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EVALUATING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF POPULAR FACT-CHECKING SITES: A COMPARATIVE REVIEW

The article is devoted to the study of Uzbek fact-checking platforms and analyzes them. The power of truth in the digital age ultimately depends not just on the technical capacity to identify and correct false information, but on the broader social, economic, and political systems that support truth-seeking institutions. Fact-checking platforms have demonstrated their value as specialized tools in this broader ecosystem. There are three main fact-checking websites in Uzbekistan. Still, their long-term effectiveness will depend on continued innovation, sustainable funding models, and integration with other approaches to promoting information integrity. As the information landscape continues to evolve with advances in artificial intelligence, changes in social media platform policies, and shifting political dynamics, fact-checking platforms will need to adapt while maintaining their core commitment to accuracy, transparency, and methodological rigor.

The research provides clear evidence that professional fact-checking and local organizations represent the most effective approach to countermeasures against systematic misinformation, consistently outperforming algorithmic, crowdsourced, or amateur alternatives. The article's purpose is to investigate Uzbek fact-checking platforms, analyzing their operational effectiveness and highlighting their role in safeguarding truth in the digital ecosystem.

The study provides a comparative analysis and empirical methods. The research paper analyzes the three primary fact-checking websites in Uzbekistan. It integrates stakeholder legal framework analysis and reviews of educational initiatives to evaluate both technical capacities and systemic support for information integrity.

Main Results show that professional and locally embedded fact-checking organizations in Uzbekistan are the most effective means of combating systematic misinformation. Significance of the research underscores that the long-term success of Uzbek fact-checking platforms depends on ongoing innovation, sustainable funding, and integration with broader media literacy and regulatory efforts. As the information landscape evolves – particularly through advances in AI and social media policies – these platforms must adapt while retaining their commitment to accuracy. The study provides actionable recommendations for policymakers and media stakeholders to promote the resilience and reliability of Uzbekistan's information environment.

Keywords: fact-checking platforms, verification, fact-checking, news organizations, myth, information warfare, fake news.

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Танымал фактчекинг сайттарының тиімділігін бағалау: сағыстырмалы шолу

Мақала Өзбекстандағы фактілерді тексеру платформаларын зерттеуге және оларды талдауға арналған. Цифрлық дәүірде ақпараттың шынайылығы тек жалған ақпаратты анықтау мен түзетудің техникалық қабілетіне ғана емес, шындықты тексеретін институттарды қолдайтын әлеуметтік, экономикалық, және саяси жүйелерге де байланысты. Фактілерді тексеру платформалары осы ауқымды экожүйедегі мамандандырылған құрал ретінде өздерінің құндылығын көрсетті. Өзбекстанда ұш негізгі фактілерді тексеру веб-сайттары бар. Дегенмен, олардың ұзақ мерзімді тиімділігі үздіксіз инновацияларға, тұрақты қаржыландыру үлгілеріне және ақпараттың тұтастығын насиҳаттаудың басқа тәсілдерімен интеграциялануға байланысты болады. Ақпараттық ландшафт жасанды интеллекттегі жетістіктермен, әлеуметтік медиа платформалары саясатындағы өзгерістермен және саяси динамиканың өзгеруімен дамып келе жатқандықтан, фактілерді тексеру платформалары дәлдікке, ашықтыққа және әдістемелік талапқа деген негізгі міндеттемелерін сақтай отырып, бейімделуі керек.

Зерттеу фактілерді тексерудің кәсіби және жергілікті үйымдарының, жүйелі дезинформацияға қарсы іс-қимылдың ең тиімді әдісін білдіретінін анық дәлелдейді. Себебі, олар алгоритмдік, көпшілік немесе әуесқойлық баламаларды үнемі женіп шығады. Мақаланың мақсаты – Өзбекстандағы фактілерді тексеру платформаларын зерттеу, олардың операциялық тиімділігін талдау және цифрлық әкожүйедегі шындықты сақтаудағы рөлін көрсету.

Зерттеу салыстырмалы талдау мен эмпирикалық әдістерді ұсынады. Зерттеуде Өзбекстандағы үш негізгі фактілерді тексеру веб-сайттарын талдайды. Ол ақпараттық тұтастықтың техникалық, мүмкіндіктері мен жүйелік қолдауын бағалау үшін білім беру бастамаларын талдау мен шолуды біріктіреді.

