Snippets of Information Disorders in Journalism Education: A Literature Review

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Abstract

The digital age has brought about unprecedented challenges and opportunities in journalism education, particularly in the realm of information disorders. This paper explores the phenomenon of information disorders, encompassing misinformation, disinformation, and malinformation, and their impact on journalism education and practice. The paper through literature review, analyses the need for addressing these issues by incorporating critical thinking, fact-checking, and media literacy skills. It highlights the importance of counteracting the spread of false information in a digital landscape where such content can easily proliferate. In addition, it discusses the role of ethical journalism in combating information disorders and the necessity of preparing media industry players to uphold journalistic integrity. By analyzing current educational practices and proposing enhancements, this paper aims to equip future journalists with the tools and knowledge required to effectively address information disorders, thus preserving the credibility and reliability of journalism in an increasingly complex media environment.

Keywords: Misinformation, disinformation, malinformation, trolling, infodemic.

Introduction

In the digital age, the proliferation of information has become both a boon and a bane for society. While access to information has democratized knowledge and empowered individuals, it has also led to the rise of information disorders. These disorders include misinformation, disinformation, and malinformation. The identified disorders pose significant challenges to the field of journalism and, by extension, journalism education. Misinformation refers to false or misleading information spread without harmful intent, disinformation involves the deliberate creation and dissemination of false information to deceive, and malinformation is genuine information used maliciously to cause harm (Wardle, 2019; Wardle, and Derakhshan, 2017). The content creators of information in the mentioned three categories have various motives to be achieved. They vary widely in their identity, motivation, and influence. They may operate individually or as part of organized networks, and their roles can differ depending on the type of information disorder and context, such as youth radicalization to violent extremism.

Scholars have identified several motivations behind the creation of disinformation. Tandoc et al. (2018) classify fake news creators into categories such as ideologues, who spread content for political or religious objectives, and profit-motivated actors, who publish disinformation to drive web traffic and ad revenue. Additionally, Marwick and Lewis (2017) highlight how disinformation is used strategically by extremist groups to radicalize youth and undermine social cohesion. In regards to Marwick etal (2017) below are some of the main categories of content creators and their motivation to be involved in information disorders:

i)   Ideological and extremist groups terrorist organizations, radical religious movements, or political extremists create and spread disinformation and malformation to radicalize youth, recruit members, and justify violence. They operate through websites, encrypted messaging apps, and social media platforms.

ii)   Political actors and operatives discredit opponents and manipulate public opinion. They also influence elections or policy debates.

iii)   Foreign state actors and intelligence agencies often engage in information warfare, creating and spreading disinformation to destabilize other nations and influence domestic affairs.

iv)   Social media influencers and digital activists knowingly or unknowingly spread misinformation or disinformation to gain followers and engagement hence monetizing viral content.

v)   Fake news sites and Content Farms produce large volumes of misleading or false information for profit, often using clickbait headlines and sensational stories to drive web traffic and ad revenue.

vi)   Bots and trolls amplify false narratives, especially on Twitter/X, Facebook, or Telegram to provoke emotional responses and confusion by spreading divisive or false content.

vii)   Traditional or rogue media outlets may publish biased, exaggerated, or false stories either for profit, sensationalism, or political bias.

viii)   Community Members and Peer Networks may unknowingly become vectors of misinformation, especially via WhatsApp or word-of-mouth, often without verifying sources.

ix)   Hackers and cybercriminals create and leak doctored information, manipulate digital content (deepfakes, edited images), or hack and expose real information to cause harm (malinformation).

x)   Academics, professionals, and religious leaders (when compromised) in some cases, may spread disinformation intentionally or due to misinformation thereby lending credibility to false claims.

As future journalists are tasked with navigating and reporting in this complex media landscape, journalism education should evolve to address these challenges effectively (Wardle, 2019). The ability to discern truth from falsehood, uphold ethical standards, and engage in rigorous fact-checking has never been more critical. This paper explores how journalism education can adapt to these pressing issues, equipping students with the necessary skills to combat information disorders and maintain the integrity of their profession.

