



The strategy of confronting fake news in the Algerian media space
An exploratory study on a sample of Algeria International Channel journalists

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Abstract:

The great openness witnessed by the Algerian media space, thanks to the wide spread of new media for information and communication, and their use by citizen journalists, contributed to a large flow of media contents through social networks whose creators try to cover events and convey the daily concerns of citizens. Television channels adopt these news stories, broadcast them and deal with them in their news bulletins. However, these news stories often contain misinformation that falls under the framework of fake news published intentionally or unintentionally

In both cases, the professional journalist finds himself forced to verify the validity of the news circulated through social networks and to follow a specific strategy to deal with the fabricated news flowing through these networks. This is what we will try to address through this study by applying the descriptive survey method and the interview tool with a sample of 20 journalists from the various sections of Algeria International Channel.

Keywords: new media; citizen journalism; fake news; media space; social network .

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1. INTRODUCTION

New media for information and communication with its various technical supports such as smart phones, electronic tablets and laptops connected to the Internet have become very popular in recent years.

This allowed the average citizen to practice the media in its own way by producing and publishing news stories in various fields of life within the framework of what is known as citizen journalism, which imposed itself in the media space at the local, regional and international levels.

And due to the exclusive coverage of the events by the citizen journalist, the TV news channels compete to broadcast and discuss these contents and stories that the public publishes through social networks.

The journalist often encounters fabricated news that he must investigate and follow a specific strategy in dealing with it in order to distinguish it from the correct news story.

Accordingly, we will try, through this research paper, to ask the following fundamental question: **What is the strategy of Algiers International Channel journalists confronting the fabricated news?**

In order to answer the problematic question, we decompose it into a number of sub-questions under which the objectives of the study fall as follows:

- What is the concept of fake news?
- What are the types of fake news?
- What are the areas in which fake news abound?
- What are the factors for the large spread of fabricated news?
- What are the effects of fabricated news on television treatment and the credibility of the information?
- What are the controls that govern the professional journalist's dealing with fabricated news?

The importance of this study is highlighted as follows:

- The concept of fake news in the Algerian media space is considered among the new concepts of the communication phenomenon, and is considered an additional entry point for monitoring developments in the field of using new media and communication media in the practice of citizen journalism.
- The study is considered a contribution to the discussion of a very important topic that has not been sufficiently given its right to discussion and analysis in scientific studies.
- The study is considered a reference in building the foundations for the proper and rational use of citizen journalism applications in order to benefit from the interactive advantages in consolidating the principle of public service in the media.

The methodology used in this study is represented in the use of methodological methods imposed by the importance of the study and its general objective, as imposed by



the treatment, discussion and analysis of the issue of the strategy to address the fabricated news in the Algerian media space.

Which necessitates the need to choose the appropriate research method and tools that raise the problem, namely:

The survey method, which is considered one of the most prominent methodological methods in the field of media studies, which represents an organized scientific effort to obtain data and information about the phenomenon or group of phenomena under study.

This methodology is also used in studying the problem and decomposing it into its hierarchical elements, in order to reach useful implications.

Based on this, the researcher resorted to the use of analysis and interpretation, to come up with logical conclusions in order to answer the questions of the study.

Through this study, we wanted to know the relationship between the fabricated news as a communication phenomenon and the Algerian professional journalist as a confrontational media element, and to highlight how he deals with this phenomenon and the strategy used to address it.

As for the tools used, the researcher presented the research contributions related to the fabricated news, in terms of concept, characteristics, features, types, and damages based on the study's questions, and using the observation and interview tool with a sample of 20 journalists from Algiers International, then scrutiny and analysis to extract the results.

Accordingly, we can address the main axes that make up the subject under consideration as follows:

2. The concept of fake news:

The concept of "fabricated news" or "fake news" has become common in our contemporary daily life since the election campaign of US President Donald Trump, who has been accusing every media outlet that criticizes him and describes it as promoting "fake news", in his famous phrase "Fake news". (Melissa , 2020 , p 19) To be the first person to launch this concept, but this does not mean that false news is recent, rather it is as old as man.

The New York Times defined fake news as “a type of yellow journalism or propaganda consisting of intentional misinformation or hoaxes disseminated through traditional print and broadcast media, or online social media.”