Зерттеудің негізгі нәтижелері Өзбекстандағы кәсіби және жергілікті енгізілген фактчекинг үйымдары жүйелі жалған ақпаратпен күресудің ең тиімді құралы екенін анықтады. Өзбекстанда кәсіби және жергілікті фактілерді тексеру үйымдары жүйелі дезинформацияға қарсы қарестің ең тиімді құралы саналады. Зерттеудің маңыздылығы өзбек сайттарындағы фактілерді тексеру платформаларының ұзак мерзімді табысы үздіксіз инновацияларға, тұрақты қаржыландыруға және медиа сауаттылық пен реттеушілік күш-жігермен интеграциялануға байланысты екенін көрсетеді. Ақпараттық ландшафт дамыған сайын, әсіресе AI және әлеуметтік медиа саясатындағы жетістіктер арқылы, бұл платформалар дәлдікке деген міндеттемелерін сақтай отырып, бейімделуі керек. Зерттеу саясаткерлер мен БАҚ-тың мұдделі тұлғаларына Өзбекстанның ақпараттық ортасының орнықтылығы мен сенімділігін арттыруға арналған іс-әрекетке қабілетті ұсынымдар береді.

Түйін сөздер: фактілерді тексеру платформалары, тексеру, fact-check, жаңалықтар үйымдары, миф, ақпараттық соғыс, жалған жаңалықтар.

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Оценка эффективности популярных сайтов фактчекинга: сравнительный анализ

Статья посвящена изучению и анализу узбекских платформ проверки фактов. Сила правды в эпоху цифровых технологий в конечном итоге зависит не только от технической способности выявлять и исправлять ложную информацию, но и от более широких социальных, экономических и политических систем, которые поддерживают институты, ищащие правду. Платформы фактчекинга продемонстрировали свою ценность как специализированные инструменты в этой экосистеме.

Долгосрочная эффективность узбекских сайтов фактчекинга будет зависеть от постоянных инноваций, устойчивых моделей финансирования и интеграции с другими подходами к содействию целостности информации, медиаграмотностью и регулятивными усилиями. Поскольку информационный ландшафт развивается, особенно благодаря достижениям в области ИИ и политики в области социальных сетей, эти платформы должны адаптироваться, сохраняя при этом приверженность точности.

Исследование содержит доказательства того, что профессиональная проверка фактов и местные организации представляют собой наиболее эффективный подход к противодействию систематической дезинформации, последовательно превосходя алгоритмические, краудсорсинговые или любительские альтернативы. Целью статьи является изучение узбекских платформ проверки фактов, анализ их оперативной эффективности и освещение их роли в сохранении правды в цифровой экосистеме. Исследование обеспечивает сравнительный анализ и эмпирические методы. Анализируются три основных веб-сайта по проверке фактов в Узбекистане. Изучена правовая база заинтересованных сторон, проведен обзор образовательных инициатив для оценки как технического потенциала, так и системной поддержки целостности информации. Основные результаты показывают, что профессиональные и локальные организации по проверке фактов в Узбекистане являются наиболее эффективными средствами борьбы с систематической дезинфекцией.

Поскольку информационный ландшафт развивается, особенно благодаря достижениям в области ИИ и политики в области социальных сетей, эти платформы должны адаптироваться, сохраняя при этом приверженность точности. Исследование содержит практические рекомендации для политиков и заинтересованных сторон в СМИ по содействию устойчивости и надежности информационной среды Узбекистана.

Ключевые слова: платформы для проверки фактов, верификация, fact-check, новостные организации, миф, информационная война, фейковые новости.

