem from cognitive overload, confirmation bias, or a lack of motivation.

Thorson (2016) records that pre-existing beliefs and cognitive biases significantly influence how individuals perceive and react to misinformation. Nickerson (1998) and later on Morvan & Jenkins (2017) stated that the tendency to seek, interpret, and remember information that confirms one's pre-existing beliefs may be described as Confirmation Bias. This makes individuals more likely to accept misinformation that aligns with their views and dismiss contradictory evidence. In other ways, the unconscious tendency to process information in a way that allows individuals to arrive at preferred conclusions, which according to Kahan (2017), is called Motivated Reasoning. A trait that is particularly evident in politically charged contexts.

Social media algorithms and user behaviour can create "echo chambers" (where individuals are primarily exposed to information that reinforces their existing beliefs) and "filter bubbles" (personalized content streams that exclude contradictory viewpoints), intensifying the effects of biases and limiting exposure to diverse perspectives (Pariser, 2011; Dubois & Blank, 2018).

The attitude of Nigerian social media users towards fake news ranges from outright rejection to a concerning level of tolerance, often influenced by the content's alignment with personal biases or the desire for entertainment. While some studies indicate a negative perception of fake news dissemination among respondents (Ama-Abasi, et al, 2024), the rapid proliferation of false content suggests that many users either tolerate it or struggle to identify it. The ease with which false information spreads, coupled with the short attention spans of readers and the abundance of online information, allows misinformation to proliferate unchecked (Onigbinde et al., 2024). It is noteworthy that some individuals may even spread misinformation based on personal aggrandizement or simply for entertainment, thereby contributing to the problem.

The prevalence of fake news has led to a decline in public confidence in the veracity of information shared on social media, particularly exacerbated during events like the COVID-19 pandemic (Siegel-Stechler et al., 2025). Despite this, the problem persists, indicating that the mere awareness of fake news does not automatically translate into rejection or active efforts to combat it. The challenge lies in converting this awareness into a proactive stance against misinformation, fostering a culture where tolerance for false narratives is minimised.

Studies in Nigeria indicate a growing awareness of misinformation among social media users, yet challenges in recognition persist. Research in Cross River State found that over 50% of respondents have a negative perception of fake news dissemination, and a significant relationship exists between social media usage and fake news dissemination among college students (Ama-Abasi, et al, 2024). This is an indication that while users are aware of the problem, the rapid spread of false content on platforms with minimal restrictions remains a concern.

The World Economic Forum's Global Risks Report (2024) identifies misinformation as a major global threat, and the WHO has made it a priority, indicating a global recognition of the issue that likely resonates in Nigeria (Umejei, et al., 2024). Despite this general awareness, the ease with which information can be shared and the tendency for users to believe what they see without much thought contribute to the problem (Unchenna, et al. 2025).

The ability of Nigerian social media users to identify fake news remains a critical area of concern. While some studies suggest a general awareness of the phenomenon, the actual skills for discerning false information are often limited. Research indicates that the proliferation and success of fake news are associated with its characteristics, such as being surreal, exaggerated, emotional, and clickbait, which motivate users to share it (Apuke, et al., 2023; Adams, et al., 2024). This implies that many users may struggle to look beyond these engaging features to evaluate content critically.

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Shockingly, he credibility of online media in Nigeria is under intense scrutiny due to the widespread dissemination of fake news. While a 2024 report indicates that 68% of Nigerians still trust the media, the highest globally, this high trust level exists despite the challenges of misinformation (Yusuf, 2025). However, a study in Abuja found that 60% of respondents reported a significant decline in trust in online platforms due to repeated exposure to misleading content (Oputa, et al., 2025). This suggests a nuanced perception of trust, where overall media trust remains high, but specific online platforms and content are viewed with skepticism.