The use of fake news with a certain intent to achieve a specific goal is long-standing in the political society of mankind. Fake news is not far from "propaganda" in many cases, and it is always important to stop at the intent and purpose behind the false news.

That is, in some cases, what appears to be false news may actually be news satire, and this type of satire resorts to exaggeration, introduces unrealistic elements, and aims to entertain or deliver a message, not to deceive.

Fake news is every content or message produced by people who sometimes spread it ignorantly and unintentionally, and here because they are not sure of its authenticity.(Mark , 2017 , p 39)



They often publish it out of conviction, intention, and awareness of its lack of credibility in order to achieve specific goals and objectives. In the recent past, the process of spreading fabricated news was difficult and rare through traditional media such as written press, radio and television, due to the strict control over these means and the inability to reach a portal for their publication.

But with the advent and spread of social networks and the expansion of their audience, which has become billions, fabricated news has found the perfect space for multiplication and wide dissemination in a few seconds to become global news, even if it is incorrect.

3. Types of fake news:

Media science researcher Claire Wardle of First Draft News identifies seven types of fake news that will give us a broader idea of this concept: (Rainer , 2021 , p 58)

- Sarcasm or parody ("There is no intention to harm, but the possibility of deception")
- Incorrect linking ("headings, visuals, subheadings, and picture words do not support the content")
- Misleading content ("misleading use of information to frame an issue or person")
- False content ("when real content is published using false contextual information")
- Quackery content ("when impersonating real sources" by fabricating false sources)
- Manipulated Content ("when real information or images are manipulated with the intent of deceiving," such as when images are modified and manipulated for specific purposes)
- Fabricated content ("The new content is 100 percent false, with the intent of deceiving and causing harm")

4. How fake news works:

Fake news is often spread through fake news websites, which often mimic authentic news sources in an effort to gain credibility.

According to research, social media enables false claims to spread, causing them to circulate faster than real news in reality.

Fake news spreads quickly because it is usually designed to attract attention and emotions; This is why they often contain outlandish claims or stories that stir anger or fear.

A social media feed often prioritizes content based on engagement metrics — the number of times it's shared and liked — rather than how accurate or truthful it is. This approach can allow click-attractive headlines, exaggeration, and false information to spread widely.

Social media companies are seen as platforms rather than publishers, which means they do not have the same legal responsibilities as traditional media, although this may change as the political and legal landscape evolves.



Social media bots can spread fake news because they generate and disseminate articles at scale, regardless of the credibility of their sources. Bots can create fake accounts online, which then gain followers, recognition, and authority, and some are programmed to spread disinformation.

Trolls are Internet users who intentionally try to start arguments or annoy people. They also play a significant role in spreading fake news.

Sometimes they may even be paid to do so for political reasons. The terms "electronic committees" or "electronic flies" are sometimes used in this context to refer to institutional groups of trolls who attempt to interfere with political decision-making.

Fake news sometimes includes the use of deepfakes. These are fake videos created using digital software, machine learning, and face swapping. The images are combined to create new snapshots that show events or actions that did not happen in the real world. The results can be very convincing and hard to spot as fake. (Eric , 2020 , p 85)

5.The dangers of fake news:

People often make important decisions, such as voting in elections or choosing medical treatment when ill, based on what they read on the news. This is why reliable news is so important. Fake news risks include: (Mark , 2017 , p 103)

- When people are unable to distinguish between real and fake news, it leads to confusion and misunderstanding about important social and political issues.
- When people have a general feeling that "you shouldn't believe anything you read," it undermines public confidence in honest news sources.
- False and misleading news about medical treatments or major diseases, such as cancer or COVID-19, may lead to people making misleading decisions about their health.
- A lot of false news has been fabricated to stir up and intensify social conflict.
- When each side of a conflict has its own 'facts', this leads to further polarization within societies and can affect electoral outcomes.
- Universities and colleges expect students to use high-quality sources of information in their assignments.
- Therefore, students who use sources that give them false or misleading information can receive lower scores.



6. How to identify fake news:

You may be wondering how to spot fake news on Facebook and other social media sites. How do you avoid fake news as a student? Or how to avoid accidentally sharing misinformation online?

