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Investigating Factors Influencing People to Engage in Weaponization of Fake News through Facebook

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Fake news has been used as a weapon right before Adam and Eve came into the world, making it one of the most dangerous weapons in existence. It was used in so many different ways since the analog era. Now that life has turned into digital, the weaponization of fake news metamorphose to fit in and maintain its status of being one of the great weapons to achieve specific goals. Among the digital turning of life, Social media play a vast role, among which is Facebook; Facebook is ranked the most rapidly growing social media platform with a vast number of subscribers. Thus, this paper aims to identify the factors that influence people to involve in the weaponization of fake news on social media platforms using Facebook as a case study. It also statistically explores the relationship between factors influencing people to be involved in fake news weaponization on Facebook. Also, it suggests some recommendations on the diminishing weaponization of fake news through Facebook. It seems this research is an initial investigation into the weaponization of fake news on social media with Facebook as a case study. The study analyses the possible factors that influence people to fake news on Facebook, statistically exploring the relationship between factors influencing people to be involved in the weaponization of fake news on Facebook, and suggested some recommendations on diminishing fake news's weaponization on Facebook. It proposes a model of factors that influence the weaponization of fake news on Facebook social media. The model was analyzed using empirical or rather statistical analysis. The data was collected in two different questionnaire survey responses ways which were on one and online distribution. The survey was conducted in July – August 2018, with a total of 207 responses. The result of the proposed model analysis suggested that political Attitude, financial gains, religious Violence, ethnic/tribal Conflict, and entertainment were the essential factors that influence the weaponization of fake news on Facebook. Theoretically, this study provides a fresh contribution in understanding fake news and factors that influences its weaponization; and fills a gap in the literature.

Keywords: Facebook, Fake News, Weaponization, Nigeria

1. Introduction

According to some perspectives, weaponizing fake news is as old as the world itself. Both religions believe that Satan uses fake news as a weapon to aid in Adam's and Eve's disobedience to God, which resulted in sending them down to earth as a punishment. It was mentioned that Satan spread fake news to them by telling them to eat the fruit of the forbidden tree, which will make them knowledgeable, and it will make them live young for an extended period. Since then, fake news has been used right before using text in the entire world as a severe verbal weapon of achieving specific goals by some individuals. It has reached a stage that those who are good at creating fake news against some individual or group of people are giving special consideration, respect, and are given special status in the palaces, for they can use fake news for the rulers' interest.

Fake news on Nigeria's social media platforms is a type of false information or propaganda that consists of deliberate misinformation or hoaxes spread via online social media. Fake news is written and published to mislead to positively or negatively impact an agency, entity, or person, often using sensationalist, dishonest, or outright fabricated headlines to increase readership, online sharing, and Internet click revenue. The weaponization of fake news on social media platforms can have a positive impact like the

government or an agency will at times decide to come up with a new strategy, and it might not be favorable to society. Some members of society can choose to weaponize fake news on a social media platform to make the government agencies revert their action in favor of the community members either economically, socially, morally, financially, academically, or politically. After solving a severe problem like a community quarrel or war, fake news can be publicized on social media like Facebook that will make the community members more focused and will keep them alert.

The weaponization of fake news on social media platforms can negatively impact an individual more of a politician can decide to weaponize a fabricated story against his opponent politician to down value him or to create hatred against that very politician. Fake news on a social media platform can be weaponized against an environment or community of people by attaching some pictures that might not even be from the country or very old photos of an immense tragedy to blackmail them or create faction between that community and another community to achieve either financial, economic, social, political, ethical or moral benefits. Thus, this study intends to identify the factors that influence people to involve in the weaponization of fake news on social media and recommend some ways of mitigations using Facebook as a case study.

The weaponization of fake news on social media platforms in Nigeria affects so many sectors such as economic, security, social, political, financial/business, academic, and other sectors in the country. Social media has doubtlessly become a powerful tool to organize and mobilize massive groups of like-minded individuals through different channels such as Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, Snapchat, WhatsApp, and many other social media. For instance, an article was recently released by Tabia Princewell on Vanguard newspaper dated February 28, 2018, that it was recently brought to her attention that a newspaper, in a report on the Depchi Kidnappings, used a friend's picture to illustrate the story. The young woman is neither a student, a relative of any of the students nor does she have anything to do with the girls' school. Her picture was simply taken off her social media page and used as an illustration for the report for unfathomable reasons. Let's not forget all the images of South Sudanese rebels carrying guns and herding cattle, erroneously but frequently used by Nigerian Media houses to depict the groups of violent herdsmen currently waging war on middle–belt communities.

