The Need for Improvement of Digital Literacy to Fighting Against Fake News in Indonesia

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Abstract

Indonesia is a democratic country with freedom of speech being one of its pillars. Recently, freedom of opinion has shifted and changed shape, no longer in the context of the real world, but also in cyberspace. This was then used by a group of individuals to reach their target of getting mass people quickly and irresponsibly, one of them is using fake news. This fake news can create information that is consumed by the public unconsciously because of a lack of literacy culture. For this reason, the purpose of this study is to increase the awareness of the Indonesian government and society about the urgency of the danger of the spread of fake news, as well as the importance of using private data since people are now running in the era of gigantic databases. The research method used in this study is descriptive qualitative research method with data and observation, with literacy studies in addition. This research expects the capability of the government in managing policies to improve digital literation for the people of Indonesia so that the spread of hoaxes can be minimized and suppressed.

Keywords


Introduction

Indonesia is a country that can be categorized as a big country when viewed from the aspect of the population. The total population of Indonesia in 2020 around 273 million, which makes Indonesia the fourth most populous country in the world (Jayani, 2019). In line with the development of information technology, the Indonesian population has also utilized the advantages of this sector in various fields of life. A large number of Indonesia's population is connected to the internet, where an estimated number is around 171.17 million or around 64.8 percent of the total population of Indonesia (Pratomo, 2019). Of these, around 132 million people access the internet almost around 6 hours a day (Bohang, 2019). Thus it can be said that the various dynamics that occur in
cyberspace will have a significant impact on the majority of the Indonesian people, especially regarding perceptions formed in their thinking.

The Indonesian people are currently enjoying freedom, as a result of a democratic political system. One form of it is freedom of expression, including freedom of expression through cyberspace. Of course, this is something positive and has been used by the majority of the Indonesian population to communicate among themselves. With this conducive condition, it is used by various parties to deliver a variety of news that is very useful for them. However, due to certain objectives, a lot of the spreading news is very misleading for its users, and the amount and intensity of it are also very massive. Based on a study, it was found that from 1,146 respondents studied, 44.3% of them gotten deception news each day, and 17.2% gotten it more than once a day (Juditha, 2018). As for what is implied by a scam is data or news that contains things that are dubious or that are not actualities that happen (Juditha, 2018).

Of course, the success of the parties who spread the hoax is influenced by various reasons. One of the success factors is because some of the parties who spread the news are indeed professional people who are very clever in their mission. Indications of groups or individuals playing in the spread of hoaxes were the unfolding of the hoax spreading network, Saracen, in early August 2017. This group allegedly made news containing hate speech which they intended to cause conflict between community groups. This organization is very neatly organized, and indeed intends to seek financial gain, so they often receive orders from certain groups to bring down their political rivals in local elections. The existence of the Saracen organization is not alone, because so many groups like this were formed to influence and provoke the community (Prayitno, 2017).

The spread of the hoax can be successful can only be due to the factors of readers or users of the news being disseminated. One important element of the reader or user factor that is often studied by various parties is digital literacy. What is implied by computerized education in this setting is having the aptitudes we got to live, learn, and work in a society where communication and get to data are gotten through computerized innovations such as web stages, social media, and versatile gadgets. Numerous individuals see that in case the level of computerized proficiency from the Indonesian individuals is very tall, the wild spread of scams in Indonesia will not run easily and enormously. However, with the many riots between groups of people and also the number of perceptions of the public regarding various issues, the level of digital literacy that is still low in the community is expected to contribute significantly to the problems that arise.
Based on these hypotheses or assumptions, the Author is interested to study this issue. The author wants to prove whether indeed the low level of digital literacy of the Indonesian people is the cause of the emergence of the negative impact of hoax news that is rife in Indonesia lately. After this hypothesis has been proven, the Author will go further on the importance of increasing digital literacy capabilities for the Indonesian people to be able to fight hoaxes. Thus, it is expected that the findings of this study can be utilized by individuals, groups, nations, and also policymakers, in counteracting or fighting hoaxes.

