Vietnam academic libraries and fake news on social networks: revealing the truth and solving the problem

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Abstract:

In reaction to the spread of false news, misinformation, and disinformation via the internet and social media, librarians and other information specialists have been urged to implement courses and training to educate their readers and clients with actions and knowledge to spot fake news. In the context of Vietnam, little research has been conducted on the topic, and the given courses and training programs are no longer applicable in the battle against fake news. This research has been undertaken to get an in-depth understanding of how library users and customers use their knowledge to increase their awareness of the issues and build their critical thinking skills. SPSS is statistical software that was used to analyze the data collected from the survey of 600 participants from Vietnam National University Library and Digital knowledge Center Hanoi, Khanh Hoa University, and Sai Gon University. Findings indicate that insufficient digital literacy and media literacy are the primary variables influencing the dissemination of false information. According to the implementation of change drivers such as the internet of things, the advent of artificial intelligence, and the warning of cyber risks, a new method for educators and legislative administrators should be devised and included into school curricula.
Keywords: media users, fake news, cyber risks, digital information

1.Introduction

Inspired by Aral, (2020) in this book titled "The hype machine" in which he points out that social medias now are "huge economic empires" and that is the reason why "Social media is rewiring the central nervous system of humanity in real time and we're now at a crossroads between its promise and its peril." A growing number of social media platforms and communication channels based on high-tech information transformation devices have disseminated and expanded the availability of news. Fake news, misinformation, disinformation and mal information are not new phrases, but their propagation continues to polarize society, deceive readers, and have detrimental social and economic effects. This circumstance has raised several questions regarding whether news media literacy is more important than ever. Fake news, which has been then defined as "news articles that are intentionally and verifiably false, and could mislead readers" (Allcott & Gentzkow, 2017, p. 213) , "deliberately created to harm a person, social group, organisation or country", "based on reality, used to inflict harm on a person, social group, organisation or country." (UNESCO, 2018). As can be seen, these topics have generated a number of perpetrators and information skepticism while simultaneously increasing the number of shares on social media platforms,

thereby creating a virtual ecosystem at unprecedented levels of news where readers could not distinguish between true and false information. It is undeniable that social media platforms and their utilities have integrated the rapid pace of the universe of news into people's lives, as well as accelerated the effects of how quickly a piece of false information can be disseminated. In many cases, the false information may be so severe that it may be difficult to locate the truth and correct the incorrect ones. In Vietnam, as the survey conducted by the Ministry of Information and Communication stated that "7 hours has been spending on surfing social media networking sites by Vietnamese youth"(ABEI, 2019) which is quite high in comparison with the Southeast Asia and the world. As a result, a rising number of people are becoming dependent on this mode of communication. According to Mr. Nguyen Quoc Huy, Deputy Head of the Propaganda Department of the Central Committee of the Ho Chi Minh Communist Youth Union, "with more than 60 million users, Vietnam is the 18th country in the world in terms of the percentage of people using the Internet and the first in the world, also in the top ten countries with the highest number of Facebook and YouTube users in the world, a large portion of whom are teenagers." (ABEI, 2019).

The research was conducted in the three main university libraries in three distinct regions of Vietnam, including the Library Center and Digital Knowledge Hub, Vietnam National University Hanoi in the north, Khanh Hoa university library in the middle, and Saigon university library in the south. 600 individuals from three institutions participated in the poll. Various initiatives and efforts have been undertaken to improve the problem in three distinct institutions over the years, including an information literacy training programme, workshops about false news, fact checking skills and literacy, and recognition of news censorship on social media networks. However, these courses have been funded and taught by separate organizations, departments, or third parties, such as multimedia corporations and non-governmental groups. The point has been made when all institutions have acknowledged, to some extent, that students aged 18 and older are the most vulnerable group in the setting of Vietnam. This paper was intended to examine how social media users can uncover and identify false information and, more importantly, how academic libraries adapt to changes in the situation in order to educate their individual readers with the skills necessary to battle fake news. In addition, it provides a step forward in building instruments and techniques for measuring news literacy and paves the road for educators, leaders, and university students to increase their news understanding, especially analytic thinking in discerning the truth, promoting critical thinking and individual self-abilities to verification.

