

# Accessing The Fact-Checking Platforms And Their Role In Combating Fake News In Nigeria

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**Abstract:** *This study is on accessing the fact-checking platforms and their role in combating fake news in Nigeria. The study adopted a survey research methodology. The population of the study are media practitioners from the Lagos Chapter of the Nigeria Union of Journalist (NUJ). The study made use of purposive sampling technique and a sample of 120 journalists were selected for the study. The study adopted research questionnaire as research instruments. Data analysis was carried out using SPSS version 23.0 software. The study made use of descriptive statistics involving frequency tables and percentages. The result of the study revealed that the most commonly used fact-check platforms by journalists in Nigeria are Factcheck hub, Africa check, Dubawa and News verifier Africa. Findings in this study also revealed that some of the challenges journalists face when using fact-checking platforms in their work include journalists not having enough time to verify every claim thoroughly using fact-checking platforms due to strict deadlines, low level of awareness of the range of fact-checking tools available, poor internet connectivity and threats, online harassment, or pressure from powerful figures. The study recommended that media industry should engage in training and retraining of journalists and media practitioners on the usage of fact-checking tools and platforms to enhance their productivity.*

**Keywords:** Fake news, Fact-checking, Journalism, Media, Technology

## Introduction

False news does the online equivalent of spreading wildfire, often gaining traction faster than the truth. A massive study of Twitter/X found that false news propagates “farther, faster, deeper, and more broadly” than true news largely due to its novelty value and emotional impact—qualities that fuel sharing. (Vosoughi, Roy & Aral, 2018) As a result, a worldwide professional fact-checking ecosystem has emerged. Many media outlets now subscribe to the International Fact-Checking Network (IFCN) Code of Principles, the standard-setting document for nonpartisanship, transparent practices, and open corrections; local networks (e.g., EFCSN covering Europe) and databases (Duke Reporters’ Lab) monitor this growing industry. (Allen et al, 2022) The fundamental question for scholarship and policy is simple: do fact-checks and associated platform tools really decrease belief in falsehoods and slow their propagation?

There is promising causal evidence on belief correction. A 16-country field experiment found that fact-check exposure significantly reduced misperceptions across topics in a reliable manner, with effects that lasted for weeks. Meta-analytic research likewise concludes that corrections on average suppress the impact of misinformation, and extreme-sized “backfire” effects happen infrequently. (Walter & Tukachinsky, 2020).

Platforms complement professional fact-checkers with product features. “Accuracy nudge” prompts—which simply ask users to consider accuracy before sharing reduce intentions to share false headlines in lab and field settings. Warning labels can also lower perceived credibility and sharing; however, tagging only some false posts risks an “implied truth” effect, where untagged false items look implicitly verified. These results highlight a design trade-off between coverage and unintended signals (Wood & Porter, 2019).

Crowdsourced models aim to scale reach. X/Twitter’s Community Notes can increase trust in fact-checking and, in some studies, reduce downstream diffusion on labeled posts. Yet other real-world evaluations find little system-level impact, often because notes arrive after the most viral phase. Timeliness and coverage, not just accuracy, remain key constraints (Pennycook & Rand, 2021).

Although newspapers thrived, the rapid advancement of technology resulted in huge breakthroughs in the Internet, which allows for greater access to information while also liberalising the mass media industry. People who have access to the internet and social media platforms may no longer be considered mere news consumers because they can also create and share news. With such immense power comes abuse, and therefore fake news, which is unverified and most likely false, and non-factual (almost imaginary) items now dominate the media landscape, spreading misinformation about major societal concerns (Nwafor & Odoemelam, 2012). Efforts have been made worldwide to combat this disinformation tendency. The “Fact-check” approach is being used by the majority of traditional media outlets and investigative web media to analyse false information and re-inform readers and audio-visual audiences on the topic. There are several academics that disagree on what constitutes a fact-check, including Stenceland Griffin (2018) and Graves and Amazeen (2019). According to their theory, fact-checking is the process of confirming claimed facts or information in order to either fully or partially invalidate it.