This study is expected to find its purpose. But to achieve this, several steps will be taken. First, information or data about reality in Indonesia will be collected, and then the reality will be analyzed to find any negative impacts caused by the spread of the hoaxes on Indonesian society. Second, the Author will discuss the effect of digital literacy on the negative impact of hoaxes, where this discussion can produce findings in the form of proof of hypotheses or assumptions about the relationship between low digital literacy among Indonesian people on the rise or success of hoax circulation in Indonesia. Third, an effort will be discussed that needs to be undertaken by various parties to improve the digital literacy of the Indonesian people against hoaxes.

**Theoretical Framework**

**Theory of Needs**

The hypothesis of needs is created by McClelland (1961, 1975, 1985) contends that individuals are motivated by three basic drivers: achievement, affiliation, and power. Several experts have stated their views regarding this theory. Some of the views are as follows: (i) Winter (1992) argued that these needs not only motivate individuals, but also include many of the most important human goals and concerns; (ii) Yamaguchi (2003) stated that the need for achievement describes a person’s drive to excel with respect to some established set of standards; (iii) Robbins (2003) and Weiner (1979) stated that those with high in achievement needs dislike succeeding by chance and seek personally identifiable sources for their success or failure rather than leaving the outcome to probability; (iv) Brunstein and Maier (2005) noted that two separate but interacting dimensions drive achievement needs: implicit and explicit motives, where implicit motives energize spontaneous impulses to act, while explicit motives are manifest by deliberate choice behaviors; and (v) McClelland (1961, 1975, 1985) defined that the need for power denotes individuals’ desires to be influential, and this could manifest itself in
attempts to make others behave, as one would like, or in a manner that they might not have otherwise.

**Hoax**

Various parties have conducted research and studies on hoaxes. The various opinions of the various experts include: (i) hoax is news, information, false or false news, and also attempts to deceive or fool the reader/hearers to believe something; (ii) hoax is a form of fraud whose purpose is to make humor or bring danger; (iii) hoax is negative excesses of freedom of speech and opinion on the internet, especially social media and blogs; (iv) hoax aims at making public opinion, herding opinions, forming perceptions, also for fun that tests the intelligence and accuracy of internet and social media users; (v) hoax is also for economic (fraud), and political (propaganda), or agitation (incitement) purposes; (vi) hoax is interpreted as an effort to distort the facts by using information that is convincing but cannot be verified (Mansyah, 2017); (vii) hoax is the impact of changing the function of social media from friendship media and sharing the means of conveying political opinions, becoming an arena for commenting on the opinions of others; (viii) hoax is distributed via e-mail or social media; (ix) hoax takes advantage of the reader's good intentions, so the readers without first researching the truth of the news, immediately pass it on to a broader forum; (x) usually the original sender of this hoax is unknown; (xi) hoax has spread like a virus that originated from news makers, opinions, data, photos and images containing hoaxes and shared through social media such as Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, Line, YouTube, Path, and Instagram (Triartanto, 2015); and (xii) a story can be indicated as a hoax, among others if it does not include sources of information, is often provocative, often lacks a match between title and content, utilizes a trending issue, often uses non-standard or simple language styles, and usually contains elements defamation (Rifauddin & Halida, 2018).

**Digital Literacy**

There are several definitions regarding literacy digital, one of them came from Ba that defined digital literacy as a “set of habits through which youngsters use information technologies for learning, work, and fun” (Ba et al., 2002). Other experts tried to define what kind of skills literacy. Eshet-Alkalai dan Chajut (2009) characterized six aptitude sets of the education, specifically: (i) photo visual proficiency, which is the capacity to work viably with computerized situations, such as client interfacing that utilize graphical communication; (ii) generation proficiency, which is the capacity to make bonafide, significant composed and craftsmanship by replicating and controlling preexisting
advanced content, visuals, and sound pieces; (iii) branching proficiency, which is the capacity to develop information by a nonlinear route through knowledge spaces, such as within the Web and other hypermedia situations; (iv) data proficiency, which is the capacity to expend data fundamentally and sort out untrue and one-sided data; (v) socioemotional proficiency, which is the capacity to communicate viably in online communication stages such as dialog bunches and chatrooms; and (vi) real-time considering aptitude, which is the capacity to prepare and assess huge volumes of data in real-time, such as in computer recreations an.