2. Literature review

2.1 Library's practices over fighting fake news

As the second president of India, Mr. Radhakrishnan, once stated, "the library is the heart of the institution," it has proven its lifelong mission of attaching higher education to two primary purposes: supporting the school curriculum and enhancing the research of university faculty, departments, and academic students. Providing access to information that enables people to make decisions that not only enhance their lives but also contribute to the overall success and lifelong learning of their audience in a timely way and with accurate and relevant information for all in the digital age (IFLA, 2016), also "provide a full spectrum of resources and services to the communities they serve" (American Library Association, Intellectual Freedom Committee & Subcommittee on the Impact of Media Concentration on Libraries, 2007). Not only is it the responsibility of the academic library in the digital age to fight for the truth to be revealed and serve their readers to the best of their ability, but they must also promote their

positions within society (Batchelor, 2017). The abundance of false information and news on social media networks has posed a threat to libraries' ability to stay abreast of recent developments and train their readers in the fight against fake news, as well as improve their readers' self-awareness of various information sources evaluation and predatory journals (Batchelor, 2017; Rubin, 2019, 2019; Skarpa & Garoufallou, 2022). For educators, the alarming increase in disordered information and falsehood over the internet and social media networks has caused several difficulties in delivering lessons and lectures. Therefore, university libraries must emphasize the role of digital librarians in combating fake news and establishing a new relationship between medial literacy and user training (De Jans et al., 2017; Rubin, 2019; Shabani & Keshavarz, 2021; Withorn et al., 2021).

While other Library and information science scholarship may pay more attention to combating fake news and emphasize on multi-disciplinary literacy by training their readers various skills including information literacy, digital literacy, and news media literacy, Taylor (et al., 2021) has demonstrated the lack of political information literacy in the face of the disinformation epidemic. However, there is a need to design proper courses in terms of training library and general users to distinguish between " fact or fake" in which they lack the appropriate skills to discern and filter information from social media sites (Ireland, 2018). As the world's population increases in tandem with the advancement of information technology, IoT, and artificial intelligence, an increasing number of people are relying on their social networks to access and gain information due to its rapid update and sharing regardless of geological location. This phenomenon has prompted experts and professionals all over the world to detect fake news dissemination, while highlighting the roles of LIS professionals, IT specialists, educators, and media professionals (Dalkir & Katz, 1 C.E.)

Over the past three years, the world has witnessed the ups and downs and health challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. This exponential challenge posed by the situation has compelled librarians and information experts to seek a new solution to assist readers in gaining access to credible information. It also raises the question of whether the health crisis produced by the pandemic has subsided and fundamentally altered the way that people receive information conventionally. Media literacy and its pedagogical application have become increasingly prominent as a result of its immediately applicable and proactive solutions for enhancing users' ability to identify reputable and trustworthy information sources (Igbinovia et al., 2020; Su et al., 2022). In the context of digital transformation and information, it is necessary to reassess the role of librarians in general and academic libraries in particular in order to improve information services and pedagogical approaches to training users and diverse stakeholders.

2.2 Vietnam academic libraries and the battle of fake news

Three university libraries, located in three distinct parts of the country, have maintained their prominent roles not just in providing timely services, but also as an integral component of the schools' curricula.

The Library center and Digital knowledge hub of Vietnam National University (VNU-LIC) in Hanoi (the north of Vietnam) has risen six places and maintained its position in the Top 50 (48 out of 3903 in the ranking of global endogenous digital resource stores and 59 out of 4039 in the ranking of all world digital resource repositories), the leading institution in Vietnam. (*TRANSPARENT RANKING: Institutional Repositories by Google Scholar (June 2022) |*

Ranking Web of Repositories, n.d.) [1] Located in the center of Vietnam, the Khanh Hoa University Library is home to more than 1,500 recent graduates and almost 2,000 enrolled students overall. This is one of the largest schools in the middle of Vietnam for professionals in the social sciences and humanities, and each year they enrol an increasing number of students. [2] Sai Gon University, the second largest school in the south of Vietnam with more than 2,000 students, is one of the most prestigious social science and humanities institutions.[3]

The state government has assigned functions and tasks for the Ministry of Public Security to implement the Resolution No. 35-NQ/TW of the Politburo, Plan No. 306-KH/BTGTW of the Steering Committee Directive 35 of the Central Committee, Plan No. 235/KH-BCA-A05 of the Ministry of Public Security in the fight and prevention of spreading fake news (The Communist party of Vietnam, 2020). In this document, all the related regulatory bodies, ministries, and local authorities in accordance with other stakeholder must hold responsibilities to proactively in preventing the dissemination, anti-party and state information over the cyberspace as well as to respond to the COVID 19 situation to handle false and toxic information. According to the Vietnam Anti-Fake News Center, which is part of the Ministry of Information and Communication, the Center received more than 1,100 fake news reports in the first quarter of 2021, handling and labeling 38 fake and false news with many articles relating to the current situation and Covid-19 prevention and control in Vietnam.[4]

