



Mapping Hoaxes, Disinformation, and Hate Speeches in Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

Hoaxes and disinformation remain significant challenges for Indonesians in this era of information proliferation. A staggering number of approximately 2,093 hoaxes circulate within the society each year, averaging around 175 hoaxes per month.

Recognizing the urgency, the government has taken a proactive stance in the battle against disinformation, hoaxes, and hate speeches within society. Operating under the East Java Department of Communication and Information, they have established an information verification platform accessible at <https://klinikhoaks.jatimprov.go.id/>. This platform empowers individuals to actively ask for verification of the information they encounter through social media or other online sources.

On a monthly basis, the team engages in the verification of a minimum of fifty pieces of information. These items originate from public requests and the team's independent searches across various publicly accessible information channels. The information being examined covers a wide range of aspects, including the specific problem at hand, information based on region, the categorical classification of the data, and the sources of dissemination media.

Due to its inherent diversity, this study aims to comprehensively represent the verified information submissions on the website <https://klinikhoaks.jatimprov.go.id/>. It employs Krippendorff's content analysis framework; the research endeavours to cartographically delineate information categories, issue typologies, and media origins.

The research population comprises a total of 331 information, simultaneously serving as the research sample. These data points encapsulate the entire information meticulously authenticated by East Java Department of Communication and Information, spanning the temporal interval from February to August 2023.

Derived from the findings of this study, it becomes evident that the prevailing information disseminated within the society pertains predominantly to public figures, political matters, government affairs, and fraudulent activities. Concurrently, regarding information dissemination media, TikTok has emerged as a nascent source. However, platforms such as YouTube, WhatsApp, and Facebook are conduits for the most contentious information dissemination.

Keywords: *digital literacy, hoax, disinformation, hate speech, tik tok, social media*

1. INTRODUCTION

Hoaxes and disinformation continue to pose tangible threats to society. Bolstered by progressively advanced technology, individuals readily obtain and access information. Often, the need to seek out information diminishes as it spontaneously surfaces before them through WhatsApp group shares or emerges on the social media feed.

The current focal point of the government lies in the realm of ensuring information quality. This concern arises from the proliferation of inaccurate and deceptive information within the society, as articulated by Bambang Gunawan, the Director of Information and Communication for Politics, Law, and Security at the Directorate General of Public Information and Communication, Ministry of Communications and Informatics (MCI). Bambang underscores that the public possesses the entitlement to access reliable

information [1]. During the timeframe spanning from August 2018 to February 16, 2023, the Department of Communication and Information documented a total of 9,417 posts disseminating fabricated information. Among these instances, 1,730 cases were identified as scams aimed at soliciting personal data or orchestrating unauthorized financial access from the general populace [2].

The peak of hoax was observed in early 2020, coinciding with Indonesia's encounter with the COVID-19 pandemic [3]. The initial stages of a pandemic are characterized by entropy, denoting a scenario where information is insufficient, leading to confusion among individuals as they grapple to comprehend global occurrences.

In communication, entropy serves as a pivotal element and signifies the growth of the communication process. It stems from the fact that within an entropy environment, participants in communication are compelled to engage actively to get adequate information to understand the world [4]. Regrettably, specific individuals took advantage of the populace's inclination to seek information, deliberately fabricating hoaxes and disinformation and proliferating them through social media platforms.

Conversely, the capacity of individuals to seek out and effectively comprehend information (information literacy skills) needs to be more consistent and, in some cases, markedly deficient. This assertion finds substantiation in the proliferation of spurious information circulating within societies. Substantiating this stance, the East Java Communication and Information Department's records illustrate that during the initial 20 days of the pandemic [5], an excess of 100 instances of fabricated news (hoaxes) and manipulative information (disinformation) permeated society. Additionally, most of these instances were accompanied by narratives infused with hate speech directed towards the government or encompassed elements of ethnicity, religion, race, and intergroup dynamics.

Rather than accessing credible and valuable information, individuals frequently find themselves exposed to spurious content that nurtures animosity and apprehension within their surroundings. This unfortunate trend contributes to a heightened level of scepticism toward the government. The pervasively low level of trust in state institutions poses a formidable barrier to effective public communication and the successful implementation of governmental initiatives.

As the political landscape approaches the significant year of 2024, marked by Indonesia's presidential and parliamentary elections, the resurgence of hoax threats becomes increasingly palpable. This is because hoaxes have been the most effective propaganda channel to

attack and distance the opposing party and form a destructive identity collectivity in society [6].