It took a few days before anyone could ascertain whether General Ibrahim Babangida had indeed authorized the recent letter written by his media aid, due to the denials and counter denials published by media. This confusion reaches government quarters as the Yobe state government initially released facts that it said were obtained from the Nigerian Army, claiming the latter had recovered the kidnapped Dapchi girls. It later had to release another very embarrassing, apologetic statement, admitting the information made to it by the Army turned out to be false. Chaos and misstatement had become the mainstay of public authorities and media organizations in Nigeria. It is sometimes difficult to separate fact from fiction in the digital, "fake news" age, but Nigeria has taken this trend to the extreme. All these are types of fake news that are being transmitted digitally, especially bear Facebook, which is beyond the control of any individual or government as a whole.

Therefore, this research work intends to identify factors (i.e., political, financial, religious, ethnic/tribal, and entertainment/fun) influencing people to engage in the weaponization of fake news, statistically explore the relationship between the studied factors and the use of social media. Lastly, come up with recommendations on how to mitigate the weaponization of fake news through social media platforms in Nigeria.

2.   Literature Review

This section dwells on the conceptual framework that examines fake news's weaponization on the social media platforms but strictly Facebook. The essential required tools and variables are explained here with their definitions and possible history concerning the subject. According to so many understandings, the term "Fake News" has no single definite agreed meaning, but there are many definitions. Fake news, or hoax news, refers to false information or propaganda published under the guise of being authentic news (Forrest, 2017). Fake news is made-up stuff, masterfully manipulated to look like credible journalistic reports that are easily spread online to large audiences willing to believe the fictions and spread the word. (PolitiFact 2017). Fake news is a type of yellow journalism or propaganda that consists of deliberate misinformation or hoaxes spread via traditional print and broadcast news media or online social media. (Leonhardt and Thompson, 2017). Fake News is false stories that appear to be news, spread on the internet, or using other media, usually created to influence political views or as a joke. (Cambridge University). Most times fake

news are written and published with the intent to mislead, damage an agency, entity, person or gain financial and political advantages. The false information are mainly distributed by social media but is periodically circulated through mainstream media. (Himma-Kadaas, Marju, 2017)

The term weaponization is used in this context to show the level of severity of the deadly way fake news easily spread on social media platforms, especially Facebook, to achieve specific goals or objectives. Social media is a form of electronic communication (such as Web sites) through which people create online communities to share information, ideas, personal messages, etc. (Dictionary and Thesaurus | Merriam-Webster, 2016). Social media is also an essential source of news. According to 'Reuters Institute Digital News Report 2013', social media are among the most important ways for people to find online (the others being traditional brands, search engines, and news aggregators) (Newman, Fletcher, and Levy, 2016). Social media are computer-mediated technologies that facilitate the creation and sharing of information, ideas, career interests, and other forms of expression via virtual communities and networks. (Obar, Wildman, and Steve, 2015). Users typically access social media services via web-based technologies on desktops, computers, laptops, or download services that offer social media functionality to their mobile devices (e.g., smartphones and tablet computers). When engaging with these services, users can create highly interactive platforms through which individuals, communities, and organizations can share, co-create, discuss, and modify user-generated content or pre-made content posted online. They "introduce substantial and pervasive changes to communication between organizations, communities, and individuals. (Kietzmann and Kristopher, 2011). Social media differ from paper-based media (e.g., magazines and newspapers) to traditional electronic media such as TV broadcasting in many ways, including quality, reach, frequency, interactivity, usability, immediacy, and performance. (Agichtein et al., 2008). It is in contrast to traditional media, which operates under a monologic transmission model (one source to many receivers), such as a newspaper delivered to many subscribers or a radio station that broadcasts the same programs to an entire city.

