

## Multi case analysis on the development of fact-checking organizations in Indonesia

Detta Rahmawan<sup>1</sup>, Rudi Hartanto<sup>2</sup>, Irma Garnesia<sup>3</sup>

<sup>12</sup>Universitas Padjadjaran, Bandung, Indonesia

<sup>3</sup>Tirto.id, Jakarta, Indonesia

### ABSTRACT

The network of fact-checking organizations has expanded widely. These organizations are seen as one of the important elements in the efforts to tackle the spread of disinformation, misinformation, or hoax in society. The number of fact-checking organizations in all parts of the world continues to increase. However, scholarly studies which try to capture the presence of fact-checking practices in Global South Countries, including Indonesia, are still limited. This study uses a multi-case study method to analyze the development of fact-checking practices carried out by six organizations in Indonesia that are already certified by the International Fact-Checking Network (IFCN), namely: “Cek Fakta-Liputan 6”, “Cek Fakta-Suara.com,” “Tirto.id”, “KOMPAS.com,” “Tempo.co”, and “MAFINDO”. Since fact-checking initiatives became popular about six years ago in Indonesia, we discovered that Indonesian fact-checking organizations have grown and strengthened their presence nationally, as well as engaged with various networks of global organizations leading the ongoing fight against hoaxes. However, Indonesian fact-checking organizations are still facing several challenges in standardizing fact-checking methodologies, measuring and evaluating the “impact” of their fact-checking activities, and related to managing fact-checking resources. While this study attempts to contribute an overview of Indonesian fact-checking organizations, further studies on fact-checking initiatives with various methodological approaches are still needed to comprehensively examine the role of fact-checking organizations in Indonesia.

**Keywords:** Fact-checking; fact check organization; hoax; IFCN; multi-case study

### *Analisis multi-kasus perkembangan organisasi cek fakta di Indonesia*

#### ABSTRAK

*Jaringan organisasi pemeriksa fakta telah berkembang luas, dan organisasi ini dipandang sebagai salah satu elemen penting dalam upaya mengatasi penyebaran disinformasi, misinformasi atau hoaks. Meski jumlah organisasi pemeriksa fakta di seluruh belahan dunia terus meningkat, namun kajian ilmiah yang mencoba menangkap keberadaan praktik pengecekan fakta di Negara-Negara Global South, termasuk Indonesia masih terbatas. Studi ini menggunakan metode studi multi-kasus untuk mengulas perkembangan praktik cek fakta yang dilakukan oleh enam organisasi di Indonesia yang telah mendapatkan sertifikasi dari International Fact-Checking Network (IFCN) yaitu: Cek Fakta-Liputan 6, Cek Fakta-Suara.com, Tirto.id, KOMPAS.com, Tempo.co, dan MAFINDO. Sejak inisiatif cek fakta menjadi populer sekitar enam tahun yang lalu di Indonesia, kami menemukan bahwa organisasi pemeriksa fakta telah tumbuh dan menguatkan eksistensi keberadaannya secara nasional dan juga telah terlibat dengan berbagai jaringan organisasi global yang bekerja dalam konteks perlawanan terhadap hoaks. Namun, berbagai inisiatif cek fakta di Indonesia masih memiliki tantangan dalam konteks standardisasi metodologi cek fakta, evaluasi pengukuran “dampak” dari aktivitas cek fakta, serta terkait pengelolaan sumber daya pemeriksa fakta dalam masing-masing organisasi. Studi ini mencoba memberikan gambaran tentang organisasi pemeriksa fakta di Indonesia. Ke depannya, studi lebih lanjut tentang inisiatif cek fakta dengan berbagai pendekatan metodologis masih diperlukan untuk melihat secara komprehensif peran organisasi pemeriksa fakta di Indonesia.*

**Kata-kata Kunci:** *Cek-fakta; organisasi pemeriksa fakta; hoaks; IFCN; studi multi kasus*

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**Correspondence:** Detta Rahmawan, S.Sos., M.A., Universitas Padjadjaran, Jln. Raya Bandung Sumedang Km 21 Jatinangor, Sumedang, Jawa Barat, 45363. *Email:* [detta@unpad.ac.id](mailto:detta@unpad.ac.id)

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## INTRODUCTION

Recently, fake news, disinformation, and misinformation, often referred to as “hoaxes” in Indonesia (Kaur et al., 2018), have attracted global attention. The spread of hoaxes also serves as important markers of the emergence of post-truth politics and decreasing trust in media and journalists’ role as one of the information authorities in society (Silverman, 2015). The Influx of hoaxes was then responded to by the emergence of various fact-checking initiatives (Mantzarlis, 2018). As of December 2018, there were 149 fact-checking initiatives in 53 countries worldwide, and the number continues to increase (Stencel & Griffin, 2018). Yet, few studies examine fact-checking organizations in the Global-South Countries, including Indonesia.