Here are ten tips to help you identify misinformation, spot fake news sites, and think before you share it: (Cindy , 2020 , p 74)

1. Check out the source:

Check the web address of the page you are looking for. Sometimes, fake news sites may have misspelled URLs or use less popular domain extensions, such as ".infonet" or ".offer". If you don't know the site, look in the About Us section.

2. Check out the author:

Research the author of the story to see if he or she is a credible person. For example, is he a real person, and is he reputable? Does he write in his specific area of expertise, and does he have a specific agenda? Consider the writer's potential motivation.

3. Check out other resources:

Was the news published by other reputable media or news outlets? Are reliable sources cited in the news?

Professional international news agencies have extensive editorial guidelines and fact-checking resources, so if you find they're reporting the story as well, that's a good sign.

4. Have a critical mindset.

Much fake news is cleverly crafted to elicit strong emotional reactions, such as fear or anger.

So approach the topic with a critical thought and ask yourself: Why was this news published? Is it to promote a particular cause or agenda? To get me to click to another website?

5. Check the facts:

Reliable news will cite a lot of facts, such as data, statistics, quotes from experts, and so on. If none of that exists, you should ask why.

Reports with erroneous information often include incorrect dates or modified time sequences, so it's a good idea to check when the article was published. Is the news recent or old?

6. Check Comments:

Even if the article or video is original, the comments below may not be true. Links or comments posted in response to content can often be created automatically by bots or people hired to spread misleading or confusing information.

7. Examine your personal biases :

We all have biases; Could your bias influence how you respond to the article? Social media can create echo chambers by suggesting news that matches your current browsing habits, interests, and opinions.



The more diverse sources and perspectives we read, the more likely we are to be able to draw accurate conclusions.

8. Check if it's just a joke:

Satire sites are popular, and sometimes it is not always clear whether the news is a joke or a parody. Check the website to see if they are known for making satire or making up funny news.

9. Validate the photos:

The images you see on social media may have been modified or their contents may have been manipulated. Signs of possible fabrication of images include: wavy straight lines in the background, odd shadows or uneven edges and a skin tone that looks too perfect.

Also keep in mind that the image may be accurate but it is just being used in a misleading context. You can use tools like Google reverse image search to check the source of an image and whether it has been changed.

10. Use a fact-checking site:

Among them:

1. Snopes
2. PolitiFact
3. Fact Check
4. BBC Reality Check

7. Read and interpret the results of the tables:

Table 1:

What is your definition of fake news?		
Introduction provided	the number	percentage %
It is a means of propaganda and misleading public opinion	10	33
It is a method of cold war between rival countries	7	23
It is a means of settling scores between competing persons, agencies and institutions	7	23
It is false and incorrect news published intentionally or unintentionally	6	20
the total	30	100

We note that the majority of the journalists of the Algerian International Channel believe that the fake news is a means of propaganda and misleading public opinion, and this is a rate of more than 33%, and this corresponds to the definition provided by researchers in



the sciences of information and communication, who believe that propaganda in the modern era has taken social networks as a fertile platform for spreading This false information.

While 23% of journalists define fake news as a means of cold war between countries, which have taken social networks as a base to launch psychological warfare campaigns, especially if those countries are competing regionally and internationally.

In the same proportion, i.e. 23% of journalists, they believe that fake news via social networks is only a means to settle scores between competing persons, bodies and institutions, especially if they carry out the same commercial or political activity, and since social networks include millions of customers and consumers, fabricated news is presented through them. It would destabilize the opposing party.

Also, 20% of the journalists of the International Channel find that the fake news is false and incorrect news that is published intentionally or unintentionally, by virtue of the fact that citizen journalists who spread false news through social networks among them are those who publish it knowing that it is not true to achieve a predetermined goal.

And there are those who publish it without the intention of offending, thinking that it is correct, especially if it was shared by people whose sources he does not know.

Table 2:

What are the factors for the spread of fake news ?		
spread factor	the number	percentage %
Lack of review and control of publications on social networks	15	32
Ease of use of social networks and flexibility of data dissemination	12	26
Not confirming the identities of the publishers of the fabricated news	10	21
The increase in the number of users, and thus the rate of quoting and re-sharing the fake news	10	21
the total	47	100

We note that the majority of the International Channel journalists, at 32%, believe that the lack of review and censorship of publications on social networks is one of the most important reasons for the spread of fake news through these networks, and this is due to the huge amount of data published by millions of users at the same time.

