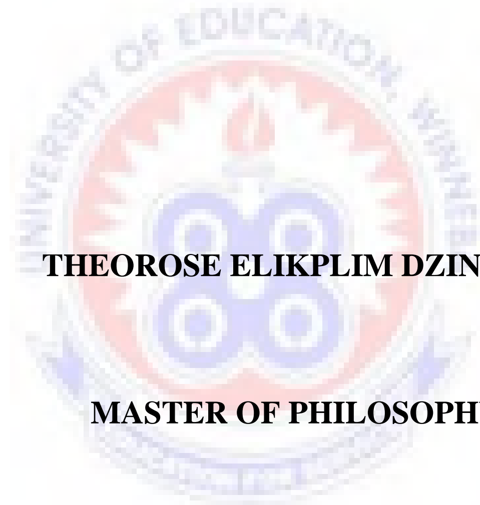
University of Education, Winneba http://ir.uew.edu.gh

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

FAKE NEWS AND MEDIA LITERACY EDUCATION IN TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS: A CASE STUDY OF GHANA INSTITUTE OF JOURNALISM



THEOROSE ELIKPLIM DZINEKU

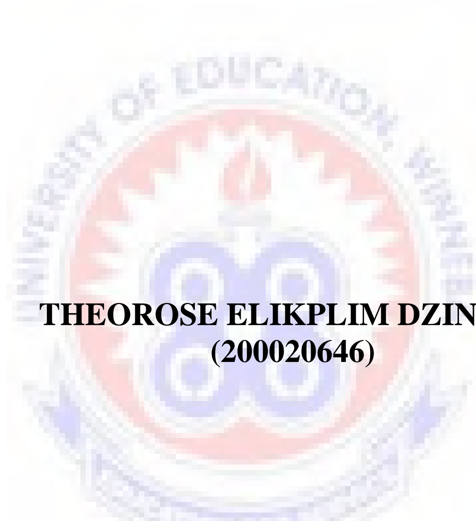
MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY

2021

University of Education, Winneba http://ir.uew.edu.gh

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

FAKE NEWS AND MEDIA LITERACY EDUCATION IN TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS: A CASE STUDY OF GHANA INSTITUTE OF JOURNALISM



THEOROSE ELIKPLIM DZINEKU
(200020646)

A thesis in the Department of Communication and Media Studies, Faculty of Foreign Languages Education and Communication, submitted to the School of Graduate Studies in partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the award of the degree of
Master of Philosophy
(Media Studies)
in the University of Education, Winneba

MARCH, 2021

University of Education, Winneba http://ir.uew.edu.gh

DECLARATION

STUDENT'S DECLARATION

I, Theorose Elikplim Dzineku, declare that this thesis, with the exception of quotations and references contained in published works which have all been identified and duly acknowledged, is entirely my original work, and it has not been submitted, either in part or whole, for another degree elsewhere.

SIGNATURE: …………………………...

DATE: ……………………………………

SUPERVISOR'S DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of this work was supervised in accordance with the guidelines for supervision of thesis as laid down by the University of Education, Winneba.

NAME OF SUPERVISOR: GIFTY APPIAH-ADJEI (PHD).

SIGNATURE: …………………………...

DATE: ……………………………………

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my late father, Mr. Francis Kwame Dzineku. Wherever you are daddy, this is for you. I made it for you because these are the sort of accomplishments you wished for me. It was evident in your burning desire to see me climb to the topmost. Your dedication and contribution to my upbringing and academics have made me who I am today. Indeed, some memories will never end. You will forever remain in that special place in my heart. I love you, daddy.

University of Education, Winneba http://ir.uew.edu.gh

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My sincerest appreciation goes to my supervisor Gifty Appiah-Adjei (PhD) for her immense support during my study at the University of Education, Winneba. I do not see myself get this far on the academic ladder without her counsel and utmost commitment to my academic welfare. Indeed, people like her are very rare and once you come in touch with anyone of her caliber, you know your blessings and breakthrough begin from there. A very liberal lady who knows no boundaries in showing her love and mammoth support to her students. Her depth of knowledge, especially in research is unparalleled. I am forever grateful.

Again, my heartfelt appreciation goes to the faculty members at the Department of Communication and Media Studies for their contribution to my knowledge. Studying at this department was an eye-opener and certainly, the world awaits me to share the very knowledge I acquired. Special thanks to the Head of Department, Mr. Kwesi Aggrey, and the Graduate Coordinator Dr. Mavis Amo-Mensah for the time they have spent taking us through taught courses on the MPhil programme.

My appreciation again goes to Mr. Kodwo Jonas Anson Boateng for his academic mentorship, Dr. Modestus Fosu for his support and keen interest in my academic growth, and Dr. Etse Sikanku for all the opportunities he has given me to serve and learn under his tutelage.

My warmest appreciation goes to my mother, Mrs. Lydia Adzo Dzineku, my big brothers William Dzineku and Lawrence Senanu Dzineku, my sister-in-law, Peace Dzineku, my very best beloved Baffour Owusu-Ansah, for the continuous emotional and physical support along life's roughest roads. I am forever indebted.

University of Education, Winneba http://ir.uew.edu.gh

Finally, but not the least, I want to show my maximum appreciation to my classmates on the MPhil course. I have had the rare opportunity of studying with great minds, many of whom are top industry players and as such, brought deep experiences to bare throughout this journey. My knowledge and experience would not have grown this much if I had not come across these folks. The waking up at dawn, the early morning ride on the Accra-Winneba road, the 'Kenkey and Waakye' as well as the jokes and motivations brought us this far. I do not see myself come this far if I was on this journey alone. I am proud of you folks. The world awaits your impact.

University of Education, Winneba http://ir.uew.edu.gh

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Content **Page**

DECLARATION III

DEDICATION IV

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS V

TABLE OF CONTENTS VII

LIST OF TABLES XI

LIST OF FIGURES XII

ABSTRACT XIII

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION **1**

1.1 Background of the Study 1

1.1.2 Fake news and the new shape of truth 6

1.1.3. Media literacy in a fake news era 11

1.2. History of Ghana Institute of Journalism 13

1.3. Statement of the Problem 15

1.4 Research Objectives 17

1.5 Research Questions 17

1.6 Significance of the Study 18

1.7. Scope of the Study 18

1.8 Operational Definition 19

1.9 Delimitations of the Study 19

1.10 Organization of the Study 20

1.11 Chapter Summary 20

University of Education, Winneba http://ir.uew.edu.gh

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW **21**

2.0 Introduction 21

2.1. Overview of Fake News 21

2.1.1 Misinformation and Disinformation within a media context 25

2.2. Media, Information and News Literacy 28

2.3. Fake News and Media Literacy 34

2.4. Theoretical Framework 38

2.4.1. Cognitive Media Literacy Theory (Potters 2004) 38

2.4.2. New media literacy framework 41

2.5. Student Engagement Theory 47

2.6 Chapter Summary 51

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY **52**

3.0 Introduction 52

3.1. Research Approach 52

3.2 Research Design 55

3.3. Sampling 57

3.4. Sample Size 58

3.5 Data Collection 59

3.5.1. Interview 59

3.5.2. Document Analysis 60

3.5.3. Focus Group Discussion 62

3.6. Data Collection Procedure 63

3.6.1 Interviews 63

3.6.2 Focus Group Discussion 64

3.8. Data Analysis 65

University of Education, Winneba http://ir.uew.edu.gh

3.8. Trustworthiness 68

3.9. Ethical Consideration 70

3.10. Chapter Summary 71

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS 72

3.0 Introduction 72

4.1. RQ1. How does the journalism curriculum equip students with media literacy skills? 74

4.4.1. Media literacy taught as a direct topic under courses 75

4.1.2. Media literacy partially taught as a topic under courses 79

4.2 RQ2. How does students' knowledge of media literacy aid in their detection of fake news? 81

4.2.1. knowledge on fake news and media literacy prior to teaching curricula exposure. 82

4.2.2. Knowledge acquired because of the exposure to the teaching curriculum 83

4.2.3. Application of knowledge gain to deciphering information 87

4.3 RQ3. What are students' perspectives on fake news identification and media literacy training so far as their curriculum is concerned? 89

4.3.1. Students agree to curricula relevance to future careers. 89

4.3.2. Students opt for more practical than theory on the topic 92

4.4. Chapter Summary 96

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS 97

5.0 Introduction 97

5.1 Summary 97

University of Education, Winneba http://ir.uew.edu.gh

5.2. Key Findings 100

5.3 Study Limitations 101

5.4 Recommendation from Findings 102

5.5. Recommendations for Future Studies 103

REFERENCES 104

APPENDICES 116

APPENDIX A: FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTION GUIDE 116

APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR LECTURERS 117

University of Education, Winneba http://ir.uew.edu.gh

LIST OF TABLES

Table **Page**

1: Demographic of Participants (Lecturers) 733

2: Demographic of FGD Participants 74

University of Education, Winneba http://ir.uew.edu.gh

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure **Page**

1: Media Literacy Diagram 41

2: Framework for new media literacy (cited from Chen et al. (2011)). 44

3: A Refined Framework of New Media Literacy 46

University of Education, Winneba http://ir.uew.edu.gh

ABSTRACT

Media literacy and fake news has become an important topic in today's media and society. Scholars have studied the domain and have attributed the increase in the spread of fake news to the audience inability to distinguish false information from true one, especially in a technological era where citizen journalism is thriving. Several studies have established that a major way to curbing the problem of fake news is equipping the audience with media literacy skills. In Ghana, there is little empirical studies on fake news and media literacy. This study, therefore, seeks to investigate how communication education is integrating the teaching of fake news and media literacy in their curricula, using the Ghana Institute of journalism as its case study. The study is underpinned by the student engagement theory, media literacy theory, and the new media framework. Employing a qualitative approach and case study design, data were collected through interviews, focus group discussion, and document analysis. Thematically analyzed data shows that most lecturers at the institute teach an aspect of media literacy and fake news in class even though it is not on their course outline. Analyzed data also reveals that some students had some level of understanding of media literacy and fake news. The study recommended that media literacy and fake news study should become a required course that all universities offer in Ghana.

University of Education, Winneba http://ir.uew.edu.gh

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Fake news is defined as "fabricated information that mimics news media content in form but not in organizational process or intent" (Lazer, Baum, Benkler, Berinsky, Greenhill, Metzger, & Zittrain, 2019, p. 1094-1096; Egelhofer & Lecheler, 2019; Tandoc, Lim, & Ling, 2018 p.120). Fake news often has a harmful effect in situations where information consumers are not able to detect the falsity. Mention can be made of *GTV*'s false reportage of the death of Thabo Mbeki on their prime time news programme in August 2016 (Owusuaa, 2016) and the distortion of 2016 US presidential election discussions by social bots and operators of troll farms (Gelfert, 2018; McGonagle, 2017). Hence, concerns about the harmful effects of fake news on democratic societies have led to studies on ways to combat fake news. While some studies have criticized producers and distributing platforms like social media sites, (Mele et al, 2017), others have addressed the urgent need for media literacy education, which can help audiences to develop the ability to detect fake news (Mihailidis & Viotty, 2017).

Though fake news has been in existence for many centuries (Posseti & Mathews, 2018), it has gained prominence and has spread since the 2016 US presidential election (Gelfert, 2018; McGonagle, 2017; Gottfried & Shearer, 2016). Many believe that fake news has now become a powerful and sinister force in the online news media environment, with dire consequences for democracy (Glaser, 2017; Zengerle, 2016). As a result, news organizations and technology companies have taken steps to stifle fake news production and dissemination (Owen, 2016). These efforts, and the discourse surrounding them, assume that fake news reaches a broad susceptible audience who do

University of Education, Winneba http://ir.uew.edu.gh

not compare such stories against those from other sources (Fletcher and Nielsen, 2018). Nelson and Taneja (2018) posit that visits to fake news sites originated from social network sites (SNSs) at a much higher rate than visits to real news sites and this confirms the primary role of social media in spreading fake news.

There are many debates from scholars and journalists on whether the term ‘sensational’ rather than ‘fake’ should be used to describe fake news. For instance, Wardle, Greason, Kerwin, and Dias (2018) suggest that the terms misinformation, disinformation, and information disorder should be used instead. Also, Basson (2016) avers that “If it’s fake, it’s not news” (p.14). As recently as 2012, scholars used fake news as a term that referred to *The Daily Show* and *The Colbert Report* - late-night television shows that blurred the line between news and comedy (Borden & Tew, 2007; Day & Thompson, 2012). Now, the term commonly refers to false or misleading information made to look like a fact-based news story in order to “influence public opinion or cull digital advertising dollars” (Uberti, 2017, p.4). The sudden shift in the term’s meaning stems from a confluence of events leading up to the election of Donald Trump as US president. These events include the increasingly central role of SNSs for news consumption (Gottfried & Shearer, 2016), the Russian propaganda effort to produce and spread fake news stories during the 2016 presidential campaign (Timberg, 2016), and the habit of some political elites to legitimize fake news stories by passing them along to their followers using social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter (Flood, 2016).

Taken together, these circumstances have contributed to a media environment where sensational headlines are easier to find than to verify. As a result, two-in-three US adults now believe fake news causes confusion about current events and issues, as well as basic facts (Barthel, Mitchell & Holcomb, 2016). Yet, empirical investigations into fake

news consumption suggest that the fake news audience is actually small compared with the real news audience (Allcott & Gentzkow, 2017; Guess, Nyhan & Reifler, 2018; Nelson, 2017). In their analysis of online audience data on fake news consumption in America from late October through late November of 2016, Allcott and Gentzkow (2017) conclude that "even the most widely circulated fake news stories [is] seen by only a small fraction of Americans" (p. 21). In Ghana, research on this aspect is non-existent, hence, it is difficult to make such estimations. Even in a media environment where news consumption has grown increasingly incidental and mediated by social media platforms, those with more availability to social media platforms will likely be exposed to news from a wider variety of sources, while those with less availability to social media platform will likely continue to consume news from the most popular sources (Fletcher & Nielsen, 2018). With the widespread of not only digital journalism but also non-professional and unreliable information publishers, the boundaries between professional and non-professional news content have become increasingly difficult to distinguish (Tandoc & Vos, 2015). Nowadays many different social actors, both within and beyond traditional news media, use digital technologies for the production and distribution of news. Emerging technological affordances have enabled audiences to do more with the media, and consequently, the relationships between actors and audiences have changed (Lewis & Westlund, 2015). By providing every user with a potential mass audience, social media platforms have broken traditional journalism's monopoly over news production and distribution (Hermida, 2011; Tandoc & Vos, 2015). Therefore, there is a scholarly need for assessment of existent literature as well as the development of plausible conceptual frameworks to account for audiences' acts of authentication that can be applied to future empirical research.

Seven conditions in which news can be fake have been inferred by Wardle (2017). Thus, fake news can be a satire and created for entertainment or it can be intentionally misleading by selectively disclosing facts or information. Similarly, fake news can go beyond selectively disclosing information to intentionally making false connections such as stringing together a pattern of events to suggest a conspiracy. Besides, fake news can also imply a context to a story, photo, or video that is untrue to advance a false narrative or to manipulate photos, quotes, or facts altogether to paint a false picture. Further down Wardle's (2017) spectrum, fake news can have no origin and be completely fabricated and entirely false. Finally, beyond the reporting, fake news can also deceive on the medium (e.g., website) level by acting as an imposter and fooling audiences into thinking their platform is a well-known source of authentic information.

Similarly, in a review of current academic literature on fake news, Tandoc, Lim, and Ling (2018) developed a typology to discern between different types of fake news. They found that fake news refers to news satire, news parody, fabrication, manipulation, propaganda, and advertising. To further complicate this classification, others have recently pointed out that President Trump and citizens alike have used the term to attempt to delegitimize and erode the credibility of established journalistic organizations (Albright, 2016).

Recently, the European Commission (EC) published a report on effective media literacy education practices to address disinformation (McDougall, Zezulková, van Driel, & Sternadel, 2018). Since the report was published, the issue of fake news has been high on the agenda for media and digital literacy academics, teachers, journalists, and researchers. The need for education to offer a preventative antidote to the dangers of fake news has been in the public discourse (Driel, & Sternadel, 2018). What is new,

University of Education, Winneba http://ir.uew.edu.gh

however, is the scale and speed of 'fake news' now in the context of the destabilization of the mainstream media. The degree of the state of information disorder, according to Wardle and Derekhshan (2017), is a current phenomenon. Also new are the powerful intersections, in this era of austerity-caused polarity, between disinformation and oppressive practices, racism, misogyny, the exploitation of the vulnerable, the discursive power of partisanship (Bridle, 2018).

The convergence of oppressive intent and information disorder leads individuals to a state of confusion (McDougal et al. 2019). Aligning with this, Bridle (2018) posits that what is common to the Brexit campaign, the US election, and the disturbing depth of YouTube is the impossibility to tell who is doing what, or what their motives and intentions are. Thus, "it's futile to attempt to discern between what's algorithmically generated nonsense or carefully crafted fake news for generating ad dollars; what's paranoid fiction, state action, propaganda, or Spam; what's deliberate misinformation or well-meaning fact checks. (Bridle, 2018 p.51)

The European Commission (2018) states that "print press organizations and broadcasters are in the process of intensifying their efforts to enforce certain trust enhancing practices… ensuring the highest levels of compliance with ethical and professional standards to sustain a pluralistic and trustworthy news media ecosystem" (p.41). However, Alan Rusbridger, the ex-Guardian editor in the UK, observes that "journalism is facing an existential economic threat in the form of a tumultuous recalibration of our place in the world. And on both sides of an increasingly scratchy debate about media, politics, and democracy, there is a hesitancy about whether there is any longer a common idea of what journalism is and why it matters" (Rusbridger, 2018 p.4).

1.1.2 Fake news and the new shape of truth

According to Gray (2017), the "major new challenge in reporting news is the new shape of truth" (p. 2). Kevin Kelly of Wired magazine (in March 2017), accurately summarizes the challenge facing both journalists and news consumers in the social media era when he asserts that the truth is becoming more difficult to determine because "for every fact, there is a counter fact" (Kelly as cited in Gray, 2017, p.2). In some cases, the counter facts are persuasive enough to effectively undermine the truth. For instance, in the final months of 2016, a false rumor about an alleged child sex ring operating in a pizza restaurant in Washington, D.C. appeared on Twitter. The rumor falsely implicated Hillary Clinton in the sex ring and the initial tweet was quickly retweeted thousands of times. It then spread to other social media platforms, reaching hundreds of thousands of people around the world in just weeks (Fisher, Cox, Hermann, 2016). This became known later on as Hilary Clinton's pizzagate issue. Few weeks after Hilary Clinton's Pizzagate' gun threat, a fake news story prompted a threat of nuclear reaction by Pakistan's defense minister. On Twitter, Khawaja Muhammad Asif, the Defense Minister, wrote "Israel forgets Pakistan is a Nuclear state too" in what appeared to be a reaction to a false story on a website that alleged Israel had threatened Pakistan with nuclear weapons (as cited by Goldman, 2016). With the above examples, the counterfact that Hilary was linked to the sex ring; that Israel was threatening Pakistan with nuclear weapons undermined the truth that Hilary Clinton has no links with the sex ring and that Israel had not threaten Pakistan with nuclear weapons. In China also, newspapers used the term fake news for the first time in March 2017 as the state media reacted to allegations of government torture by a prominent rights activist named Gao Zhisheng (Shepherd, 2017). One researcher linked the Chinese use of the

term to Donald Trump’s ongoing attacks on Western media organizations (Shepherd, 2017).

Fake news, rumors, and gossip are not new issues for society, but the falsehoods have taken on a new significance with the advent of social media and, it seems, a new resonance with the public. Nearly two-thirds of American adults surveyed in 2016 said fake news stories "cause a great deal of confusion" about the facts of news stories and current events (Barthel, Mitchell, Holcomb, 2016. p. 30). The similar survey by the Pew Research Center found almost one-quarter of adults admitted to sharing a fake political story online. Some, about 16%, did it inadvertently without knowing it was not true but roughly the same number of adults, 14%, shared online what they knew was a fake political story (Barthel et al., 2016). Their reasons included intentionally wanting to spread fake news, to bring attention to the fake stories, or simply for amusement (Barthel et al., 2016).

Many people believe in rumors and innuendo due to what is known as belief perseverance. This theory purports that many people hold on to new beliefs "even if they are informed that the initial information on which those beliefs were based was incorrect" (Green & Donahue, 2011, p.14). Belief perseverance strengthens if the individuals have "integrated those beliefs into their knowledge" (Green & Donahue, 2011, p.14). Green and Donahue’s research suggests that, especially in the "post-truth" era, once a false story is online or published it may be too late to retract it, correct it, or negate its impact. Additionally, there is an inherent trust that exists among many that, by and large, people are honest and will tell the truth. This ‘truth bias’ factors into the power and influence of fake news stories. Individuals may tend to believe the story, or facets of the story, because of the implied social contract’ that dictates honesty among

University of Education, Winneba http://ir.uew.edu.gh

individuals (McCornack & Parks, 1986). Not only are journalists and the public called upon to decipher fact from fiction with news stories, they also contend with fake news disguised as advertising, public relations, and medical breakthroughs. This process of disguising fake news is called “astroturfing”.

The term “astroturfing” was used by Senator Lloyd Bentsen to describe “the artificial grassroots campaigns created by public relations (PR) firms” (as cited by Stauber 2002, p2). Astroturfing occurs when groups of people are hired to present certain beliefs or opinions, which they do not really possess, through various communication channels. Astroturfing creates falsified impressions among decision makers or the general public and achieves the goal of persuasion (Zhang, Ko & Carpenter 2016). Traditionally, the scope and influence of astroturfing are limited by the strength of financial support behind the effort since hiring public relation firms to generate and disseminate these false messages can be costly (Hoggan 2009). Therefore, Lyon and Maxwell (2004) describe astroturfing as “a form of costly state falsification” (p.3). "Astroturf’s biggest accomplishment is when it crosses over into semi-trusted news organizations that unquestioningly cite or copy it" (Attkisson, 2014, p.42). In reaching the general public, those who planted the astroturf initially reaped the benefits.

In 2017, fake news evolved into more than just a label for misleading, inaccurate news stories. It became an adjective to modify "journalism" in general, and many mainstream media organizations, attributed that to US President Donald Trump and his tweets. Trump repeatedly called out the *New York Times, NBC News, CNN*, and others as the ‘fake news’ media (Trump, 2017a). His almost-daily Twitter tirades also raised questions for his 26 million followers about the fairness and accuracy of the media when he branded the *New York Times* and other mainstream media as ‘the enemy of the

people' (Trump, 2017a). The Trump campaign team followed this with its Mainstream Media Accountability Survey that was sent out to supporters. Journalism has always been scrutinized for accuracy issues. At times, the accuracy is compromised by the competitive nature of journalism. Competition is a factor in driving journalists to break a story before anyone else can. This thirst to be first can come at the expense of details of the story, even some facts of the story. Some journalism organizations have strict policies on ensuring the story is complete and completely accurate before publishing or airing but others do not or have policies less stringent (Reinardy, 2010). In Canada, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) has a long-standing motto as quoted by Reindy (2010):

> *It's more important to be right, than to be first. The organization reinforces that motto with a policy that demands each story, and each element of the story, to be "double-sourced" before it is reported. This is how the process is explained in the CBC's Journalistic Standards and Practices document: Our commitment to accuracy and integrity means we try where possible to verify the information with a second source. And there may be times when more than two sources are required. Our stories are based on information we have verified. Wherever possible, our stories use firsthand, identifiable sources– participants in an event or authenticated documents. (Reinardy, 2010, p.12).*

The constant news cycle on Twitter, Facebook and other platforms has largely eliminated the hard and fast deadline associated with the old rule of the journalism practice. Journalists are now pressured to deliver the news throughout each day as opposed to the traditional end-of-the-day deadline. This constant news flow creates a constant pressure on journalists not only to deliver a story but to deliver it, in pieces, as the story develops (Fisher, 2014). Despite the growing concerns about trust and accuracy more individuals are turning to social media to find and consume their news (Fisher, 2014). The primary source for millions of people has, in recent years, become Facebook. A study by the Pew Research Centre in January of 2016 found that 62% of

American adults receive their news on social media, up substantially from 49% in 2012 (Pew Research, 2016). The most commonly used platform for finding news is Facebook. The study found 66% of Facebook users said they relied on the site for their news (Pew Research, 2016). In addition, nearly two-thirds (64%) of adults surveyed used only one social media platform for news and it is most commonly Facebook (Pew Research, 2016). The convenience of Facebook is certainly a factor in its growth as a news source. The growing dependence by so many on Facebook as a sole source of news is a factor in creating a narrowed perspective on news and world events.