Research Method

In this study, the Author used data obtained from library studies, where this study was interpreted as a series of library data collection activities, reading and recording, and processing research material (Zed, 2003). In this study, some of the data collected were about the main principles of national defense, the theory of digital literacy, and government program guidelines regarding digital literacy and literacy that are in force today. Empirical data in the form of important secondary data about the condition of the Indonesian society was obtained from scientific papers written by several previous researchers.

This research design used qualitative methods. Qualitative research is a method for exploring and understanding meaning ascribed to social or humanitarian problems (Creswell, 2012). While Moleong defines qualitative research as a type of research that emphasizes drawing conclusions based on interpretations of phenomena or facts (Moleong, 2009). Based on the two definitions above, this research can be categorized as a qualitative study because the problem raised was derived from social phenomena and draws conclusions at the end of the discussion based on solving the phenomenon problems associated with the theories used in the research methodology.

In this study, the author himself was the main data collection tool, so that some adjustments could be made when collecting data analysis data (Moleong, 2001). While the data obtained were analyzed using inductive analysis, to be able to discover the multiple realities contained in the data, to be able to describe the setting in full, be able to find shared influences that sharpen the relationship, and be able to calculate values explicitly (Moleong, 2001). In this study, the application of this analysis was done by confronting the current condition of the community with the threats that will be faced.
Results

There have been various fake news that occurred in Indonesia. One research carried out by Budi Prayitno from the State Administration Agency concluded that there was fake news, whether in the hoax or disinformation category circulated on social media recently. The following are some fake news (hoax) that have gone viral on social media (Prayitno, 2017):

1. Vice President Jusuf Kalla reportedly in critical health condition and flown to Singapore (Hoax);
2. Jokowi [The President of Republic of Indonesia] is a son of a member of the prohibited Indonesian Communist Party (Hoax);
3. Rush Money Movement (Hoax);
4. Ten million Chinese workers enter Indonesia (Hoax);
5. Photo of Ahok [The Governor of Jakarta] and Habib Rizieq [The Leader of Islam Liberation Front] Handshaking (Hoax);
6. The use of plastic in Lontong [a kind of snack] (Disinformation);
7. The kidnapping of children to sell organs (Hoax);
8. Development of Disneyland in Boyolali, Central Java, Indonesia (Hoax);
9. Flood in front of the Indonesian President’s Palace (Disinformation); and
10. Cooking spices containing pork (Hoax).

There are various examples of fake news spread out in Indonesia. Several researchers have worked to investigate this matter. One research was conducted by Christiany Juditha from the Indonesia Ministry of Communication and Information, and some of the results will be presented in this section, namely: fake news related to the performance of the Indonesian President, and fake news related to the Jakarta Governor (Juditha, 2018).

The first example is news concerning Indonesian President Joko Widodo or more popularly known as Jokowi. Although in general, there are survey figures that show satisfaction from the majority of the public (66.4%) with the President's performance, hoaxes about Jokowi's performance are still circulating, especially on social media. One of them is news that seems to have been written by an international media saying that President Jokowi is a stupid President of Indonesia (Figure 1).
This news was uploaded by a Facebook account with the name Isoel Khan to a group account with the name Prabowo for NKRI on April 24, 2017. The headline of this news is “Disappointed: the stupid president of Indonesia Jokowi upset like a child That Saudi invest in China more than Indonesia”. Isoel Khan's account also wrote a statement above the news: “And now, everyone knows about Indonesia stupid President. What a shameful”. This upload is only in the form of a title and picture of President Jokowi without containing the content of the news. After tracing, the real news link was on the Asian Correspondent website with the address (https://asiancorrespondent.com) containing a different title. This news was uploaded on April 15, 2017 (9 days before Isoel Khan's upload on Facebook) by Asian Correspondent Staff @ascorrespondent with the title "Disappointed: Jokowi upset that Saudi invest in China more than Indonesia". In the original headline, there were no words 'the stupid' and 'like a child'. This news is also complete with news content which reveals that Indonesian President Joko Widodo was disappointed and upset because Saudi Arabia invested more in China than Indonesia.

