

FAKE NEWS LITERACY AMONG INSTAGRAM USERS IN EBONYI STATE.

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Abstract

The advent of social media has made information gathering and sharing easier, timely and less expensive. As a result, fake news has also become commonplace. The pervasiveness has triggered an interest in fake news literacy as a measure to ameliorate the impacts. This study aims to examine fake news literacy among Instagram users in Ebonyi State, Nigeria. It has the objectives of examining youths' level of awareness of fake news by Instagram users, assessing to what extent such awareness shapes their verification of contents before sharing, the consumption pattern of these users, and proffering ways of improving fake news literacy. The study was guided by the Media Literacy Theory and the Uses and Gratifications. A survey methodology was employed, and a sample of 385 respondents was drawn from the population using the Australian calculator for determining the sample sizes. The questionnaire was used as the instrument for data collection. The data collected were analyzed using frequency tables and percentages. The findings revealed that Instagram users in Ebonyi State are very much aware of fake news. However, this awareness does not make them to verify information before sharing. It was recommended that public and private organizations should incorporate practical verification steps that teach users how to verify information using simple tools, emphasizing posts where verification steps are shown by local content creators, use of local languages to promote fake news literacy etc. It concludes that while Instagram users in Ebonyi State have higher awareness of fake news, this awareness does not translate to verification when sharing information or contents online, additional interventions are necessary to translate this awareness into habitual digital behaviours.

Keywords: Fake news, fake news Literacy, Instagram, Users

Introduction

The emergency of the internet and its attendant consequences of social media evolution has brought overwhelming changes in the manner information are gathered and disseminated (Chioma, 2024;

Oputa, Tsegny & Igyuve, 2025). Social media particularly Instagram has made the sharing information across boundaries through videos, images easier, less expensive and timely. (Zannu, Talabi, Sanusi, Adesina, Aderibigbe, Adelabu, Oyinloye, Bello, 2024; Shu, Wang, 2017;

Chioma,2025). According to Kemp (2024), Nigeria has 36. 75million social media user with 12.40million users on Instagram and 70% of Nigerian youth are on the Instagram (NapoleonCat, August, 2025).

This explains why multitude of people leverage social media particularly Instagram for interaction, businesses and information sharing and to influence opinion thereby making act of news gathering and sharing an all-comers affair(Uwalaka et al.,2021; Apuke et al., 2021; Otukpa, Eterigbo, Okpor & Okoronkwo , 2025). According to Grace Craigie-Williams " gone are the days where an audience passively consumes content whose newsworthiness is decided by editors in a far-off newsroom".

Following this development, individuals now spread quickly all sort of fictitious stories, edited contents and post doctored videos on important issues to wide audience as though they are factual (Zannu et al., 2024). Allcott and Gentzkow (2017) in (Esimokha & Mustapha 2023), defined fake news as information that is known to be false and could mislead those exposed to it. Also McGonagle (2017) cited in Adegboyega and Obun (2022), fake news is an information intentionally created and share to deceive people into believing what

is not true and questioning established fact. Today fake news has become a force to reckon with. Undoubtedly, it has dealt a big blow to our social, political and economic spheres of lives as a nation (Esimokha et al., 2023; Okorie,2022). Corroborating this, (Otukpa, et al., 2025), observed that sometimes it could be disseminated to cause insecurity among social groups. Also, (Zhou&Zafarani,2020) in (Alon, Rahimi and Tahar,2024), observed that fake news is now one of the biggest challenge confronting journalism, democracy and freedom of expression.

One can sit in the comfort of his house and generate a story that will elicit disruptive reactions globally (Otukpa et al ,2025). And before such story could be debunked, individual, and the societal peace may have been negatively affected. According to Jardine (2016) "..... Fake news is appealing because it delivers a moral narrative or confirms sentiments that people already hold."

This has place more responsibility on the consumers of contents to guard themselves with requisite skill that will enable them to sieve out credible and factual contents from numerous information available, therefore, the need for fake news literacy . Fake news

literacy according to (Huber et al., 2022,P.3) means " an individuals" ability to discern fake news from real news". The ability to make personal meaning from the auditory and visual messages we receive from television, radio, computer, newspaper, magazine and advertisement (Thomas, 2009) cited in (Tater et al, 2022).