This exploration includes an examination of current educational practices and the integration of media literacy, critical thinking, and ethical journalism into curricula. By understanding the nature and impact of information disorders, journalism educators can better prepare students to recognize and counteract these threats.

Fake news and disinformation overview

The advent of digital communication has significantly transformed how information is created, disseminated, and consumed. Among the most pressing consequences of this transformation is the proliferation of fake news and disinformation, which pose critical threats to democratic governance, public trust, and social stability. According to Lazer et al. (2018), fake news refers to fabricated information that mimics news media content in form but lacks the news media's editorial norms and processes for ensuring the accuracy and credibility of information. It is often designed to mislead or manipulate public opinion, especially when circulated widely on social media platforms.

Disinformation, as distinguished by Wardle and Derakhshan (2017), is false or misleading information that is deliberately created and shared to cause harm. This includes political propaganda, hoaxes, and forged content aimed at manipulating audiences. Disinformation is often strategic, targeting particular populations, institutions, or narratives with specific ideological, political, or economic goals.

Fake news and disinformation have emerged as pressing concerns in the digital age, significantly impacting societies globally. These phenomena involve the dissemination of false or misleading information, often with the intent to deceive or manipulate audiences (Bainier and Capron, 2019; Ireton, and Posetti, 2018). Fake news, which can be entirely fabricated or a distorted version of the truth, and disinformation; the deliberate spread of biased or false narratives, have profound implications for public opinion, political decisions, and societal trust. The rise of social media platforms has facilitated the rapid spread of fake news, creating echo chambers where individuals are exposed primarily to information that aligns with their preexisting beliefs (Flaxman, Goel, and Rao (2016). This has exacerbated societal polarization and made it easier for malicious actors, whether motivated by political, economic, or other agendas, to influence public discourse. The consequences of this are far-reaching, including the erosion of trust in media and institutions, deepening societal divisions, and a misinformed public making decisions based on inaccurate information.

The genesis

The rise of Web 2.0 technologies, especially social networking sites, has accelerated the spread of disinformation. Allcott and Gentzkow (2017) argue that social media platforms amplify disinformation because of their algorithmic preferences for sensational and emotionally charged content. This "virality factor" makes it easier for fake news to spread faster and further than factual news.

In the African context, Mutsvairo and Bebawi (2019) note that limited media literacy, political polarization, and technological access gaps make developing nations particularly vulnerable to disinformation. Platforms like WhatsApp, which are encrypted and widely used in Kenya, have become potent tools for the spread of unverifiable claims, especially among youth populations.

Fake news and disinformation has become a top topic in recent years, but it is not a completely new phenomenon. While digitalisation has had a huge impact, many of its causes and solutions are not related to the digital world. The concept of information disorder, first proposed by Claire Wardle and Hossein Derakhshan in a 2017 report for the Council of Europe, includes disinformation, misinformation and malinformation (Wardle, and Derakhshan, 2017). Malinformation, including leaks, harassment and hate speech, is a slightly different issue from the others. Satire and parody are not included, but they have the potential to fool, and a website with fabricated content might claim itself as a satire website to defend itself. Some content may fall into more than one category, and in some cases, we may not be able to categorize something with full certainty, for example because we do not know the motivations. We may also legitimately not agree with these specific definitions. Still, what is most important is that not all false news is created equal; we must understand the complexity of the information environment, and a conceptual framework may help us in doing that.

Wardle (2019) has noted that since 2016 there has been an increased "weaponization of context", using warped and reframed genuine content, which is better than fabricated content to persuade people and is less likely to be picked up by social networks' AI systems that are part of fact checking efforts. This seemed to be confirmed during the COVID-19 pandemic and consequent "infodemic", defined by the World Health Organization (2000) as "an over-abundance of information": The Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism found that 59% of dis- and misinformation was "reconfigured" (false context, misleading or manipulated content), while only 38% was fabricated (Brennen, Simon, Howard and Nielsen, 2020).