Facebook is an American online social media and social networking service company based in Menlo Park, California. Its website was launched on February 4, 2004, by Mark Zuckerberg and fellow Harvard College students

and roommates Eduardo Saverin, Andrew McCollum, Dustin Moskovitz, and Chris Hughes. The founders initially limited the website's membership to Harvard students. Later they expanded it to higher education institutions in the Boston area, the Ivy League schools, and Stanford University. Facebook gradually added support for students at various other universities and eventually to high school students. Since 2006, anyone who claims to be at least 13 years old has been allowed to become a registered user of Facebook, though variations exist in this requirement, depending on local laws. The name comes from the face book directories often given to American university students. Facebook held its initial public offering (IPO) in February 2012, valuing the company at $104 billion, the most massive valuation to date for a newly listed public company. It began selling stock to the public three months later. Facebook makes most of its revenue from advertisements that appear on the screen (Tsotsis, 2011). Facebook can be accessed from many devices with Internet connectivity, such as desktop computers, laptops and tablet computers, and smartphones. After registering, users can create a customized profile indicating their name, occupation, schools attended, and so on. Users can add other users as "friends," exchange messages, post status updates, share photos, videos, and links, use various software applications ("apps"), and receive notifications of other users' activity.

Additionally, users may join common-interest user groups organized by workplace, school, hobbies, or other topics, and categorize their friends into lists such as "People from Work" or "Close Friends." Additionally, users can report or block unpleasant people. According to news page, the Facebook website and app receive more than 2.2 billion monthly active users as of January 2018. Its popularity has led to prominent media coverage for the company, including significant scrutiny over privacy and the psychological effects. In recent years, the company has faced intense pressure over the amount of fake news, hate speech, and depictions of violence prevalent on its services, all of which it is attempting to counteract.

On privacy, Facebook enables users to choose their privacy settings and choose who can see specific parts of their profile. The website is free to its users and generates revenue from advertising, such as banner ads (Bartolotta, 2016). Facebook requires a user's name and profile picture (if applicable) to be accessible by everyone. Users can control who sees other

information they have shared and find them in searches through their privacy settings. On the issue of combating fake news; As of January 21, 2015, Facebook's algorithm is programmed to filter out false or misleading content, such as fake news stories and hoaxes, and will be supported by users who select the option to flag a word as "purposefully fake or deceitful news." According to Reuters, such content is "being spread like wildfire" on the social media platform. Facebook maintained that "satirical" content, "intended to be humorous, or content that is clearly labeled as satire," will be taken into account and should not be intercepted. The algorithm, however, has been accused of maintaining a "filter bubble," where both material the user disagrees with and posts with a low level of likes, will also not be seen. (Weinberger 2017) In November 2015, Zuckerberg prolonged a period of paternity leave from 4 weeks to 4 months. (Gong et al., 2018). This shows that Facebook's entire management is disturbed by the way fake news has been weaponized on the Facebook social media platform.

Political Attitude:-Is one of the significant factor influencing the weaponization of fake news on social media specifically Facebook; in this research, I will go with the definition of Balmas and Sheafer (2010) where she divides political Attitude into three (3) categories as follows; political efficacy, political alienation, and political cynicism. Political efficacy can be divided into internal political effectiveness and external political efficacy (Niemi, Craig, and Mattei, 1991). Internal political efficacy can be defined as "beliefs about one's competence to understand, and to participate effectively in politics." In contrast, external political efficacy can be defined as "to beliefs about the responsiveness of governmental authorities and institutions to citizen demands" (Niemi et al., 1991) these constructs shape overall political efficacy. Political alienation is defined by Finifter (1970) as a consolidated feeling of not being able to affect politics, the sense that political decisions are unpredictable, the absence of political regulation, and the rejection of political norms and goals. Lastly, political cynicism is defined as "the belief that politicians care more about self-interest than about ordinary people and more about retaining their positions than the best interests of the country" (Balmas and Sheafer, 2010). In short, political attitudes are defined as attitudes towards someone's political competence, the government, politicians, and the political system.

Financial Gain:- Some engaged in the act just to extort money from other people. Either through blackmail or extortion or lies to take advantage of the target victim. The amount of monetary Gain; the financial gain (earned or unearned) accruing over a given period. It's also a significant factor influencing the weaponization of fake news on social media platforms.

Religious Violence: -Is a term that covers phenomena where religion is either the subject or the object of violent behavior. (Wellman and Tokuno, 2004) Religious Violence is, precisely, Violence that is motivated by or in reaction to religious precepts, texts, or doctrines. This includes Violence against religious institutions, people, objects, or events when the Violence is motivated to some degree by some religious aspect of the target or by the attacker's precepts. Religious Violence does not refer exclusively to religious groups' acts but includes acts committed by secular groups against religious groups.