Statement of the Problem

The world is now inundated with information jostling for not only attention but also to influence actions of the receiver, courtesy of social media. Social media has birthed a new dimensions of information gathering and dissemination. While social media platforms such as Instagram have not only provided opportunity for real-time information sharing and interaction using videos, photos, it has also created a leeway for individuals to spread all sort of fictitious stories, videos and doctored news and image as facts.

For instance, recent messages advising people who are customers of Heritage bank, Fidelity bank, Polaris bank, Wema bank, Unity bank to pull out all their money from the banks citing imminent liquidation as a reason which CBN later debunked (Cable Check, June 11, 2024). Also, the graphic image of a baby killed in Congo-Brassaville

that was shared and claimed to have been perpetrated by Fulani against the Berom (Omar, 2020) . And recent audio message whose purveyor posed as NAFDAC(National Agency for Food, Drug Control) staff and advised people to avoid some products because they contain harmful substances which NAFDAC later debunked (The Guardian news, July 23,2025). . As a result of that, businesses has been ruined; public trust has eroded; reputations has been damaged and about all, insecurity has been created following the ethnic and religious tensions that have become its aftermath.

However, laws for instance, Cybercrime Act, 2015; regulations and have been put in place by the government, media owners and journalists to checkmate the excesses of these fake news Marchants but the impact has become insignificant going by the pervasiveness of fake news in online media space at present.

Understanding how users employ critical thinking skills in discerning fake news while consuming contents is essential especially among Instagram users in Ebonyi State where communal clashes and other forms of criminality are often experienced. And it is against this backdrop that the researcher embarks on this study title " Fake news

literacy among Instagram users in Ebonyi State, Nigeria".

Objectives of the Study

To find out the awareness level Ebonyi State Instagram users about fake news.

To find out the extent Ebonyi State Instagram users verify the credibility of information before sharing.

To find out contents consumption pattern of Ebonyi State Instagram users.

To find out ways of improving fake news literacy among Ebonyi State Instagram users.

Research Questions

What is the awareness level of Instagram users in Ebonyi State about fake news?

To what extent do Instagram users in Ebonyi State verify credibility of information before sharing?

What are the consumption pattern of Instagram users in Ebonyi State?

What are the ways of improving fake news literacy among Instagram users in Ebonyi State?

Literature Review

Concept of fake news.

Though fake news has existed from time immemorial but the advancement in

21century technology has provided a fertile ground for its acceleration (Shu et al., 2017; Esimokha et al., 2023; Zannu et al., 2024; Huber et al., 2022). The expression "Fake news"really emerged during the 2016 American election campaign between Donald Trump and Joe Biden (pictin and Teravainen, 2017). Researchers have tried to pin the history down to a particular date and event. While some try to trace it back to the fall of "Night of Templar" the 1300s, other pin it down to 2000 years ago when the Roman Republic was facing a civil war between the Octavian, the adopted son off great general Julius Caesar, and Mark Anthony, one of the Caesar's most trusted commander (BBC Bitesize, 23 January, 2024)

Allcott and Gentzkow (2016) in (Shu et al., 2017) defined fake news to be " articles that in intentionally and verifiably false and could mislead readers. It has become an issue of global concern (Esimokha et al.,2023) due to the manner it's purveyors tactically manipulate the audience to achieve a purpose. To Editorial (2017) cited in Habib and Akila (2021), Fake news sites apply certain methods to achieve it purpose including adorning lies to appear as true and mixing up factual information with the fake

ones in a way that makes it credible. While frequent publishing of fake news could be for financial gain, to gain attention, others could be to have political advantage between opponents and to push certain believe system (Zannu, et al., 2024; Okorie, 2022).

Watts (2018) present some conditions that make information fake. This include: it cannot be verifiable. It either does not contain any links to its sources or if they stay within the domain or send you to articles that are not relevant, the stories appeals to your emotions. Adegboyega et al., (2022) also pointed out some element of fake news as the untruthfulness of news contents and the intent to deceive and mislead the audience. They went further to say that false contents shared in error may not be seen as fake news since mistakes are abound. Toeing the same of argument, Watt, went further to say that message sent in error can still be seen as fake news, they are not truthful and the whole idea is to deceive those that may access it. Shu' et al., 2017), identify two factors which promote vulnerability to fake news: Naive realism: This has to do with the believe that one is better informed more than others. And Confirmation Bias: Consumers expose

themselves to information that support their existing view.