In 2017, IFLA released the paper "How to spot fake news" with a focus on "critical thinking is a key skill in media and information literacy, and the mission of libraries is to educate and advocate its importance" " (IFLA), 2017), and a year later, Sullivan, (2018) in his paper titled "Why librarians can't fight fake news" emphasized that the knowledge of libraries and librarians is too "superficial" to combat the issue. In Vietnam, this issue has been the subject of research beginning in early 2019 and becoming increasingly widespread throughout the COVID 19 pandemic (Hoàng, 2021). During the epidemic, other studies focused on "factors of sharing bogus news" and "adherence of national reaction" (Nguyen et al., 2020; Thanh et al., 2021). Programs and training workshops have been held at three distinct institutions. While at VNU-LIC, the orientation weeks annually conducted for first year students provide them with necessary knowledge and skills in locating and using the right information, the Khanh Hoa University Library has held numerous workshops (twice a year at the beginning and end of each semester) on how to identify fake news, primarily to equip fresh graduates with information literacy and fake news detect skills and tools. (Diệu, 2020). In Saigon, neither the university library nor the school's curriculum has incorporated information literacy training for their readers; the university library is primarily responsible for operating library tours and guides. A training workshop was conducted in Saigon, but not by the school, but by the American Center in the south.[5]

Methodology

A survey method approach was settled on for this study, also at the end of the questionnaire an experimental quiz has been integrated to evaluate the personal abilities of the participants. As the quantitative was employed to gather "collection of information from a sample of individuals

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[1] https://lic.vnu.edu.vn/vi
[2] http://ukh.edu.vn/
[3] https://sgu.edu.vn/
[4] https://tuyenquang.gov.vn/noidung/tintuc/Pages/chi-tiet-tin-tuc.aspx?ItemID=21213&l=TinTuc
[5] https://www.facebook.com/news.literacyproject

through their responses to questions" (Check & Schutt, 2011, p. 160). This method permits researchers to gain a comprehensive understanding of the studied groups, paving the way for comparative analysis. The data analysis is based on the data collection from various groups of participants from various institutions in three distinct regions of Vietnam who have or have not been exposed to official or non-official media training courses on how to identify and spot fake news, misinformation, disinformation, mal-information, and false news.

505 correct responses from three different locations in Vietnam from 600 survey respondents are received. The purpose of the research was to investigate and determine how librarians, information organizations, and it practices could assist their users in locating and evaluating qualified and trustworthy content, and to measure news literacy among individuals to demonstrate the disparity between locations, schools, and training programs taken at the three institutions. The following research questions were asked:

- Research question 1: What techniques do university libraries employ to assist their readers and even stakeholders in dealing with fake news?
- Research question 2: How much do my personal knowledge and abilities assist me in identifying fake news and recognizing the truth?

Data analysis and results

The frequency calculator revealed that a total of 600 participants participated in this study, as indicated by the statistical data that reflected the nature of the phenomenon being studied. The study sample is comprised of number= 3 academic libraries geographically dispersed in three main diverse regions of Vietnam (the north, the middle, and the south), with 41.4% (VNU-LIC), 41.6% (Saigon), and 17.4% (Khanh Hoa) actively participating in the research.
Regarding library procedures and internal, external, and extracurricular activities that aid their fake news patrol. Different types of resources have been utilized to aid libraries in addressing the issue.(Figure 1)

Libraries (geography locations)	Types of libraries' practices and resources
The library centre and digital knowledge hub (VNU-LIC, the north)	- Institutional repository - Orientational week (library's training guideline and how to check for proper resources) - Checklist - Catalogue - E-learning courses (authorized ID and Password given, in collaboration with Coursera)
Khanh Hoa University Library (the middle)	- Institutional repository - Library catalogue - Training for fresh graduates - Offline Workshop (Library Cinema-Fake news and raising patrols 'awareness) - Online materials (The school's website) - Face to face seminar
Sai Gon University Library (the south)	- Institutional repository - Library catalogue - Orientational week for first year students (library's training guideline and how to check for proper resources) - Checklist - Online resources

