



# THE ROLE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION (KOMINFO) OF LUWU IN PREVENTING HOAXES

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to find out the education carried out by Kominfo of Luwu and the obstacles encountered in preventing the spread of hoax information among the people of Luwu Regency. The study used descriptive qualitative research with in-depth interviews with informants and secondary data as data sources. The analysis or data collection consists of the reduction stage, the presentation stage, the conclusion drawing stage, and the data verification stage. The study results showed that Kominfo of Luwu has a pattern in educating the public about the role of the communicator, how the communicator is given understanding, and the medium used in conducting education. Still, in maximizing this pattern, Kominfo has an obstacle that results in the need for optimal education in society. The obstacles encountered are communication barriers, human resource barriers, and socialization budget constraints. The implications of this research are expected to strengthen previous studies. Besides that, the researcher also hopes that this research can become a source of new insights that can add to the list of references for related research. It is also expected to be able to contribute knowledge and input to other researchers regarding hoax information circulating in the community both in person and on social media.

**Keywords:** Information; hoax; communication; journalistic

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Spreading and discussing hoax information is now commonplace among people due to the rapid development of technology. Hoax information is a means or an attempt to deceive someone so that people who access the information will be trapped in information whose truth has been manipulated. In the post-truth era, it is challenging to distinguish between true and false information

or news because it is presented similarly in any media. Without the skills in this matter, someone will be harmed or harm others.

In a global context, hoaxes can negatively affect every country. Everything presented in the media is not entirely true. It must be studied more deeply, especially if the source is unknown. Every country must be aware of this, and someone must handle it, especially in several countries that give freedom to their citizens to use information technology. Technology that continues to change and develop will impact increasingly advanced global communications, causing high freedom to use social media to interact with fellow users and disseminate information. In fact, this freedom is used by various individuals to provide information that is not entirely true, or in other words, a hoax. The information disseminated aims to lead public opinion to what is desired for personal and group interests.

Based on the impact it has on people's lives, advances in science and technology make society more independently connected, thus making information exchange more rapid. People are more flexible in accessing all forms of information and activities in various parts of the world. From this point, a sense of dissatisfaction arises if they are not actively engaged in spreading information to other people as well. However, they must also realize that not all information must be disseminated. Some information is enough to be consumed by particular communities. Especially if the information has not been acknowledged for its truth so that it can prevent harm to others or yourself.

Hoax information which is currently rife in the community, can be contained by maximizing the government's role in overseeing issues that are very prone to becoming material for hoax spreaders; not only that, formulating policies carried out by the government it will be a way to minimize the spread of hoax information. The government must have more capacity to identify fake news, and the most important thing is how to prevent this invalid information from spreading. The government can play an essential role in preventing the spread of hoaxes and fake news by taking several actions.

Firstly, by establishing clear regulations. The government can establish clear regulations to address the spread of hoaxes and misinformation. For example, the government could require social media platforms to develop policies and procedures for identifying and removing fake news and

misinformation. Secondly, media literacy: The government can promote media literacy by investing in public education campaigns that teach citizens how to identify and evaluate news sources. This can include critical thinking skills, fact-checking techniques, and media literacy workshops. Thirdly, supporting fact-checking organizations. The government can support fact-checking organizations by providing funding and other resources. Fact-checking organizations play an essential role in verifying and calling out false information. Fourth, encouraging responsible journalism. The government can encourage responsible journalism by incentivizing news organizations to prioritize accuracy over speed. This can include funding for investigative journalism or creating awards for responsible reporting. Lastly, collaborating with technology companies. The government can collaborate with technology companies to develop new tools and technologies that can help identify and flag fake news and hoaxes. For example, AI algorithms can be used to identify patterns of misinformation and flag them for further review. Hence, the government can play an important role in preventing hoaxes by working with citizens, media organizations, and technology companies to create a more informed and responsible media environment.

Information and Electronic Transaction Law on Law Number 11 of 2008 has been amended to become Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 19 of 2016, the Law that regulates information and electronic transactions and information technology in general and applies to all citizens of Indonesian country. The Law explains that there is freedom for the public to express their thoughts and opinions and obtain information through information and communication technology. Still, the government also needs to limit it. As stipulated in the Law to guarantees respect for the rights and freedoms of others and fulfills demands under moral considerations, religious values, security and public order in a democratic society.

Based on the rules regarding the perpetrators of spreading hoaxes that were made, of course, researchers are interested in conducting research regarding hoax information. Still, as pre-observations conducted by researchers, there were no findings regarding complaints of hoax information circulating among the people of Luwu Regency. Still, as the saying goes, it is better to prevent. Instead of treating it, the researchers wanted to know the role of the Luwu District Communication and Informatics Office in preventing hoax information and were interested in knowing what kind of education was being carried out so that the public would not be consumed by hoax information.

