



IDENTIFYING OF FAKE NEWS: THE IMPORTANCE OF DIGITAL LITERACY

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ABSTRACT

Living in Indonesia, with its diversity of cultures, ethnicities, religions, and other diversity demands high tolerance and mutual respect from every citizen. This long-standing diversity must be maintained and preserved. However, this long-established relationship has recently begun to crack with the unstoppable spread of massive information. Fake news, including hoaxes, has filled these diversity rooms, and not a few have attempted to create social conflict. This paper attempts to determine how fake news is formed and spread. But most importantly, this paper will offer tips on identifying fake news. This literature research is a continuation of previous research in which the data source was obtained from capturing fake news published online and on social media. The study showed that fake news might be created through fabrication, misleading editing, amplification, parody of satire, and deception. They are flavored with false sentences and spread via social media using anonymous or fake accounts so that people who read them spread it back to other communities. Fake news can ruin a good relationship if neither party verifies and confirms the information. Thus, digital literacy plays an important role in identifying fake news, not only in political issues but it is a valuable life skill that can help individuals make informed decisions in all areas of their lives and navigate the vast amount of information available online.

Keywords: Digital literacy; fake news; social media; politic campaign

1. INTRODUCTION

Since ancient times, humans have used various media to inform each other. This media continues to develop with the times until it enters the current digital era, where communication media are increasingly sophisticated in the packaging of information and its dissemination. The information disseminated in media contains various types of information which, of course, brought

interest to both the sender and the recipient. Information in today's era spreads speedily because the forms and media used are electronic/digital. The transmission speed is as fast as the internet network, making it easier for anyone to transact information in virtual space.

Communication is a fundamental need for human beings, and throughout history, people have sought ways to communicate more effectively with each other. Media communication development has been driven by the need to share information, ideas, and culture with others. Advances in technology have played a significant role in media communication development. The invention of writing, printing, radio, television, and the internet have all revolutionized communication by providing new ways to create, transmit, and receive information. Social and political factors have also influenced by media communication.

The ease of producing and disseminating information turns out to be misused by some elements. Deliberately, some individuals create informational content that contains false information or hoaxes. In news coverage, some people design fake news, with various motives. Research conducted by Musdalifah Arif dan Andi Miswar (2020) stated that fake news starts with the opinion that develops in society and then some people embellish the news with lies, or reverse facts (author's editorial), and disseminate it through social media such as Facebook. This study also mentions the impact of hoaxes developing in society, which can lead to debates and feuds in both immediate and neighbouring families.

Fake news spread in the media can affect any field. Including in the political field, let alone approaching the election period. In the world of politics, hoaxes also enliven political contestation. Political campaigns are one of the moments where fake news spreads. For example in the United States that many point to the 2016U.S. presidential election campaign as having been influenced by fake news (Zhang and Ghorbani 2020), prior to the election, data of fake news consumption were studied by (Allcott and Gentzkow 2017).

Likewise with Indonesia, a country where its citizens are given the freedom to express opinions, hoaxes will certainly participate in a wide space in political campaigns, for example in the 2014 presidential election contestation. A few months before the presidential election, fake news was spread almost every time on social media. For the community, of course it is difficult to distinguish which news is fake and which is true in the current post-truth era. Likewise in the

election for the governor of Jakarta in 2017, where research was conducted by Pratiwi Utami (2019) stated that the hoax that existed at that time used a memetic practice approach. The original campaign meme was changed according to the beliefs that existed in the community, and this gave its own power to get political participants.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Communication and Information conducted a mapping and showed that of the 771 hoax content they released in 2019, the majority were hoax news related to politics ahead of the Presidential Election (Kementerian Komunikasi dan Informasi Republik Indonesia 2019). This can be underlined that the nature of Indonesian democracy is still polluted by some individuals who have not shown political maturity in determining the best choice of leader when the choice is still guided by fake news that is believed to be true.

During the 2019 presidential election in Indonesia, hoax content was widely spread through social media platforms and messaging apps. One example was a hoax about a supposed plan by the government to import 10 million Chinese workers to Indonesia (Kominfo 2019), (Januaris Kuwado 2018), & (Fadhil 2016), which was shared widely through social media like WhatsApp, Facebook, and other messaging apps. This hoax content was designed to stoke fears about the Chinese government's influence in Indonesia and was later debunked by fact-checking organizations.

