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## The Current State of Fake News in the D.R. Congo and Socials Impacts

By Eliud Aganze & Riphin Kusinza

*Kivu Hub & Hope Africa University*

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## I. INTRODUCTION

In the media industry, the propagation of fake news is becoming a booming topic and challenge. On social media, website and written press the spread of this is so fast to keep track of confusing reader on what is fake and also causing damage in different sector of life [1]

In an age of where almost half of all news consumers and share their news from online sources [13] fake news can reach large audience through social media platform rapidly from one person to another [14] Van Der Linden, S "The conspiracy-effect: exposure to conspiracy to conspiracy theory (about global warming) decreases pro-social behaviors and science acceptance. Personality and individuals' differences, 87, 171-173", 2015. following an age of post trust [28] Some previous research indicated that 31% of kids age 10 to 18 have shared online at least one news story that tend to be fake. this situation raised concerned related to digital literacy a specially in country with low access to Internet around 3.1% in 2016 statistics from internet live stats and education such as the Democratic Republic of The Congo [34]

In the DRC a study published in the lancet found that "nearly half of respondents believe Ebola didn't exist or was invented to destabilize the region or make money" this turned to be fake news which

*Author α:* Kivu Hub Bukavu, DR. Congo. e-mail: eliud@kivuhub.net

*Author ο:* Kivu Hub & Hope Africa university, Bujumbura, Burundi. e-mail: Riphin@kivuhub.net

resulted in more than 5000 infected and more than 2000 dead with Ebola.

Currently day social media reputation and access keeps growing at fast rate, the quality of contents is raising the issue of fake news with more users sharing unverified contents leading to misinformation campaign used by some nation to influence their foreign policies, the Russia fake news campaign launched during the year 2018 in several Africa nation include the DR. Congo in favor of their candidate during the DR. Congo election has showed how social media can be used to spread fake news [3]. Other proposed solution ranges from making digital literacy a primary pillar of education [17], to prevent false information going viral in first place.

As stating point of this research, relevant literature including theoretical background were reviewed. Based on the review of existing literature, we developed our research framework to guide a survey study, which be developed and tested with pilot study sample. Actual data will be collected through an online survey form targeting social media users and internet users. Regression analysis will be conducted based on collected data. Finally, we will interpret and discuss about data analysis based on research framework.

## II. THEORETICAL REVIEW OF FAKE NEWS

In the current state of proliferation multiple source of information, fake news is spreading fast and it becoming increasingly hard and harder to detect what is authentic and fake news despite technology advancement but fake news spread faster than all detection technology available. In some countries they are no policies regulating the type of digital contents such our case the DR. Congo which has seen an increase of social media and mobile access.

### a) Social Media Source of Fake News

Fake news is defined as "the deliberate creation and sharing of false and/or manipulated information that intended to deceive and mislead audience, either for purposes of causing harm, or for political, personal and financial gain.[1]. The world economic forums rank misinformation and fake news among the world top risk. [12].

Most of nowadays news consumption has shifted towards online social media, where it is more comfortable to ingest, share and further discuss news with friends or other readers [32]

Recent report by Stanford internet observatory regarding Russia influence in in recent political election in Africa , the report stated that Russia used fake news to influence political environment by creating fake Facebook page to influence their political agenda which campaign was targeted countries such as Sudan, Libya, Central Africa republic , Madagascar, Mozambique and the Democratic republic of Congo. Regarding the DRC they were several pages created in the eve of 2018 elections to influence voters. The report stated that they have been indication that Russia interest in the DRC and their heavy involvement in the neighbor Central Africa Republic. This Russia operation took place against the backdrop of fragile domestic political situation after mention elections December 2018, in which opposition candidate Martin Fayulu and numerous observers claimed that the cote count was manipulated , the DRC settle into an uneasy balance , in which Felix Tshisekedi governed as president while outgoing president Joseph Kabila's party retained a majority in the national assembly, lead observers to speculate that he would continue to rule behind the scenes. [27]. The two pages provided by Facebook "Congo Actu" and "Patriotism Congolaise" were created one day part in august 2019 and have clear commonalities. The other page, "les Echos RDC," was created earlier and differs in some significant ways. Congo acts had one-page manager in Madagascar since then. The page has published 123 posts and revived 94,400 interaction. Les Echos RDC and Patriotisme congolais had both 2.427 and 5.534 followers, both managed in Madagascar and their average interactions 944 and 628. [27]

With an internet penetration of less than 7%, word of mouth remains the most common way for rumors to spread in DRC. These have included speculation that people who died from Ebola are deliberately being killed in treatment center. The spread of harmful rumors thought social media had tragic consequences for Congolese frontline workers, many of whom have been accused of profiting from the crisis. There have been more than 1300 attacks on healthcare facilities, during which dozens of people have been killed. [19] as we can fake new spread from social media has impact health care in some region of the DRC.

In response, Facebook and other social media companies have made a range of algorithmic and policy changes to limit the spread of false content. In the appendix, we list twelve announcements by Facebook and five by Twitter aimed at reducing the circulation of misinformation on their platforms since the 2016 election [29]

Majority of social media companies have their approaches to deal with spams accounts, Facebook's approach involves detecting inauthentic behaviors [14]. it is used to detect operated bots. Also, twitter's initiative on election integrity focused on giving users more transparency on us federal political campaigning

ads.[15] twitter does this by reaving billing information, ad spend, impression data allowing to make an educated decision [13]

#### b) *Fake News in Drc Ebola Outbreak*

'Fake News': 'Fake news', was chosen in 2017 as the word of the year by the Oxford University. In line with previous research, this paper avoids the term except when directly mentioned by interviewees. The main reasons for this, as highlighted in Nielsen and Grave, 2018 and the Report commissioned by the European Commission in March 2018, is that the term is inadequate to capture the complex problem of disinformation. As argued elsewhere, the term has also been appropriated by some politicians and pundits to undermine independent news media. Therefore, as previously mentioned the term *disinformation*, which includes an array of practices not only to produce but also to disseminate fabricated or false information, is preferred here. [33]

In the DRC a study published in the lancet found that "nearly Ralph of respondents believe Ebola didn't not exists or was invented to destabilize the region or make money" this turned to be fake news which resulted in more than 5000 infected and more than 2000 dead with Ebola [11].