Ethnic conflict: -Is a conflict between two or more contending ethnic groups. While the source of the conflict may be political, social, economic, or religious, the individuals in conflict must expressly fight for their ethnic group's position within society. This final criterion differentiates ethnic conflict from other forms of struggle.

Entertainment: -Is a form of activity that holds the attention and interest of an audience or gives pleasure and delight. It can be an idea or a task but is more likely to be one of the activities or events that have developed over thousands of years specifically to keep an audience's attention. (William Caxton).

3.   Research Methodology

To achieve the main objective of this research, the most suitable research design and methods are required. The current phenomenon under investigation, the research objectives, the selected research area, and the respondents for this research primarily influenced the approach's selection followed to answer the research questions. The specific objectives of this study are:

➢ To identify factors influencing people to engage in the weaponization of fake news through Facebook.
➢ To statistically explore the relationship between factors influencing people to

engage in fake news and social media (e.g., Facebook).

➤ To provide recommendations on how to diminish the weaponization of fake news through social media in Nigeria.

3.1 Research Instrument

The instrument for this research was developed to collect data about the weaponization of fake news using Facebook. Weaponisation of fake news is the deliberate attempt to share/create misinformation via social media platforms such as Facebook. It intends to mislead, interrupt, insult and disorganize, etc. gain political influence, financial Gain, religious Conflict, ethnic/tribal Conflict, and fun entertainment. The questionnaire consists of three sections: (A) demographic questions; (B) use of fake news questions; (C) factors influencing fake news. It was administered in ways: face-to-face administration to respondents and online distribution using Googledoc.

3.2 Population and Sample

This research population includes people of different political attitudes, another financial status, different religious beliefs, different ethnicity/tribes, and various entertainment reasons, of which some are direct respondents, and some are those who responded online. A sufficient number of users were sampled to meet the minimum satisfactory sample size in conducting the empirical survey. Two separate surveys were conducted in this project; first, a questionnaire survey of social media users, specifically Facebook, to explore the motives behind weaponizing fake news on the social media platform, specifically Facebook, and second is a questionnaire survey of 100 direct respondents to also explore fake news on social media platform using Facebook as a case study; thus a total of 207 respondents with knowledge of using Facebook social media platform participated in this study, this number of respondents considered sufficient to meet the sample size requirement for conducting factor analysis (Chin, 1998; Gefen al., 2000; Kim, Oh, Shin and Chae, 2009).

3.3 Sampling

The questionnaire survey was conducted among different people with different political attitudes, other financial Gain, different religious beliefs, different ethnicity/tribes, and various entertainment reasons of other locations using the convenient sampling technique from July to August of 2018. The questionnaire was administered two ways on one of my Facebook pages and two directly to the respondents. Phone calls to some online and direct respondents were made excellently and politely that aids in the quick completion of the questionnaire. Thus, the phone calls helped increase the response rate. The researcher sufficiently explained to some respondents the purpose of the research and guided some respondents by completing the survey where necessary.

4. Data Analysis

This section presents a statistical analysis on the weaponization of fake news on Facebook platforms. The section is organized in the following sequence: first, the descriptive analysis of the respondent's profiles, analysis on the awareness of fake news, analysis of the factors influencing fake news (i.e. political attitude, financial gain, religious violence, ethnic conflict, and entertainment

4.1 Descriptive Data Analysis of the Respondent's Profiles

To collect useful and accurate responses to answer the research questions, the sample used must represent the population. Relevant demographic data was therefore requested from the survey participants. Generally, the respondent's data distribution appears to represent the population, as described in this section.

A total of 207 responses to the survey were initially received, 127 and 80 of one on one respondents and online respondents with the help of google.doc, respectively. A data screening analysis was conducted on both the one-on-one responses and online responses before the primary data analysis started for three reasons: (a) to ensure the accuracy of data collected; (b) to deal with missing data and (c) to deal with extreme cases. To eliminate these three problems, a physical examination of each returned questionnaire was performed; 27 questionnaires were dropped from one on one respondents and two responses from online responses due to either missing data or careless responses. One hundred seventy-eight(178) responses were retained for further analysis. In this section of the questionnaire, six questions were asked regarding the respondent's characteristics, as shown in Table 1.