The Facebook echo chamber provides only a limited perspective because it is built on the user's likes, dislikes, and beliefs as well as those of the user's Facebook friends. An echo chamber is an environment where a person only encounters information or opinions that reflect and reinforce their own (Amol 2019). Echo chambers can create misinformation and distort a people's perspective, so they have difficulty considering opposing viewpoints and discussing complicated topics. They are fueled in part by confirmation bias, which is the tendency to favor information that reinforces existing beliefs. (Quattrociocchi 2019). The Internet also has a unique type of echo chamber called a filter bubble. Filter bubbles are created by algorithms that keep track of what an individual click on. Websites will then use those algorithms to primarily show individuals contents that's similar to what they've already expressed interest in. This prevents them from finding new ideas and perspectives online (Pariser, 2019).

Facebook users are highly polarized, and their polarization creates largely closed, mostly non-interacting communities centered on different narratives - i.e. echo chambers (Quattrociocchi 2019). The echo chambers are statistically similar in terms of how communities interact with posts. For both scientific information and conspiracy

theories, the more active a user is within an echo chamber, the more that user will interact with others with similar beliefs. The spreading of information tends to be confined to communities of like-minded people. (Sunstein & Scala, 2019). This similarity within Facebook echo chambers could be likened to George Gerbner's Cultivation Theory which stemmed from his 1976 research on the effects of television violence on those who watch it. He argues that what television viewers see on the screen can cultivate their perceptions and beliefs. Gerbner views television as society's storyteller and the stories it emitted is "a coherent picture of what exists" and "what is important" (Gerbner & Gross, 1976, p.45). Gerbner used the term mainstreaming to describe the process of commonality of values and outlooks that people with heavy TV viewing habits can experience (Gerbner, Gross, Morgan, & Signorielli, 1982). He found that constant exposure to the same images and labels leads to a "convergence of attitudes on issues of personal morality" (Gerbner 1982, p. 18).

One could argue that, 40 years later, social media has become the societal storyteller for many people. The growing exposure through Facebook to like-minded images, labels, and news stories can create a commonality of outlook similar to Gerbner's theory surrounding television-induced homogenized values (Gerbner & Gross, 1976). However, in the social media era, it happens more quickly. The structure of Facebook and the ability to quickly and easily share views and news - real or fake - with many others accelerates cultivation and mainstreaming and erects new echo chambers every day which in turn increase the spread of fake news.

1.1.3. Media literacy in a fake news era

Professionals and educators from a wide range of domains have warned that the internet, particularly, social media, may increase the circulation of hearsay and

misleading information (Jang, McKeever, & Kim, 2019; Kwon, Bang, Egnoto, & Raghav, 2016; Vosoughi, Roy, & Aral, 2018). Media literacy is considered as one of the means through which individuals can counter the problem of increased circulation of misleading information. Media literacy refers to the ability to access, analyze, evaluate, and create media. (Kimbrough & Guadagno, 2019). Hence, Flynn, Nyhan, and Reifler (2017) posit that literacy interventions should be practiced to better equip citizens with the cognitive ability to discern facts from fake stories.

In so doing, McGuire's (1964) inoculation theory provides a useful explanation for media literacy interventions.The theory suggests that prior exposure of audiences to any form of content will help them against future attacks. In the context of fake news, media literacy education enables individuals to be 'inoculated' against any harmful influence of fake news by offering knowledge and skills to resist or critically interpret fake news stories (Jeong, Cho, & Hwang, 2012). This view indicates that media literacy intervention can increase audience's knowledge about the media and the effects of the media, as well as the ability to distinguish the real news from fake news (Jang, Mortensen & Liu 2019).

With the upsurge of social media, media literacy has become an increasingly important skill, because media literacy allows media users to generate their own media content and to participate in a network of media production with their peers (Boyd & Ellison, 2007).The body of literature surrounding the field of media literacy has been described as "a large complex patchwork of ideas" (Potter, 2010 p.686) but the most commonly cited definition is by Aufderheide (1993): "The ability of a citizen to access, analyze, and produce information for specific outcomes" (p. 6). Basic assumptions of the field of media literacy include the precepts that media contents are constructed and contents

construct reality of audiences; that media have commercial, ideological, and political motivations and implications that the form in which media contents are created and content are related; that each medium has unique aesthetics and conventions; and, finally, that receivers negotiate the meanings of messages (Aufderheide, 1993). The goals of educating people in these precepts is to create informed, autonomous citizens who question the information they receive, appreciate aesthetics, develop self-esteem and competence, and have a sense of advocacy (Aufderheide, 1993; Tyner,1998). The above assertion by Aufderheide (1993) is important to curb fake news especially in a media dominated enivornment where it is difficult to determine what is true or false and what the motive behind a content produced and shared.

1.2. History of Ghana Institute of Journalism

The Ghana Institute of Journalism (GIJ), formerly The Ghana School of Journalism, was established by the Kwame Nkrumah government to provide training in journalism toward the development of a patriotic cadre of journalists to play an active role in the emancipation of the African continent. The school was officially opened on Monday, 16th October 1959, by the then Minister of Information and Broadcasting, Mr. Kofi Bako. Initially a department of the Accra Technical Institute (now Accra Technical University), the school had as its first principal and journalism tutor in the person of Mr. Richard McMillan, who was then retiring as Director of British Information Services in Ghana. Mr. Richard McMillan served as the first principal of the Ghana Institute of Journalism. In 1959 when GIJ was established, he was then retiring as Director of British Information Services in Ghana. Mr. McMillan, who also taught journalism, served as principal until 1962. Today the GIJ library is named the Richard McMillan Library in honor of the Institute's first principal.

University of Education, Winneba http://ir.uew.edu.gh

In 1966, the school moved from the press center to the present site - which used to house the Ghana Press Club. Over the years, the Institute has undergone significant changes, and owes its current tertiary status to the legislative instruments in 1974 by the National Redemption Council (NRC). The NRC passed a legislative instrument (NRCD 275) formally establishing the Ghana Institute of Journalism. The decree set as objectives of the Institute the following:

a. To train young men and women in the skills and techniques of journalism, mass communication, advertising and public relations.

b. To organize classes, lectures, seminars, demonstrations, experiments, researches and practical training in all aspects of journalism and mass communication.

For several decades these objectives served as the Institute's core functions in training and awarding diplomas and certificates in communication studies. The Parliament of the Fourth Republic and the President enacted the Ghana Institute of Journalism Act, 2006 (Act 717) to transform the Institute into a degree-awarding tertiary institution. Subsequently, the President granted a Charter to enable the Institute awards its own degrees, diplomas and certificates for programmes accredited by the National Accreditation Board. This certificate was assented to by the President in August 2006, with a Gazette notification on 1st September 2006.

The Ghana Institute of Journalism has now become a fully-fledged communication training institution with the status of a university. As public policy demands, the Institute has now been placed under the Ministry of Education, and it is now directly under the National Council for Tertiary Education (NCTE). GIJ has embraced the responsibilities and challenges presented by its new tertiary status and continues to

fulfil its mission to serve the needs of students, the media industry and society. The Institute is administered by a governing council, an executive management board, the academic board, and other departments, units and committees. The vision of the institute is to be the preferred communications training institute in Africa, upholding high academic standards and producing world class professionals for the transformation of society. Their mission is to remain a highly academic professional communications institution serving the needs of students, industry and society.

1.3. Statement of the Problem

The issue of fake news has been high on the agenda for media and digital literacy academics, teachers, journalists, and researchers (McDougall, Zezulková, van Driel, & Sternadel, 2018). This is because fake news has become a prevailing and sinister force in the news media environment, with dire consequences for democracy (Glaser, 2017; Zengerle, 2016). Researchers - such as Zhou and Zafarani (2018); Jamieson and Cappella (2008); Buntain and Golbeck (2017) - have outline fact-checking and source verification to be a major factor in detecting fake news. On the other hand, Livingstone, Van, Couvering, and Thumim (2008) have describe media literacy as an element in fake news detention and have divided media literacy as two components:

a. The media as a lens or window through which to view the world and express oneself

b. Information literacy as a tool with which to act upon the world.

Media literacies have been associated with increased ability to deconstruct and analyze media texts, to create and produce messages, and to engage and participate meaningfully in civic dialog (Aufderheide & Firestone, 1993; Buckingham, 2003; Hobbs, 2010; Mihailidis, 2014; Mihailidis & Thevenin, 2013). Recent studies have

University of Education, Winneba http://ir.uew.edu.gh

found that media literacies can play a critical role in young people's civic engagement (Hobbs, Donnelly, Friesem, & Moen, 2013), with particular emphasis on news (Ashley, Maksl, & Craft, 2013), politics (Kahne & Bowyer, 2016), and social issues (Mihailidis, 2014).

Literature on reporters' verification processes has concentrated on traditional journalism (Silverman, 2014). Given the decline in newspapers and the rise of digital media (Nielsen, 2015), an investigation into how student reporters negotiate credibility of online newsmakers is expedient to grasp how journalism norms may be changing. Content analyses, such as the work of Broersma and Graham (2012, 2013) and Paulussen and Harder (2014), studied the use of explicit social media references in the news, trying to uncover the importance of social media as a source and how news consumers can identify fake news. Other scholars, such as Gulyás (2013) and Hedman and Djerf-Pierre (2013), focused on the perceptions of journalists towards these new social media platforms using surveys and interviews. Most of the research addressing fake news thus far focus on the direct effects of fake news on audience (Allcott & Gentzkow, 2017; Silverman & Singer-Vine, 2016). Others have also focused on the reputation of online journalism within the fake news era (Barthel et al., 2015; Kilgo & Sinta,2016).

Within the Ghanaian context, Ofosu and Ahiabenu (2018), studied perspectives of journalists on fake news and its relations to news production. The study reveals that, majority of newsrooms across the country are not equipped to combat fake news even though journalists in the newsroom have some level of knowledge on fake news. Again, Jamil and Appiah-Adjei (2019), analyze how mobile journalism is altering the news

University of Education, Winneba http://ir.uew.edu.gh

production process and fostering the trend of fake news in Pakistan and Ghana using the media convergence and social responsibility theories.

Studies on fake news detection in Ghana is scanty. There is little empirical literature on media literacy and fake news education in journalism schools in Ghana (Ofosu and Ahiabenu 2018). Thus, studies on fake news literacy in Ghana is scanty, therefore, this study attempts to contribute to the area by investigating fake news and media literacy education in tertiary institutions. Thus, using GIJ as a case study, it seeks to examine how the journalism curriculum is equipping student journalists with media literacy skills to enable them to detect fake news.

1.4 Research Objectives

- To investigate whether journalism curriculum at GIJ equips students with media literacy skills.
- To explore how students' knowledge on media literacy aid in their detection of fake news
- To examine students' perspectives on fake news identification and media literacy training so far as their curriculum is concerned.

1.5 Research Questions

1. How does the journalism curriculum of GIJ equip students with media literacy skills?
2. How do students' knowledge on media literacy aid in their detection of fake news?
3. What are the students' perspectives on fake news identification and media literacy training so far as their curriculum is concerned?

1.6 Significance of the Study

Digital Media literacy in strengthening citizens' resilience to fake news has been the subject of research projects, networking, academic and policy discourses in recent years, given prominence by an escalation of the perceived crisis following election and referendum results in the US and UK respectively. (Allcott & Gentzkow, 2017). The issue of fake news has prompted scholars to have a critical dialogue about the field of media literacy education (McDougall ,Brites, Couto, and Lucas, 2019). Coiro, Knobel, Lankshear, and Leu (2014) have stated that literacy should reflect the rapid and continuous process of change in the way we "read, write, view, listen, compose, and communicate information" (p. 5).

Within the Ghanaian context, there is little empirical literature on fake news and media literacy in general and in tertiary institutions in particular. It is, therefore, justifiable that a study is conducted to advance literature in this area. The study will provide a theoretical perspective for understanding fake news and media literacy in general and how relevant it is to the GIJ journalism curriculum in particular and the university curriculum in general. This study could provide an insight into the importance of integrating fake news and media literacy in teaching curriculum. Again, it will provide a Ghanaian context for the understanding of fake news and media literacy, processes, concepts and theories.

1.7. Scope of the Study

For the purpose of this research, the study centers on the Ghana Institute of Journalism. This institution was selected because it is the first journalism institution established in Ghana. The study also interviewed lecturers that teache courses related to media and

University of Education, Winneba http://ir.uew.edu.gh

information literacy. This is to elicit the right information possible. The study is limited to Accra since the institute does not have branches out Accra.

1.8 Operational Definition

Fake News: refers to false or misleading information made to look like a fact-based news story in order to influence public opinion.

Media: mediums or platforms through which information is disseminated.

Media Literacy: refers to the ability to locate, evaluate, analyze, and draw conclusions from media sources, including the ability to discern bias, truth, accuracy and the ability to critically evaluate media messages for connotations of power and identity.

1.9 Delimitations of the Study

This study focused on examining how media literacy is integrated in the teaching curricula of tertiary institutions to enable students' detection of fake news. The study only examine how lecturers at the Ghana institute of journalism are including fake news and media literacy skills in their teaching curriculum. However, research was limited to the ringway campus of Ghana institute of journalism, which is located in Osu, Accra. The aim was to provide a case analysis of how issues of media literacy and fake news are integrated in the teaching curricula in GIJ.

Again, the researcher intended using ten (10) participants for a focus group discussion. However, as a result of the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, universities were closed and most of the focus group discussion participants had to move to their homes. The researcher could not use the initial number because some of the participants were facing various technological challenges and hence, could not partake in the discussion hence, the researcher used seven (7) participants.

University of Education, Winneba http://ir.uew.edu.gh

1.10 Organization of the Study

The study consists of five chapters. Chapter one (1) deals with the introduction and background of the study, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, research questions, significance of the study, scope and limitation of the study and the organization of the study. It outlines the introduction, fake news and literacy. Chapter two (2), which is literature review, looks at related studies and provides a theoretical framework to guide the research. Chapter three (3) discusses the approach used to address my research question, the explanation data, empirical results and interpretation of data while Chapter four (4) looks at findings and discussions. Chapter five (5) concludes the thesis with the summary, discussion of findings, conclusion and recommendations for future studies.

1.11 Chapter Summary

This chapter has outlined the purpose for undertaking the study in fake news and media literacy in tertiary institutions. It has been able to show the deficiencies in the literature and set objectives that will enable the gap in the literature to be filled. The next chapter reviews various literature that relate to the study and discusses the theoretical framework.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter reviews literature related to the study. This chapter reviews various works related to fake news and media literacy. The study also examines related theories that are significant to the understanding of fake news and media literacy. These are intended to help situate the research in context.

2.1. Overview of Fake News

While the term fake news was originally applied to political satire (Baym, 2005), it now seems to stand for all things 'inaccurate' (Lazer, Baum, Benkler, Berinsky, Greenhill, Metzger, Zittrain, 2017; Tambini, 2017) and it is even applied in contexts that are completely unrelated to mediated communication (Allcott & Gentzkow, 2017). "Furthermore, 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" (Holan, 2016, p.102). As the hype around fake news in terms of information and false news continues, the term has been effectively weaponized by political actors to attack a variety of news media (Vosoughi, Roy, & Aral, 2018). While these definitions are relatively straightforward, fake news is not. The made-up stuff has become a profitable industry around the world because of easy access to social media and the ability to reach millions of people with one click of the mouse. For this study, fake news refers to false or misleading information made to look like a fact-based news story to influence public opinion (Uberti, 2017).

Concerning news audiences, social media have been treated as a boon - one resulting in more access, more personalization, more interactivity, and the possibility to embed news and conversations about it in social networks (Hermida, Fletcher, Korell, & Logan, 2012). This increase in the audience's power comes in part as journalists' gatekeeping and agenda-setting influences wane (Purcell, Rainie, Mitchell, Rosenstiel, & Olmstead, 2010; Russell, 2017; Singer, 2014). When news is created and distributed outside the institutional logic of journalism (Hermida, 2016), tensions arise between journalists' desire for professional control and audiences' abilities to circumvent it (Lewis, 2012). The tensions is exemplified by the question of who a journalist is and what qualifies as journalism in a world where the boundaries seem less fixed and more fluid (Carlson & Lewis, 2015).

This is much alarming to news media organizations that simultaneously fear losing on the massive audiences offered by such platforms. Also, they worry about the long-term trade-offs of allowing technology companies to supersede them as publishers (Bell & Owen, 2017; Nielsen & Ganter, 2017) even though studies have suggested that social media would become a primary enabler of greater transparency (Phillips, 2010; Revers,2014), reciprocity (Borger, van Hoof, & Sanders, 2016; Lewis, Holton, & Coddington, 2014), and openness in journalism (Lewis & Usher, 2013). Condensing a wide range of news-gathering practices into the same noun has been causing problems for definitions of 'real news' and journalism as a profession for a long time now (Carlson, 2017). Along the same lines, overly general conceptualizations of the term 'fake news' can even be outright dangerous, as citizens struggle to distinguish legitimate news from fake news in a digital information environment (Allcott & Gentzkow, 2017; UNESCO, 2018).

University of Education, Winneba http://ir.uew.edu.gh

Research has shown that 'fake' news is often understood as news one does not believe in –thereby blurring the boundaries between facts and beliefs in a confusing digitalized world (Nielsen & Graves, 2017). Unhelpfully, many scholars have been tempted to use the term to describe many different things, such as propagandistic messages from state-owned media (Khaldarova & Pantti, 2016), extreme partisan alternative media (Bakir & McStay, 2018), and fabricated news from short-lived websites (Allcott & Gentzkow, 2017). To make matters worse, political actors have seized the opportunity to use the term as a weapon to undermine any information that contradicts their political agenda (Hanitzsch, Van Dalen, & Steindl, 2018; Nielsen & Graves, 2017; UN OSCE, OAS, & ACHPR, 2017).

Wardle (2017) lists a variety of disinformation types that describe fake news, namely, news that contains false connection, false context, manipulated content, and misleading content. Along the same lines, Bakir and McStay (2018) describe fake news as "either wholly false or containing deliberately misleading elements incorporated within its content or context" (p.54). This means that the absence of full facts does not entirely make a message fake news and that their content can be completely fabricated, but also only be partly untrue and paired with correct information. To date, only one study has come up with a ratio of true to untrue information that describes when a message is fake. This accurate way of labelling this content feature is provided by Tandoc, Lim, and Ling (2018), who state that fake news must be low in facticity, therefore, implying that both fully untrue as well as partly untrue messages can be fake news. Most authors argue that fake news mimics news media content in the form and it is, thus, presented in a journalistic format (Lazer, Baum Benkler, Berinsky, Greenhill, Menczer, Metzger, Nyhan, Pennycook, Rothschild & Schudson,2018). Fake news does not simply mean false news but should be understood as an imitation of news. Thus, fake news consists

University of Education, Winneba http://ir.uew.edu.gh

of similar structural components: a headline, a text body, and (however, not necessarily) a picture (Horne & Adali, 2017). Khaldarova and Pantti (2016) argue that journalistic presentation can also involve video and radio news formats. Importantly, Tandoc et al (2018) note that apart from the visual appearance of a news article, 'through the use of news bots, fake news imitates news' omnipresence by building a network of fake sites' (p.12). Researchers argue that false stories played a major role in the 2016 election in the United States (Gunther, Beck, Nisbet 2018; Parkinson, 2016), and in the ongoing political divisions and crises that have followed it (Azzimonti and Fernandes, 2018; Spohr, 2017).

A 2018 study argues that false stories remain a problem on Facebook even after changes to the platform's news feed algorithm in early 2018 (NewsWhip, 2018 as cited by Funke, 2018). Many articles that have been rated as false by major fact-checking organizations have not been flagged in Facebook's system, and two major fake news sites (bipartisanreport.com and thepoliticalinsider.com) have seen little or no decline in Facebook engagements since early 2016 (Funke, 2018). Facebook's now-discontinued strategy of flagging inaccurate stories as 'Disputed' has been shown to modestly lower the perceived accuracy of flagged headlines (Clayton et al., 2019), though Pennycook and Rand (2017) suggests that the presence of warnings can cause untagged false stories to be seen as more accurate. Media commentators have argued that efforts to fight misinformation and disinformation through fact-checking are not working (Levin, 2017) and that both misinformation and disinformation are "becoming unstoppable" (p.41).

2.1.1 Misinformation and Disinformation within a media context

As technology has enabled the rapid spread of fake news, some people have worried that misinformation has become "the major moral crisis of our times" (Al-Rodhan, 2017, p. 24). Disinformation is defined as "false, incomplete or misleading information that is passed, fed, or confirmed to a targeted individual, group, or country" (Shultz and Godson, 1984, p.102). Jowett and O'Donnell (2012) define disinformation also as black propaganda because of its covert nature and use of false information. The authors connect the term to what was once a KGB division known as dezinformatsia, devoted to black propaganda. Jowett and O'Donnell (2012) assert that disinformation in the US print media aims "to weaken adversaries" and are "planted in newspapers by journalists who are actually secret agents of a foreign country" (p. 24).

Bennett and Livingston (2018) define disinformation as 'intentional falsehoods spread as new stories or simulated documentary formats to advance political goals" (p.12). Humprecht (2018) adds a profit motive describing disinformation as information that is intentionally created and uploaded on various websites, and thereafter disseminated via social media either for profit or for social influence. The UK's Disinformation and Fake News Report similarly defines disinformation as, the deliberate creation and sharing of false and/or manipulated information that is intended to deceive and mislead audiences, either for the purposes of causing harm or for political, personal, or financial gain and this definition is in line with its European counterpart (Digital, Culture, Media and Sports Committee (DCMSC) of the House of Commons, 2019; Cairncross,2019). These definitions reflect the work of Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) political economist, Benkler (2018), who in a large-scale study of the spread of disinformation in the US have acknowledged five parties that circulate online disinformation. These are:

1. Bodies close to the Russian government.
2. Right-wing groups.
3. Groups that make money such as those based in Macedonia.
4. Formal campaigns using marketing tools (i.e. Cambridge Analytica)
5. Peer-to-peer distribution networks.

The facilitating factor of today's online usage can be traced back to the rubric of 'digital capitalism' (Schiller, 1999). Users connect to online market systems designed to maintain user attention that results in an ominous rise in online behavioral addiction (Alter, 2017; Wu, 2017). As an increasing number of users spend more time on social media, the likelihood of disinformation getting shared also rises. Here, the content is considered misinformation since the senders do not know the original story is fake (DCMSC of the House of Commons, 2019; UNESCO 2018). Deviant disinformation agents intentionally make these stories more engaging via emotional appeal, making users more willing to share them (D'Ancona, 2017).