The second example is fake news related to the Jakarta Governor, Basuki Tjahaya Purnama alias Ahok, who served as the Governor of Jakarta replacing Joko Widodo. Euphoria in the 2017 Jakarta Regional Head Election which involved Ahok as the incumbent governor candidate made hoaxes unavoidable. One of the news, including the account @tweetparpol on Twitter social media with the title: "Ahok: You Think We Intend to Build a Mosque and Raise Marbut Hajj?" This news seems to have been
uploaded by Kompas.com on October 31, 2016, at 12:25 pm which was then shared by the @tweetparpol account (Figure 2).

![Figure 2 Hoax (left) and real news (right) about Ahok](image)

Source: (Alsadad Rudi, 2016)

After tracing the truth of this news, it turned out that the news portal Kompas.com uploaded news with the same picture but with a different title. The original headline was: "Ahok: You Think We Lied to Build a Mosque and Raise the Hajj Marbut?" uploaded by Kompas.com on October 14, 2016, 11:36 am. The @tweetparpol account deliberately replaced the word 'lied' with 'intend' which, if read as a whole, made the meaning of the sentence different and seemed tendentious, leading to social conflicts.

Related to the impact of hoaxes, several parties have conducted several studies. The study conducted by several experts on the impact of hoaxes in several countries will be presented in this section. First, a study on Wikipedia websites conducted by Kumar, et. al. shows: (i) 90% of deception articles are distinguished promptly inside an hour of being endorsed, around 1% of scams that are well-written survive for over one year without being recognized; (ii) scams are seen less as often as possible than non-hoaxes, but a non-negligible 1% of scams are seen at slightest 100 times a day; (iii) at slightest 5 particular joins were clicked from over the net for 7% of deceptions, and on normal, each scam has such joins; and (iv) most deception articles are incapable, a little division of scam articles is exceedingly impactful.
Investigate on Facebook amid the 2016 US Presidential decision found the fake news stories got an add up to 8,711,000 engagements, essentially higher than the 7,367,000 engagements of the genuine news stories. Third, Gupta et al. considered the spread of fake pictures on Twitter amid typhoon Sandy and found that those fake pictures were shared nearly twice as much as genuine pictures. Fourth, Frigerri et al. conducted a comprehensive consideration of the spread of untrue and genuine data on Facebook. They collected 4,761 rumors from snopes.com, which could be a site that catalogs well-known stories on social media and checks their veracity. In their dataset, 45% of stories were fake, 26% were “true”, and the rest had halfway truth values.

Fifth, the study of the spread of over 126,000 rumors on Twitter over a period of 11 years was conducted by Vosoughi et al, where they took the set of wrong data cascade distinguished by different free fact-checking organizations and followed their spread from their exceptionally starting. They found that the beat 1% of untrue tweets come to over 1,000 clients, which genuine data tweets seldom did. Wrong data come to more individuals than truth at each cascade profundity, which was helped by its virality, appearing that it was spread by numerous individuals in a peer-to-peer way, rather than many accounts essentially broadcasting it. Besides, untrue data was six times quicker in coming to the same number of individuals as genuine data did.

Some experts and the Indonesian government have also done some research on the impact of this hoax in Indonesia. First, a study conducted by Nugroho (2017) on the impact of hoaxes in Indonesia, which in the end he concluded that various news that developed had made the Indonesian security conditions less stable and also made interpersonal life harmonious, and in society disrupted. Second, the Indonesian Press Council has conducted a study and finally assessed that hoaxes in Indonesia have entered a serious condition, where hoaxes have a very wide range, ranging from satire to satirize to being published through various information channels. Initially, the public sought the truth of information through the mainstream media. But now the hoax enters another dimension on social media and is adopted just like that in the mainstream media without clarification (Jemadu, 2017).

Third, the President of the Republic of Indonesia Joko Widodo himself had expressed his concern and called on all parties to stop the spread of hoaxes and slanders that could divide the nation. Fourth, the Coordinating Minister for Political, Legal and Security Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, Wiranto, said the community was disadvantaged by the number of unclear news distributions, doubts about all information received, and the community became confused, and then the confusion of the community could be used by
irresponsible parties to instill hatred, so that division and hostility could occur (Tarigan, 2017).