The management of these sites, similar to Facebook, activates the censorship system for immoral publications in general, but does not monitor false news publications because the matter is very complicated and difficult to control, and here the role of governments



emerges, which should criminalize and prosecute those who deliberately publish unfounded news for purposes and purposes. especially .

While 26% of journalists find that among the reasons for the wide spread of fabricated news through social networks is the ease of use of social networks and the flexibility of disseminating data, the citizen journalist who is accustomed to publishing news finds in these platforms a suitable space for producing and disseminating news in written, audio and visual multimedia with the broadcast feature. direct,

Also, the failure to confirm the identities of the publishers of the fabricated news is the reason for its spread, as its owners are unknown and use pseudonyms and pictures, and this makes them feel a kind of protection that encourages them to continue their efforts to spread false information, and this is confirmed by 21% of the journalists.

In the same percentage, i.e. 21%, journalists believe that the increase in the number of users, and thus the increase in the rate of quoting and re-sharing the fabricated news, contributes greatly to spreading it on a large scale that may reach the world.

As soon as the sparks of incorrect news are released, millions of users rush to publish it, share it and re-share it on their personal pages, so that the fabricated news enters an endless chain of rapid and networked publication.

Table 3:

What are the areas of dissemination of fake news ?		
The area	the number	percentage %
News about the resignations and dismissals of famous political and media figures	12	18
News about the death of famous artistic, sports, and political figures	12	18
News about the involvement of political figures in corruption cases before the election dates	10	15
News about the spread of diseases and global epidemics	10	15
News about unfounded statements by national figures	9	13
News about university services and unfounded amendments and decisions	8	12
News about wage increases and unemployment grant	6	9
the total	67	% 100



We note that 18% of the journalists of the Algerian international channel come across incorrect news published on social networks, including resignations and dismissals of famous political and media figures, with the aim of provoking them and settling scores with them.

Journalists also come across, with the same percentage, news related to the death of famous political, media, sports and artistic personalities, although they are in a satisfactory condition and have not reached the point of death. These personalities often suffer from difficult psychological conditions resulting from the spread of these rumors that affect them directly.

While 15% of journalists find fabricated news about the involvement of political figures in corruption cases prior to the election dates, in order to tarnish their reputation and image in the political arena and lose their popularity with the voting public.

Meanwhile, journalists come across many news and rumors about the spread of global diseases and epidemics in Algeria, similar to the Corona virus, and linking it to the seasonal flu wave that affects most citizens in the winter season.

While 13% of journalists find news about unfounded statements by national figures that have been misinterpreted or distorted and taken out of context.

While 12% of the channel's journalists come across incorrect and unofficial news about university services and baseless amendments and decisions, such as increasing the university scholarship for students, canceling university transportation and university feeding,

All of them are false news whose owners aim to manipulate the feelings of students on the one hand and attract more fans and followers from them on the other hand.

In the same context, 9% of journalists come across fake news about wage increases and the unemployment grant, which is a topic that receives a large following from citizens through social networks.



Table 4:

What are the effects and dangers of fake news?		
The effect	the number	percentage %
The fake news confuses the news and the correct information	17	31
The fake news spreads chaos in Algerian society and disperses public opinion	14	26
Fake news negatively affects people's psyche	13	24
The fake news may deceive the novice journalist and publish it in turn, which earns him credibility	10	19
the total	54	% 100

The majority of journalists, at 31%, believe that the fabricated news distorts the correct news and information, as it is often published in a context that makes it difficult to differentiate between it and the correct news, and this affects the credibility of the information, the foundation of public service, and the right to information and communication.

While 26% find that fake news spreads chaos in Algerian society and disperses public opinion, especially since it often affects sensitive areas and topics.

While 24% find that fake news negatively affects people's psyche and harms them, given that they received the news in difficult circumstances.

As for 19% of the journalists, they indicated that the fake news sometimes deceives beginners and new journalists in the field of journalism, which makes them publish it through their accounts and media institutions, and this is what gives it credibility and fake strength, so to speak, and proves its pillars and increases its validity period.