In Indonesia, a hoax is frequently entangled with an ethnic group, religion, race, and group-based interest or “SARA” (*Suku, Agama, Ras, dan Antar Golongan*) as well as communism. This is apparent, especially during the 2014 presidential election, the 2017 Jakarta gubernatorial election, to the 2019 presidential election, where hoax has deeply penetrated Indonesian political discourse (Tomsa & Setijadi, 2018). President of Indonesia Joko Widodo, through The Ministry of Communication and Informatics, has made several initiatives, such as establishing an anti-hoax coordinating body, creating special units of police, and launching various digital literacy activities to increase public awareness of hoaxes. In addition, in the context of journalism, the Indonesian press council (*Dewan Pers Indonesia*) has also created a verification system for online news sources, and even industry players such as Facebook have been willing to work with the government and several media institutions in Indonesia to address the issue (Tapsell, 2018).

This article focuses on the specific initiative to deal with the massive spread of hoaxes, namely fact-checking organizations, which sort and verify various issues circulating in society. Fact-checking practices are not a novel idea in the field of journalism. Modern fact-checking practices have been around since the 20th century in the US. However, fact-checking in the digital sphere emerged later. In 2003, FactCheck.org, a site that conducts fact-checking for the United States and Global

political issues, was founded. In addition, the Internet has opened the information flood, making it move faster into human life, opening up various possibilities to check and verify facts from hoaxes (Amazeen, 2020; Mantzarlis, 2016). While fact-checking can be applied to various fields, the term “fact check” is often used in a political context and refers to evaluating the accuracy of political claims that appear in the public domain (Nieminen & Rapeli, 2018). In a political context, fact-checking practices can affect political knowledge and evaluation of a candidate in the context of an election. Prospective voters will positively view the candidate who gets positive marks from fact-checking organizations (Fridkin et al., 2015; Wintersieck, 2017). Observation and pressure from fact-checking organizations are also believed to make politicians work with more honesty (Nyhan & Reifler, 2015). Politicians will undoubtedly avoid saying anything that can be corrected by fact-checking organizations and risking lowering their levels of support or damaging their reputation.

Although most of the developments regarding fact-check organizations have been centered in the United States, other examples of fact-check organizations can also be seen at StopFake in Ukraine and FullFact in the UK. StopFake checks for hoaxes and displays factual data related to Russian propaganda. (Haigh et al., 2017; Khaldarova & Pantti, 2016). Unlike StopFake in Ukraine, which is related to the tension in bilateral relations between the two countries, FullFact only focuses on domestic political statements in the UK (Arnold, 2017). The development of fact-checking organizations and initiatives in the world has also now reached Global-South Countries such as Brazil (Wardle et al., 2019), the Philippines (Tantuco & Tuquero, 2020), and also Indonesia (Nurlatifah & Irwansyah, 2019; Thorn & Curnow, 2021). The increasing political tension in these countries is related to the “information war” seen among others from the proliferation of hoaxes, black campaigns, and the spread of fanaticism-based political content on certain populist figures (Moore, 2018). However, studies on fact-checking are generally concentrated in North America, Europe, and Australia (Porter & Wood, 2021).

This study uses a multi-case study method to unravel and compare six fact-checking

organizations in Indonesia. The organizations are: “Cek Fakta-Liputan 6”, “Cek Fakta-Suara.com”, “Tirto.id”, “KOMPAS.com”, “Tempo.co”, and “MAFINDO”. The multi-case study method helps to provide a holistic understanding of the organization of fact checks carried out in Indonesia (Stake, 2006). This study uses the conceptual framework of previous fact-checking studies from Graves (2016) and Graves & Cherubini (2016). The initial part of this article will discuss how fact-checking initiatives have historically grown and developed in Indonesia, the role of these organizations in society, and descriptions and comparisons of various fact-checking organizations in Indonesia. After that, the next section will conceptually review the multiple opportunities and challenges regarding the development of fact-checking organizations and what things need to be considered in the future.

## RESEARCH METHOD

The multi-case study is a case study approach to multiple study objects (Yin, 1994; Stake, 2006). As a method, case studies have consistently been used to conduct comprehensive studies on one or more organizations, to uncover the phenomena and context of the case from a multidisciplinary social science perspective (Hartley, 2004; Meyer, 2001). One of the differences between the case study method and other qualitative research methods lies in the openness to conceptual categories to guide the data analysis process. Data collection in the case study and multi-case methods can be done through various methods such as interviews, archive and document studies, questionnaires, and observation (Yin, 1994; Stake, 2006).