The decentralised nature of digital platforms, often lacking structured editorial oversight, allows unverified and false content to proliferate, contributing to the erosion of trust (Abdulazeez, et al., 2025). Many Nigerians still perceive online news as credible despite widespread misinformation, which has contributed to political instability and ethnic tensions (Jibril, et al., 2025; Santas, 2025). Online influencers and personalities are

perceived as significant sources of false or misleading information globally, including among Nigerians, with 58% of Nigerians expressing concern about their ability to discern truth from falsehood online (Ogbodo, et al., 2023). This highlights a complex information environment where trust is both high and fragile, necessitating improved digital literacy and robust fact-checking systems to restore and sustain public confidence (Ilesanmi, 2021).

Global Case Studies of Misinformation: The USA, Brazil, India, and other relevant countries

Global case studies reveal common patterns and unique challenges in the spread and impact of misinformation. In the United States, particularly during elections, AI-generated disinformation has shaped election discourse by amplifying harmful narratives and entrenching political polarization, even if direct evidence of it altering election results is inconclusive due to data limitations (Stockwell, et al., 2024). Misleading claims by political candidates, conspiracy theories, and manipulated content have significantly influenced public perceptions of candidates and leading issues like the economy and immigration (Nasiri & Hashemzadeh, 2025; Olanipekun, 2025). The political polarisation in the US means that AI-enabled disinformation primarily reinforces pre-existing beliefs (Gondaliya, 2025).

In Brazil, messaging platforms like WhatsApp have been focal points for disinformation campaigns, particularly during the 2018 (Santini, 2021) and 2022 presidential elections (Kansaon et al., 2025). Analysis revealed that a significant portion of shared images in public WhatsApp groups were false or misleading, and coordinated accounts were used to organise collective actions, including protests against election results (Ozawa et al., 2024; Benevenuto & Melo, 2024). While countermeasures like limiting content forwarding and criminalising mass political content spread have been implemented, their effectiveness remains limited (Kansaon et al., 2025). Studies in Brazil indicate that using news from legacy media is associated with lower belief in electoral misinformation, while digital-born news media and platforms like Facebook and WhatsApp show inconsistent effects (Mont'Alverne et al., 2024).

India has seen a significant increase in the use of AI in political campaigns, both positively for customised messaging and negatively for amplifying propaganda and spreading deceptive content (Dhanuraj, 2024). The 2024 general election in India witnessed a surge in deep fakes and disinformation campaigns, with political parties using AI to create fake audio and videos, often without much oversight (Chaturvedi, 2025). This highlights how trusted relationships can be forged or fractured by highly realistic, personalised content, especially on less regulated platforms like WhatsApp.

Cross-cultural studies reveal variations in how individuals perceive and are susceptible to misinformation. Cultural differences can affect how people behave on social media and evaluate fake news (Anakwah, et al., 2024). For example, a study comparing Greek and Portuguese Instagram users found that cultural differences influence their ability to identify fake news, highlighting the need for tailored content strategies (Pothitou et al., 2025). In an experiment involving fake news, American participants were found to be more likely to believe fake news compared to Indian participants (Guess et al., 2020). This suggests that

cultural contexts, including levels of media trust and political systems, play a role in susceptibility.

Research also indicates that individuals socialised in collectivistic cultures, who view the self as embedded within the social context, may be more prone to accepting misinformation from social sources (Anakwah, et al., 2024). For instance, participants from Ghana (collectivistic culture) endorsed more misleading items in a recognition task compared to those from the United Kingdom (individualistic culture) (Dame Adjin-Tettey, 2022). This highlights how cultural self-construal can influence susceptibility to misleading information. Furthermore, differences in information processing styles across cultures, such as Western focus on focal objects versus East Asian focus on context, can impact memory and false recollections (Humprecht, 2019; Cheng et al., 2021). These findings emphasise that effective interventions against misinformation must consider and adapt to specific cultural nuances.

These cases underscore that misinformation is a global phenomenon with shared characteristics, such as exploiting cognitive biases and political polarisation, but its manifestation and impact are often shaped by local media landscapes, political contexts, and dominant communication platforms.