The term fake news in itself is not new at all, in an 1894 illustration by Frederick Burr Opper, a reporter is seen running to bring them to the desk, but it became ubiquitous (Farkas and Schou, 2018). During the 2016 US presidential elections, the term fake new was used by liberals against right-wing media and, notably, by then-candidate Donald Trump against critical news outlets. The term has been variably used to refer to more or less every form of problematic, false, misleading, or partisan content (Tandoc, Lim & Ling, 2018). It has thus been criticized for its lack of "definitional rigour" and for having been "appropriated by politicians around the world to describe news organisations whose coverage they find disagreeable" (Wardle and Derakhshan, 2017). A Handbook by

UNESCO (Ireton and Posetti, 2018) even put a strikethrough on it in its cover. In many countries anything against the state from the media may be termed fake news.

The dangers of information disorders

The effects of fake news and disinformation are far-reaching. Lewandowsky et al. (2017) assert that repeated exposure to disinformation can lead to belief persistence even after the information is corrected. In fragile sociopolitical contexts, disinformation has been shown to fuel mistrust, promote stereotypes, and incite ethnic and religious divisions, which are exploited by violent extremist networks (UNESCO, 2021).

Furthermore, Ganesh and Bright (2020) argue that online disinformation ecosystems can create echo chambers that reinforce radical views, especially among marginalized or disillusioned youth. This is exacerbated when disinformation targets real grievances such as poverty, unemployment, or state neglect, providing a fertile ground for recruitment into violent extremism.

In 2016, a man opened fire in a restaurant and pizzeria in Washington, D.C., looking for a basement in which children were supposedly held prisoner. There were no children, not even a basement; the belief was part of a conspiracy theory, known as Pizzagate (Pizzagate, 2017). Climate-related conspiracy theories pose a threat to the environment and medical misinformation poses a threat to health, and can even lead to riots, as happened in Novi Sanzhary, a small town in Ukraine because of the fear that people with coronavirus were going to be brought there (Miller, 2020).

News is one of the raw materials of good citizenship. The healthy functioning of liberal democracies has long been said to rely upon citizens whose role is to learn about the social and political world, exchange information and opinions with fellow citizens, arrive at considered judgments about public affairs, and put these judgments into action as political behavior (Chadwick, Vaccari, & O'Loughlin, 2018). Information is "as vital to the healthy functioning of communities as clean air, safe streets, good schools, and public health" (Knight Commission, 2009).

Dis- and misinformation pollute the information ecosystem and have "real and negative effects on the public consumption of news". Distrust can become a self-perpetuating phenomenon: "Groups that are already cynical of the media trolls, ideologues, and conspiracy theorists are often the ones drawn to manipulating it. If they are able to successfully use the media to cover a story or push an agenda, it undermines the media's credibility on other issues" (Marvick & Lewis, 2017). In the long term, this is a risk for democracy and may lead to vilification of the media (DCMS, 2018).

Disinformation accusations can also become a weapon in the hand of authoritarian regimes: World leaders use them to attack the media (The Expression Agenda Report 2017/2018) and in 2019, 12% of journalists imprisoned for their work were detained on false news charges (Beiser, 2019). This is evidenced in most African countries where autocratic regimes have jailed journalists on the grounds of fake news dissemination. Remember in

such regimes anything contrary to the expectations of the ruling elite may qualify to be fake news.

The assembly line

Some viral, mostly false news stories during the 2016 US elections were created by people in the small town of Veles in Macedonia. Their biggest hit was an article titled, *Pope Francis Shocks World, Endorses Donald Trump for President*, which was of course entirely false (Silverman & Singer-Vine, 2016). They claim they did it only for economic reasons to make money from the ads (Subramanian, 2017). But this is just one case, and the "assembly line" of dis- and misinformation can take different forms. In reference to Wardle and Derakhshan (2017), there are three elements (the agent; the message; the interpreter) and three phases (creation; production; distribution) of "information disorder". The agents could be official actors (i.e. intelligence services, political parties, religious institutions, news organisations, PR firms or lobbying groups) or groups of citizens that have become evangelised about an issue who are politically or economically motivated. Social (the desire to be connected with a certain group) and psychological reasons can also play a role.