In the context of this study, we collected data from various media coverage, organizational archives, and documents related to Indonesian fact-checking organizations that are publicly available on the Internet. We also thoroughly explored websites from each fact-checking organization in Indonesia that is: “Cek Fakta-Liputan 6” (<https://www.liputan6.com/cek-fakta>), “Cek Fakta-Suara.com” (<https://www.suara.com/cekfakta>), “Tirto.id” (<https://tirto.id/q/periksa-fakta-gnQ>), “KOMPAS.com” (<https://www.kompas.com/>

[cekfakta](https://cekfakta.tempo.co/)), “Tempo.co” (<https://cekfakta.tempo.co/>), and “MAFINDO” (<https://turnbackhoax.id/>) to examine various content and public information available on their websites as the indicator of their work. Our unit of analysis is primarily about transparency related to the fact-checking organization (fact check methodology, rating system related to fact check results, organizational structure or the structure of fact check team), information related to the impact of fact-checking activities, information related to collaborations that have been carried out by the fact-checking organizations, and various other public information that is relevant to our analysis.

In terms of field research, one of our team members, who works as a fact-checker, also conducted participant observation in various scopes of fact-checking practices. From her participation in the monthly meetings regularly held by fact-checking organizations on Facebook and with her meeting with other fact-checkers from Tempo, KOMPAS, and MAFINDO, such as in the event “Behind the Kitchen of Fact-Checking” Webinar organized by AJI Indonesia and Google News Initiative in February 2021, we learned how fact-checkers work daily, noted the challenges faced by fact-checking organizations, and what are the opportunities for the development of fact-checking practice in the future. The multi-case study method is suitable since we analyze how fact-checking organizations work in different environments with diverse contexts (Stake, 2006). The organization, reduction, and data analysis were made by determining cases in chronological order, sorting and coding based on stages and themes, implementing a conceptual framework into the analysis, comparing cases, and synthesizing research results with theory (Meyer, 2001).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

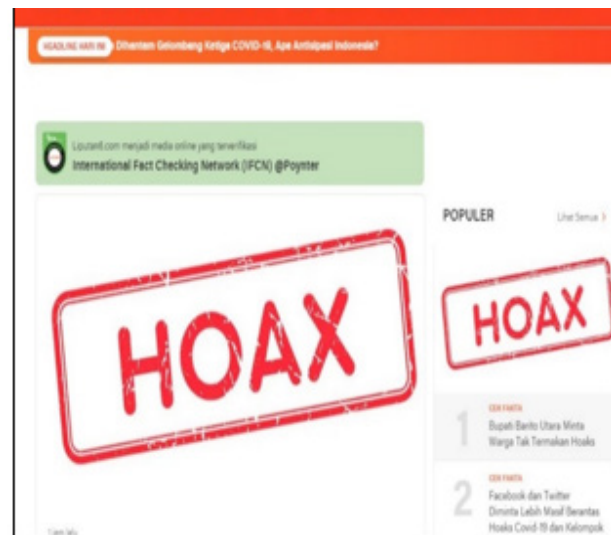
One of the first publications related to fact-checking activities was the journalistic work published in 1997 by Bondan Winarno. He investigated the gold mining scandal in Busang - Bre-X (Matanasi, 2017; Winarno, 1997). However, the dominant fact-checking practice that has emerged in recent years has more to do with elections and political issues.



Such as the analysis of the newspaper “Obor-Rakyat,” which covered black campaigns and slander in the 2014 presidential election (Tyson & Purnomo, 2016). One of the initial fact-checking initiatives was related to the Indonesian Anti-Slander Society (*Masyarakat Anti Fitnah Indonesia/MAFINDO*), Anti-Slander and Hoax Forum (*Forum Anti Fitnah Hasut dan Hoax/FAFHH*), the Indonesian Hoax Buster (IHB) community, and other communities in 2015. These communities operate based on a crowdsourcing mechanism, where everyone who joins the community participates as an aggregator. In other words, community members can exchange information they encounter daily, and then the verification process is organized together. The community is also directly related to the development of a specific website that publishes fact-check articles, “turnbackhoax.id” (Astuti, 2017).

The fact check initiative has been studied as a “manifestation of hypermedia organizations” that relies on the collaborative activities of journalists, media users, and the platform companies, which can be seen from the collaboration between media organizations with Poynter, Google News Initiative, and Facebook (Nurlatifah & Irwansyah, 2019). The fact-checking initiative as a collaborative activity between various organizations in Indonesia was also seen when the mainstream media and multiple organizations agreed to organize a movement to combat the spread of hoaxes during the run-up to the 2018 Simultaneous Regional Head Election (*Pilkada Serentak*) and the 2019 Presidential Election. This collaboration was joined by 22 mainstream media, the Indonesian Cyber Media Association (*Asosiasi Masyarakat Siber Indonesia*) (AMSI), and the Indonesian Anti-Slander Society (*Masyarakat Anti Fitnah Indonesia*) (MAFINDO). This initiative crystalized in the creation of CekFakta.com, which started in May 2018 in Jakarta (Thorn & Curnow, 2021).