Material and Methods

The study adopted survey using online questionnaire to reach diverse respondents across three Nigerian states; Lagos, Ogun and Ondo States. A total of 425 students and media practitioners were randomly selected from various higher institutions and media houses in the chose states. This approach allows the researchers to use their discretion and personal judgement to select respondents who may possess certain characteristics or knowledge about the phenomenon under study. Scholars agreed that this sampling technique is beneficial is saving cost and time and allows the researchers to sample people they believe to have the traits or attitude or knowledge of what is being studied (Palinkas, et al., 2015; Ahmed, 2024; Makwana et al., 2023; Moss, 2025). In this case, the researchers carefully targeted universities and polytechnics offering mass communication and media studies recruiting participants from 200-400 level for the study, 3 higher institutions were selected in Lagos State, 1 public school and 1 private school were chosen in Ogun State and 1 private school in Ondo State. Also, media practitioners from 10 media houses in the selected states were included for the survey to understand how respondents encounter misinformation and how they deal with it. The sample selection for the various institutions was determined using a simple random technique to finally chose our survey respondents (Moss, 2025).

The study utilised online questionnaire using the Google doc to collect the survey data from the respondents. The Instrument was set in simple English language and with a mix of close ended and 5-point Likert Scale. The study adopted the descriptive analysis and the results were presented in simple percentages and means.

Ethical Approval

All participants and respondents volunteered to be surveyed, and gave their consent. Also, a

written consent was included in the survey invites and were all granted. All the participants understood clearly that no personal data would be collected and every response and detail would be treated with strict anonymity. No vulnerable persons were surveyed, and all participants were above 18 at the time of this study. This is in line with global regulation and policy as documented in the 45 CFR 46.104(d)(2), (Mayo Clinic 2022).

Results

The research questions formulated for this study guided the arrangement of the tables. The descriptive statistics with use tables and charts to help in making numbers visible for comprehension purposes. Originally, four hundred and twenty-four (424) copies of questionnaire were sent out, but 388 returned to the researcher after conducting the online survey, using different social media platforms, specifically targeted at the study population. This response rate makes for 91.5% of the whole questionnaire. The analysis and data interpretation for this survey is therefore based on three hundred and eighty-eight (388) returned questionnaire.

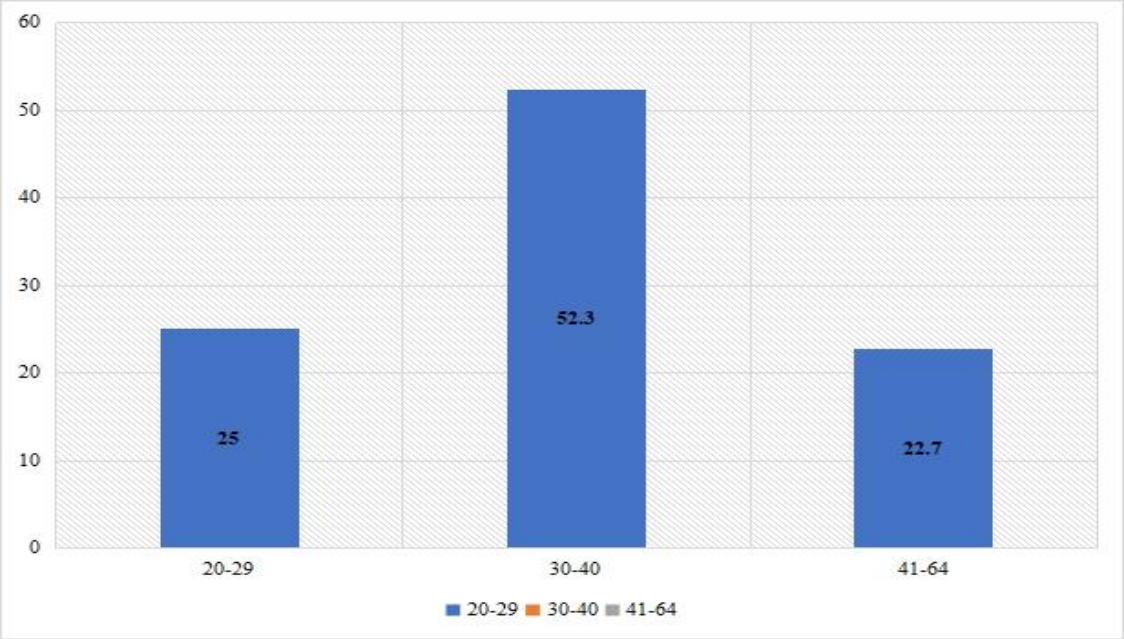

Fig 1: Age Distribution

The figure above shows that, the majority of the respondents are between the ages of 30-40 years, representing 52.3% of the total sample size, followed by the people between the ages of 20-29, representing 25% of the sample size, while 22.7% of the respondents were people between the age of 41-64.