Figure 1: Different resources from libraries help fight fake news (prepared by the author)

As is evident, the variety of library resources and information, as well as the courses developed by libraries, have helped their consumers identify misleading news. As indicated by 35.4% of the available data, students who completed courses or training or utilized the library's services tended to have improved skills in identifying information sources and third-party information and materials whose content is typically enhanced and linked to different web pages. At the Khanh Hoa University Library, they have conducted a number of offline seminars and incorporated on their website media literacy items, including articles, videos, and even library-generated materials to assist with verifying information. Moreover, at VNU-LIC, the ID and password provided by Coursera have enhanced the readers' individual competence. However, the number of activities and resources have been uploaded not only in web databases, but also on the website.

Finding 1: Better educated in information literacy, digital literacy, and even digital citizenship, and more adept at discerning the truth

Case Processing Summary

	Cases					
	Valid		Missing		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
Course attended*	505	100.0%	0	.0%	505	100.0%

Crosstabulation

Count						
		Identifying the content of the news				
		First paragraph (LEDE)	After the introduction	At the peak of the story's narrative arc, where the author determines it should be	In the summary	Total
Course attended	YES	89	49	27	8	173
	NO	151	67	74	34	326
	Other	4	0	2	0	6
Total		244	116	103	42	505

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	13.775ᵃ	6	.032
Likelihood Ratio	15.964	6	.014
Linear-by-Linear Association	5.065	1	.024
N of Valid Cases	505		

a. 4 cells (33.3%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .50.

Figure 2: Crosstabulations and Chi-square tests for the question number three

There is a substantial difference between the proportion of participants with and without news literacy. The number of students who participated in the training course/workshop/training and acquired better discernment skills and personal competency. College students account for 505 of the correct gender-related responses, with students in their first to fourth year of study primarily sharing their personal news on social networks (77 percent) and owning four outstanding social networking accounts (Facebook, Zalo, TikTok, and Youtube, respectively). There is a significant correlation between news literacy and news illiteracy according to Asymp. Sig.(2 sided)=0.32 (less than 20 percent). While 88.8 percent think that all journalists must obtain recognized qualifications or training from designated schools, the majority agree that sharing news and information on the internet is essential for raising public awareness (39.2 percent).

At the conclusion of the survey, all participants were encouraged to complete a quick test comprising of 20 news items (divided into two exercises) acquired from a variety of news sources, including both fake news and credible news sources. Participants were required to determine which statements are untrue and which are true. Numerous criteria, such as academic year, age, and geographic region, have a major effect on individuals' use of social networking sites to disseminate news and their knowledge of the news media. Figure 2 demonstrates unmistakably that the number of students who completed the course outweigh those who correctly identified fake news using chisquare Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)=0.00. This is the number derived from the question in which respondents were asked to determine whether News 1 (coded) was untrue or reliable and to compare the number of trained pupils to the number of new bees at the schools.

Exercise 1: Fact- checking skill 1

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid News 1	N	343	67.9	67.9	67.9
	Y	162	32.1	32.1	100.0
	Total	505	100.0	100.0	
Valid News 2	N	190	37.6	37.6	37.6
	Y	315	62.4	62.4	100.0
	Total	505	100.0	100.0	
Valid News 3	N	316	62.6	62.6	62.6
	Y	189	37.4	37.4	100.0
	Total	505	100.0	100.0	
Valid News 4	N	315	62.4	62.4	62.4
	Y	190	37.6	37.6	100.0
	Total	505	100.0	100.0	
Valid News 5	N	336	66.5	66.5	66.5
	Y	169	33.5	33.5	100.0
	Total	505	100.0	100.0	
Valid News 6	N	168	33.3	33.3	33.3
	Y	337	66.7	66.7	100.0
	Total	505	100.0	100.0	

Figure 3: Fact-checking skill (exercise 1)

Crosstab:

Count		News 1		
		Y	N	Total
Course attended	Y	27	146	173
	N	135	191	326
	Other	0	6	6
Total		162	343	505

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	37.407a	2	.000
Likelihood Ratio	41.625	2	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	26.130	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	505		

a. 2 cells (33.3%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1.92

Finding 2: Social media users with greater digital literacy are more selective in their sharing and reporting news

