

## The role of literacy education in preventing the impact of fake news on government policies and socio-political Stability

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### ABSTRACT

The aimed of this study is to explore how fake news through the media can disrupt socio-political stability and impede the implementation of various government policies that are being introduced, and how significant efforts are being made by all parties to ensure that hoax coverage does not spread through all lines of social life by providing a literacy education formula in the context of knowledge challenges that are difficult to address. It also analyzes how social media are used to construct strategies that can cloud the atmosphere of socio-political life and public morality, which seem to give priority to pro-people ethics, as is the case in Indonesia. In this study, a qualitative approach and post-truth theory are used as analytical perspectives in the interpretation of topics such as Covid-19 news and details in the presidential election contest of 2019. This study will also document how, through the mediation of hoax reporting through social media, online social media representations such as Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, and other personal messaging applications are explored. So, of course, based on the findings of the preliminary observations, there needs to be a strategy for creating new, shifting narratives about different government policies based on relevant references, since modern media have an influence on the social, cultural, and political landscape of life. A proper media literacy and literacy analysis must also be carried out to see if offline communities with limited internet connectivity no longer accept the notion of 'hoax opinion' established in Indonesia. Therefore, literacy education would be able to reveal false knowledge that has spread through society and will correct any myths in social life.

### INTRODUCTION

The development of information technology brings a change in society. The birth of social media has made people's behavior patterns experience a shift in both cultures, ethics, and mismatched norms. Indonesia with a large population with various ethnic, racial, and religious cultures has a lot of potential for social change. From various backgrounds and ages, almost all Indonesians own and use social media as a means of obtaining and conveying information to the public. The social media is online media, where users can easily participate, share, and create content including blogs, social networks, wikis, forums, and virtual worlds. Blogs, social networks, and wikis are the most common forms of social media used by people around the world. The positive impact of social media is that it makes it easier for us to interact with many people, broaden our relationships, distance and time are no longer a problem, it's easier to express ourselves, the dissemination of information can take place quickly, at-

lower costs. Meanwhile, the negative impact of social media is to keep people who are already close and vice versa, face-to-face interactions tend to decrease, making people addicted to the internet, causing conflict, privacy problems, vulnerable to the bad influence of others. The existence of social media has influenced social life in society. Changes in social relationships or as changes to the balance (*equilibrium*) of social relationships and all forms of changes in social institutions within a society, which affect the social system, including values, attitudes, and behavior patterns among groups in society. Positive social changes, such as the ease of obtaining and conveying information, gain social and economic benefits. Meanwhile, social changes that tend to be negative, such as the emergence of social groups in the name of religion, ethnicity, and certain behavior patterns that sometimes deviate from existing norms.

## Formulation of the Problems

The problems of reporting through various media in the form of hoaxes is a separate problem for the government in creating socio-political stability to create a conducive government atmosphere in carrying out the vision and mission of development. However, hoax reporting becomes a separate obstacle so that it requires strategies and models as an effort to straighten out various hoax reports through literacy education to create high confidence and development orientation that is right on target and planned development goals can run well and comprehensively.

Therefore, to direct this study to be more focused, the following will be discussed in the research, namely: 1). How does the mediation of hoax reporting affect government policy in creating socio-political stability in Aceh?. 2). Why does hoax reporting through various media greatly affect government policies, both central and regional?. 3). Analyze the role of literacy education in stemming the mediation of hoax reporting in creating socio-political stability in Aceh?.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Definition of Social Media

Social media is an online media, with its users can easily participate, share, and create content including blogs, social networks, wikis, forums, and virtual worlds. Blogs, social networks, and wikis are the most common forms of social media used by people around the world. Another opinion says that social media is online media that supports social interaction and social media uses web-based technology that turns communication into interactive dialogue. Social media (social media), abbreviated as "medsos", consists of 2 (two) different words, namely media (tool, means of communication, intermediary, liaison), and social (relating to society or referring to the way people interact). Kaplan & Haenlein [1] formulated social media, which is an internet-based application that allows the creation and exchange of content created by its users. Furthermore, according to Juwita [2] that:

*"social media is best understood as a group of new kinds of online media, which share most or all of the following characteristics: participation, openness, conversation, community, connectedness".*

The compared to conventional media, social media has advantages: it is very easy to use (*user friendly*), creates wider interactions, has a global reach, anyone can share information faster in real-time, or can measure the effectiveness of the information shared through the responses that appear. . The presence of social media affects relationships between individuals. Then about how much benefit we use social media is very much dependent on each of us.

The obvious advantage is that it is cheaper than via telephone, in addition to establishing a friendship, sharing

information (*faster*), self-expression, self-image, ventilation, to business/online marketing Reitz [3] mentions the functions of social media, namely: maintaining organizational identity, opportunities to build relationships, the ability to control issue management, and opportunities to promote CSR.