Table 1: Respondents' Awareness of Misinformation on Social Media (N=388)

Response Category	Social media harbours misinformation (%)	Encountered misinformation (%)	Regularly see misinformation (%)
Strongly Agree	1.0	57.0	50.5
Agree	53.9	40.2	45.4
Disagree	41.8	1.3	1.8
Strongly Disagree	1.8	0.3	0.5
Undecided	1.5	1.3	1.8

From the table above, it is clear that majority of the sample agreed that there is a lot of misinformation on social media. The data shoes that 97.2% reported that they have encountered misinformation directly., while 95.9 claim that they regularly come across contents that supposedly misinform. This suggests that awareness of misinformation is very common and highly frequent, implying that 9 in 10 Nigerian social media users are exposed to misleading contents or one form of the other.

Table Two: Perceived Prevalence of Misinformation Across Online Platforms (N = 388)

Response Category	Online News Blogs (%)	News Websites (%)	Social Networking Sites (%)	Gossip/Gist Platforms & Forums (%)
Strongly Agree	52.3	45.1	49.2	54.4
Agree	43.6	42.0	45.6	42.0
Disagree	2.8	7.7	2.6	2.3
Strongly Disagree	–	1.0	0.5	0.5
Undecided	1.3	4.1	2.1	0.8

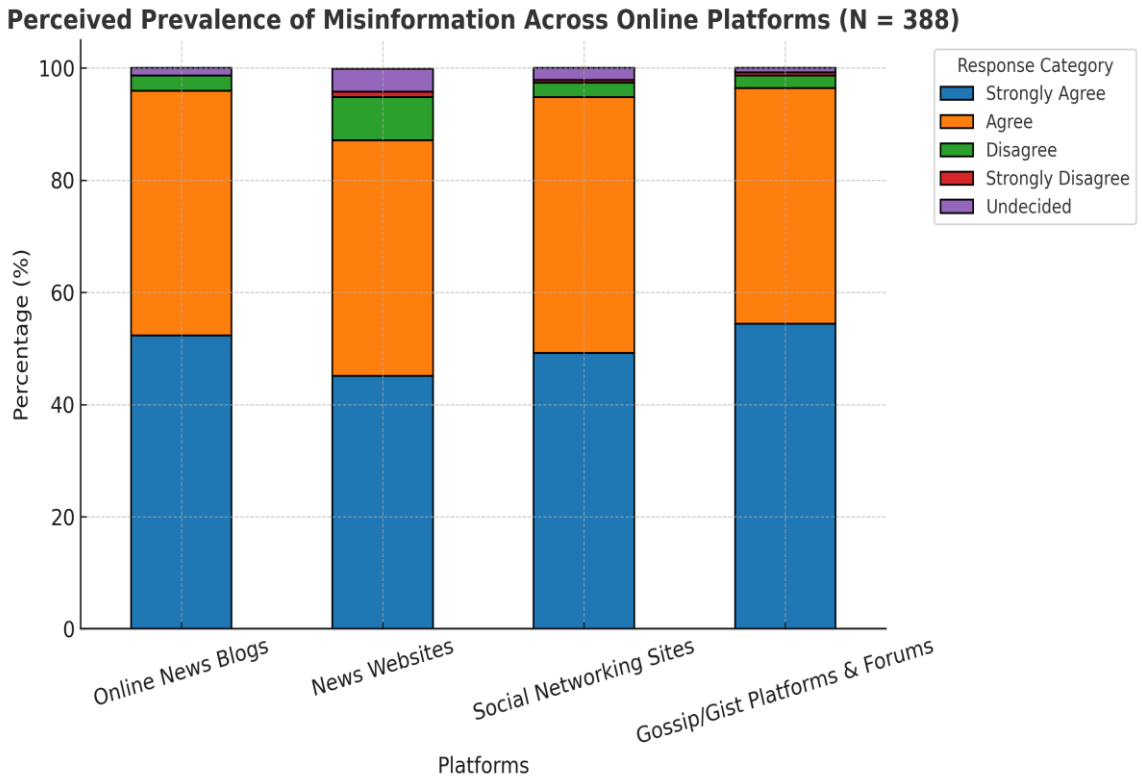

Fig 2: Comparative chart for misinformation across platforms

From the data presented above, the consensus is that respondents strongly acknowledged that misinformation is very prevalent on the social networking platforms indicated above. Gossips/online forum and blogs seem to be more prone to carry misinformation, with results showing 96.4% and 95.95 respectively.

What subject matters mostly constitute news misinformation on social media?

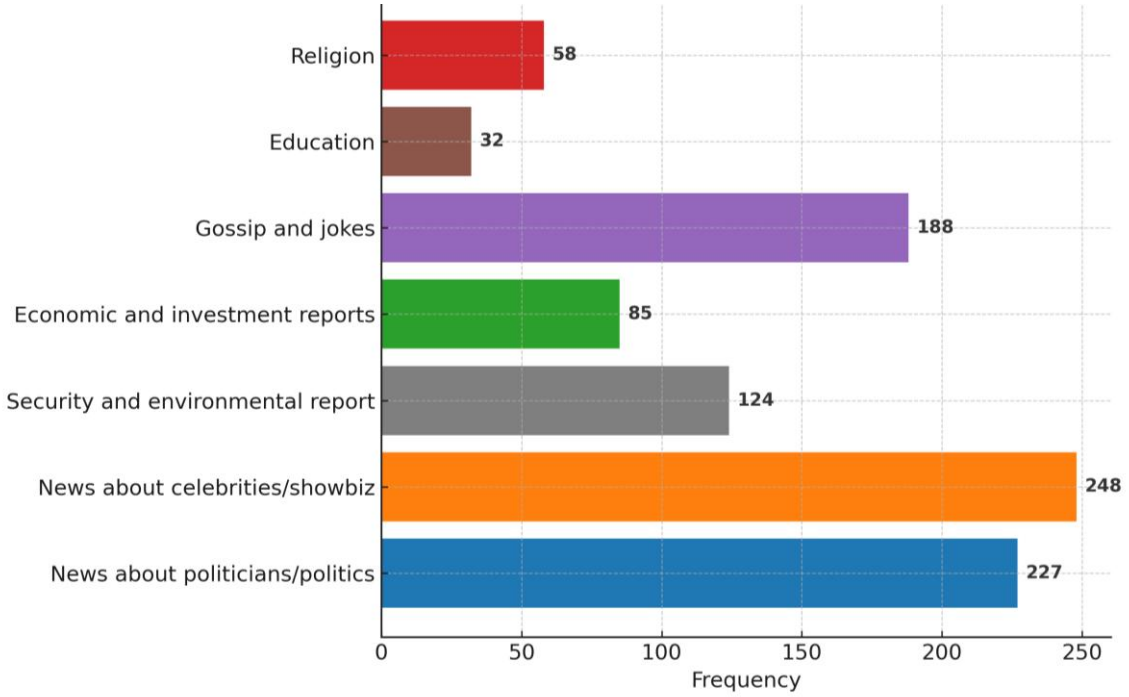

Fig 3: Topics that constitute news misinformation on social media (Multiple Choice)

Among the topics that mostly bear misinformation, news about celebrities ranked highest with 248 or 64%, followed by political news at 227, then gossips at 188. It seems that no subject area or topic is spared when it comes to incorrect information and misleading contents being disseminated on social media in Nigeria.