Another example of hoax content during the 2019 election was a video clip that was manipulated to show supporters of one candidate using a provocative gesture. This video was shared widely on social media and was designed to paint the candidate's supporters as disrespectful and offensive. Dalam kontestasi pemilihan presiden 2019 kominfo juga sempat merilis 62 konten hoax (Kami 2019).

The coming year 2023 is a political year, the year in which all party participants prepare their campaigns for the candidates they carry as president, governors, regents, and members of the council for the 2024 general election. It has been proven that every campaign, the media, including social media will play the role of election contestation. So that it is certain that fake news will return to bloom in this upcoming election and adorn the media, as in the previous election contests. However, it is possible that the fake news that will appear will have a different pattern from 2014 and 2019, as Khoirunnisa said in the coverage written by Rosy Dewi Arianti Saptoyo (2022), that concurrent presidential and regional head elections will be even more challenging.

To respond to the large amount of fake news that exists and is developing in society related to politics in particular, the public should have the ability to recognize this fake news so they are not deceived and do not spread it so that other people are also deceived. Especially in the current era of mass polarization, people who are not literate about this information will enter into it. Therefore digital literacy is needed to recognize which news is true and which is fake, however, we need to emphasize this as also mentioned by Sara Brown (2022) that this literacy ability cannot stop the spread of false information. Fake news will still be around us.

2. METHODS

This study uses several examples of hoax, fake or disinformation news obtained from several website sources on the Internet, especially related to political hoax content ahead of the 2024 presidential election in Indonesia. Using the help of a Google search, the researchers filtered the keywords “fake news ahead of the 2024 election”, “hoaxes/hoaxes ahead of the election”. Thus, it hits hundreds of coverages on various sources on the internet. Few samples obtained will then be displayed which will then describe the views of the researchers and support from previous studies. In order to limit the coverage, several representative reports are used to be further verified and analyzed qualitatively and then used to make a decision.

The sequence of data analysis techniques is as follows:

- 1) Identify the hoax content: This involves identifying the specific examples of hoax content you want to analyze. It through searching social media platforms, messaging apps, and other sources of information for content that has been flagged as potentially false or misleading.
- 2) Evaluate the hoax content: the study identified the hoax content to determine its accuracy and potential impact on public opinion. This may involve fact-checking the content, analyzing the rhetorical strategies used to spread the hoax, and identifying any biases or motivations that may have influenced the creation and dissemination of the content.
- 3) Situate the hoax content within the broader political context: This involves analyzing the hoax content in relation to broader political trends, issues, and discourse. For example, it may want to consider how the hoax content relates to the platforms and ideologies of specific political parties, the role of social media in shaping public opinion, or the historical and cultural factors that may have influenced the creation and dissemination of the hoax.

Draw conclusions and recommendations: Based on the analysis, the study should draw conclusions about the nature and impact of the hoax content and make recommendations for how to combat it. This may involve proposing new policies, programs, or educational initiatives that can help to promote media literacy or digital literacy, critical thinking, and informed decision-making among citizens.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Indonesia is known for its diversity of cultures, ethnicities, languages, and many others. This diversity has existed since ancient times, when this country was not yet in the form of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (NKRI). Since the unity of all this diversity under the Red and White flag, from Sabang to Merauke, since then there have been efforts made by certain groups to break up the nation's brotherhood. The issue of disintegration of the nation has started to ignite in several regions, but until now Indonesia is still strong in facing this shock.

Learning from past experience, efforts to lead groups of people to certain views, let's say the view of life as a nation-state can be carried out by way of propaganda which is distributed through brochures or the like, at that time there was no digital media like today which meant that how the message This propaganda can be believed to be the truth so that people follow it.

In today's digital era, this negative propaganda still exists in a much better, more convincing format. Sometimes they even lie with motives that are also unique and have various forms. In the political context, in the realm of Indonesian democracy, digital media has also become a participant in political parties in all general elections that will be/have been held. The role of the media is currently very significant and is recognized as effective in leading a group of individuals. However, unfortunately, the media, which used to function as social control, is used by some individuals to behave unethically, for example using communication media to spread fake news or hoaxes.