Disinformation is endemic to digital networks. Carlson (2018) postulates that digital technologies accentuate societal deviancies such as disinformation and that technology itself develops into the main culprit against an existing moral order. In this light, Jowett and O'Donnell (2012) note that "the very democracy and accessibility of the World Wide Web has made it the most potent force for the spreading of disinformation" (p.18). Facebook, primarily a technology company, becomes the possessor of social deviance online. As this happens news media are conversely converted into those institutions upholding moral order. As online disinformation continues to generate moral panics, news media paradoxically reclaim legitimacy as the institutions best suited to uphold contemporary public spheres (Boyd-Barrett, 2019). Yet ironically, news media are

heavily reliant on social media platforms. Most of them have constructed multiplatform options that include forming a social media presence (Ha˚ gvar, 2019; Ju, Jeong, Chyi, 2014). Revenues raised from news media websites are linked to eyes on screen; therefore, all major publishers create Facebook pages in an effort to drive traffic from the social media platform to their own websites. The result is Facebook's growing influence on news consumption.

According to the *New York Times*, Facebook "has become the largest and most influential entity in the news business, commanding an audience greater than that of any American European or Ghanaian television news network, any newspaper or magazine in the Western world and any online news outlet" (as cited by Manjoo, 2017,p.12). Until news media publishers find other revenue sources, their efforts to drive traffic from social media will continue and so will the potential for disinformation and misinformation to spread through deviants portraying themselves as legitimate news media (Ha˚ gvar, 2019). In the Ghanaian context, a 2019 Afrobarometer survey conducted shows that social media is becoming an increasingly common source of news for Ghanaians, even though they trust it less than traditional media. Ghanaians are aware of social media's negative effects on society, but they continue to consume its contents as it provides them quick information than the traditional media (Appiah-Nyamekye & Selormey, 2019).

News media's use of social media also adds to the complication of content misinterpreted as fake. In Tandoc et al.'s (2018) typology of fake news, they include news satire and parody. Jaster and Lanius (2018) add journalistic errors and highly selective reporting to the list. Opinion pieces that social media machine learning might identify as bad content - and, therefore, make it easier for deviants to cloak their own

content - could be added under these categories. By broadening the context of online disinformation across an ever-expanding news ecosystem (Picard, 2014), the presence of digital news media on social media platforms might in fact contribute to the threat of online disinformation.

The literature discussed is relevant to this study as it established and affirms the notion that disinformation is spreading more and is aided by social media platforms. The assertions made form the basis on which this study explores the role of media literacy in curbing the spread of disinformation and misinformation.

2.2. Media, Information and News Literacy

The beginning of media literacy can be traced back to the first half of the 20th century when Leavis and Thompson (1933) proposed to teach students how to distinguish the high culture and popular culture through education in the UK. In this early protectionist approach, these advocates aim at promoting high culture to fight against the increasing growth of popular culture in print media (Buckingham, 2003). In the 1950s, media literacy was introduced to the United States with the acknowledgement of the increasing impact of mass media such as radio and television on people's daily life and schooling (Schwarz, 2005). As a result, there is ample literature on media literacy in these countries and it has been part of their curriculum. In the Ghanaian context, there is scant literature on media literacy integration in the Ghanaian educational sector, hence, it has become clear that the popularity of fake news is forcing institutions to embrace the teaching of media literacy. Hence, most education institutions in Ghana are now appreciating the importance of media literacy integration in their educational curriculum.

Inan and Temur (2012) have developed a reliable scale that tests skill in consuming content from the television. Their questions revolve around whether respondents believe that they would follow the news using multiple sources; contact news channels and newspapers to tell criticisms; discuss the news with friends and family, and consume news with which they disagree. This is in line with literature on media literacy which emphasizes people's perceived beliefs about their ability to critically consume, question, and analyzes information. Thus, people predict that their perceived competence of media literacy leads to greater identification of fake news stories. However, Inan and Temur's (2012) scale (like most media literacy scales) rely on self-reports of perceived knowledge. As noted by researchers (Gross & Latham, 2009; Vraga, Tully, Kotcher, Smithson, & Broeckelman-Post, 2015), perceptions of one's knowledge and actual knowledge are related but distinct constructs. Thus, one can feel knowledgeable without actually holding correct beliefs (Radecki & Jaccard, 1995). The literature on media literacy emphasizes people's perceived believes about their ability to critically consume, question, and analyze information. Thus, people predict that their perceived competence of media literacy leads to greater identification of fake news stories.

The Association for College and Research Libraries (ACRL) (2000) defines information literacy as the intellectual framework for understanding, finding, evaluating, and using information. Following the standards of the ACRL, Boh Podgornik, Dolničar, Šorgo, and Bartol (2016) have developed a valid and reliable scale for measuring literacy. This scale comprises multiple-choice questions with one correct answer for each to test actual knowledge. The questions focus on students' abilities to identify verified and reliable information, search databases and identify opinion statements.

News literacy, developed from a similar theoretical tradition of media literacy, highlights the importance of literacy in terms of democracy and citizens' civic engagement (Malik, Cortesi, & Gasser, 2013). The goals of news literacy include an understanding of the role that news plays in society, a motivation to seek out news, the ability to find/identify/recognize news, the ability to critically evaluate and analyze news, and the ability to produce news. News audiences can achieve these goals through a greater understanding of the conditions within which news is produced, including its normative goals and influences, which sometimes conflict with journalistic ideals of objectivity and truth (Ashley, Maks, & Craft, 2013; Shoemaker & Reese, 2013).

Ashley et al. (2013) developed a reliable 15-item scale based on a model used by Primack et al. (2006). Their model included self-reported answers about (1) authors and audiences (how authors, motivated by profit, target audiences), (2) messages and meanings (that messages contain value judgments, which are interpreted differently by different people, and that these messages are designed using specific techniques intended to affect the audience), and (3) representation and reality (the way that media filters and omits information, which affects audiences' perceptions of reality). It is plausible that news consumers who are educated about these processes and motivations behind news distribution—that some news is not a complete, wholly unbiased representation of reality and is indeed a profit-based business with its own influences—will more critically assess and evaluate the completeness, truthfulness, and potential biases of pieces of news found online.

The media literacy movement has long sought to teach people how to critically analyze content across a wide range of media platforms. The Alliance for a Media Literate America, now known as the National Association for Media Literacy Education

(NAMLE), in 2007 published its core principles of media literacy education. The consensus report states that all media messages contain embedded values and points of view and that media literacy education requires active inquiry and critical thinking. The report argues that media literacy education should be taught across the K-12 curriculum in every place that traditional print literacy is traditionally taught (NAMLE, 2007).

Livingstone, Van Couvering, and Thumim (2008) have described the difference between media and information literacy. They note that media literacy "sees media as a lens or window through which to view the world and express oneself while information literacy sees information as a tool with which to act upon the world" (p. 106). Compared with media literacy, which has been constructed with regard to print and audiovisual media, information literacy has been defined and developed with regard to digital environments. Schneider and Klurfeld (2010) define news literacy as the"ability to use critical thinking skills to judge the reliability and credibility of news reports, whether they come via print, television or the Internet" (p.7). Schneider and Klurfeld (2010) further establish that while media literacy tends to focus on the impact of media messages on society and individuals, news literacy focuses more narrowly on the role of the press in society. This notwithstanding, both news and information literacies could be classified as a subset of media literacy. For the purpose of this study, information literacy and news literacy will be classified under media literacy. The understanding of media literacy which comprises information literacy and news literacy is relevant to my work in establishing the various way fake news or disinformation can be tackled. The study also adopts Aufderheide's (1993) definition of media literacy as its working definition.

The lack of certainty about trust in information, whether traditional media or digital and social media, has spawned a renewed emphasis on the importance of media literacy (Aufderheide, 1993; Potter, 2004, 2013) and particularly news media literacy (Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication [AEJMC], 2017). At its annual meeting in 2017, the AEJMC recognized that the allegations of "fake news" in recent years have created a pressing need for citizens to know how to verify the information and confirm legitimate sources. The Association emphasized recommitment to teaching news media literacy to students and others. In an attempt to measure the effects of media literacy instruction, Maksl, Craft Ashley, & Miller, (2017) used the Ashley, Maksl, & Craft, (2013) news media literacy scale to gauge the effects of a news media literacy course in a university curriculum. They reported that students who had taken the course exhibited "significantly higher levels of news media literacy, greater knowledge of current events, and higher motivation to consume news, compared with students who had not taken the course" (p. 228). Likewise, Hobbs, Donnelly, Friesem, and Moen (2013) noted that high school students who were engaged in learning video production formulated more positive attitudes toward both the media and civic engagement. Again, the Stanford History Education Group's (SHEG; 2016) in an information evaluation survey presented students with actual media content and asked them to determine the sponsor of information online, evaluate evidence in selected media content, and locate additional sources of information about subjects addressed in media messages. For some questions, it invited students to explain the rationale behind their responses. Their responses were directly used to rank student's information evaluation abilities as novice, intermediate, or master (SHEG, 2016). Referring to almost 8,000 responses from students in middle school, high school, and

University of Education, Winneba http://ir.uew.edu.gh

university from 2015 to 2016, SHEG noted the following about news media literacy levels from the test:

> *Overall, young people's ability to reason about information on the Internet can be summed up in two words: needs improvement. . .. Our 'digital natives' may be able to flit between Facebook and Twitter while simultaneously uploading a selfie to Instagram and texting a friend. But when it comes to evaluating information that flows through social media channels, they're easily duped. Our exercises were not designed to shake out a grade or make hairsplitting distinctions between "good" and "better" . . .. At each level, students fell far below the bar (p. 5).*

Researchers' ability to measure levels of news media literacy have not kept pace with educators' cries that something needs to be done about what they perceive to be low levels of media literacy in schools (McGrew, Ortega, Breakstone & Wineburg, 2017). A strong advocacy for critical media awareness is often pitched through liberal education. India for instance follows two prominent paths. One professes formal media education for children/youth. The other concerns media training and professional communication education. Despite long years of advocacy, "media education and information literacy are yet to be a formal part of India's educational system" (Kumar, 2007, p. 20). On another note, professional communication education remains challenged in India, being highly unregulated and commercialized with small skill-oriented programs; media studies, and media-house training courses. Likewise, in Ghana organizations such as UNESCO and Deutsche Welle Akademie have started organizing media literacy training for journalism and communication lecturers in tertiary institutions in Ghana but those training are yet to be made formal and to include students. However, unlike India, professional communication education is not challenged in Ghana. Ghana has ten recognized communication institutions with others affiliated with recognized tertiary institutions across the country and these institutions are regulated by the National Accreditation Board in the country (Appiah-Nyamekye & Serlomey, 2019).

The most pressing concern of journalism education is to develop affordable education sensitive to the diversity of local experiences, caste, class, and gender while treading the erratic paths opened by explosive media convergences, digital realities, and user-generated contents. The UNESCO's Model Curricula for Journalism Education suggests that journalism education has to accommodate a changed socio-technical environment that permeates "contemporary newsrooms and classrooms' in developing countries whose 'financial and economic sustainability' needs to be supported by 'literacies in science communication, data mining, human trafficking and gender " (Banda, 2013, p. 5).

2.3. Fake News and Media Literacy

The prevalence of fake news belies a widespread inability to distinguish fact from fiction (Silverman, 2016). In addition to creating conducive spaces for journalists, journalism educators and students must have a foundation of knowledge on which to base their deliberations and against which they can assess what they see in the world. This foundation of knowledge expands on traditional and digital literacy curricula. Many educators are familiar with efforts to teach digital literacy. However, in a brilliant blog post, Caulfield (2016) explains an important shortcoming of traditional, process-based approaches to digital literacy:

> *In the metaphor of most educators, there's a set of digital or information literacy skills, which is sort of like the factory process. And there's data, which is like raw material. You put the data through the critical literacy process and out comes useful information on the other side. . .. In reality, most literacies are heavily domain-dependent, and based not on skills, but on a body of knowledge that comes from mindful immersion in a context (para. 2).*

Again, Silverman (2016) found the most engaging piece of fake news on Facebook in 2016. The headline read, "Obama Signs Executive Order Banning the Pledge of Allegiance in Schools Nationwide." A knowledgeable consumer of information might

know that the Pledge of Allegiance has generated controversy at various times throughout its history, and that attempts to ban its use in schools are not unprecedented (Nieves, 2002), which may lead them to click on the article if they came across this headline on Facebook. At that point, the knowledgeable consumer might quickly notice several glaring clues that the story is fake, such as the URL domain (abcnews.com.co), non-sequitur (a conclusion or statement that does not logically follow from the previous argument or statement) quotations attributed to the head of a fake charity (http://sockitforward.com), and the author's own spurious biography ("Articles by Jimmy Rustling," n.d.). Even if a knowledgeable consumer happens to believe that the story was true, they would likely expect it to be corroborated by other news sources. How does a knowledgeable consumer know to look for these things? Surely some skill-based protocol may be applied, such as learning to "decode" URLs. As Caulfield (2016) writes,

> The *person who has immersed him or herself in the material of the news over time in a reflective way starts that process with three-quarters a race's head start. They look at a page and they already have a hypothesis they can test—"Is this site a New World Order conspiracy site?" The person without the background starts from nothing and nowhere (para. 12).*

There are many resources to help educators create appropriate spaces and tackle these issues with students. Embracing social media in the classroom is a good place to start. However, a recent episode *All Things Considered* on National Public Radio in India, (Turner & Lonsdorf, 2016) on the subject of fake news and schools points out that, "instead of teaching students the fundamentals of fact-checking, many schools simply ignore the problem, blocking social media sites on school computers" (p.125).

Pretending that social media has no place in the classroom is arbitrary. Instead, teachers can work with students to consider the benefits and risks of social media. For instance,

teachers can ask questions like; What is social media great at? What is it bad at? And How might we use social media in the pursuit of truth? Post-truth and its expression as fake news are a threat to democracy, but educators are uniquely positioned to fight back. The single most important resource for understanding and undermining fake news is also the one thing that every educator strives to inspire in their students: critical thinking. There is also a text set (Newsela Staff, n.d.) specifically on media literacy. Nonpartisan free apps like countable.us and iCitizen.com are designed to educate and engage people at all levels of government.

Since news and information are vital to the functioning of U.S. democracy, the ability of citizens to discern credible news from other information in the media is a bedrock civic asset. Shah, McLeod and Lee (2009) single out media consumption as an important part of the "communicative socialization" (p. 103) that an individual internalizes while growing up. The National Association for Media Literacy Education (2007a) emphasizes that media are "a part of culture and function as agents of socialization." (p. 9). Mihaildis and Thevenin (2013) point to communication competence as a critical component of civic engagement and emphasize that traditional forms of civic engagement fail to include the many new opportunities for participation via social and digital media. Kirschner and De Bruyckere (2017) posit that, as a society, young adults are given more credit than they deserve when it comes to critical evaluation of digital media. They argue that the "myth of the digital native," which holds that because today's students were born into a digital world they are information savvy, does much to contribute to a lack of attention to information deficits that have formed because of the abundance of readily available sources (Kirschner & De Bruyckere,2017; Mihailidis & Thevenin, 2013).

How Americans seek, process, and scrutinize information is changing, particularly in view of technological advances. The popularity of concepts such as "fake news" and "alternative facts" (Holan, 2017) have called into question the objectivity of news media and even whether a single, widely shared version of truth can exist. In addition, the blurring of lines between editorial content and advertising raises the issue of whether the public can discern the source or sponsor of the messages they encounter. Worldwide, insufficient levels of media and information literacy have resulted in the phenomenon of negative learning, described by Zlatkin-Troitschanskaia, Wittum, and Dengel (2018) as the result of various forms of "counterfactual knowledge" that leads to deficient decision-making and actions on the part of the consuming public (p. 1).

The lack of certainty about trust in information, whether mainstream media or social media, has produced a renewed emphasis on the importance of media literacy (Aufderheide, 1993; Potter, 2004; 2013) and particularly news media literacy (AEJMC, 2017). At its annual meeting in the summer of 2017, the AEJMC recognized that the allegations of fake news and other threats to the First Amendment in recent years have created a pressing need for citizens to know how to verify the information and confirm legitimate sources. The Association called for a recommitment to teaching news media literacy to its students and others. As aspirant communication professionals who will presumably influence sponsored content of many forms, communication students need to understand such issues as media ownership, media bias, sponsored content, and source credibility in order to both navigate the environment in which they work and contribute to the media industry.

Understanding students' areas of strength and weakness in news media literacy can suggest curricular interventions and support for students, who represent the future of

the media business. In an intertwined, multichannel world, future media professionals require an understanding not only of advertising or communication but also of the larger context in which it operates, which includes publishing, broadcasting, business, and society. If media professionals are lacking in their understanding of the existing and evolving media landscape and lack the confidence and competence to craft media content that reflects that understanding, they will contribute to the flowing erosion of public trust in media that is evident today. In order to address an issue such as news media literacy, tests of acumen or performance (McGrew, Ortega, Breakstone, & Wineburg, 2017) are sometimes used to pinpoint areas of strength and weakness.

Similarly, within the Ghanaian media landscape, media professionals' ability to craft media contents can be directly related to their beliefs and level of knowledge on the existing issue. Though curricula used in tertiary institutions in Ghana may not directly reflect the teaching of media literacy, it is prudent that it forms the foundation of the teaching of communication-related courses. That way, students may understand the larger context in which media operates and craft suitable and well-informed content.

2.4. Theoretical Framework

2.4.1. Cognitive Media Literacy Theory (Potters 2004)

The theory of media literacy is the ability by which an individual critically analyzes and evaluates produced messages in print, television movies, and online (Hobbs 2011; Mhihailidis, 2014; Potters, 2004). The theory was developed to protect media consumers from the content they see both online and offline and in the mainstream and minor media. Potter's cognitive theory of media literacy (2004) defines the process of becoming media literate in three parts: development of knowledge structure, applying the knowledge structure to critical thinking toward media message, and lastly, the

ability of media literacy to have a purpose. Potter's theory is relevant to the study by establishing the importance of media literacy among students in order for them to distinguish between the content they see online and offline and in the mainstream and minor media. Again, the three dimensions of becoming a media literate are critical and relevant to the study as it forms the basis of the research and re-emphases the objectives of the study.

Though literacy studies may draw audiences into a deeper understanding of mass communication processes and effects, or they may address broader questions about cultural literacy and citizen knowledge (Hirsch, Kett, & Trefil, 1987; 2002), they have some links with media literacy. Thus, media studies and information literacy education have their roots in early research about the ability to read, write and speak (Ruben, 1997). Scholars have considered the connection between these areas and the development of visual and computer literacy skills (Potter, 2001). Media literacy has been defined as a perspective related to media exposure and making meaning out of messages:

> *We build our perspective from knowledge structures. To build our knowledge structures, we need tools and raw material. The tools are our skills. The raw material is information from the media and from the real world. Active use means that we are aware of the messages and are consciously interacting with them (Potter, 2001, p. 143).*

In the information age, it is important for individuals to go beyond simply reading text since powerful visual images, and in the context of this study fake news, dominate the media and information landscape. In fact, the definition of text has been expanded to include a variety of forms and content beyond traditional print media –including cumulative, frequent, and repetitive electronic media messages that produce new meanings (Silverblatt, 1995). Language constructions, whether through printed word or electronic media, can be seen as "an endless chain of ambiguous associations and

University of Education, Winneba http://ir.uew.edu.gh

connections that offer wide potentialities for interpretation and for manipulation" (Edelman, 1988 p.78). Hobbs (1997) challenges individuals to re-think concepts by raising questions about visual literacy:

- Do images tell the truth?
- What meanings do different people see in images?
- How do words shape the meanings of images?
- How do the authors of images shape their messages?
- Why do images arouse us emotionally? (pp. 163–164).

If critical thinking skills about media are learned at an early age, then more research is needed on young people. The focus needs to be on what they are being taught in the schools to "... develop their ability to protect themselves from – or, more positively, to understand and to deal effectively with –the broader media environment" (Buckingham, 2000, p. 59). In the context of Ghana, there is a need for young people, especially university students, to develop the ability to detect misinformation and disinformation online since the traditional media depends largely on online stories as the source of their news story. In achieving that, tertiary institutions must integrate media literacy in their teaching curricula.

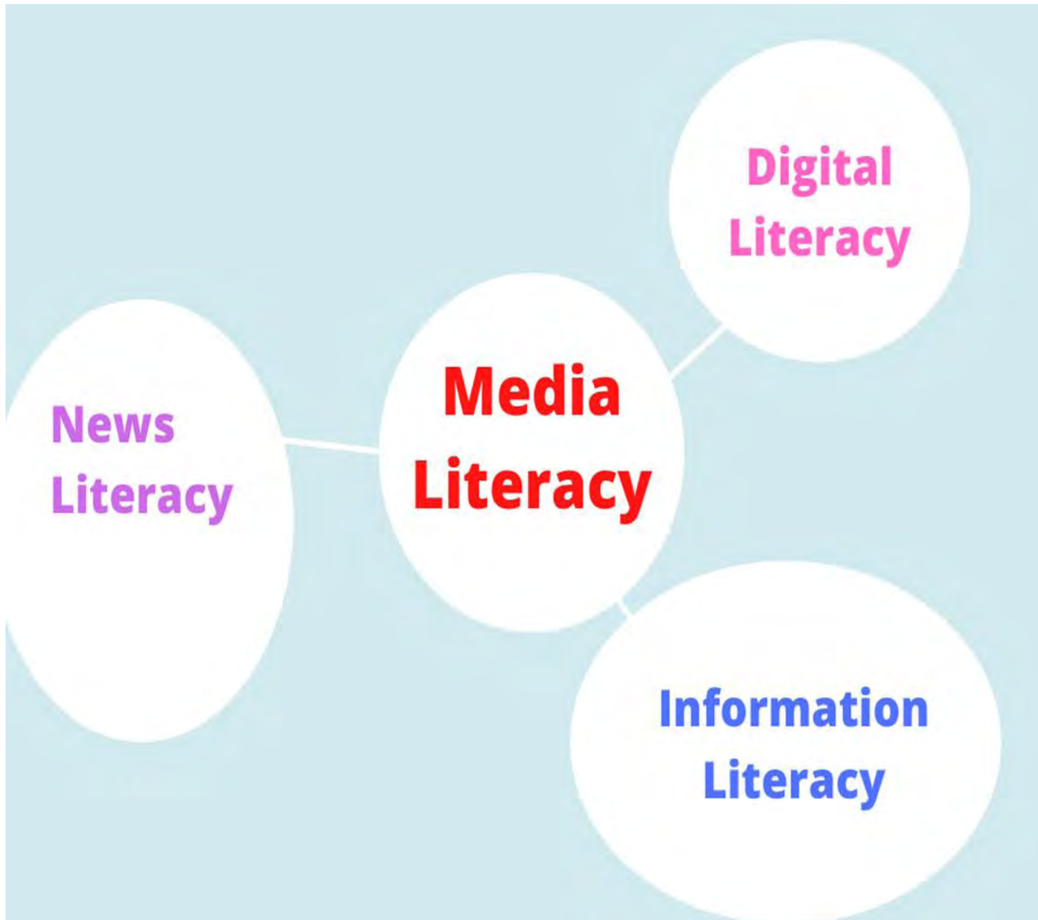


Figure 1: Media Literacy Diagram

Source: Canvas.com.