Therefore, the researcher formulated two problem formulations in this study: How does Luwu Regency Kominfo Service carry out the educational process in preventing hoax information against the public? And what are the communication barriers the Luwu Regency Kominfo Service faces in conducting education regarding hoax information?

As for the focus of the research, namely the Communications and Informatics Office of Luwu Regency as a research object which can be used as a benchmark for its role in educating the public regarding the prevention of hoax information. Hoax information as the subject of research in which the era of digitalization and the speedy exchange of information has become a problem among the public, that hoax information has become a parasite that lives and grows to become toxic in society

## **2. METHODS**

Research is a series of scientific activities for collecting data and drawing conclusions on certain phenomena in empirical phenomena. Methods or methodologies are processes, principles, and procedures to approach problems and seek answers. In other words, a methodology is a general approach to studying a research topic. The research method is basically a scientific way to obtain data with specific goals and uses. In this study, the researcher used a descriptive qualitative approach to obtain clear and in-depth information regarding the case or matters that were the main discussion in the study. Because of that, the researcher uses descriptive qualitative research to explain and interpret the data concerned with the facts, circumstances, and phenomena that occur when the research is taking place and present it as it is.

The study used a scientific approach, namely communication and journalistic science, directly obtaining information from informants. The study gathered primary data via observation and interviews with objects and parties or people who are considered capable of explaining the data needed in this case, and they were the Head of the Luwu District Communication and Information Service, the Head of Public Information and Communication Management, and the Head of Information and Communication Management Services. Other secondary data, such as books, journals, and documentation, were collected to support the primary data.

Since this research is in the form of qualitative research, in conducting research, it is necessary to look at events that occur directly in the field to make it easier for researchers to obtain data and

information based on events in the field and researchers have direct contact with all objects to be studied and use subjects as sources of information or data sources.

The interview method is the researcher's conversation as a seeker of information or data with the informant as the provider of the information the researcher needs. The researcher's interview model used guided free interviews. Free means whatever, according to the desired data taken through interviews. Meanwhile, being guided means that the researcher brings a list of questions asked following the research. The time is unlimited because it depends on the atmosphere, schedule, situation, and conditions of the interview with the informant or interviewee.

In qualitative research, the instrument or research tool is the researcher itself. As a human instrument, the researcher determines the focus or research objectives, selects information as a data source, performs data collection and analysis, assesses data quality, and interprets and makes conclusions based on the findings.

### **3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

To find out the role of the Kominfo of Luwu Service in education related to the prevention of hoax information, the study found that the Kominfo Service has the authority and responsibility to collaborate information. This cannot be separated from how the Kominfo Service becomes the communication center. The role of this institution is crucial, especially in regions where it can be said that they still need to be more careful in assessing the information circulating.

Looking at the changing times where technology development is currently very rapid. So that in accessing information one person can access information anytime and anywhere, considering that all information is received and disseminated very quickly. But on the other hand, some people abuse this opportunity. Therefore, to prevent the spread of hoaxes, Kominfo took steps to educate the public, as the Head of the Luwu Communications and Informatics Service, H. Muhammad said, "The exchange of information is speedy and its spread, therefore responding to this. We at the Kominfo Service educate the public to avoid spreading hoax information. Where this is also based on the Kominfo Service as an information source or information center which must rectify when there is information that is not true to the public". The director acts as a communicator in defining the position of the group based on the group's goals and indicates if there is a deviation from the goals and principles within a group."

In democratic societies, like in Indonesia, the role of the government is to serve and protect the interests of its citizens. One of how the government can do this is by regulating the flow of information to ensure that it does not cause harm or undermine public safety. However, the idea of the government controlling information among citizens is a complex and controversial issue, and there are arguments both for and against it. On the one hand, proponents of government control argue that some information can be harmful and may need to be censored or regulated. For example, hate speech, terrorist propaganda, and disinformation can create fear, hatred, and social unrest. In such cases, government intervention may be necessary to prevent harm to society. On the other hand, opponents of government control argue that censorship and regulation can infringe on individuals' fundamental right to free speech and expression. They also argue that governments may abuse their power by using information control to maintain their authority and suppress dissent.

From the results of interviews with the Head of the Kominfo of Luwu Service, we can collectively understand that all forms of information that do not truly exist and then spread to the community have authority and responsibility regarding this matter so that later information can be straightened out to the community. The education carried out is intended so that the community can sort out the information obtained and avoid exposure to information that is not necessarily true, as conveyed by the Head of Encryption and Information Security, Randi Eka Putra, who said that:

“We at the Ministry of Communication and Informatics must provide information to the public. The point is to be smart in choosing what can be disseminated, which can be followed up and which cannot be disseminated. So far, there are two things we have done, directly and indirectly. For example, if there are activities in the community, we can participate in socialization directly. Then we hold literacy activities and invite community groups and youth groups. But we use social media more because of budget constraints so we take advantage of existing media. For example, through social media, we make a kind of pamphlet or about avoiding hoaxes or tips like that to the public.”