The agent who conceptualizes, creates and conceives the idea on which the content is based is often different from the one who practically produces it and the one that distributes and reproduces it. Once a message has been created, it can be reproduced many times by different people located in different places and distributed endlessly by many different agents all with different motivations. Interpreters may become agents themselves: a social media post shared by several communities could be picked up and reproduced by the mainstream media and further distributed to other communities. The same piece of information might be originally born as satire, or even as real news, and then become misinformation in the eye of different interpreters or in the hands of different agents. When Notre Dame caught fire in 2019, an article documenting that a gas tank and some Arabic documents were found near the Cathedral emerged; although the article was real, it was from three years prior in 2016, thus becoming a case of false context (Bainier and Capron, 2019).

Russian Trolls and the Usual Suspects

In recent years there has been a lot of talk about "Russian trolls", as if they were the main, if not the only, agents responsible for the existence of the information disorder. The phrase "Russian Trolls and the Usual Suspects" refers to state-sponsored disinformation actors particularly Russian linked online operatives and their recurring role in global information manipulation. Trolling is as old as online forums, but "Russian trolls" refers to a slightly different phenomenon. While normal trolls do what they do for fun (a strange kind of fun, called the "lulz" in jargon), it has been demonstrated that the Internet Research Agency (IRA), based in Saint Petersburg and sometimes called the "Russian troll factory", contracted people to influence public opinion abroad for the Russian state (MacFarquhar, 2018). This is typical of most governments even in Africa. These actors are recognized for orchestrating disinformation campaigns aimed at undermining democracies, sowing social discord, and amplifying political polarization in both Western and non-Western contexts. Academic literature on this phenomenon has grown significantly since the 2016 U.S.

presidential election, when the presence of Russian trolls on social media became a widely publicized issue.

Russian Trolls and the Internet Research Agency (IRA)

The Internet Research Agency (IRA), a Russian organization based in St. Petersburg, is frequently cited as a central actor in state-sponsored trolling. According to Mueller (2019) and Benedictus (2017), the IRA employs thousands of online operatives commonly referred to as "trolls" who pose as ordinary citizens and disseminate politically charged, divisive content across platforms such as Facebook, Twitter/X, YouTube, and Instagram.

In their analysis of trolls DiResta et al. (2018) reveal how these trolls create fake personas to infiltrate online communities and promote ideological extremism, conspiracy theories, and disinformation, particularly targeting American and European audiences. The IRA's operations are characterized by sophisticated narrative engineering, including the use of culturally resonant memes, religious rhetoric, and race-related content to widen societal fault lines.

The "Usual Suspects" in Global Disinformation Networks

The "Usual suspects" as used here is a term referring to various actors, both state and non-state, who engage in similar manipulative trolling practices. The IRA is probably owned by Yevgeny Prigozhin, an oligarch linked with Russian president Vladimir Putin. Inside Russia, the IRA also has the primary function of making meaningful discussion amongst civil society impossible, a practice labelled "neutrollization" (Kurowska and Reshetnikov, 2018). While most of their activity is in Russia, it was notably revealed that they also interfered with the 2016 U.S. elections (Linvill & Warren, 2018) in what can be considered an information operation, a deliberate and systematic attempt by unidentified actors "to influence public opinion by spreading inaccurate information with puppet accounts" (Jack, 2018). While Russian trolls are often the most discussed, the "usual suspects" in global disinformation ecosystems are real and include: i)   Far-right   and   far-left   activists amplifying ideological narratives. ii) Domestic   political   actors   leveraging   foreign disinformation for local advantage. iii)   Bot networks and cyber mercenaries hired to promote specific agendas (Howard et al., 2018). iv) Alternative   media   outlets   (e.g.,   RT, Sputnik) that mix factual reporting with misleading or manipulated content.