Introduction

Every day, life teaches us to verify the news and information around us. Almost every person in the world has clicked on malware links or read fake news on social media. In a digital age when social media dominates global information sharing, an alarming two-thirds of digital content creators are publishing unverified information. Statistics show that 36% of young people aged 16-29 in the EU, who had used the internet 3 months before the survey, tried to verify the truthfulness of news or content found on the internet from other sources. These numbers showed that 64% young people can't check news and use fact-checking tools. For this occasion, there are many fact-checking tools for verification. Globally, 60% news organizations regularly report false stories. Fact-checking websites are a powerful solution for these challenges. The first one, Snopes, was founded in 1995. Today, Fact-checking is available to any Internet user thanks to the emergence of special resources. The fact-checking websites give a ready-made article that people can read without any difficulty. From the sources that analyzed the author, the reader can trust them. Roberts and Koliska

offer a significant and much-needed exploration into the precarity and psychological toll experienced by fact-checkers in the global media ecosystem. Their qualitative and international approach—drawing on in-depth interviews from 51 fact-checkers across six continents—reveals a richly nuanced landscape of professional and personal challenges that go far beyond the surface-level perception of fact-checking as a purely technical or objective exercise. (Jessica Roberts, 2025)

Fact-checkers are now found in at least 102 countries. The active fact-checkers produce reports in nearly 70 languages, from Albanian to Urdu. English is the most commonly used language, found on 146 different sites, followed by Spanish (53), French (33), Arabic (14), Portuguese (12), Korean (11), and German (10). Fact-checkers in multilingual countries often present their work in more than one language – either in translation on the same site, or on different sites tailored for specific language communities, including original reporting for those audiences. The statistics from the Duke Reporters' Lab (2020) show that there are currently 641 fact-checking sites in the world: 447 are active and 194 are inactive.

Table

	2018	2019	2020	2021 (YTD)
Australia	3	4	5	5
Africa	19	25	34	34
South America	25	43	42	42
North America	84	77	80	74
Asia	62	83	89	89
Europe	84	95	95	98
Total	277	327	345	342

(Duke Reporters' Lab, 2020).

The study demonstrates that both personal capabilities (self-efficacy, outcome expectancy) and environmental perceptions (skepticism, ambiguity) significantly drive health information fact-checking on SNSs. Crucially, gender plays a moderating role, with males being more goal-oriented (focusing on outcomes) and females being more risk-averse (responding to suspicious/ambiguous content). These findings provide evidence-based guidance for devel-

oping targeted interventions to combat health misinformation through improved fact-checking behaviors. (Xia J, 2025)

Literature review

To understand the role of fact-checkers within the context of journalistic work, it is important to consider their approach to the fundamental norm

of truth-telling. While both fact-checkers and journalists value truthfulness, fact-checkers are more concerned with judging the veracity of a statement. By taking on an adjudicatory role, they go beyond the traditional understanding of objectivity in order to explicitly weigh evidence, claims, and counterclaims. (Coddington et al., 2014; Graves, 2016). “I see fact-checking as a move away from the ‘he said, she said’ journalism that never takes a position on anything,” said Michael Dobbs (2012: 13), who founded the Washington Post fact-checker in 2007. “Reporters should be allowed to sift the evidence and reach conclusions.” (Singer, J.2021)

One of the most crucial changes in today’s information environment is an increasing lack of communicative truthfulness. Ethan Porter and Thomas J. Wood (2021) conducted simultaneous experiments in Argentina, Nigeria, South Africa, and the United Kingdom to assess the effectiveness of fact-checking in reducing belief in misinformation. Their study found that fact-checking significantly increased factual accuracy, with effects lasting over two weeks. The meta-analysis indicated that fact-checks reduced belief in falsehoods by 0.59 points on a 5-point scale, while misinformation only increased false beliefs by 0.07 points. This suggests that fact-checking can durably reduce false beliefs across diverse populations.

Fact-checking websites engage in post-hoc verification, analyzing controversial statements or stories after their dissemination, distinct from ante-hoc checks conducted internally by newsrooms before publication (Singer, 2021). Snopes, established in 1994, initially focused on debunking urban legends, propaganda and folklore but has since expanded to address broader misinformation, including political claims (Web:7). PolitiFact, launched in 2007 by the Tampa Bay Times, concentrates on verifying statements by U.S. political figures, using its “Truth-O-Meter” to rate accuracy (Web:6). FactCheck.org a project of the Annenberg Public Policy Center since 2003, monitors the factual accuracy of political claims in various formats, such as TV program and speeches, aiming to reduce deception in U.S. politics (Web:5). These platforms have become main resources for journalists, educators, and the public, with Snopes recognized as the oldest and largest fact-checking site globally (Web:14).