2.4.2. New media literacy framework

The birth of the internet is a milestone in the development of media literacy because it changed the whole media landscape and started a debate on the different approaches to media literacy (Gauntlett, 2011. This is also the starting point for scholars to propose a framework that can both suit the need of conventional media such as television, newspaper, and radio and new media such as the internet and the Web 2.0 technology. With the emergence of new media technologies at the beginning of the 21st century, knowledge of traditional media is no longer sufficient for an individual to competently survive in this new media ecology. Wu and Chen (2007) argue that media is not merely shaping our culture, but it is our culture. In other words, new media plays an

indispensable role in human societies, and individuals need to be equipped with new media literacies (Cope & Kalantzis, 2000) to be able to fully engage in the new media environment. All the above arguments represent the necessity and importance of new media literacy.

According to Chen, Wu, and Wang (2011), new media literacy is multiliteracies or "a combination of information skills, conventional literacy skills, and social skills" (p. 84). There are similarities between media literacy and new media literacy regarding the approaches to understanding the media, the role of media in society, and the purposes of media literacy. Cappello, Felini and Hobbs (2011) indicate that the current media literacy education strikes a balance between discrimination or protection and empowerment approaches and the recognition of media as an aspect of the social environment is a pushing force for the development of media literacy in the world. The moving away from the extreme protectionist approach and acknowledging the great socio-cultural impact of media have also offered a solid foundation for the development of new media literacy.

Detailed discussion on various approaches to media literacy education can be referred to Buckingham (2003), Leaning (2009) and Lin (2010). Livingstone, Van Couvering and Thumin (2004) reveal three purposes for implementing media literacy: (a) democracy, participation, and active citizenship, (b) knowledge economy, competitiveness and choice, and (c) lifelong learning, cultural expression, and personal fulfillment. Similar emphases on the role media literacy play are also evident and advocated in the media literacy documents/standards of US (National Association for Media Literacy Education, 2007), UK (Ofcom, 2004), Singapore (Lin, 2011; National

Institute of Education, 2009), Taiwan (Lin, 2009; Ministry of Education, 2002) and Ghana (UNESCO, as cited in; Media and Information Curriculum for Teacher, 2019).

Research on media literacy has also suggested a progressive shift in its meaning. As it is suggested in a review by Cervi, Paredes and Tornero (2010), literacy has developed generally from classic literacy (related to reading and writing) to audiovisual literacy (related to electronic media) to digital literacy (related to digital media) and recently to a more comprehensive new media literacy (related to Internet and Web 2.0). Moreover, Cappello, Felini and Hobbs (2011) applied the concept “expanded literacy” (p. 68) to underline the shift from literacy strictly related to alphabetic and written texts to another literacy-focused more on social communication and ideology. Besides, Chen, Wu and Wang (2011) argue that an individual needs to become new media ‘literate’ in order to participate responsibly in the new century society. To address this gap, Chen et al. (2011) proposed a promising framework that unpacks new media literacy (NML) as two continua from consuming to prosuming literacy and from functional to critical literacy. Specifically, consuming literacy has been defined as the ability to access media messages and to utilize media at different levels, while prosuming literacy is the ability to produce media contents (e.g. messages and artifacts). According to Chen et al. (2011), the consuming aspect should be integrated and implied in the prosuming aspect. For instance, an individual has to read and understand others’ ideas before they create media contents to respond. On the other hand, functional literacy refers to individuals’ textual meaning-making and use of media tools and content while critical literacy refers to their ability to analyze, evaluate, and critique media.

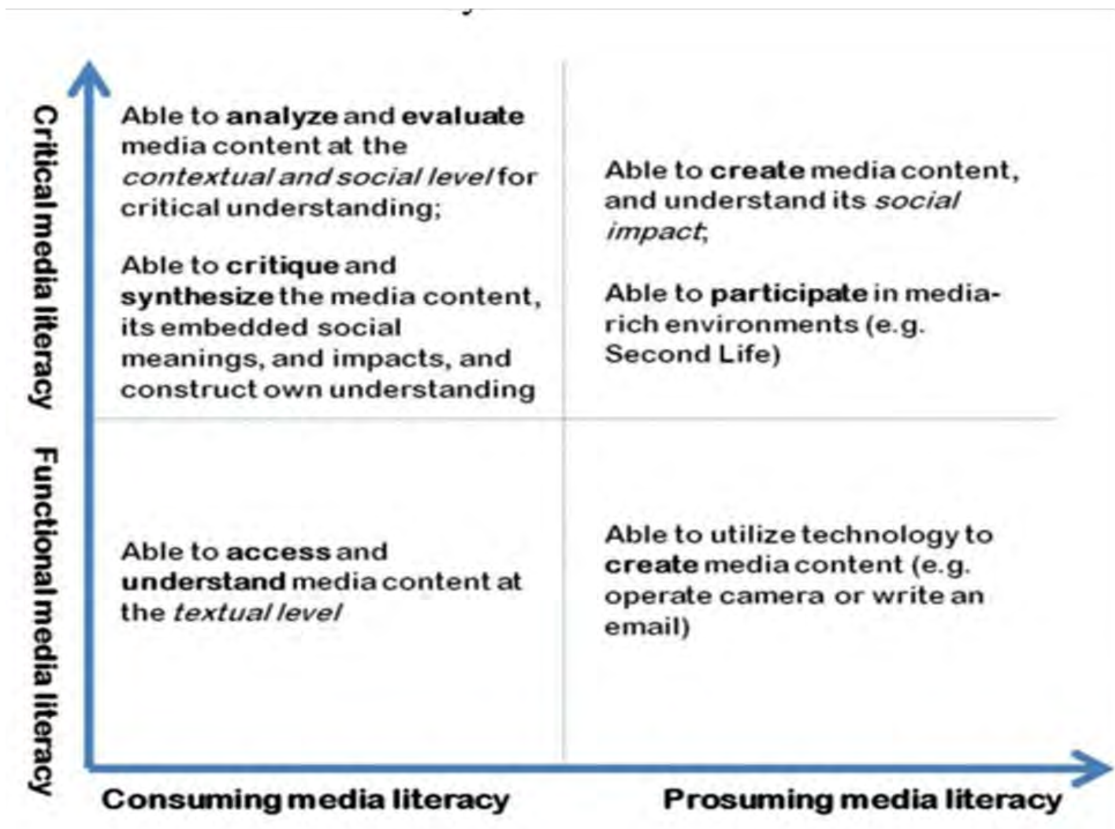


Figure 2: Framework for new media literacy (cited from Chen et al. (2011)).

Based on the above two continua, four types of NML can be recognized. They are (a) functional consuming (FC, the lower left quadrant of Figure 1), (b) critical consuming (CC, the upper left quadrant), (c) functional prosuming (FP, the lower right quadrant), and (d) critical prosuming (CP, the upper right quadrant). Accordingly, FC requires individuals' abilities to access media content and understand its textual meaning. CC involves abilities to interpret the media content within specific social, economic, political, and cultural contexts. FP focuses on abilities to participate in the creation of media content, while CP underlines individuals' contextual interpretation of the media content during their participation activities. As Chen, Wu and Wang (2011) recommend, CP should be encouraged as a vital goal in the 21st century information society. In brief, Chen et al.'s (2011) two-continuum framework provides a better understanding of the notion of NML. However, Tzu-Bi, Jen, Li and Ling, (2013) assert

University of Education, Winneba http://ir.uew.edu.gh

that the framework can still be further developed. According to the authors, there are at least two limitations in the framework by Chen et al. (2011).

Firstly, the framework has characterized the four types of NML in a relatively coarse manner. As seen in the figure above, it provides certain indicators/keywords for understanding each type of NML. For example, it is expected that functional media consumers be "able to access and understand media contents at the textual level" (p.162). Additionally, critical media consumers should be able to analyze, evaluate, critique, and synthesize the media content by pondering its embedded socio-cultural meanings/values. Yet, what these keywords refer to remain unclearly defined. This may further make unspecified the boundaries among the four types of NML. For instance, how great is the difference between 'understand' (from the functional consuming literacy) and 'analyze' (from the critical consuming literacy)? All these indicate the necessity of developing a more fine-grained framework of NML.

Secondly, the framework did not distinguish Web 1.0 from Web 2.0, which plays a pivotal role in shaping a distinct culture of media. In Figure 1, Chen et al. (2011) has unpacked the prosuming media literacy into students' abilities to create media contents and to participate in a media-rich environment. This understanding of the prosuming literacy reflects their consideration of both the Web 1.0 and Web 2.0 environments. Within the Web 1.0 environment, students are allowed to create media content, such as turning hardcopy into digital format, composing an email, and editing a photo. However, Web 1.0 does not provide opportunities for students to participate as a group to share and negotiate their perspectives, which can be accomplished within the Web 2.0 environment instead (Berger & McDougall, 2010).

Tzu-Bin, Jen-Li, Feng and Ling (2013) proposed a refined framework that aims to address the two limitations of Chen et al.'s (2011) framework. Like Chen et al.'s framework, the framework by Tzu-Bin et al (2013) acknowledges NML as indicated by two continua (i.e., functional-critical and consuming-prosuming) that consist of four types of literacy: FC (functional consuming), CC(critical consuming), FP (functional prosuming), and CP (critical prosuming). Furthermore, their framework further unpacks the four types of NML into ten more fine-grained indicators and proposes another new divide that distinguishes Web 1.0 from Web 2.0.

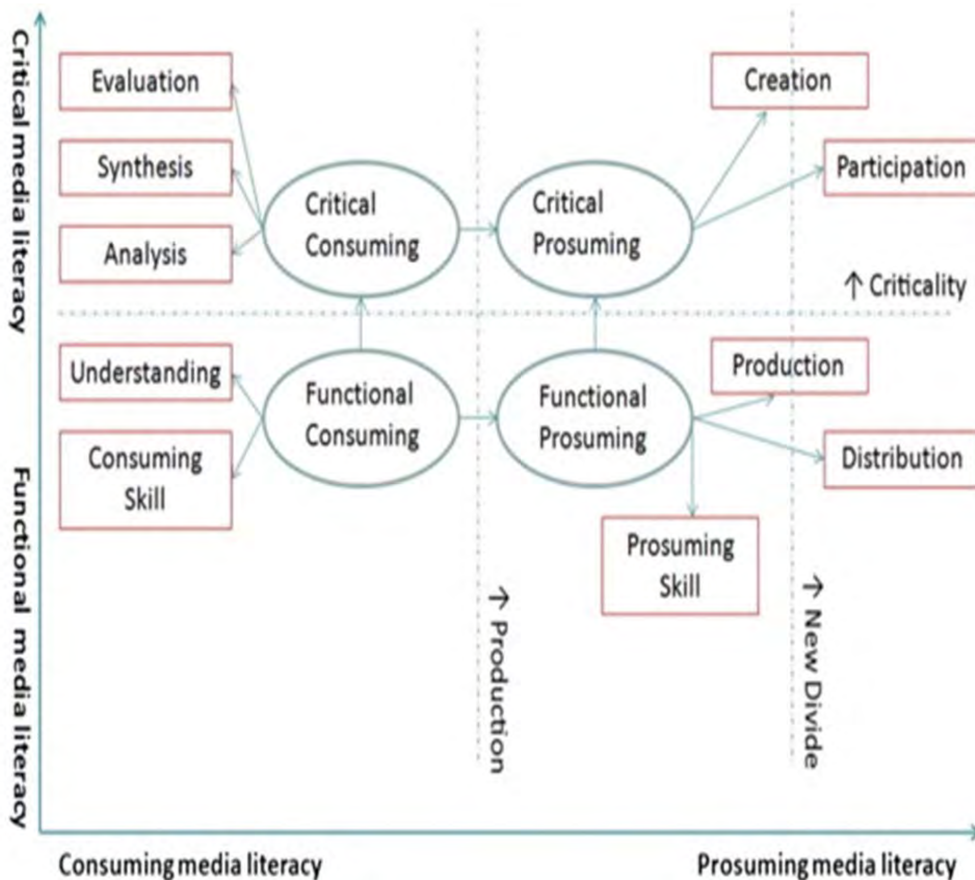


Figure 3: A Refined Framework of New Media Literacy

Source: Tzu-Bin, Jen-Li, Feng & Ling (2013).

The framework suggests that the four types of NML can be generally represented by ten more fine-grained indicators (shown in the red squares in Figure 2. To sum up, the above indicators (Consuming skill, Understanding, Analysis., Synthesis, Evaluation,

Prosuming skill, Distribution, Production, Participation, Creation) are representing consuming media literacy, which Tzu-Bin et al. (2013) propose a media consumer should express. With the development of technology, the gap between media producers and consumers has been converging (Jenkins, 2006). As Buckingham (2009) suggested, such convergence tends to result in the appearance of a new breed of media prosumers. More importantly, the new forms of cultural expression and exchange, which are organized democratically and collectively, also motivate individuals to participate in media production and to have their voice heard (Blau, 2004; Chen et al., 2011; Jenkins et al., 2006; Pink, 2005). The new media literacy framework provides an understanding of how important the internet is to understanding media literacy and that basis is relevant to the objectives of this study.

2.5. Student Engagement Theory

Alexander Astin's 1985 theory of student engagement explains how desirable outcome for higher education institutions are viewed in relation to how students change and develop, as a result of their involvement with academic, faculty, and peer. Hence, it offers educators a premise for designing a more effective learning environment necessary for the achievement of holistic student development. The theory of student engagement has also been treated as a solution to the lower graduation rate of low-income and first-generation college students (Engle & Tinto, 2008). The theory of student engagement has been in the literature for more than 70 years according to Kuh (2009). It appears in different terminologies but referred to the same concept, that is "students learn from what they do in college" (Pike & Kuh, 2005, p186). Student engagement has been defined as " …participation in educationally effective practices, both inside and outside the classroom, which leads to a range of measurable outcomes" (Kuh, Kinzie, Buckley, Bridges & Hayek, 2007, p.145) as well as "the extent to which

students are engaging in activities that higher education research has shown to be linked with high-quality learning outcomes" (Krause & Coates 2008, p. 493). Similarly, Hu and Kuh (2001) define engagement as "the quality of effort students themselves devote to educationally purposeful activities that contribute directly to desired outcomes" (p.89).

By way of contrast, the Higher Education Funding Council of England defined engagement as the process whereby institutions and sector bodies make deliberate attempts to involve and empower students in the process of shaping the learning experience (HEFCE 2008) or as "institutional and Student Union (SU) processes and practices, such as those relating to student representation and student feedback, that seek to inform and enhance the collective student learning experience, as distinct from specific teaching, learning and assessment activities that are designed to enhance individual students "engagement with their own learning" (Little, Locke Scesa & Williams 2009, p.124). Combining these two perspectives, Kuh (2009) has defined student engagement as "the time and effort students devote to activities that are empirically linked to desired outcomes of college and what institutions do to induce students to participate in these activities" (Kuh, 2009, p, 314).

Student engagement has growing importance in serving twofold higher education objectives: the institution and the individual development. At the institutional level, there are certain positive policies and practices highly associated with student engagement which directly increase institutional productivity (Kuh & Hu, 2001). Perhaps the well-known set of principles in highlighting the good practices in higher education institutions is the seven principles for good practice in undergraduate education (Chickering & Gamson, 1987). These identified principles are (1) encourages

University of Education, Winneba http://ir.uew.edu.gh

contacts between students and faculty; (2) develops reciprocity and cooperation among students; (3) active learning techniques; (4) prompt feedback; (5) time on task; (6) communicates high expectations; and (7) respects diverse talents and ways of learning. These principles are so profound in underpinning the development of the student engagement theory. On the other hand, students, if fully engaged with those facilities and opportunities provided by higher institutions, will maximize their learning, grade, and personal development (Kuh, Chen & Laird, 2007; Carini, Kuh & Klein, 2006).

HEFCE's (2008) definition suggests that the responsibility lies with institutions and sector bodies while that of Little, Locke, Scesa and Williams (2009), suggest that institutions and students collectively, through student unions, bear the responsibility for engagement. By contrast, Krause and Coates (2008) argue that "student engagement focuses on the extent to which students are engaging in activities that higher education research has shown to be linked with high-quality learning outcomes…." (p.49). Kuh's (2009, p.58) later view - that "student engagement represents the time and effort students devote to activities that are empirically linked to desired outcomes of college and what institutions do to induce students to participate in these activities" - shifts the responsibility to both individual students and their institutions. This view is neatly encapsulated in the extended quote from Coates (2005, p.213) below:

> *The concept of student engagement is based on the constructivist assumption that learning is influenced by how an individual participates in educationally purposeful activities. Learning is seen as a joint proposition…, however, which also depends on institutions and staff providing students with the conditions, opportunities and expectations to become involved. However, individual learners are ultimately the agents in discussions of* engagement …

Most of the literature on student engagement is concerned directly or indirectly with improving student learning (Hafeez, & Mardell, 2007). For Coates (2005), this is fundamental because "student engagement is concerned with the extent to which

students are engaging in a range of educational activities that research has shown as likely to lead to high-quality learning" (p.78). To Graham., Mckeown., Sharlene and Kiuhara. (2007), the centrality of improving student learning through engagement is not a new-fangled idea introduced with the concept of student engagement, but one with a long history:

> *The idea that students must be actively engaged in the learning process in order for it to be effective is not new. The roots for active learning reach back in the literature to John Dewey… A diverse body of educational research has shown that academic achievement is positively influenced by the amount of active participation in the learning process… (p.541).*

In conclusion, while students have responsibilities for their own engagement, there are important ways in which staff can contribute to the facilitation of engagement. These can range from Coates's (2005) suggestion of academic staff "making themselves available for consultation outside class time" (p.10) to Hu & Kuh's (2001) suggestion that "faculty members can make concrete links between what students are reading and discussing and other aspects of their lives" (p. 90).

While most of the literature discussed or assumed the benefits of student engagement, a striking absence was the student voice in the literature on student engagement. Instead, literature was written about students for managers, policymakers, researchers, funders, or teachers, with occasional briefing guides for student leaders, by other managers, policymakers, researchers, or teachers. Where student voices appeared, it was as data in the form of quotes to illustrate arguments being made by others about them. As stated, most of the literature on student engagement fail to focus student's perspective of how engaging school curricula is to them, forming a gap in the literature. Thus, findings from this study will focus on filling the gap in the literature. Also, the

University of Education, Winneba http://ir.uew.edu.gh

theory forms a foundation for answering the research questions in this study as the study is centered on investigating how media literacy is relevant to identifying fake news.

2.6 Chapter Summary

This chapter discuss literature on fake news and media literacy. In so doing, the chapter looked at information, news, and media literacy as well as examining disinformation and misinformation within the media context. The chapter also discussed literature on fake news and media literacy and ended the literature review by discussing some theories and theoretical framework.

University of Education, Winneba http://ir.uew.edu.gh

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter focuses on and outlines research methods and procedures used to obtain and analyze data for this study. This chapter elaborates on the methodology that was used for the study by discussing the research approach, research design, population data collection techniques, and the analysis of the data.

3.1. Research Approach

Research approaches are plans and procedures for research that span the steps from broad assumptions to detailed methods of data collection, analysis and interpretation (Cresswell, 2014). Based on the research focus and objectives of this study, the researcher employed the qualitative approach. The qualitative approach to research forms part of the three main approaches namely, Quantitative, Qualitative and Mixed Method (Cresswell, 2014). Brennen (2017) posits that the qualitative approach is "an understanding of complex concepts and making sense of language which is generally based on people's experiences and human relationships" (p.4). Rajasekar, Philominaatha and Chinnathambi (2013) also explain that qualitative research is non-numerical, descriptive, apply reasoning, and uses words to describe a situation, issue, or event.

This study not only aims at understanding the experiences and relationships of students and lecturers of Ghana Institute of Journalism so far as the issue of fake news and media literacy education in Ghana are concerned but also applies reasoning to the data about the issue under investigation in a descriptive manner. Thus, it is important to know the level of media literacy education provided to students by lecturers, therefore, the

qualitative research approach becomes the most preferred approach based on the nature of this study. Again, qualitative research places emphasis upon exploring and understanding "…the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem" (Creswell, 2014, p. 4; Holliday, 2007). This is reiterated by Denzin and Lincola (1994), who claim that the qualitative method implies an emphasis on processes and meanings that are not rigorously examined, measured in terms of quantity, amount, intensity, or frequency. This is to say that qualitative researchers typically do not make external statistical generalizations because their goal usually is to obtain insights into particular educational, social, and familial processes and practices that exist within a specific location and context (Connolly, 1998).

This study explores media literacy knowledge among students of the Ghana Institute of Journalism and does not intend to generalize but obtain insights from the experiences of students and lecturers at GIJ so far as media literacy education and fake news are concerned. The qualitative approach allows for gaining a perspective of issues from investigating them in their own specific context (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005) Therefore, perspectives of FGD participants and respondents from interviews are used to investigate the issue of fake news and media literacy in GIJ. As Creswell (2003) puts it, qualitative research can be described as an effective model that occurs in a natural setting and which enables the researcher to develop a level of detail from being highly involved in the actual experiences. This means that qualitative researcher's study phenomena in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret in terms of the meanings people bring to them. Qualitative research describes social phenomena as they occur naturally without the artificiality that sometimes surrounds experimental or survey research (Hancock, 2002; Wimmer & Dominick, 2011). Yin (2009) also adds that qualitative research helps social science researchers to study a phenomenon or

culture because it gives room for flexibility and the attainment of a deeper understanding of the subject or the phenomenon.

According to O'Leary, (2013), the research approach moves hand in hand with the research philosophy of a study as both are interconnected. The research philosophy underpinning this study is the constructivist approach. In the qualitative approach, knowledge claims are based on constructivist perspectives or different meanings of individual experience. Constructivism or social constructivism, according to Creswell (2014), is typically seen as an approach to qualitative research. According to Basser and Jack (2008), constructivists claim that truth is relative and that it is independent of one's perspective. This paradigm "recognizes the importance of the subjective human creation of meaning but doesn't reject outright some notion of objectivity" (Basser & Jack, 2008, p.14). "Pluralism not relativism is stressed with focus on the circular dynamic tension of subject and object" (Miller & Crabtree 1999, p 10). Constructivism is built upon the premise of social construction of reality (Searle, 1995, as cited in Baxter & Jack, 2008).

Again, Creswell (2013) posits that in social constructivism, researchers seek an understanding of the world in which they live and work. They develop meanings of their experiences and the meanings of their experiences are negotiated socially and historically (Creswell, 2013). Creswell (2014) admits that these meanings are varied and multiple leading the researcher to look for the complexity of views rather than narrowing meanings into a few categories or ideas.

A qualitative approach was the best to use for this study because the research is focused on the interpretation of the data gathered. It was not necessary to use quantitative methods because the purpose of the study is not necessarily looking at numbers but to

University of Education, Winneba http://ir.uew.edu.gh

describe how media literacy should be taught in universities. As the research objectives indicate, the aim of this study is to examine fake news and media literacy in tertiary institutions. A qualitative method was best suited for this study because of the project's focus on the interpretation of data (Walker & Myrick, 2006).

3.2 Research Design

According to Panncerselvan (2014), a research design is the outline of how the study is to be carried out. Research design, according to Creswell (2013), is the plan for conducting the study. Thus, it is the "plans and the procedures for research that span the decisions from broad assumptions to detailed methods of data collection and analysis" (Creswell, 2009, p.25). Also, Amoani (2005) avers that research design is an arrangement of conditions for collecting and analyzing data relevant to a study in the most economical manner that determines the sample size, sampling technique, the type of data, and how to collect it as well as the method of data analysis. Essentially, the research design creates the foundation of the entire research (Rajasekar, Philominaatha & Chinnathambi, 2013). Given (2008) simply puts it as the way in which a research idea is transformed into a research project or plan that can then be carried out in practice by a researcher. Carriger (2000) adds that research design is a strategy, a plan, and a structure for conducting a research project. Moreover, Yin (2009) suggests that research design is the logic that links the data to be collected (and the conclusions to be drawn) to the initial questions of the study

The research design for this study is the qualitative case study. A case study concerns itself with the depth of a phenomenon (Creswell, 2013). According to Kuthiala (2010), case studies employ numerous data sources to systematically investigate a phenomenon with the intent of having an in-depth understanding. Case study design permits the

application of multiple data gathering methods to achieve its purpose of an in-depth description of a phenomenon. Thus, case studies allow the gathering of information from multiple sources by using different methods such as interviews, direct observations, documents, and reports (Creswell, 2013). This study used multiple data gathering methods - interviews, document analysis, and focus group discussion - to have an in-depth understanding of fake news and media literacy in tertiary institutions in Ghana.