Table 5:

How do you deal with fake news published on social networks?		
The handling way	the number	percentage %
Ensure the authenticity of the news by making contacts with official bodies and the concerned persons	19	22
Modify the material before broadcasting and make it into a professional journalistic template	19	22
Avoid insulting and slanderous contents	15	18
Go to the field and follow the developments of the event	12	14
Report the account of the person who published the fake news	10	12
He denied the news with a counter post and counter comments	10	12
the total	85	100

We note that 22% of the journalists of the International Channel deal with the fake news published on social networks with a lot of caution, and this is by verifying the validity of the information received by conducting contacts with the official bodies, institutions, and personalities directly concerned and authorized to confirm or deny the news, and with the same percentage, journalists modify the article Before broadcasting it and casting it in the form of a professional journalist, far from insulting, insulting, slander, and everything that contradicts the controls of the ethics of the journalistic profession,

Also, 14% of the journalists go to the field and follow up the developments of the event that was presented by amateurs who did not receive the basics and principles of journalistic work. Any material they send requires many procedures, and the citizen lacks objectivity in the presentation and treatment.

While 12% of journalists resort to reporting the account of the person who published the fake news, the large amount of reporting will contribute to deleting the fabricated news and closing the account of its publisher.



While other journalists, at the same rate, deny the news by publishing counter-posts and counter-comments that would enlighten the public opinion of users and surfers of the published news and limit its spread.

8.results of the study:

Through our study of how the journalists of the Algerian international channel deal with the fake news published through social networks and the controls for dealing with such content that is produced and published by citizen journalists through these social networks, we reached a set of results that can be summarized in the following points:

- ❖ Journalists of the Algerian International Channel believe that fake news is a means of propaganda and misleading public opinion, and it is considered one of the most important means of the cold war between countries, as it is a means of settling scores between competing persons, bodies and institutions.
- ❖ Fake news, according to the channel's journalists, is false and incorrect news that is published intentionally or unintentionally. Its publisher may be aware of what he publishes, and sometimes he publishes it without knowledge.
- ❖ Among the reasons for the widespread spread of fake news through social networks is the lack of review and control of publications on social networks, ease of use and flexibility in disseminating data through them. In addition to not confirming the identities of the publishers of the fake news, as its owners are unknown and do not publish their real names and photos.
- ❖ Among the reasons for the spread of fake news is the high number of users, and thus an increase in the rate of quoting and resharing the fabricated news.
- ❖ Among the most important fields in which fabricated news is published, we find news about the resignations and dismissals of famous political and media figures, the death of famous political, media, sports and artistic figures, the involvement of political figures in corruption cases ahead of the election dates, The spread of global diseases and epidemics, unfounded statements by national personalities that are often distorted and fabricated, news about university services and unfounded amendments and decisions.
- ❖ The fake news published through social networks has many effects that we see through its distortion of the correct news and information, its dissemination of chaos in Algerian society and its dispersal of public opinion. It also negatively affects the psyche of people and their psychological state, and the fabricated news may deceive the novice journalist and publish it in turn, and this is what gives him false credibility.
- ❖ Among the most important controls for the professional journalist in the Algerian international channel dealing with fabricated news is to ensure the authenticity of the news by making contacts with official bodies and the concerned persons, modifying the material before broadcasting and making it in a professional journalistic template,



and avoiding the contents of insulting, insulting and slander, with the need to go to the field Follow up on the developments of the event, report the account of the person who published the fabricated news, and deny the news with a counter post and counter comments.

9. Conclusion :

Through this study, it becomes clear to us that social networks are a space full of fabricated news that their owners publish to achieve specific and pre-ruled goals within several strategic procedures and steps.

And the professional journalist of the Algerian international channel, who uses and browses social networks on a daily basis, is required to deal with caution with such news that has nothing to do with the media.

The efforts of the media institutions and the Ministry of Justice must be intensified in order to combat this phenomenon, which has corrupted the principles of public service and the right to information and communication.

It seeks to dilute citizen journalism and tarnish its image, although it should be a positive activity that reflects the effective and sound participation of the citizen in conveying his image, voice and opinion to the world without prejudice to persons or institutions or publishing incorrect news that is contrary to the ethics of the journalistic profession.

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