Other factors include: lack of media literacy, ease of creating a blog or post your own story online, believe that information from family or friend(s) are always factual and should not be questioned ([https://library and.Libguides.com/fake news](https://libraryand.Libguides.com/fake%20news)). The problem is further complicated due to the virality of fake news which is mostly due to algorithmic structures of social media platforms that prioritize sensationalist contents (Lazer et al., 2021) in (Data Project Report; Orhan, 2023).

Empirical reviews

Otukpa, Eterigbo, Okpor and Okoronkwo (2025). Combating fake news susceptibility among social media users in Ebonyi State, Nigeria. The study adopted descriptive survey research design where 398 internet users in Ebonyi State were studied. Finding shows that there is high level of social media usage but low media literacy. The study concluded that residents of Ebonyi State are vulnerable to fake news because of low online media literacy.

Apuke, Omar and Tunca (2022) conducted a study titled " Effect of fake news awareness as an intervention strategy for motivating

news verification behaviour among social media users in Nigeria: A quasi-experimental research. Finding showed that individual who are exposed to fake news awareness campaign tend to verify news more before consumption and are more careful about what the post online.

Ijeh and Okeoghene (2023) conducted a study titled " Pattern of Social Media Usage for Academic Activities among Students of Selected Tertiary Institutions in Delta State. The study adopted survey research method to find out the pattern of social media usage among students of tertiary institution. Finding revealed that high use of social media for academic activities.

Zannu, Talabi, Sanusi, Adesina, Aderibigbe & Adelabu (2024) titled "Influence of media literacy on the dissemination of fake news among Instagram and Twitter users". The study adopted a survey research method. Finding showed that interventions and learning efforts should be encouraged to reduce fake news.

Theoretical framework

Media Literacy theory

Media literacy theory can be traced back to the first half of the 20th century, when proposal was made that students should

learn to distinguish between mass culture and elite culture through education (Lin et al., 2013) in (Li, Razi and Hani, 2023). In the 1950s and 1960s, John Culkin, S., J., Marshall McLuhan, Harold Adams Innis, Edward Carpenter, Walter Ong S.J., created a movement called " media literacy". The movement(Slate,2017) in (Mariusz, 2016) was to educate, promote media policy and develop teaching and curriculum that will incorporate media literacy. .The idea " of media literacy" gain prominence with definition, policy and educational curriculum in 1960s - 1980, following the formal declaration on the need for educational institutions to inculcate it in their studies by UNESCO in Grunewald, Germany(UNESCO, 1985).

Media literacy theory, as an important theory has emerged to explain the relationship between people and media. According to Aufderheide, in (Li et al., 2023) media literacy refers to the "ability to acquire, analyze and produce information". Simplify put, media literacy theory try's to emphasize that media user should not just consume messages from the media rather question the source, the intent, credibility and factuality of the media products at their disposal.

In relation to this study, Ebonyi State Instagram users who are fake news literate are more likely to spot fake news where the information is domicile and to pin point factual news from opinion than those who are not fake news literate. Being literate has to do with being able to assess, critically analyse and evaluate media contents. This means cross-checking fact with reliable news platforms and recognize red flag in fake news such as poor grammar, and sensationalism.

Uses and gratification theory

Elihu Katz and his colleagues, Blumberg and Gurevitch (Okoro, Ukonu and Odemelam, 2014). They went further to observe that the theory focuses on the consumer, that is the audience member rather than the message. This consumer contribute to a large extent to the level of influence through his/her ability to determine the messages or campaigns to choose, attended to, perceive, retain on the bases of this /her needs. The audiences use media message rather than being influenced by the media (Okoro et al., 2014).

It sees audience as active media users whose drive for content choice is dependent on need such content will satisfy. Corroborating this Okorie (2022) said that the theory

explains how audience engage with social media platforms and digital technologies to fulfill various purposes. And the reliance on the media is determined by how those desires and goals will be solved by such exposure (Gailoway and Meek,1981) in (Chioma, 2024).

In relation to the work, Ebonyi State where Instagram commands appreciable number of usage, users may believe or resist fake news depending on the gratification or needs such news will satisfy. If there is pre- existing bias in them which the fake news reinforces, they tend to believe it but if otherwise, they tend to resist it.