The uniqueness of a case study is currency and boundaries. The phenomenon under study must be current, it should be happening in a real-life context and situated within a bounded system (Kuthiala, 2010). The rise in fake news crisis though not new has become a recent phenomenon and had escalated in 2016. Even though some scholars may argue that 2016 might not be current, Ofori-Birikorang (2018) is of the view that even though the case might have been in the past, it should be relevant to contemporary studies. The study agrees with this position because media literacy, especially in tertiary institutions, is still relevant as fake news has become a recent phenomenon that requires in-depth scrutiny.

According to Bekoe (2014), Yin (2009) and Kuthiala (2010), case studies involve studying a phenomenon that is as well vague and nearly impossible to quantify, "especially when the boundaries between the phenomenon and context are not clearly evident" (Kuthiala,2010, p.18). Therefore, applying a case study design to this study is befitting as media literacy and fake news in most tertiary institutions are often without clear focus (Bekoe, 2014).

Different scholars have suggested different typologies for case studies. Stake (1995) suggests three types of a case study based on case selection: the intrinsic case study,

where the case is given, rather than chosen, as commonly occurs in programme evaluation; the instrumental case study, where the case is selected for its ability to contribute to a general understanding of a phenomenon; and the collective case study, an extension of the instrumental case study, where two or more representative cases are selected. Yin (2014) also suggests three types of a case study based on study purpose: the exploratory case study, a form of a pilot study to inform subsequent research; the descriptive case study, which provides a thorough, contextualized description of a phenomenon; and the explanatory case study, intended to shed light on causal factors leading to particular events. Used together, these two typologies are useful for characterizing case studies and assessing the applicability of findings in other settings. The study employed the single case study design or Yin's (2014) explanatory case study because it gave room to explain the phenomenon of fake news and media literacy and its relevance in teaching curriculum (Farquhar, 2012).

3.3. Sampling

Sampling in qualitative studies arguably does not concern itself with a large superficial representation of individuals. Instead, the aim is to get respondents who can share their unique experiences put together to illustrate the range of variation and similarity obtained by the researcher. This implies that the researcher does not start with a specific sample size in mind. The researcher keeps sampling until there is saturated information about the phenomenon under study (Elmusharaf, 2012). This study employed purposive sampling. According to Oliver (2011), purposive sampling is a form of non-probability sampling in which decisions concerning the individuals to be included in the sample are taken by the researcher, based upon a variety of criteria which may include specialist knowledge of the research issue, or capacity and willingness to participate in the research. An advantage of purposive sampling is that the researcher can identify

participants who are likely to provide data that are detailed and relevant to the research question (Oliver,2011). This study, therefore, adopted purposive sampling in selecting participants for the study because the researcher intends to gather data from people who are knowledgeable of the research issue under study.

3.4. Sample Size

Sample size is a subset of the population that is representative of the entire population (Wimmer & Dominick, 2011). Givens (2008) sees sample size as the number of data sources that are selected from the total population while Onwuegbuzie and Collins (2007) posit that in qualitative studies, researchers must make a sound decision on the number of data to choose which is known as the sample size. Though Patton (2002, p.244) avers that “there are no rules for sample size in the qualitative inquiry”, Braun and Clarke (2013) posit that qualitative research tends to use smaller samples than quantitative research. In general, (Omona, 2013) says, the sample size in qualitative research should not be too small that it is difficult to achieve saturation. At the same sample time, the sample should not be too large that it is difficult to make deep, case-oriented analysis (Sandelowski 1995 as cited in Omona, 2013). The sample size of the study was 12 participants in all and ten (10) documents. The sample size for the interview involved two lecturers from the Communication Department and three lecturers from the Journalism Department of GIJ. Five lecturers were selected because according to Ommana (2013), a sample size should not be too large or too small. Hence five is an average representation. Seven students were selected as the sample size for the focus group discussion (4 participants from the Degree programme and 3 from the Diploma program) Degree sessions) and ten (10) documents (course outlines) were sampled from the 2018/2019 academic year.

3.5 Data Collection

Data collection does not only focus on actual types of data and procedures but also involves obtaining permissions, obtaining a good sample size, recording materials, and anticipation for ethical issues that may arise (Creswell, 2013). The data collection methods for the study were interviews, focus group discussion, and document analysis. The primary data collection methods were interviews and focus group discussion whilst document analysis augmented the data from the interviews and focus group discussion. The triangulation of data collected helps to obtain trustworthiness (Denzin, 1970 as cited in Flick 2018). On trustworthy, the study demonstrates that with the collection of data from various sources through interviews, focus group discussion, and document analysis.

3.5.1. Interview

The choice of the interview was based on the fact that interviews are mostly used in qualitative studies (Creswell, 2013). Interviews are also seen to provide studies with varied and rich data (Bekoe, 2014). Though there are three interview approaches, namely, structured, semi-structured, and unstructured interview (Creswell, 2007), the generally used interview approach, which is a semi-structured interview (Creswell, 2007), was employed for this study. The semi-structured interview approach was chosen because it allows flexibility in the composition and process of interviewing (Gall, Gall & Borg, 2003). Semi-structured interviews are suited to working with small samples and are useful for studying specific situations or for supplementing and validating information derived from other sources (LaForest&Bouchard, 2009). Hence, the study employed the semi-structured interview to allow for flexibility in the interview process of the participants. The semi-structured interview approach, which

University of Education, Winneba http://ir.uew.edu.gh

was applied to the current study, also allowed participants some degree of comfort to provide detailed and exhaustive answers to the questions where they can.

Interviews in research are important because they offer a systematic way to gain knowledge and insight about a topic (Zaykowski, 2014). Interviews in research are an appropriate method to use when there is a need to collect in-depth information on people's opinions, thoughts, experiences, and feelings. Interviews are useful when the topic of inquiry relates to issues that require complex questioning and considerable probing (Easwaramoorthy, 2006). This study used interviews to collect in-depth information on the participants' thoughts, experience, and opinions on fake news and media literacy.

3.5.2. Document Analysis

Document analysis is a social research method and it is a form of qualitative research method in which documents are interpreted by the researcher to give voice and meaning around an assessment of a topic (Bowen, 2009). Document analysis is a systematic procedure for reviewing or evaluating documents-both printed and electronic material. Analyzing documents incorporates coding contents into themes. For this study, the course outlines for the 2018/2019 academic year were analyzed. Thus, they were examined and interpreted for their meanings and to gain an understanding of fake news and media literacy through developing empirical knowledge (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Rapley, 2007). There are three primary types of documents that can be analyzed namely, public records, personal documents, and physical evidence (O'Leary, 2014). Documents that may be used for systematic evaluation as part of a study take a variety of forms. According to Bowen (2009),

> *the document includes advertisements; agendas. attendance registers, minutes of meetings; manuals; background papers; books and brochures;*

University of Education, Winneba http://ir.uew.edu.gh

> *diaries and journals; event programs (i.e. Printed outlines); letters and memoranda; maps and charts; newspapers (clippings/articles); press releases; program proposals, application forms, and summaries; radio and television program scripts; organizational or institutional reports; survey data; and various public records (p.34).*

These types of documents are found in libraries, newspaper archives, historical society offices, and organizational or institutional files. This study used course outlines and analyze the information in the course outlines to help in determining whether fake news and media literacy is integrated with the teaching curriculum at GIJ. The document analysis procedure entails finding, selecting, appraising (making sense of), and synthesizing data contained in documents like the course outlines that were used for this study. Documents analysis yields data - excerpts, quotations, or entire passages - that are then organized into major themes, categories, and case examples specifically through content analysis (Labudchagne, 2003).

According to Payne (2004), documentary analysis helps to identify the limitations inherent in using human sources hence, the study uses document analysis to aid any inherent limitation that the researcher will identify. Again, Bowen (2009) declares that document contain text (words) and images that have been recorded without a researcher's intervention. The study uses document analysis because the study uses course outlines that were prepared without the researcher's intervention. Also, the texts, images, and videos are social facts that are produced, shared, and used in a socially organized system (Atkinson& Coffey, 1997). For the purpose of this study, images are not included since the study only concentrated on the text. Document analysis is appropriate for the study since it is highly applicable to qualitative case studies (Stake, 1995; Yin 19994).

University of Education, Winneba http://ir.uew.edu.gh

3.5.3. Focus Group Discussion

According to Liamputtong (2015), a focus group discussion involves a group of people gathered together to discuss a focused issue of concern. The emphasis is, therefore, on the interaction between participants in the group (Morgan 1997; Duggleby 2005). Morgan (1997 as cited in Liamputtong (2015, p. 2) puts it clearly that "the hallmark of focus groups is their explicit use of group interaction to produce data and insights that would be less accessible without the interaction found in a group". "Any group discussion may be called a focus group as long as the researcher is actively encouraging and attentive to the group interaction' (Kitzinger & Barbour, 1999, p. 20 as cited in Barbour (2011).

The participants in focus groups are often selected because they are homogeneous, like-minded people and have something in common which is of interest to the researchers (Ivanoff & Hultberg 2006). It is contended that if the participants share social and cultural backgrounds, they may feel more comfortable talking to each other and are more likely to talk openly. The study used participants that have the same background; thus, all the participants are students of the Ghana Institute of Journalism so that they can feel more comfortable and more likely to talk openly. Liamputtong (2015) suggests, it is this social and cultural homogeneity that allows for 'more free-flowing conversations' among the participants. Social and cultural backgrounds here include such factors as class, gender, ethnicity, religion, educational background, occupation, status within the community, and sexual preference. It is crucial to note that homogeneity in focus group research refers to the background or personal characteristics of the participants, and not their views and attitudes (Morgan 1997; Peek & Fothergill 2009). In this study, the researcher selected diploma two (2) and level 400

students from the Ghana Institute of journalism to constitute the group. The researcher developed a focus group discussion guide which was used to moderate the discussion.

3.6. Data Collection Procedure

Data collection procedure or process refers to the various steps, ways, and means through which the researcher applied the various data collection instruments to gather data for the research study. For this study, the procedures followed to gather data for this study have been discussed below:

3.6.1 Interviews

With an introductory letter from the Communication and Media studies Department at the University of Education, Winneba, I contacted the interviewees to schedule a telephone interview due to the COVID-19 pandemic. After the participants had been briefed on the focus of the study and the need to interview them for their perspectives on the issue under investigation, the interviews commenced on the scheduled date and time. On the day of the interviews, the researcher called the participants five minutes before the scheduled time to remind them of the interview. A semi-structured interview guide that involved open-ended questions was used. Semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions allow for greater flexibility and freedom on the part of both interviewers and interviewees in terms of planning, implementing, and organizing the interview content and question (Braun & Clark, 2011). The interviewees were asked questions that unravelled answers about fake news and media literacy. Follow-up questions were also used whenever necessary. A mobile phone was used as a primary tool in collecting data for each meeting. Also, notes were taken during the interview. Averagely, each interview lasted for 30 -40 minutes. The interviews were recorded, transcribed, and cleaned before coding.

3.6.2 Focus Group Discussion

The focus group discussions also comprised students of the institute who were willing to participate and give information once they were convinced the purpose of the study was purely academic. The focus group discussion was done in two sessions. The researcher called and shared the link to the zoom meeting with participants 5 minutes to the beginning of each session. The discussion was done via zoom because the researcher could not meet physically with the participant as a result of COVID 19. The focus group discussion for the sessions lasted for one hour forty minutes. According to Liamputtong (2015), participants with different backgrounds can restrict the openness and sincerity of the discussion. In this case, the researcher believes that the class level can be a restricting factor if the two, thus diploma 2 and level 400 students are mixed, and hence, the researcher conducted two separate sessions for each group.

During the session, participants were allowed to introduce themselves, thus mention their name, course of study, and level. This was done so the participants feel comfortable before the discussion. Also, the researcher asked the permission of the participants to record the meeting, and participants were given the chance to either turn on or off their video during the discussion. Also, notes were taken during the focus group discussion.

The document analysis was done to corroborate the findings from the FGDs and the interviews. Ten (10) course outlines (attached as appendix) were picked for analysis. The ten (10) documents (course outlines) that were looked at were grouped into media-related and non-media-related courses. In gathering data for the document analysis, an appointment with the secretary of the faculty of journalism was first booked. The researcher was given a day to come to the institute to pick the requested documents.

University of Education, Winneba http://ir.uew.edu.gh

When the course outlines were given, the researcher printed them out and grouped them into two major themes; media related, and non-media related. I then used a pink paper highlighter to highlight words or sentences that are similar. This was then to help identify quotes to support the themes that were formed.

3.8. Data Analysis

The analysis of the data for the study followed the manual thematic analysis procedures. Thematic analysis is concerned with systematically identifying, organizing, and offering insight into patterns of meaning (themes) across a dataset (Braun and Clarke 2012). This study made interpretations into how media literacy and fake news were integrated with the teaching curriculum and taught in the Ghana Institute of Journalism. This process allowed the study to make associations in the analysis as well as examine how particular themes were recurring in the study. The thematic analysis also enabled the researcher to generate individual themes and to do a cross-analysis of themes. This allowed the study to compare the issues raised with the available literature.

Adapting the thematic analysis process also afforded the study the locus to examine the data in order to discover common themes from more than one respondent (Ibrahim, 2012). According to Braun and Clarke (2013), thematic analysis is only an analysis method, therefore, it can be used to construct a critical constructionist analysis that is able to identify the manifest meanings of data content, as well as the latent meanings inherent in data. Qualitative studies value critical subjectivity and reflexivity, thematic analysis enabled the study to analyze the experiences of lecturers and students of the institute on the issue under investigation.

The rationale for using thematic analysis for this study was based on the fact that interpretations were drawn through detecting and identifying factors that gave

appropriate explanations to people's actions, thoughts, and behaviors (Creswell, 2013; Hatch, 2002;). Thus, it will enable the researcher to detect and identify factors in the data (from the interviews, FDGs, and document analysis) that afford the researcher the opportunity to draw interpretations that give appropriate explanations as to whether the curriculum equips students with media literacy skills that help students to detect fake news.

A lot of scholars have theorized on how to conduct a thematic analysis (Braun & Clark, 2013; Creswell, 2013; Crawford, Brown & Majomi, 2008). However, the analysis of data for this study followed the processes espoused by Miles and Huberman (1994) and adopted by Alhojailan (2012). This process outlined three stages to conducting a thematic analysis. These are the data reduction stage, the display of data level, and data drawing which outlines the issues for validation of the extracted themes.

The data reduction involved transcribing the interviews, sorting them, discarding irrelevant portions - such as when questions were asked so that conclusions can be drawn and data verified - (Miles & Huberman, 1994). After transcribing the interviews, three columned table was drawn with the first column for raw data, the second column for themes generated and the third column for general commentary of the data (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Halldorson, 2009). The raw data was read on four occasions (Biklen, 2007) to give the researcher a feel of the data and a clearer understanding of the issues (Ryan & Bernard, 2003). Both a vertical and axial reading of the texts were carried out. By vertical reading, each interviewee's transcript was separately analyzed. By axial reading, the transcribed data were placed side-by-side a horizontal analysis of the issues raised. After the readings, themes were generated from the data. Bernard's (2000) ocular scan method was used to search for themes, get the full image of the

University of Education, Winneba http://ir.uew.edu.gh

interview, and make connections between the interviewee's ideas, actions, and thoughts (Attard & Coulson, 2012; Kim, 2008). This approach to the thematic analysis has been used by other scholars to generate a comprehensive analysis of the data (Brinkmann & Kyale, 2014; Eksell & Thelander, 2014; Heide & Simonsson, 2015).

The next stage was using a highlighter pen to identify sentences and paragraphs that have a correlation with the objectives and research questions (Halldorson, 2009). Items that were related to the objectives were coloured purple. The highlighted sentences and paragraphs were analysed for the themes that were generated. Forming the themes involved breaking the data into smaller pieces. After that, the whole document was read again to be sure that all aspects of the data had been duly attended to (Ryan & Bernard, 2003).

Though a lot of caution was taken in handling the data, it was important to validate how reliable the themes were to the study. The validation of the themes was done using another two independent reviewers. It was the duty of the independent reviewers to also go through the transcribed data and analyze it thoroughly. After that, the generated themes were compared with that of the researcher to identify similarities and divergences. Themes generated that did not agree with each other were re-worked or discarded on the advice of a fourth analyst. The idea behind this process was to have highly reliable themes through the inter-coder analysis (Hosmer, 2008). This gives a better comprehension of the themes as a result of the inputs of the outside independent reviewer (Miles & Huberman1994; Hosmer, 2008).

Like the transcribed interviews and focus group discussion, documents for the document analysis were skimmed first and later thoroughly examined using elements of thematic analysis (Bowen, 2009; Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006). The study

University of Education, Winneba http://ir.uew.edu.gh

identified important information relating to the research objectives and questions as appropriate themes (Corbin & Strauss, 2008).

3.8. Trustworthiness

When it comes to trustworthiness, Creswell (2013) opines that it is one of the ways researchers can show the level of accuracy of their data and research. Creswell (2014, p.201) asserts that in qualitative research, "validity is used to determine whether the findings are accurate from the standpoint of the researcher, the participant, or the readers account". Creswell (1998) recommends that prolonged engagement and observation of the research phenomenon, triangulation, peer review and debriefing, negative case analysis, clarification of research bias, member checking, rich-thick description as well as external audits as methods of checking trustworthiness in qualitative research but he agrees that in qualitative research, at least two of these verification procedures must be used.

The trustworthiness of this study was based on the construct and external validity. In Yin's (2009) opinion, there are three ways in which a qualitative case study can achieve construct trustworthiness ; the use of multiple sources of evidence, the imputing of a chain of evidence and to have the case study report reviewed by key informants. To achieve internal validity, this study resorted to the use of data triangulation (Creswell, 2013). Paiva, Leão, and Mello (2011) also proposed five trustworthiness criteria in qualitative research: triangulation, the construction of a research corpus, a clear, rich, and detailed description of the research performed, surprise, and feedback of informants (communicative validity). Triangulation may be the best-known criterion for qualitative researchers. Triangulation consists of the interrelationship between the information obtained from the data that was collected from different sources to increase the

understanding of the study in question, thus improving the reliability of the results. (Paiva, Leão, and Mello, 2011).

According to Patton (1999), triangulation makes it possible to compare and cross-check data, thus, assessing the consistency of the information coming from different sources at different times. Olson, McAllister, Grinnell, Gehrke -Walters, & Appunn, (2016) note that triangulation has been one of the most used methods to ensure validity in research. Fusch and Ness (2017), also assert that the triangulation technique allows the researcher to explore several facets of the studied phenomenon. The study relied on the use of focus group discussions, interviews, and document analysis to explore several facets of fake news and media literacy, making the study rigorous and reliable. This, according to Cesar, Antunes and Vidal (2010), is one of the vital points to achieving methodological rigor. Gil, Licht and Oliva (2015) further observe that the most distinctive aspect of a case study is through triangulation.

Member checking was also used in this study. After the recorded interviews were gathered and transcribed, the raw data, its analysis, and interpretations were taken back to the participants to judge the accuracy and credibility of the issues raised during the data gathering process. Stake (1995, p. 119), is of the view that the case study participant should 'play a major role to the study directing as well as acting' to provide 'critical observations or interpretations. The discussions from the focus group were also transcribed, its raw data, analysis, and interpretation were shared with the participants to make sure the issues raised during the discussions were well captured. I have been able to ensure that interpretations of people's experiences during the focus group discussions are conducted with the literature as a guiding point. The document analysis of the course outlines for the 2018/2019 academic year was coded into themes and was

sent to the lecturers in charge of the course to cross-check and affirm that the information on the course outlines was well represented.

Again, the study had been able to define the boundaries of the case and linked evidence and rigor in every step of the study (Martins, 2006). Each of the data collection processes has been outlined in detail and appropriate analysis tools incorporated. Thick descriptions of events were considered. These descriptions gave a detailed account of what took place at each step of the study, including describing the participants. The use of many works conducted in the field gave direction to the whole process of why the case study was extensively incorporated.

Again, I have been able to bracket myself from the study in such a way that I have no particular interest in the outcome of the results hence, my biases and prejudices are limited and not likely to shape the interpretation and approach of the study (Creswell, 2013).

3.9. Ethical Consideration

Ethics, in academics, is a branch of moral philosophy concerns about the study of conduct that strives to answer age-old questions about duty, honor, integrity, virtue, justice, the good life, and so on (Resnik, 2007). Areas of dishonesty to constitute unethical issues, according to Trochim (2006), include plagiarism, fabrication, and falsification, non-publication of data, faulty data gathering procedures, poor data storage and retention, misleading authorship, sneaky publication practices, involuntary participation, uninformed consent, anonymity, and confidentiality. The absence of the above-mentioned variables constitutes ethical research and it is dependent entirely on the researcher conducting the study. With the significance of ethics in mind, the study exercised honesty at all stages; avoided biases in content analysis, interpretation and

University of Education, Winneba http://ir.uew.edu.gh

avoided exaggeration in data presentation. Ethical considerations in qualitative studies start prior to the study and continue throughout until the publishing of the study (Creswell, 2013).

Although the necessity of confidentiality has been questioned (Nespor, 2000; Walford, 2005), it was necessary to conceal the identity of the participants in this study because of personal reasons on behalf of the respondents. Assigning fictitious names and composite profiles (Creswell, 2013) helped to conceal the identities of participants. During the interviewing and focus group sessions, I avoided leading questions, showing personal impressions, and disclosing sensitive information (Creswell, 2013). Falsification of authorship and plagiarism were avoided.

3.10. Chapter Summary

The chapter outlined in detail, the methodology of the study. It had satisfied the philosophical underpinnings of conducting a case study under a social constructionist paradigm. The process involved in data collection and analysis had been clearly stated.

University of Education, Winneba http://ir.uew.edu.gh

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

3.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses the research data collected and the findings in a detailed and in-depth manner. This is in line with Brennen's (2017) argument that qualitative research offers the researcher the opportunity to interpret and discuss the data collected in a way that is deep and rigorous. Data was generally collected through three different techniques document analysis, focus group discussion and interviews. The discussions are presented under these three broad categories.

For the purposes of ensuring anonymity of the research participants, and in line with Creswell's (2013) argument that researchers must make efforts at respecting the privacy and anonymity of the participants, the researcher assigned codes to the interview participants. The first interviewee is referred to as IntP1, the second is referred to as IntP2, the third participant is referred to as IntP3, the fourth is referred to as IntP4 and the fifth Participant is referred to as IntP5. Also, the FGD participants were named FGD1, FGD2, FDG3, FDG4 FDG5, FDG 6, and FDG 7.

The research questions for the study were as follows:

1. How does journalism curriculum equip students with media literacy skills?
2. How do students' knowledge of media literacy aid in their detection of fake news?
3. What are students' perspectives on fake news identification and media literacy training so far as their curriculum is concerned?

University of Education, Winneba http://ir.uew.edu.gh

To be able to discuss the research questions comprehensively, first it is important to present some basic demographics of the participants. This would help in the further understanding of the discussion.