How social media users deal with misinformation

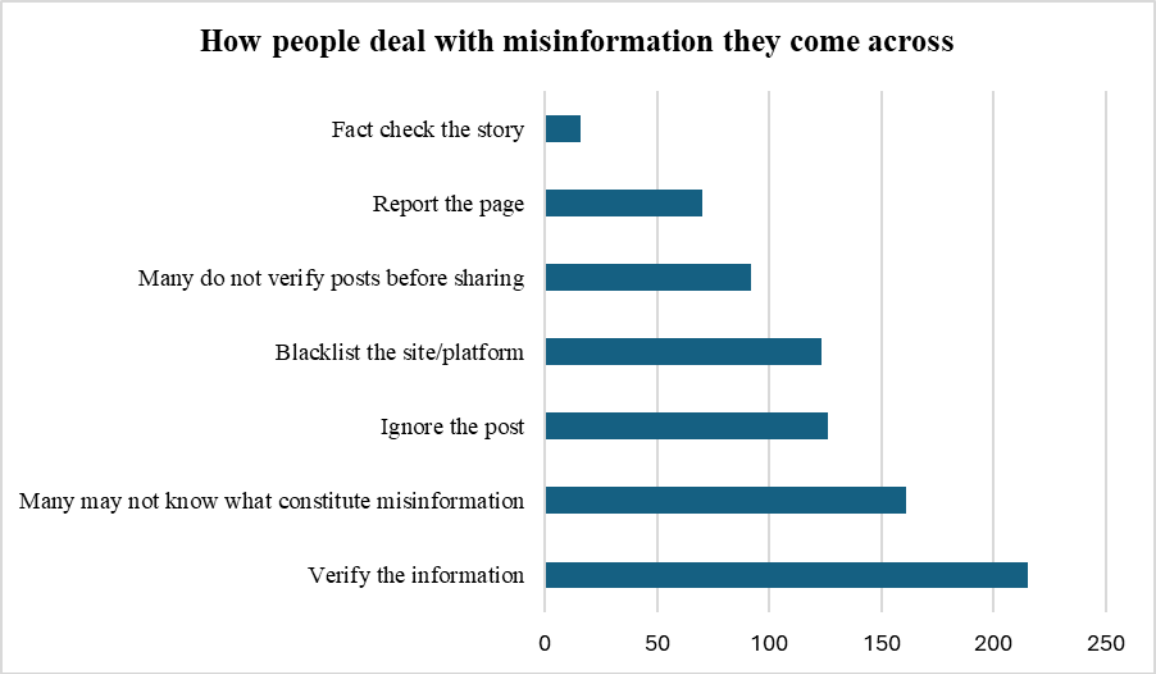

Fig 4: How social media users deal with misinformation

From the data above, it appears that the majority of the sample, numbering 215 verify information when they encounter materials bearing some elements of misinformation. This indicates a growing awareness level and responsibility towards online news/information. In a sad twist, about 160 respondents indicated that many still do not understand what constitute misinformation, which can only underscore a massive gap in digital and information literacy in the country. The study also reveals that about 140 respondents ignore any post that constitute misinformation. In the same vein, the data shows that respondents up to 130 claim they blacklist such sites or platforms, while 70 people report the pages or platforms that carry misinformation. With this claim, there seems to be some form of resistance or passive struggle with information disorders online, or this could subtly point to self-regulation of some kind. From the study, it is obvious that the least common action people take when they come across misinformation is to fact-check the stories, this only accounts for 20 people from the total sample.

Discussion

The results answering research question one discovered that social media habours contents that misinform the users. The study also confirmed that social media users often encounter materials that are tilted towards misinformation on social media, then it was revealed that social media `users regularly see social media contents that bear some elements of misinformation. These revelations have been established in recent studies of Hazzan (2022), which found that there is plethora of fake stories circulated through the social media with the ultimate mission of inciting fear, anxiety, suspicion, disunity across ethnic groups in Nigeria. The data from Council of Europe reveals that two-third of EU citizens agreed that they see fake news at least once in a week. In the light of this, the work of

McGonagle (2017), the online space is said to be deliberately diffused with some distorted and false stories to satisfy some ends. When compared to the work of Hillary and Dumebi (2021), their study revealed that social media platforms have become vulnerable to distorted and polluted information. To Denniss and Lindberg (2025), they investigated the cause of misinformation of on social media, and they concluded that it is partly because users can share any kind of topic of interest without restraints. The study also pointed that internet bots published information that are not correct at times.