Benkler et al. (2018) argue that these actors frequently operate in "networked propaganda" systems, where state actors, partisan media, and grassroots influencers reinforce each other's messaging while creating a powerful echo chamber effect.

Tactics and Strategies of Russian Troll Campaigns

Troll campaigns aim at convincing someone of something, but more at spreading uncertainty, sowing mistrust and confusion, a purpose that is typical of many disinformation campaigns (Wardle & Derakhshan, 2017). For their purpose, Russian trolls have also made use of bots and botnets (Barojan, 2018). Russia is not the only country that has been involved with this kind of information operation; in 2019 Twitter explicitly accused China of an information operation directed at Hong Kong (Twitter Safety, 2019).

Countries can also indulge with information campaigns that are different from information operations, because while their content might be true or false, their author is not hidden. However, foreign countries are not the only cause of the information disorder (Gunitsky, 2020). Others, including social media, and phenomena related to social media, have also been accused. Russian troll campaigns typically deploy multi-platform strategies to maximize impact. As outlined by Starbird et al. (2019) and Zannettou et al. (2020), key tactics include: i)   Hashtag hijacking to insert propaganda into trending conversations. ii)   False persona creation to infiltrate activist or political groups, iii)   Astroturfing (creating the illusion of grassroots support). iv)Amplifying divisive issues such as immigration, race, and religion. v)   Cross-platform coordination, where content is seeded on fringe platforms (e.g., 4chan, Gab) and amplified via mainstream networks.

Importantly, these campaigns often target existing social tensions, not just to manipulate information, but to weaponize emotions and identities.

Influence on Political and Social Systems

Evidence of Russian troll influence on political discourse and electoral outcomes is well documented. Jamieson (2018) and Howard et al. (2019) emphasize that Russian-linked disinformation campaigns: i) Exacerbate political polarization by deepening ideological divides, ii)   Suppress voter turnout among marginalized communities, iii) Undermine trust in democratic institutions, media, and electoral processes.

Beyond the U.S., Bradshaw and Howard (2018) show that Russian troll activity has been observed in over 70 countries, often with localized themes adapted to specific sociopolitical contexts including Brexit in the UK, elections in France and Germany, and conflicts in Syria and Ukraine.

Critiques and Counter-Arguments

While the role of Russian trolls is well-documented, some scholars warn against overstating their impact. Boyd (2019) and Freelon etal., (2020) argue that domestic political divisions and media environments are more consequential than foreign troll activity. There is also concern that overemphasis on foreign actors may distract from internal drivers of misinformation, such as partisan media and algorithmic amplification. Moreover, the term "troll" can be misleading. As Phillips (2015) points out, many so-called "trolls" operate more like propagandists than pranksters, which raises the need for more precise terminology.

In summary, the literature on Russian trolls and the "usual suspects" provides compelling evidence of coordinated disinformation operations aimed at disrupting democratic discourse, amplifying division, and influencing political outcomes. While the focus has largely been on western democracies, the threat is global and adaptable. Combating this challenge requires multi-level strategies including regulation, education, research, and international cooperation.

Algorithms and Other Suspects

Search algorithms decide why a certain link appears in the first page of a search engine's results. Social media algorithms also decide what you see. On your Facebook newsfeed you might see a link to a junk news website, a mainstream newspaper or a photo of your nephew depending on what the algorithm prioritizes. The algorithm behind suggested videos on YouTube has been accused of *amplifying* junk content, misinformation, conspiracy theories, etc. (Carmichael & Gragnani, 2019).