Indonesian Fact-Checking organizations obtained legitimation by enlisted as part of the International Fact-Checking Network (hereinafter referred to as IFCN in this article). IFCN is a global organization that issues certifications to media, organizations, and NGOs doing fact-checking activities worldwide. In 2021, there are 78 organizations worldwide with IFCN certificates, and there



Source: Author’s documentation, 2021

**Figure 1** Fact-check webpage owned by Liputan 6

are six Indonesian fact-checking organizations that enlisted as part of IFCN, namely: “Cek Fakta-Liputan 6”, “Cek Fakta-Suara.com”, “Tirto. id”, “KOMPAS.com”, “Tempo.co”, and “MAFINDO.” Information on the verification can be accessed periodically on the IFCN code of principles’ website at <https://ifcncodeofprinciples.poynter.org/signatories> (The Poynter Institute, n.d.). The collaboration of fact-checking organizations in Indonesia at both national and global levels shows that fact-checking organizations cannot work alone and must exist in an environment that inherently supports one another or “establish itself within a structural environment” (Amazeen, 2020).

After reviewing the history and development of fact-checking organizations in Indonesia, the next part of the article will go through details on each of the Indonesian fact-checking organizations. The first organization is “Cek Fakta-Liputan 6” (hereinafter referred to as “Liputan 6”), part of an online media called *liputan6.com*. *Liputan6.com* was founded in August 2000 and, in 2018, was listed as one of the largest online news portals in Indonesia (Portnoy, 2018). This portal is a subsidiary of PT “Elang Mahkota Teknologi” (Emtek Group). According to their webpage, Liputan 6 claims that they have carried out fact-checking initiatives since the 2014 Presidential Election to provide input to their editors. Their work has



Source: Author's documentation, 2021

Figure 2 Fact-Check webpage owned by Suara.com



Source: Author's documentation, 2021

Figure 3 Fact-Check webpage owned by Tirto.id

also been continued in the 2017 DKI Jakarta gubernatorial election to this day. Liputan 6 has initiated a program called “Pegiat Cek Fakta Liputan6.com” (Liputan6.com’s Fact-Check “Activist”), also known as “WhatsApp Hoaxbuster,” at the beginning of 2020. This program wants to invite the public to participate in their fact-checking process and also related to fact-checking and digital literacy training.

The editorial team responsible for the fact-checking process consisted of seven people. The fact-checking method in “Cek Fakta-Liputan 6” has been carried out in the following manner: 1) Selection of claims to be verified; For example, viral content circulating on social media and instant messaging applications, as well as input from readers and their fact check activists. Content or issues related to the public, such as claims that can endanger lives, will be prioritized. 2) The fact-checking team also conducts verification using various steps: content verification, examining the accounts that published the content and comparing the content with information from other mainstream media, official institutions, and the authorities and experts related to the alleged content. They also conduct technical checks, such as testing the authenticity of an image using Google Reverse Images/TinEye/Yandex (Liputan6.com, n.d.). In 2020, Liputan 6 received a grant from IFCN and Facebook for their COVID-19 WhatsApp

Hoaxbuster program (Verdiana, 2020).

The second organization is “Cek Fakta-Suara.com” (hereinafter referred to as “Suara.com”), owned by an online news portal Suara.com that was founded in 2014 by a company called PT Arkadia Digital Media. Suara.com certified by IFCN since 28 October 2019 (Hidayatullah, 2019). The fact check initiative carried out by Suara.com was similar to the journalistic work process, which is carried out in a structured and transparent manner.

Suara.com fact-checking method initiated by checking questionable news, claims, or information circulating or viral on social media. This news and claims are then examined and verified until they are sure about the information’s veracity. The process includes contacting and finding credible and authoritative sources. They also look through information from official institutions and related mainstream media publications. In addition, their fact-checking practices are also carried out in collaboration with CekFakta.com and turnbackhoax.id (Suara.com, n.d.).

The third organization is Tirto.id. Tirto.id is a newcomer in the Indonesian media industry landscape. It was founded in 2016 and built its image on “precision journalism.” Unlike other online news media in Indonesia, Tirto’s editorial strives to use data and create long-form journalistic products and in-depth reports. As a



Source: Author’s documentation, 2021

**Figure 4 Fact-Check Webpage owned by KOMPAS.com**

new digital-native media, Tirto’s initial funding was carried out independently by three former journalists with nearly 30 years of experience (Tirto.id, 2016). Tirto.id is also the first online media in Indonesia to officially joined as a member of IFCN.

Tirto.id has two fact-checking formats: fact-checking and data checking. The first format is live fact-check, which is carried out directly during certain events, such as in the DKI Jakarta governor debate and the presidential debates. Another one is an analysis of rumors circulating in the online realm. They verify the integrity of data and information through various authoritative sources Tirto’s fact-checking practice is conducted by a dedicated research team, which afterward publishes a short report twice a week (Tirto.id, 201d7).

The next organization is KOMPAS.com. Their fact-checking portal is under the umbrella of the Kompas Media Group, one of the largest media groups in Indonesia. As an important part of the journalistic landscape in Indonesia, Kompas.com is also taking part as a media organization that conducts fact-checking initiatives on hoaxes circulating in society. Since 2016, KOMPAS.com has started its efforts to verify facts in the selected rubric called “fact or hoax?” (*Hoaks atau Fakta?*). Since October 2018, KOMPAS’ fact-checking initiative has also been certified by IFCN.