Table 1: Demographic of Participants (Lecturers)

Name /Initials	Level of Education	Teaching Experience	Level Taught	Subject Taught
IntP4	PhD	13 years	Degree and Diploma	Media and society & New media
IntP 5	PhD	10 years	Degree	Introduction to Journalism & Community journalism
IntP3	MPhil	5 years	Degree and Diploma	Information Gathering and Research
IntP2	MPhil	5 years	Degree and Diploma	Introduction to Journalism
IntP1	MPhil	4 years	Diploma	Introduction to mass communication.

Table 1 above shows the demographic of the interviewees. From the table, it is evident that all four (4) interviewees have been with the institute for at least 5 years or more. Two of the interviewees indicated that they were Teaching Assistants for a year before being appointed as lecturers. The one-year work as a teaching assistant was not included in their teaching experience because the Institute does not allow teaching assistants to teach, hence, the one year may not be relevant to the main objective of the study.

Table 2: Demographic of FGD Participants

Name or Initials	Level of education	Duration of Study
FDG1	degree	4 years
FDG2	degree	4 years
FDG3	degree	4 years
FDG4	Diploma	2 years
FDG5	Diploma	2 years
FDG6	Diploma	2 years
FDG7	degree	4 years

Table 2 above shows the demographics of the focus group discussion participants. Out of the seven (7) participants who took part in the discussion, four (4) of the participants were degree students and three (3) were diploma students. The degree program is four (4) years while the diploma program is two (2).

4.1. RQ1. How does the journalism curriculum equip students with media literacy skills?

Media literacy involves the ability of individuals to critically analyze and evaluate produced messages in print, television movies, and online (Hobbs 2011; Mhihailidis, 2014; Potters 2004). The body of literature surrounding the field of media literacy has been described as "a large complex patchwork of ideas" (Potter, 2010 p.18), but perhaps the most commonly cited definition is by Aufderheide (1993): "The ability of a citizen to access, analyze, and produce information for specific outcomes" (p. 6). Basic assumptions of the field include the precepts that media are constructed and construct reality, that media have commercial, ideological, and political motivations and implications, that form and content are related, that each medium has unique aesthetics

and conventions, and, finally, that receivers negotiate the meanings of messages (Aufderheide, 1993). The goals of educating people in these precepts are to create informed, autonomous citizens who question the information they receive, appreciate aesthetics, develop self-esteem and competence, and have a sense of advocacy (Aufderheide, 1993; Tyner,1998).

In the case of teaching fake news and media literacy at the Ghana Institute of Journalism, this research question seeks to investigate how the journalism curriculum at GIJ equipped students with media literacy skills. From the analysis of data gathered, the following themes were identified to answer the research question: *Media literacy taught as a direct course: and media literacy partially taught as a direct course.* Based on Potter's cognitive theory of media literacy (2004), the themes are examined to explain the development of media literacy skills at the Ghana Institute of Journalism.

4.4.1. Media literacy taught as a direct topic under courses

Analysis of data gathered established that media literacy was directly taught as a topic both at the Diploma and Degree level . The majority of the lecturers (3 out of the 5 interviewees) admitted that they taught media literacy as a topic under two core courses (Media and Society; Information Research) at both the degree and diploma levels. Thus, lecturers of these courses devoted some specific weeks to the teaching of media literacy as a topic. For instance, IntP1 who teaches the Degree students notes in the interview:

> *Yes, and I am happy to say that I am one of the first to start teaching that in 2018. We introduce media literacy into our Information and Research course, so the course is segmented, the first three weeks are for teaching media and information literacy. And then we also teach that as a topic under the Media and Society course.*

His counterpart who also teaches the Diploma students also claims that:

> *I teach media literacy as a topic when I am teaching my research and information gathering course.*

Another discovery made from the analysis of the data was that while some lecturers taught the media literacy topic alongside fake news, others taught media literacy as a topic without linking it to fake news. Out of the 5 lecturers interviewed, 1 of them admitted that he taught the topic alongside fake. Hence, a participant posits that:

> *I do teach media literacy as a subject and anytime I am teaching that topic, I usually teach fake news as well. You cannot teach media literacy without saying anything about fake news.*

However, some of the lecturers (2 out of the five interviewees) directly taught just the media literacy aspect without mentioning or focusing on the fake news aspect. The respondents attributed this to the fact that the institute (GIJ) is not purely a journalism training institution, hence, cannot teach fake news alongside media literacy as a topic on its own.

Participants asserts that:

> *I teach news writing and so I mostly teach only media literacy as a topic so that it can benefit the students more and they can relate with it better.*

They, however, added that they prefer to mention it while teaching topics they think are closely related or intertwine with the media.

In this light, IntP2 said that:

> *I believe that some of the topics have aspects of them or some components especially when teaching students how to identify fake news, I think that if you teach a course or a topic that lightly touches on fake news, effectively you've addresses aspects of media literacy because I do believe that media literacy is one of the objectives of the course or the whole concept of media literacy is to expose students to the nuances of the media work and to help them appreciate and consuming media content.*

The researcher further probe into why some lecturers believe media literacy should be taught alongside fake news while others do not. Data analysis revealed that most

interviewees (3 of them) hold the assertion that the two terms, thus fake news and media literacy, should not necessarily be treated separately from each other but the remaining two (2) interviewees hold the view that fake news and media literacy cannot be treated as the same.

In this regard, IntP4 claims that:

> *Well, a course like Media and Society can be classified as media literacy somehow depending on topics and how you teach it because for me my understanding of media literacy is for your students or your audience to understand how the media functions and why they do what they do. So over the years if I teach for instance introduction to communication, or elements of communication, they appear in there but they are not classified as media literacy but my students will begin to appreciate how the media operates and why the media do what they do. It is only recently that we decide to, no we didn't even. It was because we had a course called media and society that we often have media literacy in there. But I think it's tautology or redundant because all the courses or topics make the students aware or they become literate in what the media does and the impact it has on them. So, the media literacy alone as a standalone course..., If you're a University and you want to call it Media Literacy then you can have all this under Media Literacy, but if you leave it as aspects in that course, then it's okay.*

This finding is not in tandem with Buckingham and Bragg's (2004) view that the obvious starting point for conceptualizing media literacy would be to understand the importance of educating and providing media literacy equipment skills for young people. Thus, because the literature on media literacy emphasizes people's perceived beliefs about their ability to critically consume, question, and analyze information, it is prudent that people are equipped with skills to do that. It has been established that the ability of individuals to predict their perceived competence of media literacy leads to greater identification of fake news stories (Gross & Latham, 2009; Vraga, Tully, Kotcher, Smithson, & Broeckelman-Post, 2015).

In highlighting the importance of literacy in terms of democracy and citizens civic engagement, Media literacy study should include the understanding of news literacy which was developed from a similar theoretical tradition as media literacy (Malik, Cortesi, & Gasser, 2013). The goals of news literacy include an understanding of the role that news plays in society, a motivation to seek out news, the ability to find and recognize news, the ability to critically evaluate and analyze news, and the ability to produce news. News audiences can achieve these goals through a greater understanding of the conditions within which news is produced, including its normative goals and influences, which sometimes conflict with journalistic ideals of objectivity and truth (Ashley, Maks, & Craft, 2013; Shoemaker & Reese, 2013).

Also, the findings are in sync with the theory of media literacy which was propounded by Potters (2004). He tries to establish the influence media exert on people. The theory was developed to protect media consumers from content they see both online and in the mainstream media. Potter's cognitive theory of media literacy (2004) classify the process of becoming media literate as; development of knowledge structure, applying the knowledge structure to critical thinking toward media message, and lastly the ability of media literacy to have a purpose.

4.1.2. Media literacy partially taught as a topic under courses

Analysis of data gathered established that some lecturers at the Ghana Institute of Journalism (GIJ) partially taught media literacy under some course. Thus, some of the lecturers do not teach it as a direct topic but find ways to integrate it into the course they are teaching. For instance, IntP3 indicates that:

> *I teach a course called media systems and so, even though I do not teach media literacy as a topic, I do mention it in relation to the course itself which is media systems.*

Further probe into how these lecturers can equip the students with media literacy skills without having to directly teach it as topics revealed that some of the lecturers prefer not to ascribe the term media literacy to the topics that they teach.

This is what IntP 2 told the researcher:

> *So over the years if I teach for instance introduction to communication, or elements of communication, they appear in there but they are not classified as media literacy but my students will begin to appreciate how the media operates and why the media do what they do.*

Interestingly, some of the lecturers interviewed stated that they even include fact-checking while trying to partially teach the student media literacy skills. This caught the researcher's attention because while they may not teach fake news and media literacy directly, they do acknowledge its importance. They even stated some of the ways they equip students. IntP 1 said this to the researcher:

> *Well, that's interesting because media literacy is practical. So, in addition to giving them texts to read and giving them presentations. I also try to share with them some practical steps that you can use in deconstructing media texts. Knowing the author, the purpose for which the author is communicating that message. Knowing the elements that are hidden in the message so they can deconstruct it. So, I even brought adverts to class and play, and I asked my students*

University of Education, Winneba http://ir.uew.edu.gh

> *to deconstruct those adverts. So, we break it down and we try to sort of experiment. So, we'd deconstruct the adverts. And that is our way of trying to rationalize things. We would like to use stuff like a movie but those very long and for a 2 to 3-hour lecture we will rely on short clips that we can handle like music videos sometimes adverts.*

However, IntP4 seems to defer from the views of IntP1. He told the researcher in an interview that:

> *Well, the way we use to teach media literacy as I said has changed because we didn't have a specific course called media literacy it was spread in between courses. But at the beginning of the year 2000 or around the middle of 2000, we had this international project where we used to look at... that was the beginning of social media so we called it social media something for development and we invited people and we had workshops and then later a seminar. That was the genesis of media literacy, but we usually teach it partially.*

To sum up, data gathered from the interviews indicated that through the direct teaching of media literacy as a topic and partial teaching of aspects of media literacy under courses, the students in GIJ were equipped with media literacy skills. It was also discovered that the majority of lecturers have taught their students fact-checking as a verification method in identifying fake news even though they are directly or partially teaching media literacy and fake news as a course.

These findings can also be linked to the theory of media literacy which was propounded by Potters (2004). In establishing the importance of media literacy and fake news, it is key that media consumers are taught to develop knowledge structure, apply the knowledge structure to critical thinking toward media message, and the ability of media literacy to have a purpose. Hence, by directly or partially teaching the students about media literacy and fake news, the lecturers are affording the students the opportunity to develop their knowledge structure as far as media literacy and fake news are concerned. This way, irrespective of how a student was taught media literacy or fake news, thus directly or partially, they will develop the ability to develop knowledge and finally,

apply the knowledge gained to critically analyzing contents both in the online media and the mainstream media.

Literacy studies draw audiences into a deeper understanding of mass communication processes and effects and they may address broader questions about cultural literacy and citizen knowledge (Hirsch, Kett, & Trefil, 1987; 2002). Media studies and information literacy education have their roots in early research about the ability to read, write and speak (Ruben, 1997). Scholars have considered the connection between these areas and the development of visual and computer literacy skills (Potter, 2001). This is in line with the researcher's findings and goes to support the researchers claims that the subject of media literacy and fake news should be taught whether directly or partially.

4.2 RQ2. How does students' knowledge of media literacy aid in their detection of fake news?

The frequency of fake news belies a widespread inability to distinguish fact from fiction. In addition to creating conducive spaces, journalism educators and students must have a foundation of knowledge on which to base their deliberations and against which they can assess what they see in the world. This foundation of knowledge expands on traditional digital literacy curricula. Many educators are familiar with efforts to teach digital literacy Caulfield (2016). In answering research question two, the analyzes of the data gathered during a focus group discussion came up with the following themes:

> *knowledge on fake news and media literacy prior to teaching curricula exposure, knowledge acquired because of the exposure to the teaching curriculum, and application of knowledge gain to deciphering information.*

University of Education, Winneba http://ir.uew.edu.gh

4.2.1. knowledge on fake news and media literacy prior to teaching curricula exposure.

Analysis of data gathered established that some participants of the focus group discussion have an idea or know what fake news is before coming into contact with their lecturers.

FDG 2 asserts that:

> *Before I came to class, I have some knowledge on fake news because I hear my collogues in the newsroom saying it.*

Some participants also stated that some of their courses in the first year had tackled the issues of fake news and media literacy during their lectures indirectly. Thus, they mention it casually and they decided to go and read more on the topic. FGD1 indicates during the discussion that:

> *…. to a large extent, the courses have touched on both the fake news aspects and that media literacy, but unfortunately, um, the subject of fake news, especially wasn't dealt in depths, right. It was just touched on superficially, but of course, it was mentioned here and there in a few of the courses throughout the year.*

This finding does not fully sink with Hu and Kuh's (2001) view that students' engagement with lecturers should be taken seriously by the students as well as the quality of effort students themselves devote to educationally purposeful activities will contribute directly to their desired outcomes. Thus, if students take the initiative to read more and to do further reading on what their lecturers would mention in class, it will go a long way to help them acquire knowledge on the topic.

While students have responsibilities for their own engagement, there are important ways in which lecturers can contribute to the facilitation of engagement. These can range from Coates's (2005) suggestion of academic staff "making themselves available

for consultation outside class time" (p.10) to Hu & Kuh's (2001) suggestion that "faculty members can make concrete links between what students are reading and discussing and other aspects of their lives" (p. 90). Thus, when those practical links are made between what they read or are taught and how they can relate that to their lives, it makes it easy for them to relate it to their daily lives.

4.2.2. Knowledge acquired because of the exposure to the teaching curriculum

Audiences are likely to get most of their news online or through social commentary television (e.g., The Daily Show) rather than mainstream news outlets, and over two-thirds of teenagers participate at least monthly in social causes (Pew Research Center, 2015). However, today's audiences have a growing distrust in mainstream politics and are the least likely generation to exercise their voting rights. Many are dissatisfied with conventional politics and government; they do not like negative campaigns and think that most politicians ignore them (Bennett, 2008).

These biases do not aid in the audience's discernment of fake news. More fundamentally, even though audiences tend to feel comfortable in the mass media world, they often have poor evaluation skills (Stanford History Education Group, 2016). Furthermore, they tend to generalize the quality of new sources rather than compare and prefer specific sites based on relative authority (Eysenbach, 2008). Particularly in the social media arena, audiences are not just passing on or commenting on existing news and other information, but they are also generating knowledge (Bennett, 2008). Unfortunately, online discussion forums tend to assert personal opinions more than promote respectful and deep deliberation. Such practices can result in a greater spread of fake news rather than its containment. (Farmer, 2019). To curb

this problem, it is important that audiences are attention is given to media literacy skills development.

To ascertain the views of the focus group discussion participants as to whether they acquired knowledge on media literacy and fake news from their exposure to the curricula, FGD 5 told the researcher this:

> *Well, I did not know what media literacy is until our research and information gathering lecturer taught us that in our first year second semester.*

One interesting trend that was discovered by the researcher during the focus group discussion was that when the question of whether the students had a known idea of what fake news and media literacy was until they were told in class, most of the participants were in the affirmative. However, when the researcher poses a follow-up question of how the exposure to the curricula had affected their understanding of fake news and media literacy, the participants could not answer. This made the researcher be of the view that, students do not fully understand what they were taught in class hence, could not state clearly if they had acquired any knowledge based on their exposure to the teaching curricula. The researcher went a step further to ascertain if participants can state categorically that, they now know how the media work and how information is created because of them taking a course that exposed them to media literacy. In answering that FGD 4 made this comment to the researcher:

> *Yeah. Learning media literacy gave me the ability to identify what news is and to be able to understand the various things you have to look out for say the photos used in writing a story, having to look at the meaning of the story, and also having to look at various media houses that you can source it from within that particular jurisdiction that the news has been shared. I will say it gave me the ability to have the skills to identify fake news.*

In terms of knowing if the participants were taught media literacy or any of the forms of media literacy, the majority of the focus group discussion participants were in the

University of Education, Winneba http://ir.uew.edu.gh

affirmative. The researcher went further to ask them if they can explain what media literacy is based on what they were taught. FGD3 said this to the researcher:

> *Well, I mean we have been taught that if you don't fully understand a word you try to break it down so MEDIA and LITERACY. So, Media is basically the channel through which information is shared across and Literacy basically is your understanding of something. So, If I decide to put the two together, Media Literacy is how you understand the information that is shared across various media platforms. So, if any information is shared, how are you going to deduce the facts of that information. Are you able to cross-check those facts, do you even understand that kind of words, how they are encoded., are you able to decode them? So, your level of decoding a message which has been encoded and shared across depends on how well your Literacy or understanding goes. So, this is how I understand Media Literacy.*

The explanation given was not detailed enough. All efforts by the researcher to ask further questions in other to know the depth of understanding of the student on the topic prove futile, hence, the researcher identified that as a gap either on the part of the students or the lecturers. This is not in sync with Astin's student engagement theory which emphasizes that, for institutions to have a desirable outcome for higher education, it has to be seen from how their student develop, change and acquire skills that help them to participate in both their academic work and other works. Hence, the theory offers the educators a premise for designing a more effective learning environment, in achieving holistic student development. The theory of student engagement has also been treated as a solution to the lower graduation rate and non-performance of students (Engle & Tinto, 2008).

In the new information age, it is important for individuals to go beyond simply reading text since powerful visual images, and in the context of fake news, dominate the media and information landscape. In fact, the definition of text has been expanded to include a variety of forms and content beyond traditional print media –including cumulative, frequent, and repetitive electronic media messages that produce new meanings

(Silverblatt, 1995). Language constructions, whether through printed word or electronic media is "an endless chain of ambiguous associations and connections that offer wide potentialities for interpretation and for manipulation" (Edelman, 1988 p.78).

The obvious starting point for conceptualizing media literacy would be to understand the importance of educating young people (Buckingham & Bragg, 2004). If critical thinking skills about media are learned at an early age, then more research is needed on young people. The focus needs to be on what they are being taught in the schools to "... develop their ability to protect themselves from – or, more positively, to understand and to deal effectively with –the broader media environment" (Buckingham, 2000, p. 59). In the context of Ghana, there is a need for young people especially university students to develop the ability to detect misinformation online. In achieving that, tertiary institutions like GIJ must integrate media literacy in their teaching curricula and the lecturers must make sure that students are well equipped with media literacy skills to identify fake news online.

Again, in higher education, there is currently an emphasis on students becoming more engaged in the learning process (Carini, Kuh and Klein 2006). Indeed, there are suggestions that students should become active co-creators of learning and that this method has led to some suggestions for greater student participation in designing specific elements of courses such as assessment (Nicol, 2008). There have also been a handful of specific calls for students in Europe to become active participants in the design of the curriculum. Fraser and Bosanquet (2006) outline definitions of the curriculum given by academic staff with one definition describing the curriculum as "…a dynamic, emergent and collaborative process of learning for both student and teacher" (Fraser and Bosanquet, 2006, p.272). This expands the traditional idea of the

curriculum towards a view of the "teacher and student acting as co-constructors of knowledge" (Fraser & Bosanquet, 2006, p.275). When lecturers at GIJ involves their students in curricula development, it becomes easy for them to get involved in the learning process.

4.2.3. Application of knowledge gain to deciphering information

The flow of fake news in traditional media and on social media platforms has increased dramatically with media and information literacy skills becoming more important than ever. Media literacy skills promote the critical thinking skills that enable people to make independent choices, in particular how to evaluate and choose different information sources and channels, as well as how to interpret the news and information received through those channels. (Suminas and Jastramskis 2020).

The role of media literacy education is emphasized especially in the context of young people's education. Despite the fact that young people use new technologies and forms of communication with ease, they do not necessarily have the ability to fully analyze and evaluate media content. Media literacy helps young people to understand media content correctly, critically dissect media forms, and consequently to benefit from media intelligently (Schmidt, 2013). Thus, if students at GIJ are exposed to media literacy skills, it will help them to understand, dissect and correct media content.

In line with Schmidt (2013), the researcher tried to find out from the participants if the knowledge gain after their exposure to discussions on fake news and media literacy help them to distinguish false information from true information. In answering that FGD6 told the researcher during the discussion that:

> *Well, yes to a large extent. Because of what I learned from class on fake news and media literacy, anytime I see information online, I try*

University of Education, Winneba http://ir.uew.edu.gh

as much as possible to remember what my lecturer told me and I try to apply those pointers to the information.

This is in sync with Ashlock, 2011 and Schmidt, 2013 view that the necessity of media literacy in the university curriculum is reasoned from a cultural studies perspective and is emphasized in the importance of the impact of media usage on "lived society" (Onge, 2018, p. 15). Although media literacy competencies should not only be addressed during media literacy courses, associated competencies can also be addressed in an interdisciplinary fashion in a wide range of courses across the university-level curriculum (Ashlock, 2011; Schmidt, 2013). This places importance on the fact that, for them to be able to know how to distinguish false news from a true one, they need to be media literates.

Also, the researcher during the focus group discussion tried to find out from the participants if they think the course has been of help to them especially as journalism or public relation students, and will help them in their journalist work. FGD3 told the researcher that:

Yes of course it has been of great help. I volunteer with a radio station. I can now do good stories for my station because of what I was taught in my research and information gathering class. I can know if when some send me information which is not true.

This is in tandem with Fry's (2018) view that Media literacy education is extremely important for journalism students because, after finishing their studies, as journalists, they are going to be responsible for the media content (Katherine 2018). She argues for the necessary inclusion of digital media literacy into curriculum related to television and radio in the context of a "paradigm shift in the existing media landscape" (p. 14). A media literate perspective could improve journalism practices by providing journalism students with a more holistic knowledge of message construction and

reception. When journalists attain insights into how texts are interpreted, used, and enjoyed by audiences, they may gain proficiency in storytelling from the production side (Mihailidis, 2006).

4.3 RQ3. What are students' perspectives on fake news identification and media literacy training so far as their curriculum is concerned?

A recent review of media literacy education across the European Union reported: "an urgent but ongoing need for media literacy educators and stakeholders to document their best practice in the form of empirical classroom research, and to address enduring disconnects between theory and practice, conceptual frameworks and pedagogic practice, and educational/political policy and classroom practices" (McDougall 2018, p.63). Thus, it is important to train students or equip students with media literacy skills. Students, on the other hand, must feel or see the importance of acquiring those skills and how relevant it is to their future careers. In answering research question three, the analyzes of the data gathered during a focus group discussion came up with the following themes: *students agree to curricula's relevance to future careers and Students opt for a more practical approach than theoretical approch on the topic.*

4.3.1. Students agree to curricula relevance to future careers.

Developing curricula that are relevant to the development of students' skills for the job market is important. A curriculum defines what the learner should learn and can possibly guide when the learner learns the information from the lesson. A curriculum offers teachers the ideas and strategies for assessing student progress and the requirement a student must meet in order to be moved to the next level or grade (Patankar, 2013). A student must meet certain academic requirements to be promoted to the next level. Without the guidance of a curriculum, teachers cannot be certain that

they have supplied the necessary knowledge or opportunity for student's success at the next level, whether that level involves a high school, college, or career (Patankar and Jadhav 2013).

The researcher during the focus group discussion with the participants asked if they think the training provided to them on how to identify fake news was relevance to them and their future careers. In answering that, (4 out of 7 participants) claim that, the curricula is relevant to their career because it provides them with knowledge on the topic and how to apply that to their work in future. In line with this asserting, FGD1 stated that:

> *Of course, it is relevant. Knowing and learning media literacy skills is the best as a journalism student.*

His collogue who was a degree student also claims that:

> *I strongly support the skills the curricula provide. How can I share information as a journalist if I do not know who to determine which of the information is true or false? That is why I support the curricula and agree that it is very relevant to my future career or profession.*

These assertions indicate that majority of the participants agree that the curricula is very relevant to their future career.