In general, fake news might be formed through certain things as follows. *Fabrication*: fake news can be created from scratch by fabricating entirely false stories or events. These stories may be created for various reasons, such as to generate clicks, promote a particular agenda, or sow confusion or discord. *Misleading editing*: Another way that fake news can be formed is through misleading editing. This can involve taking a true story or video clip and selectively editing it to change the meaning or context. This can create a false impression or narrative that is not supported

by the facts. *Amplification*: fake news can also be formed through the amplification of false or misleading information. This can involve taking a small piece of information that may be true, but blowing it out of proportion or making exaggerated claims about its significance. *Parody or satire*: fake news can also be formed through parody or satire. In these cases, stories are intentionally exaggerated or made up to be humorous or satirical. However, some people may take these stories seriously and mistake them for real news. *Deception*: fake news can be formed through deception, such as by impersonating a legitimate news source or using false identities to spread false information. This can be done to manipulate public opinion or to sow confusion and chaos.



Figure 1. Misinformation or fake news shared via Facebook

(Source: <https://turnbackhoax.id/2022/10/14/salah-amarah-mega-memuncak-ganjar-sudah-resmi-keluar-dari-pdip/>)

Fake news and hoax content during presidential elections can be a significant issue in any country, as it can manipulate public opinion and potentially influence the outcome of the election. Such content can come from various sources, including political parties, interest groups, foreign actors, and individuals seeking to spread misinformation for personal gain or ideological reasons. The spread of hoax content during presidential elections is often facilitated by social media and other digital platforms, which can amplify false or misleading information to a wide audience quickly. This can make it difficult for voters to distinguish between accurate and inaccurate information, leading to confusion and potentially affecting their voting decisions.



Figure 2. Fake news shared via Facebook

(Source: <https://turnbackhoax.id/2021/02/23/salah-judul-artikel-jokowi-kembali-maju-di-pilpres-2024-rakyat-akan-sangat-bahagia-sebab-rakyat-amat-ri-amat-menyayanginya/>)

Addressing the issue of hoax content during presidential elections requires a multi-pronged approach, including public education campaigns, media literacy initiatives, and regulatory measures. Political parties and candidates can also play a role by committing to ethical campaign practices and avoiding the spread of false or misleading information. Ultimately, the responsibility for addressing the issue of hoax content during presidential elections lies with all stakeholders, including the media, civil society organizations, and individual citizens. By working together, we can help ensure that elections are free and fair, and that voters are able to make informed decisions based on accurate information.

Fake news, hoaxes and misinformation can have a significant impact on political issues and elections. Hoaxes can shape public opinion and influence how people vote. They can be used to manipulate or deceive voters and sway the outcome of an election. It's important for voters to be aware of the potential for hoaxes and misinformation during election seasons and to approach information with a critical eye. Fact-checking and seeking out multiple sources of information can help to mitigate the impact of hoaxes and ensure that voters are making informed decisions.

Impact of fake news or misinformation in political issue might be:

- 1) Undermining democracy: Hoax content can undermine the democratic process by spreading false information about political candidates, parties, or policies. This can lead to voters making decisions based on misinformation, rather than facts, and can result in a less informed electorate.
- 2) Polarizing society: Hoax content can polarize society by spreading false information that is designed to appeal to one particular group or political ideology. This can lead to increased political polarization, social unrest, and even violence.
- 3) Eroding trust in institutions: Hoax content can erode trust in institutions, such as the media, government, and electoral systems. This can make it more difficult for these institutions to operate effectively and can result in a breakdown of public trust.
- 4) Creating economic and social instability: Hoax content can create economic and social instability by spreading false information about economic policies, social issues, or public safety. This can lead to a loss of confidence in the government and can result in economic downturns, social unrest, and even violence.
- 5) Damaging international relations: Hoax content can damage international relations by spreading false information about foreign countries or leaders. This can lead to diplomatic crises, strained relationships between countries, and even conflict.