Furthermore, Table 1 shows that the majority of the respondent is aged 18yrs to 29yrs (N=91, 51%), followed by 30 to 39years (N=74, 42%), and then 40yrs and above were just (N=12, 7%). In the gender section, 127 respondents were

male, while 51 were females at (71% and 29%), respectively. The majority of the respondents were BSC/HND holders with (N=85, 48%) followed by NCE/ND (N=45, 25%), then PG/Masters (N=42, 24%) and finally SSCE/NECO with (N=6, 3%). The majority of the respondents own at least one Facebook account (N=176, 99%) only negligible (N=2, 1%). The proficiency of Facebook use here is very important for the study. All the respondents indicate that they use Facebook every day, spending adequate time on Facebook surfing, with the majority spending 2hrs and above (N=55, 31%) than those that spend about 31min – 60min (N=51, 29%) followed by those that spend about 1hr – 2hrs (N=45, 21%) and finally those that spend about 0 – 30min (N=26, 15%). The most regular activity on Facebook from the findings is reading news feed (N=133, 75%) followed by Chat/sending messages (N=105, 59%), then Check/post pictures (N=76, 43%) and post/watch videos (N=58, 33%).

Table 1: Respondent's descriptive analysis

Demographic characteristics		Online	1 on 1	%
Age	18yrs to 29yrs	11	80	51%
	30yrs to 39yrs	59	15	42%
	40yrs and above	8	5	7%
Gender	Male	67	60	71%
	Female	11	40	29%
Educational level	SSCE/NECO	1	5	3%
	NCE/ND	5	40	25%
	BSC/HND	35	50	48%
	PG/Masters	37	5	24%
Owning Facebook account	Yes	76	100	99%
	No	2	0	1%
Time spend on Facebook surfing	0 – 30min	16	10	15%
	31min – 60min	26	25	29%
	1hr – 2hrs	10	35	25%
	2hrs and above	26	30	31%
Regular activities on Facebook (multiple choice allowed)	Check/post pictures	46	30	43%
	Chat/send messages	45	60	59%
	Read news feed	63	70	75%
	Post/Watch Videos	33	25	33%

Table 2: Knowledge about the term fake news on Facebook

Please indicate the extent to which the following effect fake news	Agree	Disagree
Do you think Fake news can be passed through Facebook?	96%	4%
Do you think Fake news can be used on Facebook as a weapon?	90%	10%
The government are responsible for identifying fake news on social media	67%	33%
The general public is responsible for identifying fake news on social media	73%	27%
The social media platform are responsible for identifying fake news on social media	74%	26%
Private organizations (e.g., NGO's) are responsible for identifying fake news on social media	58%	42%

Table 3: Political Attitude as a factor

Please indicate the extent to which political Attitude influence fake news	Agree	Disagree
Political Attitude is a factor that influences the fabrication of fake news on Facebook	94%	6%
Fake news on Facebook social media can have a positive influence on the Political career of an individual	82%	18%
Fake news on Facebook can influence some one's political career negatively	87%	13%
Fake news can be fabricated on Facebook against the government to achieve some specific objectives	84%	16%
Mitigating the fabrication of fake news on Facebook can assist in putting the political system into order	81%	19%

Table 4: Financial Gain as a factor

Please indicate the extent to which financial Gain influence fake news	Agree	Disagree
Financial Gain can influence the fabrication of fake news on Facebook	87%	14%
Fake news on Facebook can increase the financial income of an individual	67%	33%
Fake news on Facebook can affect the financial income of an individual	75%	25%
Fake news can be used on Facebook to manipulate stealing money from either organization or individuals	78%	22%
Mitigating the fabrication of fake news on Facebook can assist in saving the financial institution or individual from financial crimes	51%	49%

Table 5: Religious Violence as a Factor

Please indicate the extent to which religious Violence influence fake news	Agree	Disagree
Religion can be used as a means for the fabrication of fake news on Facebook	86%	14%
Fake news on Facebook can create religious conflict among people	86%	14%
Fake news on Facebook can affect some one's religious beliefs	84%	16%
Fake news can be fabricated on Facebook against different religious groups or societies/sects.	93%	7%
Mitigating the fabrication of fake news can assist individuals or society at large against religious Violence.	83%	17%