FGD3 told the researcher that:

> *it is very relevant and important. Because I mean now we are promoting community journalism and I may not be able to go to a community to get a story, but I can rely on my correspondents or people within the community to get me stories. So when they send me information that is not credible, and I am passing that on to the public, then I might be misinforming them and they might be taking decisions based on the information I have given them and it puts a dent on the media organization that I work with.*

This respond is in line with Dumitru (2020) view that the best way individuals could get to a better level of fake news identification is arguably through education and as such, Italy and the US are just some of the states that include fake news identifying subjects in their curriculums. Media literacy skills have become 'constants' used in

deconstructing and constructing all forms of communication and those forms can be contextualized to acquire knowledge and create contents. Having media literacy skills, especially being able to use a consistent process of inquiry enhances the ability to communicate and to explore and share ideas that transcends subject areas as well as geographic boundaries. Thus, there are no particular subject that required the learning of media literacy because the media literacy skills are cross-curricular and common to all. It is through this process of inquiry that students interrogate, acquire and master content knowledge, but both media literacy skills and content knowledge rest on a continuum of knowledge that can always be expanded and deepened (Jolls 2014). This means that media literacy skills must be valued, articulated, and taught systematically in ways that are consistent, replicable, measurable, and scalable globally (Jolls 2012).

During the discussion, the researcher probe further to investigate if the participants think the course outlines lecturers use must state the learning of media literacy and fake news identification. For example, FGD6 responded claim that “for clarity sake and also for them to make adequate preparations, they have to include it on the course outline”.

The researcher also wanted to find out if the participants think the course should be taught to only journalism students or it must be taught across all profession, FGD1 responded by saying:

> *I would say that you don't need to be a communication student for you to be taught media literacy. In fact, I would even recommend that the Ministry of Education should incorporate media literacy from the beginning, say from JHS throughout, because it is very key. You must as a student, as an individual, you must know how to deduce right from wrong.*

This response underlines Jolls (2014) view that having media literacy skills, especially being able to use a consistent process of inquiry enhances the ability to communicate and to explore and share ideas that transcends subject areas as well as geographic

boundaries. Thus, there are no particular subjects that required the learning of media literacy because the media literacy skills are cross-curricular and common to all. Media literacy, with its emphasis on critical analysis and media production, advances itself well to designing and organizing new curricular resources and utilizing overall frameworks that support connected learning. As such, countries around the world have made media literacy a priority, most notably in Britain, where the UK regulatory agency, OfCom, has conducted research and advocated for media literacy to be taught in school and in Finland, where a national strategy for encouraging media literacy was adopted (National Policy Guidelines 2013-2016). The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has advanced media literacy education in Ghana through its ongoing commitment to the field and publishing of relevant materials to guide both students and teachers in acquiring the skills. UNESCO has also collaborated with various organizations in Ghana such as penplusbyte and Ministry of education to provide seminars and training workshops on media literacy for journalism educators

4.3.2. Students opt for more practical than theory on the topic

With the world becoming technological, organizations are including machine-based technologies in their work. It is, therefore, important that, not only should curricula teach media literacy skills to equip students to identify fake news but to also provide them with more practical steps of identifying fake news. According to Kubey (2003), "a worldwide movement in media literacy education has been growing for roughly twenty-five years now and has been marked by a number of recent developments" (p.352). Media educators from around the world are meeting and sharing curricula, research, and strategies with increasing frequency. Also, media literacy is being mandated and taught more broadly in many countries (Kubey (2003). The researcher

University of Education, Winneba http://ir.uew.edu.gh

during a focus group discussion ask the participants view on whether the teaching of fake news and media literacy was more theoretical than practical. Some of the participants (4 out of 7) noted that the teaching of fake news and media literacy was more theoretical than practical.

In response to that, FGD3 said:

> *I wouldn't have been able to determine which news is fake or not fake if not for media literacy which was taught in my media and society class. But that notwithstanding, the lecturer did not fully take the class through any practical steps, lets say how to fact-check or something so even if I see fake image, I may not really know how to practically or step by step process it to see if its fake. I only know literature about fake news and media literacy so I think our teachers should include more training and workshop sessions than the theory part.*

This response caught the researcher's attention, hence, the researcher further ask the participants what form of practical they would want their lecturers to take them through for them to develop media literacy skills. In answering that FGD 7 said:

> *I think as my other collogue said, we need more workshops. At times they can even invite quest speakers or invite experts to come and train us.*

Media literacy is rarely taught as a goal in itself. That is, media educators mostly try to increase children's and adolescents' mass media knowledge and skills because this, in turn, will maximize positive media effects and minimize negative ones and in the long run, help them to identify when an information is false (Martens 2010). The idea of media literacy education is to enable students to fully understand and act on the content, form, purpose, and effects of media messages. Media literate individuals take an active rather than a passive role in acquiring new knowledge and skills. This way, they become fully able to participate as critical consumers and citizens in a media-saturated society (Thoman & Jolls 2004; Bergsma 2004; Galician 2004a, 2004b; Kubey 2004; Claussen 2004; Jackson & Jamieson 2004; Tyner 2003; Buckingham 2007).

University of Education, Winneba http://ir.uew.edu.gh

Also, media and information literacy education will prevent future journalists from getting lost in the sea of public relations, content marketing, and misinformation (Carlson, 2018). The issue of raising the level of journalism by providing sufficiently literate representatives of this profession is of vital importance in times called by many the era of post-truth. Jason Tanz in his article entitled *Journalism Fights for Survival in the Post-Truth Era* concluded that "in a post-fact era of fake news and filter bubbles, in which audiences cherry-pick the information and sources that match their own biases and dismiss the rest, the news media seems to have lost its power to shape public opinion." (Wired, 2017). Carlson (2018) has also stated that if journalists should still "occupy the symbolic communicative Centre of democracies through normative goals of information production and dissemination" (p. 1182), there is a need for wide research in the area of media and information literacy, the results of which will influence journalism educational curricula.

When examining the relationship between journalism and MIL, it is relevant to first focus on news literacy which is at the intersection of information literacy and media literacy (Malik 2013). News is a journalistic product and the result of the work of humans (or artificial intelligence under their control) in the selection, evaluation, and preparation of certain information that must be new or partially new and has not yet been disclosed. In order for the audience to identify the news as the appropriate content, they must be news literate and, above all, develop critical thinking and communication skills to recognize news and events in the modern communication landscape (Hobbs, 2010). A broader view of news literacy should include an understanding of the role of news and journalism in society and democracy. It is even important for young people to develop their motivation to seek out news and be interested in the news. Creators of journalistic content (news) must develop professional skills for the production of the

University of Education, Winneba http://ir.uew.edu.gh

news (the best way to learn about the structure of news for citizen journalists and informed consumers also) (Malik 2013). In reality, the ability to create journalistic content cannot be decoupled from all the other abilities mentioned above.

The importance of media in education is of great essence because the possibility of people using media every day for information grows, which calls for the need to develop media literacy skills. Development of media literacy skills with young people is one of the most important tasks the school and the educational system have (Stanisavljević, Petrović, Radović & Ivanović, 2012). Media literacy represents an educational process which tends to enable members of the community to creatively and critically analyse media content on the level of production, distribution and monitoring (Zgrabljić Rotar, 2005).

In conclusion, the importance of media literacy education is widely discussed in scientific literature from various perspectives as it has several applications within different contexts (Schmidt, 2013). Due to the fact that it includes the diversity of dimensions that is technological, cultural, social, and economical, it might be called “an umbrella concept” (Koltay, 2011) and has been the subject of manifold definitions. Over the years, the main focus of media literacy has been on print and audiovisual media and peoples’ skills regarding how to practically exploit those traditional communication channels. The role of media literacy education is emphasized especially in the context of young people’s education. Despite the fact that young people use new technologies and forms of communication with ease, they do not necessarily have the abilities to fully analyze and evaluate media content. Media literacy helps young people to understand media content correctly, to critically dissect media forms, and consequently to benefit from media intelligently. The requirement for media literacy in

University of Education, Winneba http://ir.uew.edu.gh

the university curriculum is reasoned from a cultural studies perspective and is emphasized in the importance of the impact of media usage on “lived society” (Onge, 2018, p. 15). Although media literacy competencies are not only addressed during media literacy courses, related competencies can also be addressed in a wide range of courses across university curriculum (Ashlock, 2011; Schmidt, 2013).

4.4. Chapter Summary

The chapter presented data that was gathered. The data was analyzed, and the findings presented and supported with relevant literature and theories that underpinned the study.

University of Education, Winneba http://ir.uew.edu.gh

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter summarizes the entire study and most importantly, focuses attention on drawing conclusions from the major findings this study has unraveled. The chapter also seeks to make key recommendations to academia based on the observations and research findings that have emerged from the data gathered. The conclusions and recommendations are mainly hinged on the issues of fake news and media literacy education in tertiary institutions.

5.1 Summary

Proliferation of fake news and the inability of media consumers to detect fake news are some of the key issues currently confronting open societies. This is because concerns surrounding fake news have spread since the 2016 US presidential election (Gottfried and Shearer, 2016). This necessitates the need for individuals, especially university students to be equipped with fake news detection skills. Media literacy skills as one of the means for detecting fake news cannot be overemphasized. The background of this study is that Ghana is no exception to the problem of fake news. Therefore, the researcher undertook this study to ascertain how lecturers of the Ghana Institute of Journalism are integrating fake news and media literacy in the current courses they teach and how final year students of the institute are applying those knowledge to content they read online. Specifically, the study used the student engagement theory, media literacy theory, and the new media literacy framework to ascertain how students are engaged in issues of fake news and media literacy and how lecturers are leveraging new media skills to teach the students the importance of developing information and

University of Education, Winneba http://ir.uew.edu.gh

media literacy skills. In attaining these aims set out by the researcher, three major research questions were posed.

1. How does the journalism curriculum equip students with media literacy skills?
2. How does students' knowledge of media literacy aid in their detection of fake news?
3. What are students' perspectives on fake news identification and media literacy training so far as their curriculum is concerned?

Furthermore, the researcher also did a thorough literature review on the subject matter. Literature ranging from fake news, social media, to the relationship between social media and fake news was reviewed. This review became important for exploring the way previous researchers in the thematic areas related to this study handled their own research. This helped shape the focus of this study so that it is positioned in a strategic way that contributes to the body of literature.

After the extensive literature review, it emerged that many of the previous scholars in fake news and media literacy had not focused much attention on curricula development. Works of Broersma and Graham (2012, 2013) and Paulussen and Harder (2014), studied the use of explicit social media references in the news, trying to unearth the importance of social media as a source and how news consumers can identify fake news. Other scholars, such as Gulyás (2013) and Hedman and Djerf-Pierre (2013), focused on the perceptions of journalists towards these new social media platforms using surveys and interviews. Most of the research addressing fake news thus far concentrates on the direct effects of fake news on the audience (Allcott & Gentzkow, 2017; Silverman & Singer-Vine, 2016). Others have also focused on the reputation of online journalism within the fake news era. (Barthel et al., 2015; Kilgo and Sinta,2016).

University of Education, Winneba http://ir.uew.edu.gh

Even within the Ghanaian context, Ofosu and Ahiabenu (2018), only studied the perspectives of journalists on fake news and its relations to news production. The existing literature on media literacy education are within the European and Asian context, thus media literacy and curricula development within the African context are scanty.

The study employed a qualitative research approach in gathering data. Specifically, the qualitative case study was adopted as the design for the study, and in gathering data, three data gathering techniques were employed – Interview which was mainly meant to gather data from lecturers of Ghana Institute of Journalism, Focus group discussions, which were conducted with some final year diploma and degree students who were purposively sampled and Document analysis of some course outlines to support evidence from the interview and FGD.

Thereafter, the data collected were thematically analyzed. Overall, seven themes emerged from both the interview and the Focus group discussion. For the interviews, two themes emerged and are Media *literacy taught directly as a topic and media literacy partially taught as a direct topic.* For the Focus group discussion, however, a total of five themes emerged and they were duly analyzed to answer research questions 2 and 3. The five themes are; *knowledge on fake news and media literacy prior to teaching curricula exposure, knowledge acquired because of the exposure to the teaching curriculum, and application of knowledge gain to deciphering information. Students agree to curricula relevance to future careers and Students opt for more practical than theory on the topic.*

5.2. Key Findings

As discussed above, data was collected to answer three major research questions. In answering research question 1 which was to ascertain how the journalism curriculum equips students with media literacy skills, it emerged that, there was no course in the institute that is labelled "media literacy". This is evident in the diploma course outlines as the outline did not indicate specifically a subject labelled as media literacy. Some degree course outlines, on the other hand, indicated teaching topics on MIL (media information literacy). However, the majority of the lecturers interviewed indicated that they teach media literacy as a topic within their course even though they may not have indicated it on their course outline. Again, the lecturers interviewed mentioned that they provide the students with some form of media literacy equipment which are in the form of workshops and reading materials. However, others mentioned that the nature of their course makes it hard for them to fully take students through media literacy in its entirety. Again, in establishing if the interviewees take their students through some forms of training on news verification majority affirms negative. When asked specifically if they teach fact-checking, only one interviewee indicated to teach that.

Top among the findings under research question 2 is that majority of the participants had pre-existing knowledge of what fake news was before it had been mentioned to them by their lecturers. However, those participants claimed that further exposure to the subject had given them more insight into the little they knew. This supports the student involvement theory pounded by Alexander Astin, as well as the views of (Engle & Tinto, 2008; Kuh, Kinzie, Buckley, Bridges & Hayek, 2007). In response to knowing if participants were now knowledgeable in the subject under discussion as a result of their exposure to the curricula, the participant's response was affirmative. They added that they had more in-depth knowledge after they took a class in media literacy. This

can be concluded that, even though participants have some level of understanding, the teaching of the topic gave them more understanding than they had. Again, participants were asked if they are able to use the skills and knowledge acquired to identifying fake news online. Participants' responses to that were positive.

For the third research question which sought to examine what students' perspectives are on fake news identification and media literacy training so far as their curriculum is concerned, it emerged that, majority of the participants stated that, most of the discussions on media literacy and fake news were more theoretical than practical. Thus, lecturers who teach or mention the subject of media literacy and fake news mostly focus on just the literature without teaching the students practical steps in using media literacy skills in identifying fake news. Participants stated that they would prefer that, the subject is made practical since it is important to their future careers and profession. This response contradicts the response of some of the lecturers interviewed under research question one where they believe that they do take the student through some sort of practical teaching like teaching them how to fact-check and information. These responses also indicate a gap in the level of understanding of students and the level at which they could classified a topic as being taught. When participants were asked if they believe that the teaching of media literacy and fake news was relevant to their future profession, the majority of the participants said yes.

5.3 Study Limitations

Due to time constrictions and the outbreak of the corona virus pandemic, this study conducts the interviews via mobile phone conversation, and the Focus group discussion was also done via zoom. Again, the initial number for the zoom was ten but only seven

University of Education, Winneba http://ir.uew.edu.gh

participants took part as the other three were facing network challenges. This had affected the responses from the FGD.

Again, because of the pandemic and the fact that most of the participants were new to the zoom platform, the researcher used more effort than usual in teaching the participants how to use the platform and how to overcome simple network issues. Even though this had a very minimal impact on the data collection process, it got the researcher a little frustrated at the very beginning of the discussions as the researcher had to constantly repeat questions for the benefit of those who keep going on and off the platform.

Lastly, some lecturers were reluctant to provide the researcher with the course outlines. After several weeks of following up the request from the lecturers which was to no avail, the researcher had to rely on the ones provided by the secretariats. It also largely delayed the progress of the researcher thereby making the researcher spend more time than she would have spent. Nonetheless, these limitations, though challenging to an extent, did not in any way invalidate the study. The study is well placed to explain the issues of fake news and media literacy.

5.4 Recommendation from Findings

It is recommended that, the teaching of fake news and media literacy should take a more practical approach than theoretical.

Again, the teaching curriculum should clearly indicate whether lecturers will be including the teaching of media literacy and fake news in their course outlines.

University of Education, Winneba http://ir.uew.edu.gh

5.5. Recommendations for Future Studies

Future researchers can broaden the scope of this study by including other tertiary institutions to ascertain if the dynamics may be different due to the additional institutions.

Again, since media literacy can be taught at every level, future researchers can shift focus from final year students to students in other levels such as primary schools or secondary schools.

Finally, a future researcher can also apply a different research approach or design to ascertain if the same result will be seen.

REFERENCES

Abad Alcalá, L. (2019). *Media literacy among the elderly*. In R. Hobbs & P. Mihailidis (Eds.). *The international encyclopedia of media literacy, 2,*763–768.

Ahiabenu, K., Ofosu-Peasah, G., & Sam, J. (2018). *Media perspective on fake news in Ghana*. Pen Plus Bytes, 2nd May, 2018. Available from: http:// penplusbytes.org/wp content/uploads/ 2018/05/FAKE-NEWS-STUDY.pdf

Aikin, K. J., Betts, K. R., O'Donoghue, A. C., Rupert, D. J., Lee, P. K., Amoozegar, J. B., & Southwell, B. G. (2015). Correction of overstatement and omission in direct-to-consumer prescription drug advertising. *Journal of Communication, 65*, 596-618.

Allcott, H., & Gentzkow, M. (2017). Social media and fake news in the 2016 election. *Journal of Economic Perspectives, 31*, 211-235.

Al-Rodhan, N. (2017). *Post-truth politics, the fifth estate and the securitization of fake news.* Global Policy.

Alter, A. L., & Oppenheimer, D. M. (2009). Uniting the tribes of fluency to form a metacognitive nation. *Personality and Social Psychological Review, 13*, 219–235.

Althaus, S. L., Cizmar, A. M. & Gimpel, J. G. (2009) *Media supply, audience demand, and the geography of news consumption in the United States*. *Political Communication 26*(3): 249–277.

Alvermann, D. E. (2004). Media, information communication technologies, and youth literacies: A cultural studies perspective. *American Behavioral Scientist 48*(1):78-83.

American Dialect Society. (2017, January 5). "*Fake news" is 2017 American Dialect Society word of the year.*

Anderson, M., & Perrin, A. (2017). *Tech adoption climbs among older adults. Pew Research Center.*

Andsager, J. L., Austin, E. W., & Pinkleton, B. E. (2001). Questioning the value of realism: Young adults' processing of messages in alcohol-related public service announcements and advertising. *Journal of Communication, 51*, 121-142.

Archer, S. (2006). Thought beats: New technology, music video and media education. *Media International Australia Incorporating Culture & Policy, 120,* 142-155.

Arke, E. T., & Brian A. Primack. (2009). Quantifying media literacy: development, reliability, and validity of a new measure. *Educational Media International 46*(1): 53-56.

Artis, S., & Kleiner, B. M. (2006). The effects of age and the design of web-based training on computer task performance. *Human Factors and Ergonomics Society Annual Meeting Proceedings, 50*(2), 185–189.

Ashton, D. (2009). Thinking with games: exploring digital gaming imaginaries and values in higher education. *Journal of Media Practice 10*(1), 57-68.

Aspinall, E. E., Beschnett, A., & Ellwood, A. F. (2012). Health literacy for older adults: Using evidence to build a model educational program. *Medical Reference Services Quarterly, 31*(3), 302–314.

Asthana, S. (2008). Young people, media pedagogy, and participatory design: Sketching a dialogic process. *Intercutureller Dialog and Medien, 63*(1), 40–44.

Atwood, R. A. (1988). "The allied controversy" and the ethics of journalism education in the Pacific Northwest. *Journal of Mass Media Ethics 3*(1):7-17.

Aufderheide, P., (1993). *Media Literacy. A report of the national leadership conference on media literacy.* Aspen, CO: Aspen Institute.

Austin, E. W., A. C. R. Miller, J. Silva, P. Guerra, N. Geisler, L. Gamboa, O., Phakakayai, & Kuechle, B. (2002). The effects of increased cognitive involvement on college students' interpretations of magazine advertisements for alcohol. *Communication Research*, *22*(2),7-13.

Austin, E. W., and K. K. Johnson. (1997). Effects of general and alcohol-specific media literacy training on children's decision making. *Journal of Health Communication 2*(1),17-23.

Balmas, M. (2014). When Fake News Becomes Real: Combined Exposure to Multiple News Sources and Political Attitudes of Inefficacy, Alienation, and Cynicism. *Communication Research, 41*(3), 430–454.

Balmas, M. (2014). When fake news becomes real: Combined exposure to multiple news sources and political attitudes of inefficacy, alienation, and cynicism. *Communication Research, 41*, 430-454.

Banda, F. (2013). *Model curricula for journalism education: A compendium of new syllabi.* Paris: UNESCO.

Barnard, Y., Bradley, M. D., Hodgson, F., & Lloyd, A. D. (2013). Learning to use new technologies by older adults: Perceived difficulties, experimentation behaviour and usability. *Computers in Human Behavior, 29*(4), 1715–1724.

Barthel M, Shearer E, & Gottfried, J. (2015). *The evolving role of news on Twitter and Facebook.* Pew Research Center, 14 July.

Barthel, M., Mitchell, A. & Holcomb, J. (2016). *Many Americans believe fake news is sowing confusion.* Pew Research Center, 15 December.

Bawden, D. & Robinson, L. (2009). The dark side of information: overload, anxiety and other paradoxes and pathologies. *Journal of Information Science 35*(2), 180–191.

Bawden, D. (2001). Information and digital literacies: a review of concepts. *Journal of Documentation, 57*(2), 218–259.

Bawden, D. (2008). *Origins and concepts of digital literacy.* In: Lankshear C and Knobel M (ed.) Digital Literacies: Concepts, Policies and Practices. New York: Peter Lang, 17–32.

Baym, G. (2005). The Daily Show: Discursive Integration and the Reinvention of Political Journalism. *Political Communication, 22* (3), 259–276.

Beavers, S. L. (2011). Getting political science in on the joke: Using the Daily Show and other comedy to teach politics. *Political Science & Politics, 44*, 415-419.

Bedford, D. (2010). Agnotology as a teaching tool: Learning climate science by studying misinformation. *Journal of Geography, 109*, 159-165.

Beeson, I. (2005). Judging relevance: a problem for e-literacy. *Journal of the Literacy 4*(2), 7-11.

Bell, E. (2014). *Silicon Valley and Journalism: Make up or Break up? Reuters Memorial* Lecture, Oxford.

Bergsma, L. J. (2004). Empowerment education: The link between media literacy and health promotion. *American Behavioral Scientist 48*(2), 152-164.

Bergsma, L. J., & Carney, M. E. (2008). Effectiveness of health-promoting media literacy education: A systematic review. *Health Education Research, 23*(3), 522–542.

Berkeley, L. (2009). Media education and new technology: a case study of major curriculum change within a university media degree. *Journal of Media Practice, 10*(2&3),185-197.

Berkowitz, D., & Schwartz, D. A. (2016). Miley, CNN and The Onion: When fake news becomes realer than real. *Journalism Practice, 10*, 1-17.

Berkowsky, R. W., Cotten, S. R., Yost, E. A., & Winstead, V. P. (2013). Attitudes towards and limitations to ICT use in assisted and independent living communities: Findings from a specially designed technological intervention. *Educational Gerontology, 39*(11), 797–811.

Bernal, V. (2013). Please forget democracy and justice: Eritrean politics and the powers of humor. *American Ethnologist, 40*, 300-309.

Bertera, E. M. (2014). Storytelling slide shows to improve diabetes and high blood pressure knowledge and self-efficacy: Three-year results among community dwelling older African Americans. *Educational Gerontology, 40*(11), 785–800

Bessi, A., Coletto, M., Davidescu, G. A., Scala, A., Caldarelli, G., & Quattrociocchi, W. (2015). *Science vs conspiracy: Collective narratives in the age of misinformation.*

Bhardwaj, D. (2017, February 17). *India's first digital village project shuts down amid chorus for Digital India.* India: Hindustan Times.