The research findings indicate that the national digital literacy index for the year 2022 is projected to be 3.54 on a scale of 1 to 5—this is a marginal increase of 0.05 points from the preceding year, 2021. Analyzing the data through a gender lens, women exhibit a digital literacy index 3.52, slightly trailing behind the national average, whereas the male digital literacy index stands at 3.56. Within the scope of the four dimensions considered, digital security emerges as the dimension with the lowest value. This observation signifies a deficiency in the Indonesian populace's comprehension of digital security, encompassing their ability to safeguard themselves against deceptive and detrimental information [7].

Recognizing the potential escalation of hoax trends during the span of 2023-2024, the East Java Communication and Information Department has taken a proactive stride by establishing the website klinikhoaks.jatimprov.go.id for lodging information complaints and undergoing verification processes. This platform is a potent tool in the fight against hoaxes by East Java Department of Communication and Information. The public is empowered to seek clarification regarding any received information concerning both the government and public matters through this website.

In response to the context mentioned above, the Communication and Informatics Department of the East Java Provincial Government has launched an innovative hoax clinic website designed as an information verification conduit. This platform verifies and uploads 60 pieces of information within a month's timeframe to the hoax clinic.

This webpage embodies a form of media literacy situated within the evaluative and communicative realm of deciphering media content, ultimately facilitating the acquisition of truthful and high-quality information [8].

Submissions of information reports via the MCI web are subjected to review and analysis within 24 hours by the East Java MCI anti-hoax team. Consequently, the information is categorized into labels such as "fact," "hoax," "disinformation," and "hate speech."

In the context of this classification, "facts" pertain to information underpinned by accurate and verifiable data [9]. In contrast, "hoaxes" encompass fabricated information deliberately formulated to mislead recipients. Hoaxes require deliberateness from the sender, which usually aims to attract the attention of the reader or recipient of the message. The lies in the information are blatant or easily recognized and are usually intended as a gimmick [10].

Meanwhile, "disinformation" involves manipulative content that distorts facts and alters contexts, leading recipients toward erroneous beliefs or conclusions [11]. Hate speech denotes messages designed to tarnish the reputation of an individual or institution [12].

The significant and unstoppable flow of information in the current era is an implication of the characteristics of new media, namely interactivity. According to McQuail, interactivity is when a person can send messages widely in new media without being limited by distance, and there is an exchange of messages in both directions and more, even among people who have never met. This condition can occur because there are no boundaries in new media, so it can change the social structure of its users to be equal [13].

As in the case of falsehood, we also need to know the selection of media distribution and the genre of issues raised to know the model of anticipating hoaxes in dealing with issues that attract public attention. Various forms of hoaxes in new media also have an impact on the anxiety of misunderstanding in society. Even hoaxes are disseminated to make the situation in society more uncomfortable. In communication science, this situation is explained by Gerbner in media cultivation theory, which explains how a person's perception, understanding, and beliefs about reality are determined as a result of the consumption of messages in the media [13].

On a different note, as Potter outlined, media literacy equips individuals or groups with the active capability to interpret received messages and foresee any detrimental impacts they might carry [14]. Consequently, dismantling the chain of hoaxes can be achieved by bolstering the community's resilience through media literacy [15]. It involves emphasizing users' proficiency in accessing, analyzing, assessing, and communicating the content of media messages.

Given these considerations, it becomes imperative to undertake research that delves into the prevailing patterns of information dissemination within society. These patterns encompass various aspects, such as the proportion of accurate information in contrast to problematic information, the recurring themes in circulating information, and the evolving trends of public information channels in media.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This research employs a descriptive quantitative content analysis methodology. The study's population and sample comprise information authenticated by the East Java Communication and Information Department within six months, specifically from February 15 to August 5, 2023, covering the duration since the team's inception. A comprehensive collection of 331 distinct information instances was verified and uploaded onto

klinikhoaks.jatimprov.go.id. For this study, the entire pool of information was considered, and a statistical classification was executed based on the information's dissemination type and source.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Variety of Information by Type

Out of the 331 instances of verified information, 166 of them, constituting 50.15%, were confirmed as factual and accurate. False information, commonly known as hoaxes, accounted for 29.61% of the total. Additionally, information categorized as disinformation, referring to content containing elements of truth but manipulated to convey a different context or meaning, represented 15.71%. Instances of hate speech directed towards individuals, institutions, or parties comprised 4.53% of the verified information.