The serious problem with algorithms is that they are often not transparent: we don't know how they work. So while it seems unlikely that Google and Facebook are actively and consciously promoting disinformation, it may well be that their algorithms accidentally favour such content, for example because it gets high engagement and thus is likely to get more clicks and generate more revenues for the platforms (Bradshaw & Howard, 2018). When you see a physical ad, for example on a billboard, everyone else can also see it. On the web this works differently: on Facebook and elsewhere, you can make your ads only visible to your target, using different elements, such as location, age, etc. This is called *microtargeting* and it is commonly used for commercial ads. However, this can become problematic with political ads. If a politician makes a false claim on a physical billboard or on TV, journalists would be able to debunk it. If instead he makes it in a micro targeted ad, it would be more difficult to identify and correct. As a result, we use the term dark ads.

The problem, however, has been partially resolved in recent years. In 2019, to respond to the harsh criticism received, Facebook launched an Ad Library in which all political ads that have appeared on the platform are available (Constine, 2019). Additionally, you can see who paid for the ad. Of course, these systems can be tricked, as you might be able to make a political ad which is not recognised as such by Facebook or to pay through a dummy person or organization. Individuals play an important role in exercising their information preferences on the internet. Some academic studies have demonstrated that people are more likely to share information that conforms to their pre-existing beliefs with their social networks, deepening ideological differences between individuals and groups. It has thus been argued that social media creates ideological segregation leading to the creation of "echo chambers". The term is a metaphor to describe the situation where a person interacts primarily within a group of people that share the same interests or political views (Dubois & Blank, 2018). A somewhat related concept is "filter bubbles", a term coined by internet activist Eli Pariser (What is a Filter Bubble, 2018) to refer to a selective information acquisition by website algorithms, including search engines and social media posts. This may also help the circulation of fake news. However, among scholars there is no full consensus on how these phenomena operate over the internet (Flaxman, Goel and Rao, 2016), and some studies argue that the danger is non-existent or overstated (Fletcher and Nielsen, 2018).

In "Network Propaganda", a comprehensive study of media coverage of the 2016 U.S. presidential elections published in October 2018, Yochai Benkler, Robert Faris, and Hal Roberts argue that the cause of the current situation are not the usual suspects (social media, Russian propaganda and fake news websites), but a longstanding change of the right-wing media ecosystem (e.g. Fox News), that has abandoned journalist norms creating a propaganda feedback loop. While they focus only on the American case, their method and

approach could be used to analyse the mainstream media ecosystem in other countries, and many insights may be similarly valid. Interestingly, a study in the UK examined the role of "traditional" British tabloids, and noticed that the more the users share tabloid news on social media, the more likely they are to engage in sharing exaggerated or fabricated news (Chadwick, Vaccari, and O'Loughlin, 2018).

Any Solution?

According to Wardle and Derakhshan (2017), combating information disorders requires a comprehensive understanding of their types, sources, and impacts. Their information disorder framework suggests interventions at three levels: prevention, detection, and response. These interventions can be technical (e.g., content moderation), cognitive (e.g., media literacy), or structural (e.g., policy and legal reforms). Lazer et al. (2018) argue that successful strategies must also address the socio-political and psychological dimensions of how people consume and believe false information. They emphasize the importance of boosting public resilience through education and institutional trust-building. Here are the strategies:

Media and Digital Literacy

Media literacy is widely acknowledged as a key mitigation factor for disinformation, as it teaches people how to recognise it. It "cannot be limited to young people but needs to encompass adults as well as teachers and media professionals" in order to help them keep pace with digital technologies (HLEG, 2018). Guess et al. (2020) demonstrate that individuals trained in critical thinking are more likely to evaluate online information carefully and less likely to share false content. Mihailidis and Viotty (2017) advocate for digital civic literacy to empower citizens especially youth to engage critically with online content and understand the dynamics of algorithmic curation. Organizations like UNESCO and the European Union have been active in improving media literacy among people from various societies. In the African context, Mutsvairo and Ragnedda (2019) argue that media literacy should be localized and culturally relevant, especially in communities where traditional media consumption coexists with informal information channels like WhatsApp groups.