Methodology

This study adopted a descriptive survey design to investigate fake news literacy among Instagram users in Ebonyi State, Nigeria. The population consists of all residents of Ebonyi who use Instagram, a micro logging site for various purposes. There is an estimated population 2,880,383 million people in the Ebonyi State, Nigeria in 2016 figure which happened to be the latest figure by the National Bureau of Statistics. To ensure broad representation, multistage sampling was employed in three

stages. At the first stage, cluster sampling was used to divide Ebonyi State into (3) senatorial zones: Ebonyi north, Ebonyi south and Ebonyi central. To bring the study to a manageable extent, two local government was picked from each of the three (3) senatorial zones of Ebonyi State using simple random sampling technique amounting to six (6) local governments. This include: Abakaliki and Ohaukwu (Ebonyi north), Afikpo North and Ohaozara (Ebonyi south), Ezza north and Ikwo (Ebonyi central). To trim further, simple random sampling technique was used to pick 1 town each from the six (6) local governments which include: Abakaliki (Abakaliki town), Ohaukwu (Nkalagu), Afikpo North (Afikpo town), Ohaozara (Okposi), Ezza north (Ebiaji town), Ikwo (Okpitemo). Using simple random sampling again, these towns were trim down to one community each which include: Abakaliki town (Amachi), Nkalagu (Nkalagu), Afikpo town (Ohaisu), Okposi (Okposi Okwu), Ebiaji (Amuda) and Ikpitemo (Obeagu). The sample size for this study was 385. This was arrived at using the Australian calculator using the following metrics: confidence level of 95%, population proportion of 0.5, confidence interval (error margin) 0.05. Therefore, sixty-four (64.2) At

the second stage, the sample size was evenly distributed across these three communities ($385 \div 6 = 64.2$ per community). Since (0.2) cannot be share it was randomly share among the towns studied.

At the final stage, questionnaire was used as the instrument of data collection. And it was administered face-to-face using simple random probability sampling. Six research assistants representing six towns were used to share and retrieve the instrument from the respondents since they are part of the people and know how to handle them In case of any challenge that may arise. Finally, all the 385 copies of the instrument were retrieved. The collected data was analyzed using frequency tables and percentages, allowing for a structured presentation of findings related to the research objectives.

Data Analysis and Discussion

Table 1: Demography of Respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	197	51.2%
Female	188	48.8%
Total	385	100%
Age	Frequency	Percentage
18-25 years	84	21.8%
26-35 years	133	34.6%
36-45 years	95	24.7%
46-55 years	51	13.2%
56 and above	22	5.7%
Total	385	100%
Educational Level	Frequency	Percentage
Primary	63	16.4%
SSCE	89	23.1%
OND/NCE	115	29.9%
Bachelor's Degree	97	25.1%
Postgraduate Degree	21	5.5%
Total	385	100%

Source: Field study, 2025

The table above presents the demographic distribution of respondents. In terms of gender, there were slightly more males (51.0%) than females (49.0%), reflecting a near-equal representation of both sexes. Regarding age, the largest proportion of respondents fell within the 26–35 years category (34.6%), followed by those aged 36–45 years (24.7%), and 18-25 years (21.8%). While the smallest group was 56 and above years (5.7%) and 46-55 (13.2%). This distribution indicates that the majority of respondents were in their early to mid-

youth stage. In terms of educational level, most respondents had OND/NCE (29.9%), followed by those with bachelor's degree (25.1%) and secondary school certificates (23.1%), while the smallest group comprised those with postgraduate degrees (5.5%). This distribution suggests that the respondents were largely educated, with varying levels of formal education that could influence their engagement with contents on Instagram

Table 2: Respondents on whether they were aware of fake news on Instagram.

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	361	93.8%
No	19	4.9%
Not sure	5	1.3%
Total	385	100%

Source: Field study, 2025

Table 2 examines whether respondents have awareness of fake news on the Instagram. A large majority (93.8%) responded "yes" while the rest of the respondents (4.9%) and (1.3%) stated that they were not aware and "not sure" respectively. This suggests that majority of the respondents are aware of fake news.

Table 3: Respondents on how often they verify news before sharing on Instagram

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Very often	17	4.4%
	25	6.5%
Often		
Sometimes	35	9.1%
Never	231	60%
	77	20%
Rarely		
Total	385	100%

Source: Field study, 2025

Table 3 assesses how often respondents verify news before sharing on Instagram. The findings indicate a strong resistance to verifying information before sharing, with a

majority of respondents saying either "Never" (60%) or "Rarely" (20%). While a smaller proportion responded "Sometimes", a minority of respondents chose "Often" (6.5%) or "Very often" (4.4%), suggesting that, majority of the response do not verify information at their door step before sharing. These results imply that even though most of the respondents are aware of fake news, they still do not verify information before sharing. The pervasiveness of fake news could be attributed to this finding.