## Statement of the Problem

Fake news continues to spread faster and wider online than the truth does, so fact-checks typically begin the race behind. There is evidence that exposure to facts-checking does reduce belief in lies across countries and topics, with lingering effects remaining for weeks. But belief reduction is not the same as diffusion slowing down on the wild. We cannot yet produce solid evidence, to scale, that fact-checking tends to dampen the spread of subpar information across platforms, languages, and closed networks. This discrepancy between individual-level belief correction and platform-level contagion is the crux of the problem this study addresses (Pennycook & Rand, 2021). On-platform tools bring hope but bring new risks. “Accuracy nudge” prompts and sister cues are found over and over to boost sharing decisions in experiments and field tests, yet their real-world coverage is patchy. Warnings labels might help—but labeling select posts on lies creates an “implied truth” effect, where untaxed fibs seem more credible, potentially blunting benefits.

In most African environments including Nigeria the problem is more acute on closed-messaging platforms such as WhatsApp, where the content is encrypted and fact-checking cannot easily cut through group chats. Preliminary assessments and practitioner reports indicate local initiatives increase awareness, but closed-channel dynamics and linguistic diversity constrain reach and velocity. Hence the challenge is that even though there is an expanding ecosystem of professional fact-checkers and platform-based interventions, there is a need to know how effective these mechanisms really are in spotting false claims fast enough and broadly enough, and cutting their spread measurably.

## Aim and objectives of the Study

The aim of this study is to assess the fact-checking platforms and their role in combating fake news in Nigeria. The secondary objectives are to

- i. Assess the awareness of fact-checking platforms among journalists.
- ii. identify the types of fact-checking tools and platforms used by Nigerian journalists
- iii. challenges journalists when using fact-checking platforms in their work

## Literature Review

### Fact-Checking

In journalism, fact-checking is crucial since it guarantees the veracity and correctness of news reports and stories. To preserve the integrity of their profession and the confidence of their audience, journalists have an obligation to confirm the material they publish (Wardle & Derakhshan, 2017). Journalists can reduce mistakes, inaccuracies, and misrepresentations in their reporting and increase the dependability and credibility of their work by carefully fact-checking sources, confirming information, and supporting assertions. In a time when fake news and disinformation are common, fact-checking is an essential strategy for thwarting lies, rumours, and propaganda. By critically analysing assertions, closely reviewing supporting data, and offering context and analysis to refute misleading narratives, journalists play a significant role in dispelling disinformation (Graves, 2016). Fact-checked content enables viewers to discern between trustworthy and untrustworthy news sources, enabling them to make wise decisions and thwart the spread of false information.

### Fake News

Fake news, according to McGonagle (2017), is purposefully produced content intended to mislead or deceive people into believing lies or doubting accepted truths. Information experts view fake news and hoaxes as misinformation that passes for real news and is frequently connected to propaganda or yellow journalism. This type of content is made up of intentional lies or hoaxes that are shared on social media or traditional media. In a similar vein, Bakir and McStay (2017) define fake news as items that are purposefully misleading and clearly produced in order to deceive readers. Although definitions differ, Marda and Milan (2018) note that fake news frequently combines disinformation—false information purposefully disseminated to deceive—and inaccurate information (misinformation). This difference is explained by Olorunyomi (2018), who emphasises the dual nature of disinformation and misinformation, defining the former as narratives in which the sender unintentionally spreads false information without intending harm, while the latter entails a conscious effort to sway public opinion and modify public behaviour in order to support particular ideologies. Olorunyomi also emphasises that disinformation, which has historically been used by governments, is a more severe and damaging form of narrative manipulation.

### Types of Fact-checking tools and Platforms

There are several types of fact-checking platforms and some of them include:

- i. Dubawa: Possibly the most well-known fact-checking website in Nigeria, Dubawa takes a team-based approach. To validate claims, journalists, researchers, and volunteers collaborate and use a variety of media formats, including text, audio, and video.
- ii. Fact-check.org: This well-known fact-checking website is run by the University of Pennsylvania's Annenberg Public Policy Centre. It uses a group of scholars and journalists who evaluate political speeches, declarations, and news items to determine their veracity and offer factual context (Clifton, 2019).
- iii. Africa Check: With a significant presence in Nigeria, this pan-African project focusses on thorough investigations and lengthy fact-checks. They address complicated topics like political deception and healthcare misinformation with a methodical manner.