Everyone indeed cannot be separated from information in their daily lives, both in terms of conveying information has become an essential part of human life. There are various information theories expressed by experts who try to explain the meaning of ‘information’ in sentences that can be understood. Information can be found in any format and form, whether in print, social media or media online. Data can be said to be information when it functions or can be used.

The interview results show that the Kominfo of Luwu Service in educating the public takes two stages, namely directly and indirectly by providing an understanding to the community about

what correct information is and tips to avoid hoaxes, so that people can avoid things that are can cause chaos. The Kominfo Service in preventing the spread of hoaxes collaborates with various local and regional media as during an interview with the Head of the Kominfo Service who stated that: “Regarding the issue of hoax information, the Kominfo Office itself often builds communication and builds cooperation with the media so that it can counteract this, for example when there is hoax information, he is the one who quickly clarifies, because we have cooperation here with online media and print media. We have a work contract with the media to help the local government disseminate information and counteract the current hoax news.”

An interview with the Head of the Communications and Information Service regarding cooperation shows that the media plays a significant role in controlling the spread of hoax news. If the media is used as a tool to disseminate trustworthy information, then this hoax news will not spread to the public. This media will clarify any viral news spread on social media. So that people can know which information is accurate and which is fake news so that they are not affected by news whose sources are unclear.

However, if this media triggers the spread of fake news, then this media is misleading. Then the Communication and Informatics Office chose to cooperate with print and online media because the media is considered the main tool in disseminating information in the public domain and the media as a means of controlling the circulation of information where the media currently has a great influence on what will be disseminated or conveyed to the public audiences.

The leadership of the Luwu Regency Kominfo Service, in this case the head of the Kominfo department, in educating, of course, does not only extend to establishing cooperation, but another step taken is to create a PPID work program, H. Muhammad said: “In addition to collaborating with various media, we also have a special program to prevent hoax information from occurring, the name of the program is the Information and Documentation Publication Officer (PPID), so his job is to distribute existing documentation, disseminate information that the media have published, So that’s the main duty attached to Kominfo externally, it is cooperation with the print media to disseminate news”.

From the results of the interview above, we can understand that this special program is a form of communication so that it is conveyed as a whole to the community order so that today's people

find it easier to reach the information conveyed by the Luwu Regency Communications and Informatics Service, so that later problems do not arise in society and help the Communications and Informatics Service in dealing with hoax information through the dissemination of information to the public.

As for the main function of the PPID program, namely the creation of educational content related to the prevention of hoax information, in which content is disseminated to the public as a form of disseminating information to the public, as well as being a warning and caution for the government if at any time there is information that can cause uproar in the community.

Seeing the results of research conducted by researchers, the analysis described by researchers, that the Luwu District Communication and Information Service in educating the community is only a formality, where the stages carried out in the education process have minimal direct contact with the community. In carrying out the process of sending messages, it is necessary to have interactive communication between communicators and communicants so that they can answer existing problems in the field. Still, on the other hand, and with budget constraints being the main factor, the Luwu District Communication and Information Service need to maximize direct education to the public.

Taking samples from several Kominfo who have the same role in preventing hoax information to the fullest by making various programs regarding education regarding hoax information to the public, starting from creating a Community Information Group (KIM), and being active in Creating Hoax Information Prevention Content.

Considering that hoax information is something that has a bad impact on society, special attention is needed by the Luwu Communications and Informatics Agency so that it can carry out its duties and functions as well as possible, with the hope that the budget in conducting education can become a concern for local governments so that they can allocate funds in maximizing education related to prevention of information hoax.

## **CONCLUSION**

Education is always an excellent approach to addressing any societal issue, including the spread of hoax content. By educating citizens on identifying fake news and misinformation, the



government can empower individuals to make informed decisions and protect themselves from being misled by false information. One way governments can educate citizens about fake news is by providing information and resources on reliable sources of information, fact-checking tools, and critical thinking skills. This could be done through public awareness campaigns, public service announcements, or even in schools and universities. Another approach could be to work with social media platforms and other online communities to develop and promote tools that help users identify and report fake news and misinformation. For example, some social media platforms have introduced features allowing users to flag or report content suspected to be fake or misleading.

Educating citizens on identifying and avoiding fake news and misinformation is a valuable step toward creating a more informed and resilient society. It can help prevent the spread of false information and enable individuals to make informed decisions based on accurate and reliable sources of information.

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