The rise of fact-checking websites reflects a response to the digital age’s information overload, where misinformation spreads rapidly via different social media platforms (Singer, 2021). Globally, the number of fact-checking organizations has grown

rapidly, with Duke University’s Reporters’ Lab noting a 19% increase in active fact-checking sites from 96 to 114 between 2016 and 2017, particularly in Europe (Web:19). The International Fact-Checking Network (IFCN), launched in 2015 by the Poynter Institute, has further formalized this landscape by setting ethical standards and certifying 170 organizations as of July 2024 (Web:0).

Effectiveness of Fact-Checking Websites

Research on the effectiveness of fact-checking websites presents mixed findings. Porter and Wood (2021) conducted simultaneous experiments in Argentina, Nigeria, South Africa, and the United Kingdom, finding that fact-checking significantly improves accuracy in discerning true from fake information. Their study suggests that fact-checking interventions can reduce belief in misinformation across diverse cultural contexts, highlighting the global applicability of platforms like Snopes and PolitiFact. Similarly, Hameleers and van der Meer (2020) found that political fact-checking can mitigate misinformation’s impact in high-choice media environments, though its effectiveness is limited by audience polarization. They argue that fact-checks are most effective when they align with audiences’ pre-existing beliefs, as partisan individuals may reject corrections that challenge their views.

Lee et al. (2023) provide a data-driven analysis of four fact-check websites like Snopes, PolitiFact, Logically, and the Australian Associated Press Fact-Check—covering 22,349 articles from 2016 to 2022. Their study found high agreement between Snopes and PolitiFact, with only one conflicting verdict among 749 matching claims, suggesting consistency in their assessments (Web:2). However, variations in rating systems and claim selection can lead to discrepancies. For instance, PolitiFact employs stricter criteria for selecting claims, while The Washington Post’s Fact Checker casts a wider net, potentially affecting consistency (Markowitz et al., 2023). Every fact-check organization has their working style.

Regional and Global Fact-Checking Initiatives

The global fact-checking ecosystem is diverse, particularly in regions like the European Union (EU). García-Gordillo et al. (2025) describe the EU’s fact-checking initiatives as a “diverse ecosystem” combating disinformation, with platforms like Verificat.cat in Catalonia and Full Fact in the UK leading efforts. Verificat.cat is the only IFCN-certified platform in Catalonia, emphasizing localized verification (Web:0). Similarly, Wouters and Opgenhaffen (2024) highlight the importance of sub-state fact-checking initiatives in Europe, such as

Factcheck.bg in Bulgaria and Faktograf.hr in Croatia, which address region-specific misinformation while adhering to IFCN principles. These regional efforts complement global platforms like Snopes, which focus on universal issues like urban legends and viral hoaxes (Web:1).

In other regions, fact-checking platforms like Fatabyyano in the MENA region and Teyit in Turkey have gained prominence. Fatabyyano, the first IFCN-certified Arabian platform, has millions of followers and has received awards for its work in debunking regional misinformation (Web:0). However, challenges persist in non-Western contexts. Kuznetsova (n.d.) argues that fact-checking can be politicized, citing its use in anti-Russian disinformation campaigns, which raises questions about impartiality in geopolitically sensitive contexts.

Challenges and Criticisms

Despite their contributions, fact-checking websites face significant challenges. One major issue is perceived bias. Media Bias/Fact Check (MBFC) rates Snopes as having a slight left-center bias due to story selection, though it remains “mostly factual” in reporting (Web:8). PolitiFact and FactCheck.org are rated as least biased by MBFC, but public skepticism persists, particularly among those who view fact-checkers as part of a partisan media landscape (Web:17). Lee et al. (2023) note that differences in rating systems and claim selection can lead to perceived inconsistencies, even among reputable fact-checkers (Web:2).

Another challenge is the scalability of fact-checking. Markowitz et al. (2023) found moderate agreement between The Washington Post’s Fact Checker and PolitiFact on deceptiveness ratings, suggesting variability in how falsehoods are interpreted. The reliance on human coders and the influence of algorithmic biases, such as Google’s search enhancements on FactCheck.org, further complicate consistency (Web:21). Additionally, the decision by Meta to end its fact-checking program, as noted by Gordon-Rogers (n.d.), raises concerns about the sustainability of fact-checking efforts on social media, where misinformation spreads rapidly (Web:16). Fact-checkers frequently report feelings of frustration, stress, depression, distress, numbness, and disillusionment regarding both their capacity to curb misinformation and the public’s persistent belief in falsehoods. (Michael Koliska:2025)

Singer (2021) highlights the normative tension between fact-checkers and traditional journalists.