Table 6: Ethnic/Tribal Conflict as a Factor

Please indicate the extent to which ethnic/tribal conflict influence fake news	Agree	Disagree
Ethnic conflict can influence the fabrication of fake news on Facebook	95%	5%
Fake news on Facebook can initiate ethnic conflict of different tribes or societies.	90%	10%
Fake news on Facebook can increase ethnic conflict between some tribal individuals or society.	89%	11%
Fake news on Facebook can be used against some ethnic groups of different tribes	89%	11%
Mitigating the fabrication of fake news on Facebook can assist individuals or society against ethnic conflict.	82%	18%

Table 7: Entertainments as a factor

Please indicate the extent to which entertainment influence fake news	Agree	Disagree
Entertainment can influence the fabrication of fake news on Facebook	81%	19%
Fake news on Facebook can sometimes be funny or entertaining	89%	11%
Fake news on Facebook can increase fun, prank, and jokes	80%	20%
Fake news can be fabricated on Facebook against some innocent individuals or society to laugh at them or create fun.	81%	19%
It is mitigating the fabrication of fake news assisting some individuals or the society at large against unnecessary jokes that can harm them.	90%	10%

4.2   Analysis on the Knowledge of Fake News on Facebook

The most important part of this study is collecting respondents' perceptions based on their previous experience of fabrication of fake news on Facebook social media. As such, respondents were asked to present the little they knew about the term fake news using four scales of measurement that strongly agreed; agree; disagree, and strongly disagree. The four scales of measurement here are classified into two; strongly agree/agree on shows the positive impact and the level at which people support the term, while disagreeing and strongly disagree shows the negative impact and the level at which people repel from the statement. Table 2 illustrates the possible level at which fake news can be passed through Facebook, where the majority of the respondents believe with that fact having (96%), and those that disagree only has (4%). This shows that almost all the respondents

agreed that fake news could be passed through Facebook. Also, (90%) of respondents believed that fake news could be used as a weapon on Facebook, where only (10%) disagree, which might be a negligible number. (67%) of the respondents indicates that government is responsible for identifying fake news on Facebook social media platform where (33%) of the respondent disagrees, to the government is not responsible for determining fake news on Facebook. It might be possible they were thinking of other sources of identifying fake news on Facebook. Also, 73% of respondents believe that the general public was responsible for identifying fake news on a social media platform, and (27%) disagree. From the result of the findings here, respondents think the general public is more responsible for identifying fake news on Facebook than the government. Social media platform owners might be responsible for identifying fake news on Facebook, having (74%), and (26%) disagree. On the aspect of a private organization (e.g., NGOs), the agreed response was low (58%) though higher than they disagree (42%), here private organizations were given less response. In a nutshell, after passing fake news through Facebook and using it as a weapon, identifying fake news on Facebook social media is a joint task on all of the government, the general public, social media platforms or host and private organizations also, though social media platforms had the highest responses (74%) on this section.

4.3   Analysis of the Factors Influencing Fake News

This section statistically analyses the most important and most popular factors that influence the fabrication of fake news on Facebook social media. The present analysis of results of the factors influencing weaponization of fake news. The factors are political attitude, financial gain, religious violence, ethnic/tribal conflict, and entertainment.

Table 3 presents the statistical analyses of political Attitude as a factor that influences the fabrication of fake news on social media platforms. Both the online responses and one response were presented in table 3. Political attitude responses were up to (94%) which indicates the respondents believe the fact that political Attitude might be a very strong factor that influences the fabrication of fake news on Facebook. Having only (6%) respondents that disagree, which might be considered as a negligible response. (82%) of the responses indicate that fake news on social media can have a positive influence on the political career of an individual having just (18%) disagree

responses. Therefore, the positive reaction is faraway higher than the negative reaction. Fake news on Facebook can influence some one's political career negatively had received (87%) response with only (13%) disagree response; the result here indicate fake news can have both positive and negative influence on some one's political career having (82%) and (87%) respectively. An (84%) response goes to the fact that fake news can be fabricated on Facebook against the government to achieve some individual objectives having just (16%) disagree responses, which signify the respondent's level of believing in that. Mitigating the fabrication of fake news on Facebook can help put the political system into order having (81%) and disagree responses had just (19%). In a nutshell, political Attitude can be mentioned as one of the greatest and the most powerful factors that influence the fabrication of fake news through the Facebook social media platform having the highest percentage of (94%).