This distribution implies that while factual information holds the majority compared to the other three categories, the latter constitutes problematic information, comprising false, misleading, and hate speech content. Intriguingly, in 2023, the prevalence of problematic information circulating within society nearly matches that of factual information. It signifies that approximately one out of every two pieces of information is problematic. The subsequent table depicts the distribution of information based on the analysis performed by the East Java Communication and Information Department's information verification team:

| Information Type | Total | Percentage |
|------------------|-------|------------|
| Hoaxes | 98 | 29.61% |
| Disinformation | 52 | 15.71% |
| Hate Speeches | 15 | 4.53% |
| Facts | 166 | 50.15% |
| Total | 331 | 100% |

Table 1 The Percentage of Hoaxes, Disinformation, Hate Speeches, and Facts

3.2. Government Politics, and Fraud are the Most Verified Information

The data analysis reveals a diversity in the issues of the verified information. The most significant proportion of information pertained to public figures, comprising 65 instances, corresponding to 19.63% of the total. The subsequent notable category was politics

and government, accounting for 18.73% or 62 pieces of information. Following closely in third place is the crime issue, with a total of 47 instances, constituting 14.20%.

Additionally, 81 issues, equivalent to 24.48%, fell under the miscellaneous category. It encompassed diverse topics such as cultural information, accidents, missing Google satellite cars, education, technology, etc. Given the relatively limited frequency of each specific subcategory, the study consolidated them into an

overarching category termed "Others".

| Issue | Total | Percentage |
|-----------------------------------|------------|-------------|
| Politics & Governments | 62 | 18.73% |
| Health | 28 | 8.46% |
| Economy | 11 | 3.32% |
| Natural Disasters and Environment | 37 | 11.18% |
| Figures | 65 | 19.63% |
| Crime (Fraud) | 47 | 14.20% |
| Others | 81 | 24.48% |
| Total | 331 | 100% |

Table 2 Variety of Information by Issue

Individual popularity remains a prominent and influential factor in Indonesian society, often as a significant "selling point". Consequently, topics concerning a person's prominence are prolifically generated and disseminated across various media platforms. Notably, the most prominent figures in the circulated information include President Joko Widodo, Presidential candidate Ganjar Pranowo, and Presidential candidate Anies Baswedan. This prominence could be linked to the prevailing political landscape in Indonesia, considering that within less than a year from the completion of this research, in February 2024, the country is scheduled to conduct a presidential election. Another facet related to the issue of prominent figures is the prevalence of information about the passing of public figures. In the year 2023, notable individuals reported to have passed away include Agnes Monica (singer), Nunung (comedian), Emha Ainun Nadjib (religious figure), Abdullah Gymnastiar (religious figure), and Raffi Ahmad (film and television actor).

Government politics issues significantly influence the prevalent information disseminated within society. Much of this information pertains to government policies, encompassing both local and national spheres. Prominent national policies that feature as information include the purported forfeiture of BPJS benefits if not utilized (hoax), the alleged discontinuation of subsidized fuel "pertalite" (hoax), misleading claims of President Jokowi's prohibition on joint iftar gatherings for

Muslims (disinformation), alongside verified reports of salary increments and civil servant pension adjustments (facts). Moreover, many people often ask about crime and fraud issues related to lottery scams and apk files.

| Issue Type | Information Type | | | | Total |
|-----------------------------------|------------------|----------------|------------|-------------|------------|
| | Hoax | Disinformation | Fact | Hate Speech | |
| Politic & Government | 13 | 9 | 38 | 2 | 62 |
| Health | 14 | 5 | 9 | 0 | 28 |
| Economy | 7 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 11 |
| Natural Disasters and Environment | 3 | 7 | 27 | 0 | 37 |
| Figure | 30 | 11 | 12 | 12 | 65 |
| Crime | 16 | 2 | 29 | 0 | 47 |
| Others | 15 | 17 | 48 | 1 | 81 |
| Total | 98 | 52 | 166 | 15 | 331 |

Issues still dominated by hoaxes are figures, health, and the economy. Meanwhile, the issues more dominated by facts are politics and government, natural disasters and the environment, and criminal issues.

Table 3 Type of Information on each issue

3.3. TikTok, The New Star of Information Dissemination Media

Based on the analysis results, it is known that the top three media sources of information are TikTok, Facebook, and Twitter. The exciting thing about this data is that the number of TikTok is soaring compared to other media. Information originating from TikTok shot away from other media; TikTok dominated with a figure reaching 41.69% or 138% of the information. Behind TikTok is Facebook, with 15.41% (51 pieces of information), followed by Twitter, at 14.50% or 48 pieces of information.