Blažun, H., Saranto, K., & Rissanen, S. (2012). Impact of computer training courses on reduction of loneliness of older people in Finland and Slovenia. *Computers in Human Behavior, 28*(4), 1202–1212.

Blythe, T. (2002). Working hard for the money: A faith-based media literacy analysis of the top television dramas of 2000-2001. *Journal of Media & Religion 1*(3),139-151.

Bobkowski, P. S. (2015). Sharing the news: Effects of informational utility and opinion leadership on online news sharing. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly, 92*, 320-345.

Borden S. L & Tew, C. (2007). The role of journalist and the performance of journalism: ethical lessons from "fake" news. *Journal of Mass Media Ethics 22*(4): 300–314.

Breakstone, J., McGrew, S., Smith, M., Ortega, T., & Wineburg, S. (2018). Why we need a new approach to teaching digital literacy. *Phi Delta Kappan, 99*(6), 27–32.

Brennan, B. (2017). Making sense of lies, deceptive propaganda, and fake news. *Journal of Media Ethics, 32*, 179-180.

Brown, L. E., & Strommen, J. (2018). Training younger volunteers to promote technology use among older adults. *Family & Consumer Sciences Research Journal, 46*(3), 297–313.

Bryant, A. G., & Levi, E. E. (2012). Abortion misinformation from crisis pregnancy centers in North Carolina. *Contraception, 86*, 752-756.

Buchanan, M. (2017). *Commentary: why fake news spreads like wildfire on Facebook.* Chicago: Tribune.

Bucher T (2017). The algorithmic imaginary: exploring the ordinary effects of Facebook algorithms. *Information, Communication & Society 20*(1), 30–44.

Calvert, C., & Vining, A. (2017). Filtering fake news through a lens of Supreme Court observations and adages. *First Amendment Law Review, 16*, 153-177.

Cannon, M., Potter, J., & Burn, A. (2018). Dynamic, playful and productive literacies; Changing English. *Studies in Culture and Education, 25*(2), 180–197.

Carlson, M. (2017). Facebook in the news. *Digital Journalism 6,* 4–20.

University of Education, Winneba http://ir.uew.edu.gh

Castilla, D., Botella, C., Miralles, I., Bretón-López, J., Dragomir-Davis, A. M., Zaragoza, I., &Garcia-Palacios, A. (2018). Teaching digital literacy skills to the elderly using a social network with linear navigation: A case study in a rural area. *International Journal of Human- Computer Studies*, *118*, 24–37.

Cavazos-Rehg, P., Krauss, M., Grucza, R., & Bierut, L. (2014). Characterizing the followers and tweets of a marijuana-focused Twitter handle. *Journal of Medical Internet Research, 16*(6), 157-159.

Chadwick, A., & Vaccari, C. (2019). *News sharing on UK social media: Misinformation, disinformation, and correction.*

Chan, M. P. S., Jones, C. R., Jamieson, K. H., & Albarracín, D. (2017). Debunking: A meta-analysis of the psychological efficacy of messages countering misinformation. *Psychological Science, 28*, 1531-1546.

Chan, S.K and Foo, R. (2004) Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Abstracts for Information Retrieval. *IBERICA, 8*, 100–124.

Chaudhuri, M. (2014). National and global media discourse after the savage death of 'Nirbhaya': Instant access and unequal knowledge. In N.-C. *Medical Journal, 2*, 10-21.

Chen, X., Sin, S. C. J., Theng, Y. L., & Lee, C. S. (2015). Why students share misinformation on social media: Motivation, gender, and study-level differences. *Journal of Academic Librarianship, 41*, 583-592.

Chen, Y., Conroy, N. J., & Rubin, V. L. (2015). *Misleading online content: Recognizing clickbait as false news.* In Proceedings of the 2015 ACM on Workshop on Multimodal Deception Detection (pp. 15-19). New York, NY: Association for Computing Machinery.

Chipeta, E. K., Chimwaza, W., & Kalilani-Phiri, L. (2010). Contraceptive knowledge, beliefs and attitudes in rural Malawi: Misinformation, misbeliefs and misperceptions. *Malawi Medical Journal, 22*, 38-41.

Chiu, C.-J., Hu, Y. H., Lin, D. C., Chang, F. Y., Chang, C. S., & Lai, C. F. (2016). The attitudes, impact, and learning needs of older adults using apps on touchscreen mobile devices: Results from a pilot study. *Computers in Human Behavior, 63*, 189–197.

Chu, R. J., & Chu, A. Z. (2010). Multi-level analysis of peer support, Internet self-efficacy and e-learning outcomes: The contextual effects of collectivism and group potency. *Computers and Education, 55*(1), 145–154.

Clayton, K., Blair, S., Busam, J. A., Forstner, S., Glance, J., Green, G., Nyhan, B. (2019). *Real solutions for fake news? Measuring the effectiveness of general warnings and factcheck tags in reducing belief in false stories on social media.*

University of Education, Winneba http://ir.uew.edu.gh

Clifford, S., & Jerit, J. (2014). Is there a cost to convenience? An experimental comparison of data quality in laboratory and online studies. *Journal of Experimental Political Science*, *1*(2), 120–131.

Coddington, M., Molyneux, L., & Lawrence, R. G. (2014). Fact checking the campaign: How political reporters use Twitter to set the record straight (or not). *International Journal of Press/Politics, 19*, 391-409.

Coe, K., Tewksbury, D., Bond, B. J., Drogos, K. L., Porter, R. W., Yahn, A., & Zhang, Y. (2008). Hostile news: Partisan use and perceptions of cable news programming. *Journal of Communication, 58*, 201-219.

Cook, G. (2001). *The discourse of advertising* (2nd ed.). : Routledge.

Cook, J., Lewandowsky, S., & Ecker, U. K. (2017). Neutralizing misinformation through inoculation: Exposing misleading argumentation techniques reduces their influence. *PLOS ONE,12*(5), 17-29.

Cook, J., Lewandowsky, S., & Ecker, U. K. (2017). Neutralizing misinformation through inoculation: Exposing misleading argumentation techniques reduces their influence. *PLoS One, 12*, 57-99.

Cordes, S. (2009). *Broad Horizons: The Role of Multimodal Literacy in 21st Century Library Instruction.*

Craft, S., Ashley, S., & Maksl, A. (2016). Elements of news literacy: A focus group study of how teenagers define news and why they consume it. *Electronic News, 10*, 143–160.

Craft, S., Ashley, S., & Maksl, A. (2017). News media literacy and conspiracy theory endorsement. *Communication and the Public, 7*, 388–401.

Creswell, J. W. (2007). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Das, B. (2009). Media education as a development project: Connecting emancipatory interests and governance in India. *Revista Comunicar, 16*(32), 65–82.

Das, B., & Parthasarathi, V. (2011). *Media research and public policy: Tiding over the rupture.* In R. Mansell & M. Raboy (Eds), The handbook of global media and communication policy (pp. 245– 260). UK: Wiley-Blackwell.

Davison, W. P. (1983). The third-person effect in communication. *Public Opinion Quarterly, 47*, 1–15.

Day, A., & Thompson, E. (2012). *Live from New York, it's the fake news! Saturday Night Live and the (non) politics of parody*. *Popular Communication, 10*, 170-182.

University of Education, Winneba http://ir.uew.edu.gh

Del Vicario, M., Bessi, A., Zollo, F., Petroni, F., Scala, A., Caldarelli, G., & Quattrociocchi, W. (2016). The spreading of misinformation online. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America*, *113*, 554–559.

Downman, S. (2017). When a community rises up against fake news: The Change Makers' Project. Ethical Space. *The International Journal of Communication Ethics, 14*(4), 4-10.

Ecker, U. K., Lewandowsky, S., Fenton, O., & Martin, K. (2014). Do people keep believing because they want to? Preexisting attitudes and the continued influence of misinformation. *Memory & Cognition, 42*, 292-304.

Effron, D. A. (2018). *It could have been true: How counterfactual thoughts reduce condemnation of falsehoods and increase political polarization.* Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 44, 729–745. doi:10.1177/0146167217746152.

Effron, D. A., & Miller, D. T. (2012). *How the moralization of issues grants social legitimacy to act on one's attitudes.* Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 38, 690 701.

Eintraub, E. W., Kristine, A., & Johnson, K. (1997). Effects of general and alcohol specific media literacy training on children's decision making about alcohol. *Journal of Health Communication, 2*(1), 17–42.

Elberse, A. (2008). Should you invest in the long tail?. *Harvard Business Review 86*(7–8), 88–96.

Emanuelson, E., Jr. (2017). Fake left, fake right: Promoting an informed public in the era of alternative facts. *Administrative Law Review, 70*, 210-232.

Fazio, L. K., Brashier, N. M., Payne, B. K., & Marsh, E. J. (2015). Knowledge does not protect against illusory truth. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General, 144*, 993-1002.

Felton, J. (2018). A life-threatening piece of ACTUAL fake news has gone viral on Facebook. Please stop sharing it. *IFL Science. 9*, 39–42.

Festinger, L. (1957). *A theory of cognitive dissonance*. Row, Peterson.

Field, A. (2017). *Discovering statistics using IBM SPSS statistics.* North American: SAGE.

Findsen, B. (2007). Freirean philosophy and pedagogy in the adult education context: The case of older adults' learning. *Studies in Philosophy and Education, 26*(6), 545–559.

Fletcher, R. & Nielsen, R. K. (2017). *Are people incidentally exposed to news on social media? A comparative analysis*. New Media & Society. Epub ahead of print 17 August.

University of Education, Winneba http://ir.uew.edu.gh

Flood B (2016). *Mike Huckabee apologizes for sharing fake news about "liberal, Jewish" students.* The Wrap, 18 November.

Frederick, S. (2005). Cognitive reflection and decision making. *Journal of Economic Perspectives, 19*, 25–42.

Gagliardi, C., Mazzarini, G., Papa, R., Giuli, C., & Marcellini, F. (2008). Designing a learning program to link old and disabled people to computers. *Educational Gerontology, 34*(1), 15–29.

Gall, M. (2014). Intergenerational learning between teenagers and seniors with the help of computers. *Procedia: Social and Behavioral Sciences, 116*(2014), 1274–1279.

Gamliel, T. (2016). Education in civic participation: Children, seniors and the challenges of an intergenerational information and communications technology program. *New Media & Society, 19*(9), 1–18.

Garrett. R. K. & Stroud, N. J. (2014). Partisan paths to exposure diversity: differences in pro- and counter attitudinal news consumption. *Journal of Communication, 64*(4) 680–701.

Gentzkow, M. & Shapiro, J. M. (2011). Ideological segregation online and offline. *Quarterly Journal of Economics 126*(4): 1799–1839.

Glaser, A. (2017). Apple CEO Tim Cook says fake news is "killing people's minds" and tech needs to launch a counterattack. *Journal of Science, 4,* 112-131.

González, A., Paz Ramírez, M., & Viadel, V. (2012). Attitudes of the elderly toward information and communications technologies. *Educational Gerontology, 38*(9), 585–594.

González, A., Paz Ramírez, M., & Viadel, V. (2015). ICT learning by older adults and their attitudes toward computer use. *Current Gerontology and Geriatrics Research, 2015*(5), 84-93.

Gottfried, J. & Shearer, E. (2016). *News use across social media platforms 2016*. *Pew Research Center*, 26 May.

Gough, D., & Thomas, J. (2016). Systematic reviews of research in education: Aims, myths and multiple methods. *Review of Education, 4*(1), 84–102.

Guess, A. M. (2016). *Media choice and moderation: evidence from online tracking data.*

Guess, A., Nagler, J., & Tucker, J. (2019). Less than you think: Prevalence and predictors of fake news dissemination on Facebook. *Science Advances, 5*(1), 45-86.

Guess, A., Nyhan B., & Jason Reifler. (2018). 'Selective Exposure to Disinformation: Evidence from the Consumption of Fake News During the 2016 US Presidential Campaign'.

Ha, L., Hu, X., Fang, L., Henize, S., Park, S., Stana, A., & Zhang, X. (2015). Use of survey research in top mass communication journals 2001-2010 and the total survey error paradigm. *Review of Communication*, *15*, 39-59.

Haidt, J. (2001). The emotional dog and its rational tail: A social intuitionist approach to moral judgment. *Psychological Review, 108*, 814–834.

Hameleers, M., & van der Meer, T. G. L. A. (2019). Misinformation and polarization in a high choice media environment: How effective are political fact-checkers. *Communication Research, 7*, 42–48.

Hargittai, E., & Shafer, S. (2006). Differences in actual and perceived online skills: The role of gender. *Social Science Quarterly, 87*(2), 432–448.

Harper, R. (2014). Development of a health literacy assessment for young adult college students: A pilot study. *Journal of American College Health, 62*(2), 125–134.

Hasher, L., Goldstein, D., & Toppino, T. (1977). Frequency and the conference of referential validity. *Journal of Verbal Learning and Verbal Behavior, 16*, 107–112.

Hayes, A. F. (2017). *Introduction to mediation, moderation, and conditional process analysis: A regression-based approach.* Guilford Publications.

Hobbs, R. (2006a). *Reconceptualizing media literacy for the digital age.* In: Martin A and Madigan D (eds) Digital Literacies for Learning. London: Facet, 99–109.

Hobbs, R. (2006b). *Multiple visions of multimedia literacy: emerging areas of synthesis.* In: McKenna M et al. (eds) International Handbook of Literacy and Technology. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 15–26.

Hobbs, R. (2007). *Approaches to Instruction and Teacher Education in Media Literacy.* Available (consulted July 2009).

Hobbs, R., Donnelly, K., Friesem, J., & Moen, M. (2013). Learning to engage: How positive attitudes about the news, media literacy, and video production contribute to adolescent civic engagement. *Educational Media International, 50*(4), 231–246.

Holan, A. D. (2016). *2016 lie of the year: Fake news. PolitiFact.*

Holan, A. D. (2017, October 18). *The media's definition of "fake news" versus Donald Trump's. Politifact.*

Holbert, R. L. (2005). A typology for the study of entertainment television politics. *American Behavioral Scientist*, *49*, 436-453.

University of Education, Winneba http://ir.uew.edu.gh

Humphreys, A., & Grayson, K. (2008). The intersecting roles of consumer and producer: A critical perspective on co-production, co-creation and presumption. *Sociology Compass, 2*, 963–980.

Jacquinot-Delaunay, G., Carlsson, U., Tayie, S., & José Manuel Pérez, T. (2008). *Empowerment through media education: An intercultural approach.* In T., José Manuel Pérez, G. Jacquinot-Delaunay, S. Tayie & U. Carlsson (Eds), Empowerment through media education: An intercultural dialogue. Nordicom: International Clearinghouse.

Jamil, S. & Appiah-Adjei, G. (2019). *Journalism in the era of mobile technology: The changing pattern of news production and the thriving culture of fake news in Pakistan and Ghana* DOI:10.30547/worldofmedia.3.2019.2

Jones, J. P. (2010). *Entertaining politics: Satiric television and political engagement.* Lanham, MA: Rowman & Littlefield.

Karlova, N. A., & Fisher, K. E. (2013). Plz RT: A social diffusion model of misinformation and disinformation for understanding human information behaviour. *Information Research, 18*(1), 1-17.

Karlsson, M., Clerwall, C., & Nord, L. (2017). Do not stand corrected: Transparency and users' attitudes to inaccurate news and corrections in online journalism. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly, 94*, 148-167.

Khaldarova, I., & Pantti, M. (2016). Fake news: The narrative battle over the Ukrainian conflict. *Journalism Practice, 10*, 891-901.

Kim, J. N., Park, S. C., Yoo, S. W., & Shen, H. (2010). Mapping health communication scholarship: Breadth, depth, and agenda of published research in health communication. *Health Communication, 25*, 487-503.

Kirschner, P. A., & De Bruyckere, P. (2017). The myths of the digital native and the multitasker. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 67*, 135–142.

Koc, M., & Barut, E. (2016). Development and validation of New Media Literacy Scale (NMLS) for university students. *Computers in Human Behavior, 63*, 834–843.

Kucharski, A. (2016). *Post-truth: Study epidemiology of fake news.* Nature, 540, 525.

Kuthiala, J. (2010). Case study research types in Yin, R. K. (2014). *Case study research: Design and methods* (5th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Lewandowsky, S., Ecker, U. K. H., & Cook, J. (2017). Beyond misinformation: Understanding and coping with the "post-truth" era. *Journal of Applied Research in Memory and Cognition, 6*, 353-369.

Lewandowsky, S., Ecker, U. K. H., Seifert, C., Schwarz, N., & Cook, J. (2012). Misinformation and its discounting: Continued influence and successful debiasing. *Psychological Science in the Public Interest, 13*, 106–131.

Lin, T. B., Li, J.-Y., Deng, F., & Lee, L. (2013). Understanding new media literacy: An explorative theoretical framework. *Educational Technology & Society, 16*(4), 160–170.

Maksl, A., Craft, S., Ashley, S., & Miller, D. (2017). The usefulness of a news media literacy measure in evaluating a news literacy curriculum. *Journalism & Mass Communication Educator, 72*(2), 228–241.

Malik, M., Cortesi, S., & Gasser, U. (2013*). The challenges of defining "news literacy."* Berkman Center for Internet & Society.

McGrew, S., Ortega, T., Breakstone, J., & Wineburg, S. (2017). *The challenge that's bigger than fake news: Teaching students to engage in civic online reasoning.* American Educator.

Metzger, M. J., Flanagin, A. J., & Zwarun, L. (2003). College student Web use, perceptions of information credibility, and verification behavior. *Computers & Education, 41*, 271-290.

Meza, S. (2017, November 21). *"Fake news" named word of the year*. Newsweek.

Mihailidis, P., & Thevenin, B. (2013). Media literacy as a core competency for engagedcitizenship in participatory democracy. *American Behavioral Scientist, 57*(11), 1611–1622.

National Association of Media Literacy Education. (2007a). Academic programs database.

National Association of Media Literacy Education. (2007b). The core principles of media literacy education in the United States.

Nyhan, B., Porter, E., Reifler, J., & Wood, T. J. (2019). Taking fact-checks literally but not seriously? The effects of journalistic fact-checking on factual beliefs and candidate favorability. *Political Behavior*. Advance online publication.

Potter, W. J. (2004). Argument for the need for a cognitive theory of media literacy. *American Behavioral Scientist, 48*(2), 266–272.

Potter, W. J. (2013). Review of literature on media literacy. *Sociology Compass, 7*, 417–435.

Primack, B. A., Sidani, J., Carroll, M. V., & Fine, M. J. (2009). Associations between smoking and media literacy in college students. *Journal of Health Communication, 14*(6), 541–555.

Ram, N. (2011). *The changing role of the news media in contemporary India*. Presidential Address of Contemporary India Section of the 72nd Session of Indian History Congress, Patiala, December 2010.

Rao, S. (2008). Accountability, democracy, and globalization: A study of broadcast journalism in India. *Asian Journal of Communication, 18*(3), 193–206.

Silverblatt, A., & Eliceiri, E. M. (1997). *Dictionary of media literacy*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing. Stanford History Education Group (SHEG). (2016). Evaluating information: The cornerstone of civic reasoning.

Tseng, Y.-H., Chang, C.-Y., Rundgren, S.-N. C., & Rundgren, C.-H. (2010). Mining concept maps from news stories for measuring civic scientific literacy in media. *Computers & Education, 55*(1), 165–177.

Vacek, P., & Rybenská, K. (2016). *The most frequent difficulties encountered by senior citizens*.

Vaportzis, E., Martin, M., & Gow, A. J. (2017). A tablet for healthy ageing: The effect of a tablet computer training intervention on cognitive abilities in older adults. *American Journal of Geriatric Psychiatry, 25*(8), 841–851.

Vosoughi, S., Roy, D., & Aral, S. (2018). The spread of true and false news online. *Science, 359*, 1146-1151

Vraga, E. K., Tully, M., Kotcher, J. E., Smithson, A.-B., & Broeckelman-Post, M. (2015). A multi-dimensional approach to measuring news media literacy. *Journal of Media Literacy Education, 7*(3), 41–53.

Vroman, K. G., Arthanat, S., & Lysack, C. (2015). Who over 65 is online? Older adults' dispositions toward information communication technology. *Computers in Human Behavior,43*, 156–166.

While using information and communication technology. *Procedia: Social and Behavioral Sciences, 217,* 452–458.

Wong, Y. C., Chen, H., Lee, V. W. P., Fung, J. Y. C., & Law, C. K. (2014). Empowerment of senior citizens via the learning of information and communication technology. *Ageing International, 39*(2), 144–162.

Yadav, A. (2015). *Information and communication technologies (ICT) literacy for sustainable development In J. Singh, A. Grizzle S. J. Yee & S. H. Culver (Eds)*. Media and information literacy for the sustainable development goals (pp. 67–76). Nordicom: International Clearinghouse. Author's

Yin, R. K. (2014). *Case study research: Design and methods* (5th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage

Young, D., Weinert, C., & Spring, A. (2012). Home on the range: Health literacy, rural elderly, well-being. *Journal of Extension, 50*(3), 155-162

Zhou, W., Yasuda, T., & Yokoi, S. (2007). Supporting lifelong learning in the information age. *Journal of College Teaching and Learning, 4*(9), 11–18.

Zimet, G. D., Rosberger, Z., Fisher, W. A., Perez, S., & Stupiansky, N. W. (2013). Beliefs, behaviors and HPV vaccine: Correcting the myths and the misinformation. *Preventive Medicine, 57*, 414-418.

University of Education, Winneba http://ir.uew.edu.gh

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Focus Group Discussion Question Guide

How do students knowledge on media literacy aid in their detection of fake news?

What are the students' perspectives on fake news identification and media literacy training so far as their curriculum is concerned?

- What of your level of understanding of fake news?
- Does any of your courses tackle the issue of fake news and media literacy
- What is your understanding of media literacy?
- Do you think being equipment with media literacy skills is important to you as a journalism student
- If yes, why, if not why
- Before your media literacy class, how do you determine if the information you read online is fake or authentic.
- How do you use the knowledge gain from your media literacy class to detect and identify fake news online?
- Outside the classroom, do you do further reading on fake news and media literacy.
- Do you think learning media literacy is relevant to your future career, if yes why, if no why?
- What forms of media literacy training would you want your lecturers to take you through?

University of Education, Winneba http://ir.uew.edu.gh

APPENDIX B

Interview Guide for lecturers

To investigate whether journalism curriculum equipped students with media literacy skills.

- As a lecturer, do you teach media literacy as topic within your course.

  If NO, WHY

  You teach a communication course, why are not including an aspect of media literacy in your course.

  Have you ever tackle or discuss fake news as part of the course you teach

  If yes, why did you not tackle media literacy aspect.

  Do you think, it is not directly related to your course and so it should not be taught

  Do you believe that irrespective of the course you teach, media literacy is fundamental in every communication school.

- How long do you teach media literacy (number of weeks dedicated to teaching the topic within the semester)?
- how do you equip your students in media literacy?
- Is there a specific reading material that you use or recommend for media literacy when teaching?
- What forms of media literacy training do you take your students through (example, organizing media literacy seminar, taking students to workshops, inviting guest to talk on the topic etc.)?
- Do you consider fact-checking to be relevant to media literacy training, if yes why, if no why?

University of Education, Winneba http://ir.uew.edu.gh

- After teaching media literacy, are you able to test the student's applicability of what you taught to identifying fake news?
- Does the institution or department provide you with manuals, guidelines or books to aid your teaching. If yes, can you mention some of them.