## Empirical Reviews

Arikenbi and Ikharo (2025) looked into journalists' perceptions of fact-checking apps in Nigeria to combat fake news. The study focusses on their awareness, utilisation, and problems. The study employs technological determinism theory and a survey research design. According to the findings, the majority of respondents are aware of fact-checking applications, which is becoming increasingly important in journalism due to the development of misinformation and fake news. The study's findings show that the vast majority of respondents are well aware of fact-checking tools designed to combat fake news. The report advises that media stakeholders establish extensive education initiatives to help journalists comprehend fact-checking applications. It also advocates for transparency and accountability in the creation and implementation of these technologies.

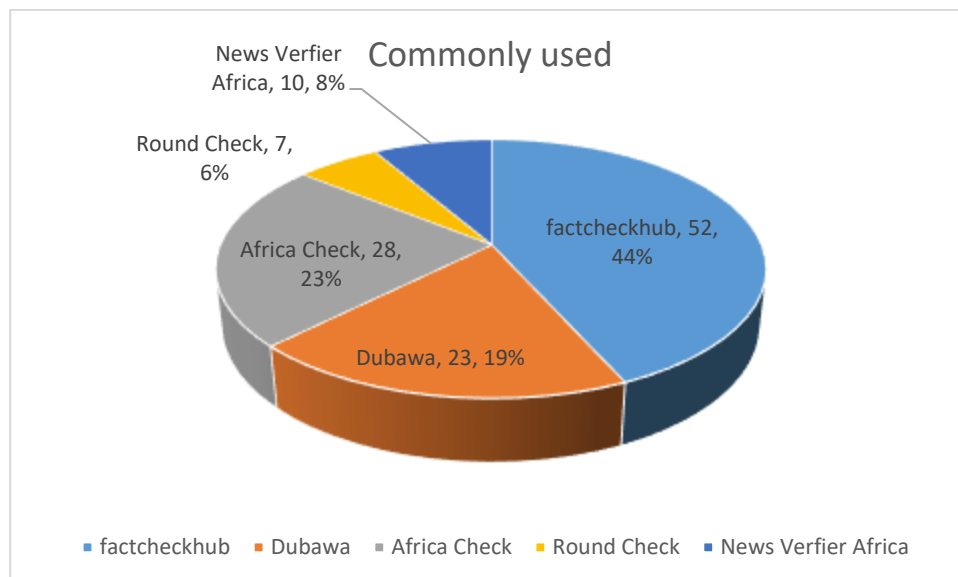
Chukwu (2021) conducted research on fact-checking news items prior to publishing and the media in Port Harcourt, Nigeria. The study looked at the difficulties associated with fact-checking as well as the degree to which the media in Port Harcourt fact-check their news stories prior to publication. The researcher discovered, through interview schedules with journalists from 15 media outlets, that the Port Harcourt media are unaware of independent fact-checkers and have not used them to verify news stories or information before releasing it to the public.

## Research Methodology

A survey research methodology was used in this study. The population of the study are journalists from the Lagos Chapter of the Nigeria Union of Journalist. The study made use of systematic and purposive sampling techniques and a sample of 120 journalists were selected for the study. Purposive sampling is a non-probability sampling techniques in which participants are selected because of the unique characteristics they possess that related to the subject matter. The research instrument used was a structured questionnaire and data analysis was carried out using SPSS version 23.0 software. The study made use of descriptive and inferential statistics such as Multiple Regression Analysis to analyze the hypothesis of the study.

## Data Analysis

### Commonly used Fact-checked platforms



**Figure 1: Commonly used Fact-check platforms**

From figure one, the most commonly used fact-checked platforms are factcheck hub (44%), Africa check (23%), Dubawa (19%) and News verifier Africa (8%). This implies that the most commonly used fact-check platforms by journalists in Nigeria are Factcheck hub, Africa check, Dubawa and News verifier Africa.

**Table 1: Awareness level of Fact-checking platforms among Journalists**

Awareness level	Frequency	Percent
Very high	34	28.3
High	61	50.8
Moderate	18	15.0
Low	7	5.8
Very low	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 1 shows that awareness level of fact-check platforms among journalists. It shows that 50.8% of the respondents have a high level of awareness of fact-check platforms, 28.3% of the respondents had a very high level of awareness, 15.0% had a moderate level of awareness while 5.8% had a low level of awareness. This implies that the awareness level of fact-check platforms among journalists is high.