KOMPAS.com’s fact-checking work was



Source: Author’s documentation, 2021

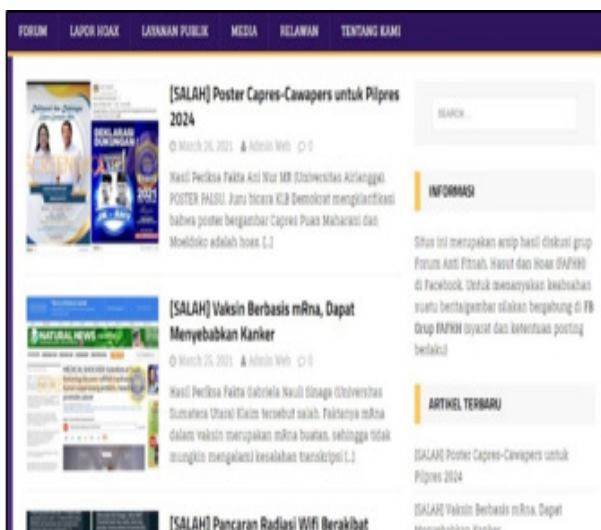
**Figure 5 Fact-Check Webpage owned by Tempo.co**

conducted by a team of nine reporters (who also work as fact-checker) and four editors. These people are also the editorial team of KOMPAS.com. Hence, it can be assumed that their fact-checking method is carried out following how they work in the context of journalism. The results of the verification are concluded with a tag of Hoaks (if the information or news is false) and clarification (information or news that is not entirely wrong, so it needs to be clarified) (Kompas.com, n.d.)

The fifth organization is Tempo.co. Tempo.co is a news portal owned by Tempo Media Group, which was founded in 1995 by one of the largest media groups in Indonesia with a tradition of investigative journalism. Tempo Media Group has been renewing itself since 2008 and continues to make several strategic investments in digital products to date. For fact-checking skills, several parties at Tempo also participated in various training related to verification and fact-checking methods from the Google News Initiative in collaboration with First Draft News, the Alliance of Independent Journalists (AJI) Indonesia, and Internews (Rahma, 2019).

The fact-checking process at Tempo starts with identifying questionable news or claims circulating online. Then, they will examine and compare claims with other publicly accessible sources. Under certain circumstances, Tempo.co’s fact-check editorial will contact and





Source: Author's documentation, 2021

**Figure 6 Fact-Check Webpage owned by MAFINDO**

interview credible and competent experts to verify the editorial conclusions regarding the claim. Furthermore, the fact-checking team also collaborated with MAFINDO. Tempo.co's editors are also open to input from the public to provide reports, suggestions, and even criticism, regarding all the results of their fact checks (Tempo.co, n.d.). In 2020, Tempo joined the Corona Virus Facts Alliance formed by Facebook and IFCN, a grant from Facebook and IFCN to combat coronavirus misinformation (The Poynter Institute, 2020).

The last organization is MAFINDO with their website [turnbackhoax.id](http://turnbackhoax.id). This website was created during a series of anti-hoax movements in Indonesia related to the widespread circulation of hoaxes, especially on political issues. Turnbackhoax.id also searches for questionable and viral information and is widely discussed in public based on reports from their volunteer network, which they created in 2015. Their fact-checking practices are primarily collaborative, and the results are published regularly on their website.

As one of the largest fact-checking organizations in Indonesia, with many volunteers in various cities, MAFINDO volunteers and teams also have a code of ethics related to their duties. This is mainly done to ensure that the results of their fact-checking are neutral and impartial, especially in situations related to various political events. The militancy of this

organization's volunteers can be seen from the fact that this site has the largest number of fact-checking articles compared to the other organizations, and this organization is also often used as an "official reference" by other fact-checking organizations and the government. For example, MAFINDO, together with the Indonesian Cyber Media Association and the Alliance of Independent Journalists Indonesia, held a fact-checking program during the 2019 Presidential Election on April 16 and 17, 2019. This fact-checking process was also carried out in Jakarta and has been done by their network in 15 regions throughout Indonesia (Oxtora, 2019). In 2020, MAFINDO, Maarif Institute, and the agency Love Frankie also received a grant from Google. The program aims to provide education related to digital literacy and combating hoaxes to 26,700 lecturers, teachers, and students. They also created training programs and classes that can be followed online related to critical thinking called *TULAR NALAR* (Sasmito, 2020).

All fact-checking organizations provided their fact-checking methods on their websites, except for [turnbackhoax.id](http://turnbackhoax.id) in which their fact-check method is located on MAFINDO's website. All organizations conducted similar methods of fact-checking with slight differences, especially regarding their conclusion and ratings. They start by checking on questionable and suspicious claims circulating online, check and verify the information based on reliable and authoritative sources, and then publish the results of the verification on their respective pages.