Table 4 presents the statistical analyses of financial Gain as a factor that influences the fabrication of fake news on social media platforms. The Table shows the response of (87%) shows that financial Gain can affect the fabrication of fake news on Facebook, has just (14%) disagree responses. (67%) responses indicate that fake news on Facebook can increase an individual's financial income while a good percentage up to (33%) disagree with the assertion. (75%) responses indicate fake news on Facebook can affect an individual's financial income having (25%) disagree responses. (78%) respondents agreed that fake news could be used on Facebook to manipulate stealing money from either organization or individuals having (22%) disagree responses. Mitigating the fabrication of fake news on Facebook can assist in saving the financial institution or individuals from financial crimes got just (51%) very close to the disagree responses of (49%); the difference here clearly shows that a good number of respondents didn't agree, they might be thinking of other sources of mitigating fabrication of fake news on Facebook to affect financial institutions of individuals.

Table 5 presents the statistical analyses of religious Violence as a factor that influences the fabrication of fake news on social media platforms. Religion can be used as means of fabrication of fake news on Facebook, having agreed on response up to (86%) with just (14%) disagree responses. (86%) respondents agreed that fake news on Facebook could create religious conflict among people with (14%) disagree responses. Fake news on Facebook can affect some religious beliefs, having (84%)

agree on responses, and just (16%) disagree responses. (93%) respondents agree that Fake news can be fabricated on Facebook against different religious groups or societies/sects, having just (7%) disagree, respondents, which might be considered negligible. It is part of the biggest problem we currently have in Nigeria. (83%) respondents agreed that mitigating the fabrication of fake news could assist individuals or society against religious Violence with (17%) disagree responses. In a nutshell, religious conflict is a decisive factor that influence the fabrication of Fake news on a Facebook social media platform. A high response of (93%) on fake news can be fabricated on Facebook against different religious groups or societies/sects.

Table 6 presents the statistical analyses of ethnic/tribal conflict as a factor that influences the fabrication of fake news on social media platforms. The Table indicates that the majority of the respondent (95%) agreed that Ethnic Conflict could affect the fabrication of fake news on Facebook, having a negligible percentage of (5%) that disagree and also the majority of the respondents (90%) agreed that Fake news on Facebook could initiate ethnic conflict of different tribes or society with just (10%) disagree responses. (89%) responses agreed that Fake news on Facebook could increase ethnic conflict between some tribal individuals or society with just (11%) disagree response. Also (89%) respondents agreed that fake news on Facebook could be used against some ethnic groups of different tribes and (11%) disagree response. On the issue of mitigating the fabrication of fake news on Facebook can assist individuals or the society against ethnic conflict (82%) respondents agreed while (18%) respondents disagree. In this section, all the agree response or positive response was higher than any other area due to the level of severity of the ethnic/tribal conflict as it's a severe and current issue in the country or the whole world at large.

Table 7 analyses entertainment as a factor that influences the fabrication of fake news on social media platforms. The Table presents the statistical analysis of entertainment as a factor that influences the fabrication of fake news on Facebook social media platform with (81%) agreed responses on entertainment can influence the fabrication of fake news on Facebook and (19%) disagree respondents. (89%) The respondents agreed that fake news on Facebook could sometimes be funny or entertaining while (11%) disagree with that. Fake news on Facebook can increase fun, prank and jokes got (80%) agree responses while disagree responses got (20%); also (81%) of the respondents agreed on fake news can be

fabricated on Facebook against some innocent individuals or society just to laugh at them or create fun. In comparison (19%) respondents disagree. Mitigating the fabrication of fake news on Facebook can assist some individuals or the society at large against unnecessary jokes that can harm them got (90%) agree with responses. In comparison, only (10%) disagree, which clearly shows that it could help.