Fact-checking and Verification Initiatives

The term usually refers to internal verification processes that journalists put their own work through, but fact-checkers or debunkers dealing with disinformation are involved in ex-post fact-checking, verifying news by other media and publishing the results. Facts alone, however, are not enough to combat disinformation (Silverman, 2015), as it may continue to shape people's attitudes even when debunked (Thorson, 2016). Additionally, people who see the fact-check are often not those who saw the incorrect news, but people who did not see the incorrect news at all or who saw it but recognised or suspected that it was false to begin with.

Independent fact-checking organizations have become central to disinformation mitigation efforts. Platforms such as Africa Check, PesaCheck, and Kenya's Media Council provide

evidence-based verification of public claims and viral content. According to Graves (2018), fact-checking works best when it is timely, nonpartisan, and widely accessible.

However, Nyabola (2018) cautions that fact-checking alone may not be sufficient in environments where trust in media and political institutions is already low. In such cases, verified information may be ignored or rejected if it contradicts users' beliefs or community narratives.

Platform Governance and Algorithmic Accountability

Technology platforms like Facebook, Twitter/X, YouTube, and WhatsApp have been both enablers and battlegrounds for disinformation. Bradshaw and Howard (2019) note that algorithmic design and monetization structures often reward sensationalism, which exacerbates the reach of disinformation. Efforts by platforms to counter this trend include: i)Content flagging and removal. ii)Algorithmic de-prioritization of false content. iii)Collaborations with fact-checkers. iv) Promoting authoritative sources. However, Gillespie (2018) and Tambini (2020) argue that platform interventions often lack transparency, consistency, and accountability—making regulatory oversight increasingly *necessary*.

Legal and Policy Frameworks

Governments have responded to information disorders through legislation, although with mixed results. Laws against hate speech, cyberbullying, and disinformation exist in many jurisdictions. For instance, Kenya's Computer Misuse and Cybercrimes Act (2018) criminalizes false publication and cyber harassment. However, Article 19 (2020) warns that such laws must be carefully designed to avoid violating freedom of expression, especially when governments use them to suppress dissent or opposition voices.

Community-based and Peer-led Interventions

Community resilience is an emerging focus in combating information disorders. UNESCO (2021) emphasizes the role of community leaders, teachers, and youth influencers in promoting accurate information and countering harmful narratives at the grassroots level. In radicalization-prone areas, peer networks can be mobilized to intervene early, debunk harmful myths, and offer credible alternative narratives. Similarly, Ganesh and Bright (2020) highlight the importance of counter-speech campaigns, especially those led by trusted insiders, to neutralize extremist or disinformation narratives.

Conclusion

The prevalence of information disorders; misinformation, disinformation, and malinformation presents a formidable challenge to the field of journalism and underscores the urgent need for an evolved approach in journalism education. As future journalists navigate an increasingly complex media landscape, it is imperative that they are equipped with the skills and knowledge to identify, understand, and combat these threats. This paper has highlighted the critical role that journalism education plays in this context. By integrating media literacy, critical thinking, and ethical journalism into the curriculum,

educational institutions can nurture a new generation of journalists who are not only adept at discerning truth from falsehood but also committed to upholding the integrity of their profession. The adoption of rigorous fact-checking practices and a deep understanding of the ethical implications of spreading information are essential components of this educational evolution. Moreover, addressing information disorders within journalism education is not merely about equipping students with technical skills. It is about instilling a sense of responsibility and ethical commitment to truth and accuracy. As journalism continues to serve as a cornerstone of democratic societies, ensuring that journalists are prepared to uphold these values is paramount.

In conclusion, the fight against information disorders requires a multifaceted approach that includes robust journalism education. By adapting to the realities of the digital age and emphasizing the importance of ethics, critical thinking, and factual integrity, journalism educators can play a crucial role in preserving the credibility and reliability of journalism. Through these efforts, we can ensure that the next generation of journalists is well-prepared to navigate and mitigate the challenges posed by information disorders, ultimately contributing to a more informed and trustworthy media environment.

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