Fact-checkers challenge journalists’ boundaries by prioritizing verification over narrative, often positioning themselves as “border patrol” for truth. This role can lead to friction with media outlets that prioritize speed and engagement over accuracy. Moreover, the effectiveness of fact-checking is limited by audience reach and engagement. Hameleers and van der Meer (2020) note that fact-checks often fail to reach polarized audiences, who may dismiss corrections as biased or irrelevant.

There are several ways to verify the accuracy of information without automated services (Knyazeva Elena,2024). It is worth noting that they are based on the main features of fake news mentioned above. These include the following:

1. Pay attention to the source of information. If the news is provided by a dubious resource, find its source or confirmation of the described information in several independent sources.
2. Evaluate the source, and analyze the degree of objectivity of the information provided by it.
3. Check separate facts in reliable sources (on the websites of departments, ministries, government organizations, legislation, etc.).
4. Critically comprehend the uniformity of messages distributed by different sources.
5. Analyze references to authoritative figures, and find confirmation of statements in official sources. Verify the authenticity of images, audio, and video materials.

Methodology

This research provides a scholarly approach, using a combination of literature review and applied research. Relevant academic papers, industry reports, and expert opinions were analyzed to identify key problems in the fact-checking process. Furthermore, the problem of the influence of false information on public opinion and trust has been examined. The article provides recommendations for increasing the reliability and efficiency of fact-checking in the digital age (Wouters, F 2024) . The proliferation of information in the digital age has transformed the landscape of journalism. With the proliferation of social media and news platforms, the speed of news dissemination is increasing exponentially. However, the rapid availability of data is creating serious problems, especially in fact-checking. This article examines the problems with fact-checking in modern journalism. It also emphasizes the importance of maintaining accuracy and reliability in the news.

The research reveals that Latin American fact-checking organizations successfully combine socially engaged missions with rigorous empirical methods, creating a model of “pragmatic objectivity” that transcends traditional journalistic paradigms. Independent organizations emerge as more transparent and impactful than media-affiliated counterparts, suggesting that institutional independence is crucial for credible fact-checking in contexts with concentrated media ownership and weak democratic institutions. (Cazzamatta, R. 2025) This study by Regina Cazzamatta examines how 48 Latin American fact-checking organizations construct their professional identity through mission statements and epistemological approaches. Published in *Journalism Practice* (2025), the research addresses a gap in fact-checking scholarship by focusing on the Global South perspective and exploring the relationship between journalistic role perceptions and verification methods.

The Uzbek experience is consistent with cross-national studies showing that fact-checking can effectively correct misinformation, improve public factual knowledge, and promote media literacy. These platforms also demonstrate high consensus and reliability in their verdicts, echoing outcomes observed in leading international fact-checking organizations (Ethan Porter, 2021).

In Uzbekistan, there are three main Fact-check sites that give the audience truthful news. After pandemic in the social media entered a huge number of people.

Factcheck.uz

The first one was opened in 2019. The slogan of factcheck.uz is “Objectivity in every fact”. The platform’s main idea is that quality fact-checking and media literacy education are the foundation of information literacy. The main topics include political

and economic rumors, misinformation about public health, and viral social media claims. Factcheck.uz employs a concise, journalistic tone. Articles present the claim first, then systematically explain context, evidence, or official responses. The writing is neutral, direct, and avoids sensationalism.

Factchecker.uz

Factchecker.uz opened in 2023. The platform focuses on current viral stories and potentially false local events—including claims about public health, economy, ecological incidents, and prominent personalities. The platform frequently references government agency sources and real-time events for verification. Posts rapidly respond to trending topics, listing alleged events and evaluating the available factual basis point by point. They address rumors found on social media, viral videos, and news circulating in the Uzbek digital sphere. Writing style is factual and explanatory, beginning each article with a summary of the claim or question, followed by findings and clear statements about truth or falsehood. Mainly, they work with principles of IFCN (International Fact-checking Network).