In terms of their rating system or the assessment of the content, there are several versions owned by each fact-checking organization. Liputan 6 uses a rating of "true, clarification, wrong, out of context, partially true/partially false, unproven, and hoax" (Liputan6.com, n.d.). Next, Suara.com noticeably does not have available information on the type of rating they use. For Tirto.id, it uses simpler ratings such as "False & Misleading" (the entire content is misleading), "Partly False" (some of the content is incorrect), and "Missing Context" (content can be misleading without additional notes or specific context). Nevertheless, the information about the ratings is not available on Tirto.id's website. Kompas.com uses two categories: "Hoaks" and "Clarification". Tempo categorizes its fact-check articles as "true",

**Table 1 Comparison of the Fact-Checking Organizations**

Organization	Fact-Check Methodology	Organizational Structure	Rating System
Cek Fakta-Liputan 6	<a href="https://www.liputan6.com/info/metode-cek-fakta">https://www.liputan6.com/info/metode-cek-fakta</a>	1 Managing Editor, 1 Researcher/Data Analyst, 4 Writer/Editor, 1 Fact-Checking Activist Coordinator	CORRECT: The claim is proven to be accurate, supported by several pieces of evidence that can be justified; CLARIFICATION: Contains clarification of related parties on specific claims; FALSE: The claim is not based on reliable evidence; OUT OF CONTEXT: Information that has been manipulated from facts, so that it does not fit the context. The title and content do not match, so they tend to be misleading; PARTIAL TRUE/PARTIAL FALSE: The information submitted is incomplete. Some are true, some are omitted or made not according to facts; UNPROVEN: Information that has not been verified, usually given to claims related to events that are currently happening but have not found valid evidence; HOAX: It is not based on reliable evidence at all; it is indicated that the claims were deliberately made by certain parties to achieve specific goals
Cek Fakta-Suara.com	<a href="https://www.suara.com/pages/tentangcekfakta">https://www.suara.com/pages/tentangcekfakta</a>	1 Person In Charge 1 Team Coordinator 3 Fact-Checkers	There is no specific page that explains the rating system
Tirto.id	<a href="https://tirto.id/insider/metodologiriset">https://tirto.id/insider/metodologiriset</a>	Research Team and Editors (details unavailable)	There is no specific page that explains the rating system.
KOMPAS.com	<a href="https://cekfakta.kompas.com/about#metodologi">https://cekfakta.kompas.com/about#metodologi</a>	1 Person In Charge 2 Managing Editors 3 Vice Managing Editors 4 Editor 9 Fact- Checker/ Reporter	[HOAX] if the claims in the information circulating are 100% wrong, and secondly [CLARIFICATION] if the claims in the information circulating are not entirely false, some of the information is wrong, so it needs to be corrected.



Tempo.co	<a href="https://cekfakta.tempo.co/metodologi">https://cekfakta.tempo.co/metodologi</a>	1 Head of Tempo Media Lab 1 Fact-Checker Coordinator 2 Fact-Checker	CORRECT: A statement is accurate based on available sources; PARTIALLY TRUE: A statement is only partially accurate based on available sources; UNPROVEN: A statement cannot be concluded to be accurate or not; MISGUIDED: A statement uses correct facts and data, but the method of delivery or conclusion is wrong and leads to wrong interpretation; FALSE: A statement is inaccurate based on available sources.
MAFINDO	No details are available on <a href="https://turnbackhoax.id">turnbackhoax.id</a> . The methodology can be found at <a href="https://www.mafindo.or.id/tentang-kami/metode-klasifikasi-hoax/">https://www.mafindo.or.id/tentang-kami/metode-klasifikasi-hoax/</a>	No details are available on <a href="https://turnbackhoax.id">turnbackhoax.id</a>	The page on the rating system can be found at <a href="https://www.mafindo.or.id/tentang-kami/metode-klasifikasi-hoax/">https://www.mafindo.or.id/tentang-kami/metode-klasifikasi-hoax/</a>

Source: author’s rendition, 2021

“partially true”, “unproven”, “misguided”, and “false”. For [turnbackhoax.id](https://turnbackhoax.id), information on their rating system is not available on their website. However, it can be found on MAFINDO’s website in which they claimed that they use a rating system by FirstDraft, that is: “satire/parody”, “false connection”, “misleading content”, “imposter content”, “manipulated content”, “fabricated content” (Wardle, 2017) however if we look closely at [turnbackhoax.id](https://turnbackhoax.id), especially on their past fact-check articles, at first they also used various other ratings arbitrarily such as “slander”, “disinformation”, “misinformation”, etc. The comparison between fact-check methodology, organizational structure, and rating system from each organization can be seen in Table 1.