The descriptive analysis of the respondent's profiles; the statistical analysis of peoples basic understanding of Facebook about fake news; and statistical analysis of the factors influencing the fabrication of fake news on Facebook social media platform was carried out successfully, and the respondents have done justice to the questions and the questionnaire as a whole. The descriptive analysis of the respondent's profile shows that the respondents were fully matured people as 18yrs to 29yrs (51%) and 30yrs to 39yrs (42%) and also very educated as BSC/HND (48%), (25%), and PG/Masters (24%); as such the questionnaire was well answered. On the statistical analysis of people's basic understanding of Facebook about fake news, thinking that fake news can be passed through Facebook got the highest response of (96%). That fake news can be used on Facebook as a weapon got (90%) response, which might ascertain that fake news can be used on Facebook. The statistical analysis of the factors influencing the fabrication of fake news on the social media platform, specifically Facebook, indicates that the proposed five (5) factors influencing the fabrication of fake news on social media platform were all valid; among which are political Attitude with (94%) agree responses; financial Gain with (87%) agree responses, religious Violence with (86%) agree responses; ethnic/tribal conflict with (95%) and entertainments with (81%) agree on responses. All the responses here were above (80%), which can signify majority; the ones with a higher percentage were political Attitude and ethnic/tribal Conflict (94% & 95%), respectively, which indicate the level of severity of the two factors. In a nutshell, the answers to the research questions can now be deduced from the research survey findings.

5.   Conclusion

Currently, Facebook social media platform is among the most popular social media platforms with an outstanding feature to accommodate any type of news. There appears to be a lack of theory that sufficiently explains the realization of basic factors that influence the weaponization of fake news on the Facebook social media platform. Identifying factors that influence fake

news's weaponization on Facebook social media platforms is the significant contribution of this research. For instance, fake news can be weaponized on Facebook, and you may not understand the factor that influences the weaponization of that fake news. The findings of this project person can categorically understand the specific factors that influence such weaponization. Another essential contribution of this research is the realization of how to spot fake news, and also, the recommendations provided are as well as contributions to consider.

Theoretical Contribution: -the main goal of this research was to identify factors influencing people to involve in the weaponization of fake news through the Facebook social media platform. This research achieved that by developing proposed test models for factors affecting fake news weaponization on social media platforms. The factors influencing people to weaponize fake news on Facebook social media platforms were validated by obtaining data fit for the proposed model. While the proposed model establishes each factor's features and constructs, the structural model establishes the strength of the relationship between these factors and the dependent constructs. Identifying and validating these factors contributed to addressing the research when studying the weaponization of fake news on Facebook social media. The validated factors can be used for future studies or refinement by other researchers who wish to validate these factors further. Overall, the factors were used to create a reliable instrument for assessing the degree of weaponized fake news on the Facebook social media platform.

Empirical Contribution: This research provides empirical (or rather statistical) evidence regarding the relationship between the factors influencing people to involve in the weaponization of fake news on Facebook social media. These factors and their dependent constructs were initially identified from the prior studies and further explored using a quantitative approach (questionnaire research approach) was an excellent means of gathering data from users of different backgrounds, different locality, different religious beliefs, and various ethnic/tribal origin. Also, convenient sampling was used in selecting the respondents for the questionnaire filling.

Research Implications: This research identified the fundamental factors that influence people to involve in the weaponization of fake news on Facebook social media platform models from a comprehensive quantitative analysis of empirical studies that examine fake news on Facebook from different perspectives.

6.   Recommendations

Having undergone a thorough research study and survey of weaponization of fake news on Facebook social media platform; the following recommendations are provided:

- ➢ The general public should take fake news seriously and start learning and teaching themselves about fake news on Facebook.

- ➢ Social media platforms should create a robust algorithm that can detect fake news and counter it immediately.

- ➢ The social media platform should also make unlimited easy access and visible access to flagging any fake news by individuals and taking serious action on the account holder.

- ➢ As recommended by the former INEC chairman, the government should review some of the regulations to make stiffer rules for implementation to curb fake news.

- ➢ The government should create serious punishment and make the punishment known to the general public for whoever tries to weaponized fake news on Facebook social media.

- ➢ The government should also create a curriculum on fake news or insert it into another for individuals to understand the term weaponization of fake news on the Facebook social media platform.

- ➢ Security agencies should create a department that will solely dedicate their work to figuring out weaponized fake news on Facebook social media and always have men on the ground that can act fast.

- ➢ Media houses should have a verifiable system ready and make sure they verify any news that comes to them before publishing

- ➢ Media houses should also assign some of their members to monitor Facebook pages to avoid using their published news in other ways.

Social media platforms should use high, current, robust, and secured technologies, government agencies, security agencies, and media houses to avoid hacking into their system and insert fake news.

Competing Interests

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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