The findings further show that almost all the social media platforms; from notable social networks, to blogs, and online forum are guilty of carrying misinformation. True to these facts, some researchers have clearly associated the proliferation and the anonymous nature of social media to most of the misinformation in the society today. Studies of Arun, 2019; Shu, et al., 2017; Yang, et al., 2019; Shu & Liu, 2019 have all found that social media platforms and other digital platforms, messenger apps, emailing systems, and social networks have been targeted by miscreants to spread rumours and disinformation. The insight from work of Micich (2025), it shows that misinformation thrives on social media platforms because of the need to go viral. In agreement with this idea, Langin (2018) found our that incorrect and distorted information are disseminated ten times faster that correct or credible news. However, unlike Denniss and Lindberg, (2025) who blamed bots for the proliferation of misinformation on social media, the work of Langin discovered that people actually share incorrect information more on social media.

Using a multiple choice to rank responses to know the topics that mostly bear misinformation, news about celebrities ranked highest with 248 or 64% of the total sample saying it constitutes a topic with are mostly polluted with misinformation. This is then followed by news about politics or politicians at 227 or 58.5% of the respondents. Gossips/joke and news on security followed suit, while other categories like religion, education and economics all have dents of misinformation trailing them on social media.

The results of this survey in agreement with the study by Allcott and Gentzkow (2017) which discloses that news misinformation is mostly common with political news and politically motivated information. Others like Arun, 2019; Shu, Sliva, Wang, Tang, & Liu, 2017; Yang et al., 2019 have their reservations on information types and sources which are said to be deliberately manipulated to stair emotions. To Beauvais (2022), his study discovered that political news has become more popular to be laced with misinformation because they are largely ideological. The author also believe that health news or post may be subject to rumours and misinformation, which this study did not look into.

In order to answer the fourth research question, the study found that 215 (55.4%) verify the information from others credible sources. In addition, some claim they ignore, other blacklist or report the pages they have seen misinformation. Unfortunately, more than 15% share it, possibly because the study also indicated that many people do not understand what constitutes misinformation, and by so, they would fall for it.

The outcomes identified in this survey clearly confirm what researchers like Vosoughi, et al. (2018) when they confirm that people like to share novel news because new information is more valuable to people from an information-theoretic perspective. On the other hand,

the studies of Oh, et al., (2013); Mukherjee, et al. (2012) clearly speculates that massive surge in online content consumption primarily through social media both business organizations and political parties have begun to share content that are ambiguous or fake to influence online users and their decisions for financial and political gains. To the American Psychological Association (2024), they found that many people are susceptible to illusory truth, especially when they know a little about the topic or are somewhat familiar with the post.

Conclusion

The study has proved that many polluted contents on social media today heavily contends with credible information, and most times social media users are too overwhelmed to thoroughly sift or are not well empowered to deal with such surge of incorrect information. Consequently, we have continued to witness high volumes of misinformation and the dissemination of all forms of information disorders on various social media platforms. To this end, there seem to be a huge gap between efforts to sensitise people and the actual action taken when people come across materials that contain partial or complete falsehood. Without proper measure, either through committed efforts of the platforms to rid and sanitise all social media platforms of information that polluted or substandard, enforcement of strict policy that are accessible to the user or stricter actions against platforms or accounts that spread misinformation, there could be a massive overkill, where there would be more falsehood than verifiable materials, especially on sensitive topics like health, economics, politics and other. In fact, there is nothing as small lie or partial falsehood, all misinformation can result in damaging consequences.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this work, the researcher considers the following recommendation fitting for the subject under review:

a. Fair policy to regulate and monitor news information that are posted on any digital platform in Nigeria
b. Regular sensitization and social media literacy training for social media users in order to forestall the spread and sharing of news misinformation
c. Punitive measure should be handed to any website, blog sites or forum that publishes or accommodate comments and opinions bearing news misinformation.
d. Public naming and shaming of websites and social media accounts that constantly popularize materials bearing news misinformation in Nigeria.

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