Elaboration on fact-check methodology, organizational structures, and rating system are important to note, considering that one of the credibility factors of fact-checking organizations is the transparency and technical details related to fact-checking practices. By comparing six fact-checking organizations in Indonesia, we can ask further important

questions such as whether there is a mechanism to check their methodology periodically and whether these organizations regularly examine their fact-check results and look for any potential biases? Is the collaborative fact-checking practices examination carried out by the same standard? And the like. Some of these various questions are routinely asked by several researchers such as Amazeen (2015; 2020), Bell (2019), Graves (2017), and others. Given what has been said, we argue that a thorough evaluation of fact-checking practice is urgently needed. For example, in terms of methodology, fact-checking organizations can use the intercoder reliability check method, as is commonly done in various studies in the social sciences (Lim, 2018). This is important since various biases from fact-checkers may affect the fact-check results (Ceci & Williams, 2020). Our findings show that there are no public documents regarding the efforts made to evaluate the organization and practice of fact-checking, apart from various academic articles that have only looked at partial cases of check-checking practices in Indonesia.

Furthermore, we also noted that in all of the six organizations, there had not been any visible effort to document the “impact” of the results of systematic fact-checking practices in Indonesia. Documentation of the impact of fact-checking practices can certainly be beneficial for the existence of fact-checking organizations, especially since studies have revealed the difficulties of measuring the impact of fact-checking practices, the effectiveness of fact-checking, etc. Measurements related to impact and effectiveness can be carried out through various research methods such as surveys and quantitative experiments (Bell, 2019; Porter & Wood, 2021; Tompkins, 2020; Wardle et al., 2019). Conducting evaluation collaboration with academia will make fact-checking organizations have more legitimacy regarding their work, and this has been discussed by Graves (2016), who found that many fact-checking organizations in the world have formal and informal ties to universities.

Fact check organizations can be categorized into two models: the Newsroom Model and the NGO (Non-Governmental Organization) Model (Graves & Cherubini, 2016). In the newsroom model, fact-checking practices and organizations rely on or are affiliated with established media and traditional newsrooms, especially in terms of coverage and supporting material for conducting fact-checking practices. The opportunity of the Newsroom Model is certainly related to the resources and infrastructure of media organizations that are already available, as well as related to the opportunity to disseminate fact-check articles to a wider audience. Thus, it can be said that the bigger the media, the newsroom will be solid and have more resources. In turn, the fact-checking team will work better. However, on the other hand, there are also challenges, especially related to the attachment of fact-checking teams to the editorial interests or the interests of media ownerships.

Moreover, based on our observation, small media companies, such as Tirto.id have limited resources involved in fact-checking practices since they only have one fact-checker and one editor. This makes hoaxes that can be verified and also clarified very limited compared to other institutions that have greater resources, such as KOMPAS, Liputan 6, or Tempo.co. In response, each media applies a different solution.

Tempo.co, for example, empowers students and contributors to create fact-checking articles and then re-edited by their fact-checkers. This can be done because Facebook or IFCN do not restrict students/contributors from doing fact-checking; what is important is the principle of the overall fact-checking methodology. It can also be said that while bigger media have more resources, some of their fact-checkers also often come from traditional reporters, and they sometimes lack the ability to do data analysis, judgment on facts, etc. Based on discussions conducted by AJI with fact-checkers from Kompas, Tempo, and Tirto (AJI Indonesia, 2021), one of the fact-checker for KOMPAS.com, is a reporter who is used to writing on lifestyle or trends. It is different from that of Tirto.id where the fact-checking is carried out under the research team, and Tempo.co which created a new fact-checking team.

The second fact-checking model, the NGO model, is a model that moves beyond the traditional newsroom and is more independent, mostly found in Eastern European countries. The fact-checking organization MAFINDO with its turnbackhoax.id is an example of this model. Although they are not attached to a particular media organization, in practice, the NGO model also requires collaboration with several media organizations. NGO model also needs to employ people with job descriptions similar to journalists. The opportunity for the NGO model is that their work will be relatively free from editorial pressure and business pressure. Some organizations may also receive funding from multiple donors and have the potential to develop volunteer networks and build a fact-checking culture that is more collaborative. On the other hand, the challenge of this model is the lack of resources and infrastructure to disseminate the fact-check articles, so it is possible that their work is not properly distributed to the public. In addition, even though the NGO model has the freedom to choose funding sources, in the long term, sensible management of resources is needed to ensure their activities are sustainable.

Claims for independency are also another concern for the NGO model. In contrast to the newsroom model, which can be said to work within the corridors of a journalistic code of ethics and adhere to the newsroom, those who are part of a fact-check organization with the NGO Model will come from various backgrounds.

MAFINDO members consist of various groups and individuals who have different political views. They also used college students in an effort to increase resources and add additional labor to carry out their fact-checking process. While a code of ethics among the members exists, the enforcement will certainly be a challenge in itself. They are not bound by a professional ethic. Therefore, the potential for bias will be greater in the NGO model.

Similar to the newsroom model, MAFINDO also needs a more consistent and standardized fact-checking methodology so that the stringency of the fact-checking process can be maintained even though it is carried out by different volunteers. As previously discussed, collaborations with academics can be carried out for a systematic and periodic evaluation to maintain the quality of the results of the fact-check practice and can be seen as an effort to increase credibility and maintain the independence of fact-checking organizations (Graves, 2016; Bell, 2019).