**Table 2: The challenges journalists when using fact-checking platforms in their work**

S/N	Statement	SA	A	U	D	SD	$\bar{x}$	Std Dev
1	Journalists working under strict deadlines may not have enough time to verify every claim thoroughly using fact-checking platforms	58 (48.3%)	52 (43.3%)	10 (8.3%)	-	-	2.60	0.64
2	Many journalists are not fully aware of the range of fact-checking tools available	60 (50.0%)	56 (46.7%)	4 (3.3%)	-	-	2.53	0.56
3	In some parts of Nigeria, poor internet connectivity slows or blocks fact-checking efforts	86 (71.7%)	26 (21.7%)	8 (6.7%)	-	-	2.48	1.02
4	Journalists who expose false claims, especially those linked to politics, can face threats, online harassment, or pressure from powerful figures	31 (25.8%)	67 (55.8%)	14 (11.7%)	8 (6.7%)	-	2.99	0.80

Table 2 shows that 58 (48.3%) of the respondents strongly agree that journalists working under strict deadlines may not have enough time to verify every claim thoroughly using fact-checking platforms, 52 (43.3%) of the respondents agree to the statement while 10 (8.3%) were undecided on the statement. Also, 60 (50.0%) of the respondents strongly agree that many journalists are not fully aware of the range of fact-checking tools available, 56 (46.7%) of the respondents agree to the statement while 4 (3.3%) were undecided on the statement. In addition, 86 (71.7%) of the respondents strongly agree that in some parts of Nigeria, poor connectivity slows or blocks fact-checking efforts, 26 (21.7%) of the respondents agree to the statement while 8 (6.7%) were undecided on the statement. Furthermore, 67 (55.8%) of the respondents agree that journalists who expose false claims, especially those linked to politics, can face threats, online harassment, or pressure from powerful figures, 31 (25.8%) of the respondents strongly agree to the statement, 14 (11.7%) were undecided while 8 (6.7%) of the respondents disagree on the statement.

**Discussion of the Findings**

This study is on accessing the fact-checking platforms and their role in combating fake news in Nigeria. A total number of 120 journalists from NUJ chapter of Lagos were involved in this study. The findings showed that the most commonly used fact-check

platforms by journalists in Nigeria are Factcheck hub, Africa check, Dubawa and News verifier Africa. Also, the awareness level of fact-check platforms among journalists is high. The study also showed that some of the challenges journalists face when using fact-checking platforms in their work include journalists not having enough time to verify every claim thoroughly using fact-checking platforms due to strict deadlines, low level of awareness of the range of fact-checking tools available, poor internet connectivity and threats, online harassment, or pressure from powerful figures. Arikebi and Ikharo (2025) who reported that majority of respondents are aware of fact-checking applications, which is becoming increasingly important in journalism due to the development of misinformation and fake news.

## **Conclusion**

With the introduction of new tools and techniques to improve accuracy and efficiency in information verification, contemporary technology has completely changed how journalists approach factchecking. However, different journalists have different perspectives and understandings of factchecking apps, which are influenced by things like technology literacy, work experiences, and ethical issues. A lot of journalists are aware of how fact-checking technologies may increase accuracy and counter false information. Compared to manual factchecking techniques, these systems are faster and more thorough in their ability to analyse vast amounts of data, spot trends, and pinpoint errors or contradictions in news content. The study shows that the most commonly used fact-check platforms by journalists in Nigeria are Factcheck hub, Africa check, Dubawa and News verifier Africa. In addition, some of the challenges journalists encounter when using fact-checking platforms in their work include journalists not having enough time to verify every claim thoroughly using fact-checking platforms due to strict deadlines, low level of awareness of the range of fact-checking tools available, poor internet connectivity and threats, online harassment, or pressure from powerful figures.

## **Recommendations**

- i. Media industry should engage in training and retraining of journalists and media practitioners on the usage of fact-checking tools and platforms to enhance their productivity.
- ii. Transparency and accountability in the creation and implementation of fact-checking tools should be promoted by media outlets and other pertinent parties.

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