Discussion

Why People are so Easily Affected by Hoaxes?

Several studies have been conducted to promote internet users in general, who believe in deception. From these studies, several findings were obtained. First, about focusing on internet users. More about trusting deception, if the information is by the opinions or attitudes they have (Respati, 2017). Second, many internet users who asked for their opinions or beliefs get recognition from others, regardless of whether the information received is true or false, where then they will access the information back to others. Third, those who use the internet for too long to search for information will increase information overload, which they will easily take for granted and then they will spread it to other parties without first seeing the benefits and harms to others. Fourth, many internet users can only see the main information without seeing the contents of the news, and they immediately approve the information, really needing the sender's information related to the well-known media. Fifth, many social media users participate in commenting on a theme so that it can be understood.

Sixth, Lazonder et al. (2000) show that there is a difference between someone who has special expertise in using search engines and people who are new or lay in using them, where users who have experience, will tend to be more systematic in conducting searches. Seventh, hoaxes are made so that the public is no longer focused on the real problem, and subsequently will be trapped in bombastic things that are not the main problem. Eighth, social media users generally do not want to be blamed if the information is a hoax, they add the words "from the next group" as a preventive measure so that if the news is a lie (Rahadi, 2017).

Several studies have also been carried out by various experts to see the behavior of the Indonesians related to the spread of hoaxes. First, Ryan Ariesta (in Rudi, 2017) states that there are three reasons that the Indonesian people are very easily influenced by hoaxes: community interest in reading is still lacking, not checking the truth and authenticity of the news, and the Indonesian people are too quick in concluding an event that occurs. Secondly, Deddy Mulyana (in Rudi, 2017) argues that the original character of the Indonesian people is not healthily accustomed to differing opinions, so they easily accept hoaxes that are deliberately distributed. Third, Septanto (2018) concludes that hoaxes and expressions of hatred developed in Indonesia due to several factors: political motives of
power that justifies any means, because the spread of hoaxes and hate speech is organized in an organized manner by professionals, the public has not had social awareness in selecting various information obtained through social media, community leaders often abuse their influence by making or spreading their personal opinions regardless of the consequences in society, and hoaxes have become a promising business field.

Fourth, a research conducted by Faturahman (2018) of several students from a university concluded that the tendency of students to believe in hoaxes was high because: they were fanatical about news originating from a source that they felt was right, they were very emotional about the situation an event that carried away with the news without having time to judge the truth of the news, many of them were easily influenced by news that used language styles that touched their feelings, and many of them had very limited ability to test the truth of the news.

**Relation between Hoax and Literacy**

In this section, we will discuss the negative effects of hoax and their relationship to the digital literacy rates of users from the internet or social media. For this reason, it is necessary to convey various parties who have researched the relationship between these two variables. First, Rahadi (2017) found that warding off hoaxes or false information can be done in several ways, one of them was by increasing public literacy through the active role of government, community leaders, and communities, providing easy access to the right sources of information for each the issue of hoaxes, conducting systematic, and continuous education and effective legal action for the disseminators. Second, Gumilar et al. (2017) state that media literacy is a solution to the problem of hoaxes where the main way to overcome hoaxes is to build public competence in dealing with a flood of information, namely through media literacy. Third, Pratiwi and Pritanova (2017) state that good digital literacy can affect the psychological condition of adolescents and children, and if given properly, it will be able to prevent teens and children to do negative things in cyberspace, such as insulting others, speaking impolitely, damaging, spiteful, and spreading false information.

Fourth, Rianto (2016) finds that digital literacy is considered absolute given so that the internet provides benefits for its users, where if the provision of digital literacy is not enough, active users of information can get lost. Fifth, Silvana and Darmawan (2018), and Wahono and Effrisanti (2018), state that digital literacy needs to be included as one of the subjects or courses in schools because the young generation of Indonesia is not only dealing with hoaxes, but also expressions of hatred, radicalism, cyberbullying, and the
like, so they have digital literacy. Sixth, Heryanto (2017) considers that digital literacy is like a vaccine to maintain health, while hoaxes are like diseases that can strike anyone and at any time. If you have been given the vaccine, then someone at least becomes more protected from various diseases. Likewise, when digital literacy shields are prepared, hoaxes cannot attack.