Table 4: Respondents on how often they come across news contents on Instagram

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Very Often	162	42.1%
Often	124	32.2%
Sometimes	58	15.0%
Rarely	26	6.8%
	15	3.9%
Never		
Total	385	100%

Source: Field study, 2025

Table analyzes the frequency with which respondents come across news content on Instagram. The data reveals that most respondents are regularly exposed to news

content, with almost half (42.1%) stating that they come across it very often, while another large proportion (32.2%) reported encountering it often. A smaller percentage indicated that they see such content sometimes, whereas only a few respondents either rarely (6.8%) or never (3.9%) come across it. This suggests that there is a high amount of exposure to news content on Instagram among the respondents.

Table 5: Respondents on the kind of news they mostly access on Instagram

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Entertainment	123	31.9%
	92	23.9%
Politics		
Health	48	12.5%
Sports	11	2.9%
	111	28.8%
Security		
Total	385	100%

Source: Field study, 2025

Table 5 explores the kind of content respondents mostly see on Instagram. The data showed that entertainment (31.9%) and security (28.8%) recorded highest, indicating that people now take to Instagram which was designed for entertainment

for important information that shape their lives. According to the result, entertainment (31.9%) and security (28.8%) recorded

highest indicating that most respondents talked to Instagram for entertainment and also shows that no-journalistic source such as activists, eyewitness and influencers are gain prominence in new dissemination. Another large portion of (23.9%) reported seeing mostly political contents. A small number reported that they mostly see health (12.5%) and sports(2.9%). These results suggest that there is a generational shift in the choice of platform for critical information sharing among respondents. A situation where platform designed for entertainment has become a channel for other important information.

Table 6: Respondents on whether they need more education on fake news on Instagram.

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	310	80.5%
No	62	16.1%
Not sure	13	3.4%
Total	385	100%

Source: Field study, 2025

Table 2 examines whether respondents need more education on fake news on Instagram. A large majority (80.5%) responded "yes" while the smaller number (16.1%) responded "No" and "Not sure"(4.9%) and (1.3%). This suggests that people are of the view that media literacy is still low among

respondents and need to be promoted to curb fake news on Instagram.

Table 7: Respondents on what they think are the ways to improve fake news literacy

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Online campaigns	26	6.8%
Intervention and educational initiatives(school programmes)	49	12.7%
Influencers raising awareness	15	3.9%
Instagram alert and warning	31	8.0%
All of the above	264	68.6%
Total	385	100%

Source: Field study,2025

Table 6 analyzes what respondents consider to be ways to improve fake news literacy on Instagram. The data reveals that majority of the respondents (68.6%) chose all of the above on the table. Appreciable number (12.7%) and (8.0%) chose intervention and educational initiatives and Instagram alert and warning. A smaller percentage (6.8%) and (3.9%) went either for online campaigns and influencer raising awareness. This suggests that the respondents recognize the danger of fake news in politics, health crises, economy, and the need for it to be tackled.

Discussion

Research Question 1: What is the awareness level of Instagram users in Ebonyi State about fake news?

This research question is answered in Table 2, which analyzed whether respondents aware of existence of fake news. The data reveals that majority of respondents (93.8%) stated they aware of the existence "Yes," while another (4.9)% reported "No." And insignificant number (1.3%) tatee "Not sure). This indicates that Instagram users in Ebonyi State very much aware of the existence of fake news. A possible reason for this awareness could be because of the increasing rate information presented to be true and has gone viral are being debunked in the public space.

The findings of this study align with those of Otukpa et al. (2025), who found that social media play a significant role in the spread of fake news among users in Ebonyi State. The awareness of Instagram users in Ebonyi State about fake news can be explained by the Uses and Gratifications Theory which posits that people actively seek out media content that fulfills their needs. In this case, users may be engaging with information on Instagram to satisfy their need for real-time

news update, motivation, entertainment. This suggests that their awareness is not accidental but rather an active choice influenced by digital habits.

This finding reinforces the idea that Instagram is a crucial channel for information among Ebonyi residents.. Furthermore, the high awareness rates suggest that social media can be an effective tool for campaigns aimed at promoting fake news literacy among the people.