TikTok, although currently still considered a banal media with low-quality content, cannot be denied that its popularity has skyrocketed with massive user growth.

For the public, TikTok's appeal lies in its uncomplicated system, blending music or songs, straightforward movements or dance content, and succinct narratives. This unique combination has propelled TikTok's popularity among its users while also drawing the attention of information creators aiming to engage the public through its platform. Below is a compilation of data illustrating the distribution of information across diverse media platforms:

| Media Dissemination | Information Type | | | | Total |
|---------------------|------------------|----------------|------------|-------------|------------|
| | Hoax | Disinformation | Fact | Hate Speech | |
| Facebook | 20 | 7 | 17 | 7 | 51 |
| Instagram | 3 | 3 | 16 | 0 | 22 |
| Twitter | 4 | 4 | 38 | 2 | 48 |
| Tiktok | 28 | 28 | 78 | 4 | 138 |
| Youtube | 16 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 21 |
| WA | 25 | 3 | 9 | 1 | 38 |
| Others | 2 | 5 | 6 | 0 | 13 |
| Total | 98 | 52 | 166 | 15 | 331 |

Table 4. Total of information type based on media dissemination

However, when cross-tabulation is done between the media source of dissemination and the type of information, it is interesting to find that some media contain more factual information (based on facts) than problematic information (hoaxes, disinformation, and hate speech). The media in this category are Instagram and Twitter. Instagram contains 16 facts and six problematic information. It means that out of 22 verified pieces of information, the dominant ones are facts (72.72%). On Twitter, the same pattern was observed. Out of the 48 pieces of information sourced from Twitter, 38 (79.17%) were factual news, and "only" 20% of the information on Twitter was problematic.

On the other hand, information dissemination media dominated by hoaxes are Facebook, WhatsApp, and YouTube. The highest percentage of hoaxes is on YouTube. On this video channel, 76.19% (16 pieces of information) are hoaxes. This number does not include disinformation and hate speech. The amount of factual information is only 9.52%.

On the WhatsApp messaging application, hoax information also dominates with 65.79% (25 information), coupled with disinformation and hate speech, the number reaches 76.31% (29 information). Meanwhile, only 23.69% of the information is accurate.

On Facebook, the distribution of factual information is only 33.33%. Meanwhile, more than 70% (34 pieces of information) were problematic, consisting

of 39.22% hoaxes, 13.73% disinformation, and 13.73% hate speech.

Another finding from this research is that the media sources of information are known to be more factual than problematic information. In this category, the media are Twitter and Instagram. On Twitter, factual information has a higher percentage than hoaxes, disinformation and hate speech. The number of verified facts from Twitter reached 79.17% out of 48 pieces of information. The number of facts on Instagram also reached 72.73 out of 22 pieces of information.

Interestingly, on TikTok, the rising star, the number of facts and problematic information is almost equal. Facts accounted for 56.52% of the total 138 pieces of information shared via TikTok. The number of verified problematic information from TikTok is 43.48%, which consists of hoaxes, disinformation and hate speech.

4. CONCLUSION

From the analysis conducted on the data available at klinikhoaks.jatimprov.go.id, it becomes evident that as of 2023, Indonesia continues to grapple with a substantial prevalence of problematic information, encompassing hoaxes, disinformation, and hate speech. Remarkably, every second piece of information disseminated within the society is tainted with

animosity, falsehoods, or manipulation intended for its readers.

The most pronounced issues linked to problematic information are public figures, politics, government affairs, and criminal activities. Specifically, hoaxes exhibit the highest prevalence in contexts concerning public figures, health-related matters, and economic affairs. In contrast, information predominantly anchored in facts is observed within government politics, natural disasters, environmental topics, and crime-related information.

Regarding the sources of information, a notable newcomer has risen to prominence: TikTok, a platform renowned for its public information sharing. TikTok has outpaced other information mediums in terms of usage. However, problematic and factual information hold comparable significance on this platform. In contrast, platforms like Facebook, WhatsApp, and YouTube present a distinctive pattern, containing more hoax information than factual content.

from the research results it is also known that the existence of an information verification website, klinikhoaks.jatimprov.go.id, which was initiated by the East Java Communication and Information Service is significant for increasing the digital literacy of the Indonesian people and helping them analyse information based on the factuality of the data it contains.

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