Within 505 qualified responds, the relationship between the tendency of participant sharing news over the Internet accounted for the huge numbers. While 414 of them (77%) tend to share personal information, up to 18.2 % tended to share current affairs and the second most popular was all about celebrity news. With most of them sharing it over Facebook and Instagram as well as Zalo. They are also getting used to accessing Official webpage from the Government (Thong Tin Chinh Phu) and Vietnam national broadcasting TV (VTV)(**Figure 4**) to update news instead of the other means of communication. The cross reference between the ones who have been trained and took courses were more critical and concerned with sharing and to whom to report news (sig.=.000) **(Figure 5)**

Case Summary

	Cases					
	Valid		Missing		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
$6. Attended course	505	100.0%	0	.0%	505	100.0%

$c6*c3. Attended course Crosstabulation

			Attended course			Total
			Y	N	Other	
$c6[a]	Official Government Fanpage	Count	107	152	3	262
	24h Fanpage (VTV)	Count	129	152	4	285
	Vtv.vn	Count	89	86	2	177
	Dantri.com	Count	84	52	2	138
	Vnexpress.net	Count	85	107	3	195
	Vietnamnet.com	Count	70	49	1	120
	Thanhnien.com	Count	78	104	3	185
	Kenh14.vn	Count	81	115	3	199
	Baomoi.com	Count	50	111	1	162
	Others	Count	24	83	2	109
Total		Count	173	326	6	505

Figure 4: Accessing the news

Case Processing Summary

	Cases					
	Valid		Missing		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
Attended course * Report Fake news	505	100.0%	0	.0%	505	100.0%

Crosstabulation

Count

		1. Report to owner of information	2. Report to the editor	3. Ministry of Information and Communication	4. Phone hotline 18008108	5. Report to tingia.gov.vn	Report website I don't know									Total
Attended course	Y	42	50	43	13	24	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0		173
	N	75	23	78	69	71	1	1	2	0	1	1	1	3		326
	other	2	0	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		6
Total		119	73	123	83	96	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	3		505

Figure 5: Reporting news

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	62.717a	24	.000
Likelihood Ratio	66.209	24	.000
N of Valid Cases	505		

a. 29 cells (74.4%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .01.

Conclusions and recommendations

As "the heart" of the institution, the academic library should play a crucial role in the battle against fake news and have exceptional reach. The academic library system should be reunited and share their resources in the digital transformation according to the "model of digital knowledge center" in which numerous libraries might "co-use" (Nguyễn, 2021) their contents to better equip their readers with resources and abilities. Numerous techniques should be applied to librarians' knowledge to enable them in assisting clients in gaining access to trustworthy news sources. As they will be vital to the objective of producing learning and information-gathering tools and also verifying information in a professional manner. While also facing the challenges of the fourth industrial revolution and in accordance with library boards to lay the groundwork for an updated, informed, and responsible society in the consumption and generation of information, they are also taking greater responsibility to improve the quality of their service in obtaining the most dependable news sources for which they have received official training from schools and fact-checker programs.

Some recommendations should be taken into consideration
- **For legislative bodies and authorities**
  - As the Center for Anti-fake news[6] has been concentrating on shutting down widespread misinformation while simultaneously supplying people with factual content and a trusted network, The government network should amplify its efforts at a greater level to counteract the dissemination and effect of false news.
  - People should be required to pay a subscription fee and pay a charge to have access to reliable news sources. State rules could include a fee such as a media tax to discourage such misleading amplification for its own users to preserve their data privacy, data use, and data sharing.
- **For academic libraries**
  - Academic libraries and institutions should hold platforms accountable for researchers and readers who first and foremost amplify the truth. This could be accomplished through the cooperation of many academic libraries in the given regions to expand and connect not only at the local level but also at the national level, and within public digital libraries, special libraires, and even the national library to reach out and share qualified content with the general readership.

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[6] https://tingia.gov.vn/

- o Researchers and readers within and outside of institutions should have had access to more data, utilizing updated technologies with varied privacy and organizational methods to allow access to credible sources and news.
- o Consideration should be given to human-centric techniques and human-centered design. It is important to recruit social scientists and other engineers to diversify the team fighting fake news so that the truth can be revealed and preserved.
- o Digital literacy and media literacy should be essential components of the school curriculum; also, schools and journalists should be introduced to ethical certification programs, which is a novel concept in the contemporary context.
    - ▪ The digital literacy training program should not be confined to recent college graduates; rather, it should be divided into many levels of education, from year 1 (fresh graduate) through year 4 (senior), spanning from basic information literacy to advanced digital literacy
- o Promoting lifelong learning through free or even paid courses given by academic libraries through library learning and digital literacy

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