Figure 3. An example of hoax spread via Facebook
(Source: <https://www.antarane.ws.com/berita/2791109/hoaks-pemilu-2024-ditunda>)

Seeing the impact that can be generated due to the ‘contamination’ of fake news, concrete actions must be taken, one of which is the importance of digital literacy for all citizens. Digital literacy and critical thinking skills are essential in today's world, where information is abundant and can be easily manipulated. By teaching citizens how to recognize fake news and misinformation, it can help them become more informed and engaged members of society. Educating citizens about fake news and hoaxes can take many forms, such as workshops, educational campaigns, and online resources. It can also be integrated into school curricula to help teach critical thinking skills from a young age. Digital literacy, from the study point of view, can help promote a more informed, engaged, and responsible citizenry. It is an important step towards creating a more healthy and democratic society.

To do so here some tips to combat or educate people:

1. Encourage digital literacy: digital literacy is the ability to critically analyze digital messages and understand the role of media in shaping public opinion. By promoting digital literacy among citizens, people can learn to identify and analyze hoax content, as well as seek out credible sources of information.
2. Use fact-checking resources: Fact-checking organizations such as Mafindo and Tempo can help people identify and debunk hoax content. Encourage people to use these resources to verify the accuracy of information before sharing it on social media or other platforms.
3. Encourage critical thinking: Besides knowing how digital information are form, critical thinking is also necessary which is the ability to analyze and evaluate information to form a reasoned judgment. By encouraging critical thinking among citizens, people can learn to identify and evaluate sources of information, as well as recognize logical fallacies and other forms of faulty reasoning.
4. Engage in constructive dialogue: Engaging in constructive dialogue with those who spread hoax content can help to dispel misinformation and promote accurate information. It is important to approach such conversations with an open mind, avoid attacking or belittling others, and present credible evidence to support your arguments.
5. Support independent journalism: Independent journalism can help to expose and counteract hoax content. By supporting independent media outlets and journalists who report objectively and accurately, people can help to ensure that accurate information is available to the public.

These few tips to combat and educate people about hoax content in Indonesian politics are important to address, and should be proactively informed to citizens to prevent misinformation from spreading and to promote informed decision-making among citizens.

Some general guidance on how to identify hoax content and the importance of digital literacy. Here are some key points:

- 1) Consider the source: Be skeptical of information that comes from sources that you don't recognize or that have a reputation for spreading fake news. Look for information from trusted news outlets and fact-checking organizations.
- 2) Check the evidence: Look for evidence to support the claims being made in the article or post. Are there links to credible sources or statistics that can be verified? If not, the information may be suspect.
- 3) Beware of clickbait: Be wary of headlines or social media posts that use sensational language to grab your attention. This is a common tactic used by fake news sites to get clicks and shares.
- 4) Watch out for confirmation bias: It's important to be aware of your own biases and be willing to consider alternative viewpoints. If a news story or social media post seems to confirm your pre-existing beliefs, it's worth taking a closer look to ensure that it's not a hoax.
- 5) Build digital literacy skills: Digital literacy skills are essential for identifying fake news and hoaxes. This includes the ability to evaluate sources, verify information, and critically analyze content. There are many resources available online to help build these skills, including fact-checking websites, online courses, and workshops.

The importance of digital literacy cannot be overstated in today's media landscape. With so much information available online, it's crucial to have the skills and knowledge to identify reliable sources and avoid hoaxes and fake news. By developing strong digital literacy skills, individuals can become more informed consumers of information and help combat the spread of fake news and hoaxes.

CONCLUSION

As for the upcoming 2024 presidential election in Indonesia, it is difficult to predict what specific fake news or hoax content may be spread. However, it is likely that social media and

messaging apps will continue to be a major platform for spreading misinformation and hoaxes. It is important for voters to be aware of the potential for misinformation and to seek out credible sources of information to make informed decisions. Digital literacy skills, such as the ability to assess the credibility of sources, identify potential biases, and distinguish between facts and opinions, can help individuals make more informed decisions when it comes to voting.

Without these skills, people may be more susceptible to hoaxes and misinformation, which can ultimately impact the outcome of an election. By promoting digital literacy and critical thinking skills, it can empower citizens to be more discerning consumers of information and help ensure that their vote is based on accurate and reliable information. Furthermore, digital literacy is not just important during election seasons. It is a valuable life skill that can help individuals make informed decisions in all areas of their lives and navigate the vast amount of information available online.

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