In the NGO model such as MAFINDO, they use a hoax reporting system from a wide audience using a Facebook group. The increasing number of memberships in this Facebook Group adds new possibilities as well as challenges. These are two things that need to be taken into account. The increasing number of Facebook group members, on the one hand, can be an indication that more people are interested in fact-checking activities. On the other hand, the increasing number of members also means that more topics will be discussed, and there will be more additional reports that will increase the burden on the fact-checking process. Furthermore, the fact-checking process also will be affected by the fact that there are no fixed priorities and rules regarding what topics to discuss first. Lastly, the difference in the level of knowledge and capabilities of group members also should be a concern since this will increase the potential for biases in the verification process.

MAFINDO regularly carries out various efforts such as fact-check training for students and also the general public who are interested in fact-checking activities. This activity was also carried out in various cities in order to strengthen public knowledge about fact-checking. However, there is no documentation on the impact of their activities and whether

the results of the training can be measured and have a direct impact on the sustainability of the movement.

At least until 2021, we have not seen much progress in IFCN membership from Indonesia. Since Suara.com joined IFCN in 2019, no other organization has joined the IFCN membership. For comparison, in India, a country with a dense population like Indonesia, there are 15 organizations verified by IFCN. The explanation for the lack of progress might be because there are many requirements and qualifications for organizations to get IFCN certification, such as providing publicly available information on fact-checking transparency and methodology, attaching a business model and company ownership, and providing information containing steps that can be taken if a media receives criticism or a page for the right to reply. In 2021, the IFCN application also required a fee of USD 200 (approximately 2,9 million rupiahs). This fee represents the cost required for IFCN to hire an external appraiser to evaluate the application. Applications will not be considered unless the fee has been paid.

The next most obvious challenge is that the media certified by the IFCN are all national media and based in the Java Islands. There are no local media certified by IFCN. Investment in the media and journalism is still centered in the big cities on Java Island, especially Jakarta. Looking at the size and vastness of Indonesia, local fact-checking practice can be considered an important part of regional politics. Furthermore, the practice of collaborative fact-checking can also be seen as a case to make local media maximize the utilization of technology more (Maryani et al., 2020); hence, the local media industry can have an additional value in the democratization process in the regions (Yusuf, 2011).

The development of local fact-checking organization initiatives that focus on locality and regional contexts certainly can be developed in the future since there is evidence of political hoaxes in the contestation of regional head elections (*pilkada*) (Muliya, 2020). In addition, efforts to fight hoaxes related to the COVID-19 pandemic are also been frequently carried out using local approaches such as using local language and local contexts (Kliwantoro, 2020). Examples of activities carried out by MAFINDO to build their organizational



networks in the regions can be a way to build public interest in the organization and practice fact-checking. Cooperation between media institutions and community initiatives at the local level is one of the potential visible moves that will add more strength to the ecosystem of fact-checking in Indonesia.

## CONCLUSION

Various fact-checking practices have emerged around the world to combat the spread of hoaxes. Historically, fact-checking practices are not novel and have appeared in multiple political contexts. In Indonesia, fact-checking practices and organizations surfaced in 2015 and related to the escalation of political hoaxes on various digital platforms, especially during elections. This article uses a multi-case study method to review the development of Indonesian fact-checking organizations certified by the International Fact-Checking Network (IFCN) in Indonesia: “Cek Fakta-Liputan 6”, “Cek Fakta-Suara.com”, “Tirto.id”, “KOMPAS.com”, “Tempo.co”, and “MAFINDO”.

Our study illustrates how Indonesian fact-checking organizations developed and increased their presence nationally and connected with various global organizations that lead the ongoing fight against the hoax. It can be said that five of the fact-checking organizations in Indonesia were built in a newsroom model based on the journalism discipline. In contrast, one organization (MAFINDO) was built around a more organic and independent setting (NGO model). Our analysis also highlighted several challenges, such as the importance of standardizing fact-checking methodologies, measuring the “impact” of the fact-checking activities, and the management of fact-checking resources within each organization.

Studies related to fact-checking organizations and fact-checking practices in the context of Global-South countries, including Indonesia, are still limited. Hence, further studies are necessary. A study on fact-checking organizations using a participatory observation method or ethnography can be done for a more detailed, qualitative approach. On the other hand, surveys and experiments specifically designed to measure the “performance” of fact-checking practices, their effectiveness, and their

impacts are also needed.

Lastly, studies that look closely at the day-to-day work of fact-checking organizations are essential not only to maintain the accountability and the “performance” of these organizations but also to confirm the importance of their role. Our article does not aim to belittle the role of fact-checking organizations. In fact, by looking at the technical details, we try to show why the work of fact-checkers needs to be continuously supported. To quote Amazeen (2015), “It is precisely because facts are complex and often not self-evident that more fact-checking, rather than less, is necessary.”

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