Research Question 2: To what extent do Instagram users in Ebonyi State verify the credibility of information before sharing?

This research question is answered in Tables 3 which assess the extent respondents verify the credibility of information before sharing. The data shows that a majority of respondents either never (60%) or Rarely (20%) verify information they see or share on Instagram. This suggests that awareness does not translate to verification in information consumption and sharing on Instagram. So many reasons may be adduced to this which includes: information may be a confirmation of existing view about such news, some information appear with emotional language and when they are emotional they may not verify before

sharing. Additionally, trust in the reliability of information from those they follow online, lack of media literacy and laziness are all factors that contribute to lack of verification of information before sharing by Instagram users. This does not align with the work of Apuke, Omar and Tunca (2022) who found that those who are exposed to fake news awareness campaign tend to verify news content and are even show more concern about their reputation online.

This finding is corroborated by those of (Robinson & Deshano, 2011; Pennycook & Rand, 2019; Zang & Ghorbani, 2020) in Orban (2023) who observed that spontaneity and unprofessional as well voluminous nature of information on the social media hinders verifying of factuality. Also, Oputa, Santos and Igyuve (2025) found that there is relatively low media literacy programmes and fact-checking initiatives among online users. This also aligns with media literacy theory which tries to emphasize that Instagram user in Ebonyi State should not just consume information from the Instagram rather question the source, the intent, credibility and factuality of the information at their disposal.

This finding demonstrates that a lot are still need to be done in getting Instagram users in Ebonyi State to consistently develop and sustain fake news literacy in their digital engagement.

Research Question 3: What is the content consumption pattern of Instagram users in Ebonyi State?

This research question is answered in Tables 4 and 5, which examine how often respondents come across news contents and the kind of news they mostly see on Instagram. The data in the tables show that majority of the respondents very often (42.1%) or often (32.2%). This indicates that Instagram users in Ebonyi State are digitally active which could make them vulnerable to fake news. Also, a vast majority (31.9%) or (28.8%) mostly watch entertainment and security news respectively. The reason could be because of the prevailing economic and security situations of the country which instagram users need entertainment and security contents to cushion the effect. Through this, exaggerated contents or false contents could be spread. This aligns with the study of Ijeh et al.,(2023) who found that the rate of social media usage for academic activities among students is high. This aligns

with the assumptions of the Uses and gratification theory which emphasizes that people access media contents to satisfy their needs.

Research Question 4: What are the ways of improving fake news literacy among Instagram users in Ebonyi State?

This research question is answered in Tables 6 and 7, which examine whether Instagram users in Ebonyi State and what they think are ways to improve on fake news literacy among Instagram users in Ebonyi State. The data in the tables show acceptance of the need for fake news literacy education as most of the respondents selected "Yes" (80.5%). Also, a vast majority (68.6%) reported "All of the above" indicating acceptance of all the strategies put forward in the table. A possible reason for this finding is that these approaches are in line with everyday information habit, social norms and the kind of education people are already used.

This finding aligns with the study of Zannu et al., (2024) who advocated for interventiins and learning efforts in tackling fake news.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that while there is huge awareness of existence of fake news as a phenomenon among Instagram users in Ebonyi State, their awareness do not translate to verification of information before sharing which could be an indication that the rate of fake news literacy among Instagram users in Ebonyi State remains low. This highlights the need for strategic interventions that go beyond raising awareness to actively encouraging behavioural change, ensuring that strategies provided by social media platforms as well as government and other social institution are communicated to the people through local languages for more education on how to promote fake news literacy.

The following recommendations have, therefore, been provided based on these findings:

Awareness should not only be created among Instagram users on pervasiveness of fake news; government institutions, media owners, NGOs, educational institutions should incorporate practical verification skill that teach users how to verify information

using simple tools such as TinEye, Google Reverse image search etc.

Instagram stories, reels and posts where verification steps are shown by local content creators and influencers should be emphasized to encourage behavioural and attitudinal change among users on the need to verify information before sharing.

There should be partnership among Government agencies, traditional institutions, civil society organization and NGOs to launch a campaign aimed at promoting fake news literacy among users through the use of local languages on radio, community meetings, churches and market places.

To catch them young, fake news literacy club should be established in primary and secondary schools to raise the consciousness of user on the menace of fake news and also inculcate the habit of fact-checking at the early stage in their lives.

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