Some people were affected by fake news and as we can hear from one victim who never believed in Ebola diseases a real testimony If Floride Kayindo hadn't contracted Ebola herself. She would not believe that it existed. The 36 years old prints with bemusement thinking about the rumors she's heard. "she thought it was not a real illness, it was brought in by white people to make money out", she explains, "white people are evil, that's what people in community believe, "Kayindo tells TIME. "Before Ebola white people were around, but now they're thinking white people came with Ebola, Kayindo was declared Ebola free in November 2018[19]. Misinformation has contributed to the difficulties containing the virus in the DRC, where more than 1300 people have now died in the second largest outbreak in the DRC history. These rumors lead to destruction of medical centers and death of health workers.

According to Diallo senior UNICEF Ebola coordinator interviewed by the TIME says "the lack of information leads the community to ask a lot of question about the Ebola virus". Also, other people believe that international aid organization are behind the outbreak. The belief has been compounded by the amount of the money that suddenly seems to be flowing into DRC east of the help assist efforts to contain Ebola. They argue they got little relief from conflict and other health and other health issues before this, and ask why Ebola would be any different.

### c) *Digital Literacy and Misinformation Spread*

We can define digital literacy according to the European Union is “the skills required to achieve digital competences [26] emphasizing “the confident and critical use of digital technology’ which implies ‘knowledge’. After checking different sources, we can also define digital literacy, “in addition to ICT competence, implies a critical assessment of impact of digital technology on personal development and society; in an addition to ICT competence, it incorporates the three pillars: smart use, nurturing values and an understanding of the digital age. [24], according to the research by Target DRC, we have seen an increase of 84% of Congolese having access to internet through mobile device [35]

Misinformation is defined as information that is inaccurate or misleading [30]. It could spread unintentionally [31] due to honest reporting mistakes or incorrect interpretations [31]. The digital age poses many opportunities and challenges for its citizens. While it that digital native has the self-developed skills required to take advantage and harness risks of the digital environment. Developments in the digital field caller systematic upgrade of literacy to the level of digital competence. [23] In a time when we increasing implement digitalization at work, estimates show that 65% of child in primary school will jobs which do not exist today [25]

To ensure responsible behavior of digital natives in the environment, and ultimately create responsible and competent digital citizens, it is of utmost importance to address and bring closer the concept of digital literacy to educators [25].

The key to success is therefore to increase the level of education and education itself. It is also necessary to build and increase the digital literacy of individuals. Which is related to searching, processing, sorting and sharing information through new media and ICT. In addition to more specific digital literacy. It is necessary to increase media literacy itself and improve the social status of media literacy as set of technical, knowledge, civil and creative capabilities that allow access to and critical perception of media. [22].

## III. RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

Information disorder theoretical framework [16], which define three types of false or harmful information:

- *Mis-information*: False information that shared inadvertently, without meaning to cause harm.
- *Dis-information*: Intending to cause harm, by deliberately sharing false information.
- *Mal-information*: Genuine information or opinion shared to cause harm, e.g. Hate speech, harassment. [20],

In [9], Piotrkowicz studied the impart of the linguistics of major headline of news stories on their

popularity, also [10] similar discussed the impact of fake news in recent US election Spread of fake new on Facebook and twitter.

## IV. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHOD

The survey was completed by a nationally representative sample of 1500 representative for age, gender and job. The research tool the survey online to allow respondents to answer at their convenience, which results in a more considered response. The X question survey covered a range of topics around news consumption, including;

- Trust /distrust News sources
- News format
- Example of fake new

It is important for general users to continue to pay attention to information and misinformation they encounter on the web and social media platform. In this section, we discuss how research results and their publicizing lead over time to change in design features of these systems addressing the exhibited weakness.

We will use survey method to conduct this research [8], the survey questionnaire will be developed for influence of fans news in the DR. Congo. The survey data will be collected through online survey, the population study focuses on the social media/internet users in the DR. Congo, and the sample population which we collect is target 150 participants. The sample will be collected using free survey response platform. We will use students, journalist, media professional, IT professional, academic and blogger in this survey. Later, we can generalize the result of this research to a population of general internet/social media users.

After getting the final data set, we will clean the survey data set by removing invalid data. [7], The descriptive data analysis will show some demographic information about the respondents. In regard to statistical analysis, factors analysis and multiple regression measurements of six different variables. Correlation will be used to see the relationships among all research variables. [6]

### *Regression result*

Regression coefficients represents the mean change in response variable for one unit of change in predictor variable while holding other predictors in the model of constant was used, as his control that regression provides is important because it isolates the role of variable from all of the others in the model [8] look for documentation.

## V. CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study is to understand the factors which the current state of fake news in the D.R. Congo and socials impacts. We focus on both gratification research and adoption to answer our research question.

In regard to the possible results of this research, first we found/believe FIST FINDING, second, third. The analysis of survey results will help us validating the new model and understand individual user "the factors which the current state of fake news in the D.R. Congo and socials impacts"

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