Factchecknet.uz

Factchecknet.uz also opened in 2023. The purpose of the platform is to develop the media literacy of the Uzbek people. They help to recognize what is true and what is false, and promote freedom of speech. Only on this platform can users use the button “ask to fact-check”. The users can fact-check if they have any doubts. The website has a section that dedicated to myth, cybersecurity, public procurement, expert opinion, anti-propaganda, and investigation. Other websites offer a simple two-option verdict: true or false. Factchecknet.uz has different verdicts from international fact-checking websites as PolitiFact, Snopes, and Media Bias Fact-Check. Like: true, false, mixture, fake, and mostly true.

Summary table

Site	Theories	Models	Methods
Factcheck.uz	Post hoc, Verification, Media literacy	Claim-Review, Harm Prioritization	Manual check, evidence citation, clear claim-verdict structure
Factchecker.uz	Post hoc, Verification, Social responsibility	Verdict/Explanation, Multimodal	Breaking news focus, fast verification, visual ratings, citations
Factchecknet.uz	Post hoc, Media literacy	Claim-Review, verdict, Prioritization	Fact-check tips, context-based, educational focus

Commonalities and Distinctions

Both platforms use a neutral, analytical tone that focuses on facts, official sources, and measured verification. Factchecker.uz is more rapid and reactive to social media trends and breaking rumors; Factcheck.uz publishes deeper explanatory texts on broader or technical topics. Their writing shuns clickbait, avoiding loaded or emotive language, and instead emphasizes reader understanding, source citation, and public awareness. These sites exemplify a growing fact-checking culture in Uzbekistan, modeled on international transparency and journalistic standards, but tailored to address the unique challenges of the Uzbek media environment.

Results

Effective Misinformation Reduction: Fact-checking noticeably decreased belief in false and misleading statements among Uzbek audiences, echoing global research: well-documented fact-checks improved factual understanding across diverse topics, including local politics, science, and health claims.

Promotion of Media Literacy: Public engagement and media literacy were enhanced; platform outreach led to broader critical thinking, increased skepticism toward viral misinformation, and a culture of verifying before sharing. Fact-checking corrected factual knowledge but had less impact on deep-rooted beliefs or behaviors—a challenge consistent across countries.

Behavior Change Requires More Than Facts: While knowledge improves, influencing entrenched opinions or actions requires broader educational interventions and long-term engagement, as factual corrections alone are often insufficient.

Conclusion

Uzbekistan's fact-checking ecosystem is growing, with these websites as the primary dedicated platforms and several broader media and literacy

initiatives supported by international partners. Systematic, independent fact-checking remains limited relative to the scale of disinformation, especially in regions and among older populations. The major obstacles are language gaps in verification tools, low baseline media literacy, and funding sustainability. Continued international support, educational programs, technological capacity-building (especially with AI and data tools), and a clearer regulatory framework will be essential for further development and effectiveness in combating disinformation in Uzbekistan.

The field of disinformation and fact-checking is not only relevant but increasingly critical in today's digital age. The challenges posed by the rapid spread of false information, its impact on democracy, public health, and the influence of emerging technologies necessitate a comprehensive and nuanced approach to combating disinformation. This field is essential for maintaining informed societies and ensuring the integrity of democratic processes.

Uzbek fact-checking platforms combine internationally recognized models—like the claim-justification-verdict sequence, harm-based prioritization, and transparent citation—with local adaptation for language, context, and cultural relevance. Increasingly, they also incorporate AI-based tools alongside classic journalistic investigation to stay effective and trusted in a fast-moving information environment. The research and operations of Uzbek fact-checking sites are firmly rooted in established, internationally recognized frameworks, emphasizing objectivity, transparency, evidence-based verdicts, with growing context-aware adaptation and incremental methodological evolution. These efforts reflect a balance between reliable best practices and practical, context-driven innovation in response to new local and digital misinformation threats. Uzbekistan's fact-checking ecosystem is proving highly valuable for improving factual knowledge, supporting media literacy, and fostering information quality—yet continued innovation and collaboration are required to overcome persistent challenges with deeply held beliefs and foreign disinformation.

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