**Digital Literacy Improvement**

From the discussion that has been done above, it appears that the main solution that needs to be done is to increase digital literacy for the people of Indonesia, especially internet or social media users. Some experts have researched digital literacy. According to Juliswara (2017) elements of digital literacy that internet users need to have are (i) awareness of the ethics of communication; and (ii) constructive skills in receiving, producing, and sharing news content.

Meanwhile, Potter (2011) has established seven skills or abilities from digital literacy. The skills are: (i) analytical, namely breaking down the message received into meaningful elements; (ii) evaluation ability, which is to assess the meaning of these elements; (iii) ability to group, i.e. determine elements that have similarities and different elements to be grouped into different categories; (iv) the ability of induction, which is to conclude the grouping above, then generalize the patterns of these elements into larger messages; (v) the ability of deduction, that is, using general principles to explain something specific; (vi) the ability to synthesize, which is to gather these elements into a new structure; and (vii) abstracting capabilities, namely creating concise, clear, and accurate descriptions to describe the essence of the message in a shorter manner than the original message.

Meanwhile, another expert, Silverblatt (1995), states that digital literacy must include several abilities, including (i) awareness of the influence of the media on individuals and society; (ii) an understanding of the process of mass communication; (iii) developing strategies for analyzing and discussing media messages; (iv) awareness that media content is a text that describes our culture and ourselves; and (v) developing pleasure, understanding, and appreciation for media content.

From the scope of digital literacy capabilities described above, the following will be discussed how methods or approaches can be chosen in realizing the desire to improve digital literacy. Juditha (2019) suggests that users of social media should form a community. With the formation of the group, the digital literacy of each group member will be formed by itself. Within the group, there will be someone who plays the Admin,
responsible for disseminating correct information and correcting hoaxes. Each member is also motivated to provide support through contributing supporting data and truth references about information. The process of forming information literacy to fight hoaxes takes place at any time because everyday information that is indicated by hoaxes is uploaded in this community. The information is discussed to get a truth, so that each member can play an active role by asking questions, providing additional data, discussing, giving comments, or just reading for additional knowledge.

In Indonesia, several communities have been formed independently by members who want to eliminate the symptoms of hoax in the interactions between them. In 2012 a community called Mafindo was formed (Septanto, 2018). This group has established four pillars of their movement, namely: (i) anti-hoax narratives with anti-hoax discussion groups and turnbackhoax.id sites; (ii) literacy education, with the education programs in schools, campuses, and the general public; (iii) advocating families, community leaders, government, and managers of social media; and (iv) friendship to break down the polarization wall due to socio-political, ethnic, and religious issues (Nugroho, 2017). Another group that has been formed is Indonesia Hoaxes, formed by the anti-hoax community and intended to be a place of discussion for members of the group. This community aims to enable people to join in the discussion or just read the right information (Juditha, 2019).

The Indonesian government is also active in fostering social media users so they are not consumed by hoaxes. The Government through the Ministry of Communication and Information has also established a communication network through the WhatsApp application. This communication network contains government public relations personnel at the central and regional levels. With this communication group, government public relation officials join in the group always provide up-to-date information related to various information and opinions that develop in the community. Group members also provide information related to the activities carried out in their respective institutions to be known by group members in the hope that they will be disseminated to the WhatsApp group in their respective agencies (Prayitno, 2017).

**Conclusion**

From the discussion above, it can be concluded that there is a very close relationship between the level of hoax distribution in Indonesia with the level of digital literacy from internet users and social media from the Indonesian society. Therefore, increasing the level of digital literacy from internet and social media users is one solution to counter the
spread of hoaxes in Indonesia. The intended increase in digital literacy must include all necessary elements of digital literacy capabilities, namely attitudes or manners, knowledge, and skills in interacting in the cyber world. The capacity building must be done through education in schools or colleges, in the world of work, and in the media itself. Literacy improvement is carried out either individually, or by forming groups. The increase needs to involve the individuals concerned, individuals who are concerned about others, teachers and lecturers, community leaders, and government officials, both informally and officially in a well-prepared program.

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