Social media has several characteristics that differentiate it from conventional media. The character of social media presented by Juwita [4] is somewhat different from that conveyed by Musser and O'Reilly. The characteristics of social media according to Musser and O'Reilly [5], include:

1. Allows web users to do more than just search for information.
2. Allows users to execute directly from the browser and then control data on social media platforms.
3. Users can add value to the content accessed. This is because social media is user friendly so there is no need for special knowledge to use it.
4. Decentralized social media tools without a control system.
5. Transparent and using technology standards that are growing rapidly into an open ecosystem, building applications to build open data and use components.
6. Emerging social media does not depend on the application of a predetermined structure.

The freedom to communicate with the media has been regulated in the 1945 Constitution to be precise in Article 28F, which reads:

*"Everyone has the right to communicate and obtain information to develop their personal and social environment, and the right to seek, obtain, possess, store, process and convey information using all types of channels available."*

### Theoretical Perspectives

This study uses a Post-Truth theoretical perspective. Post-Truth discovered by Stephen Colbert [6] is an era marked by the exclusion of truth and emotions as motives for action. The rise of internet technology has enabled people to freely convey their ideas, feelings, and personal beliefs through social media. The critical discourse method is used to reveal the extent of the impact of hoaxes on government policies while providing alternative solutions. The increasing tension in society, religious radicality, and urban society in the millennial era require proper literacy education in understanding problems in socio-political life.

Facebook, Whatsapps, Twitter, and others as social media that can construct reality including government policy issues, such as government policy issues against the Covid-19 pandemic and the 2019 presidential election contest. Social media also manipulate reality by forming something that does not exist. but made as if there is, real and true, and the result is false information or known as

hoaxes. Hoaxes are often used as a wall for Facebook users, spread widely through WA, with various purposes, such as spreading fear, disturbing feelings of security, inciting hatred, and so on, which will eventually divide society and often create tension. This is where the hoax and post-truth era is a period that subverts the truth so that it is not profitable for socio-political life following the mandate of the constitution (Ulya, 2018).

### Government Policy in Socio-Political Stability

**Policies** The Indonesian political system is currently undergoing a process of democratization which brings various consequences not only to the dynamics of national political life but also to the dynamics of other systems that support the administration of state life. The development of a democratic political system is aimed at maintaining the territorial integrity of the Republic of Indonesia and further strengthening the unity and integrity of Indonesia which will provide wider space for the realization of social justice and welfare that is evenly distributed to all Indonesian people. The success of democratic political development is not only influenced by the situation that develops in the country but can also be influenced by the impact of hoax reports in the community. In addition, the success of building a democratic political system also needs to be supported by professional state administrators who are free from corruption, collusion, and nepotism (KKN) practices and can make optimal use of various forms of mass media and broadcasting as well as various information networks within and abroad. Government Policy in Socio-Political Stability.

### Literacy Education

Literacy which in English Literacy comes from the Latin *littera* (letter), which means that it involves mastering writing systems and conventions that accompany them. However, literacy primarily relates to language and how it is used. The written language system is secondary. When talking about language, of course, it cannot be separated from talking about culture because language itself is part of the culture. So, defining the term literacy must certainly include elements that encompass language itself, namely its socio-cultural situation. In this regard, Kern [7] defines the term literacy comprehensively as follows:

Literacy is the use of social, historical, and cultural situations in creating and interpreting meaning through texts. Literacy requires at least an unspoken sensitivity about the relationships between textual conventions and the context in which they are used and ideally the ability to reflect critically on those relationships. Being sensitive to the intent/purpose, literacy is dynamic-not static-and can vary between and within communities and discourse/discourse cultures. Literacy requires a range of cognitive abilities, knowledge of the written and spoken

language, knowledge of genres, and cultural knowledge. What is meant by the text above includes written text and spoken text. The knowledge about the genre is knowledge about the types of texts that are applied/used in the discourse community, for example, narrative texts, expositions, descriptions, and others. There are seven elements that make up this definition, namely with regard to interpretation, collaboration, convention, cultural knowledge, problem-solving, reflection, and language use. These seven things are the principles of literacy.

Literacy is not uniform because literacy has ascending levels. If a person has mastered one stage of literacy then he has a foothold to move up to the next literacy level. Wells [8] states that there are four levels of literacy, namely: performative, functional, informational, and epistemic. A person whose literacy level is at the performative level can read and write and speak with the symbols used (language). At the functional level, people are expected to be able to use language to fulfill their daily lives such as reading manuals. At the informational level, people are expected to be able to access knowledge with language. Meanwhile, at the epistemic level, people can transform knowledge into language. Literacy is not limited to language systems (*oral/written*) but requires knowledge of how language is used in both oral and written contexts to create a discourse/discourse.

Literacy is not only in a narrow sense in the form of an individual's ability to read and write but includes a learning continuum that allows individuals to achieve their life goals, develop their knowledge and potential, and fully participate in their wider social life. This is in line with what Pangesti Wiedarti, et al (2017). Stated that literacy is more than just reading and writing. Meanwhile, according to the Prague Declaration, literacy includes a person in communication, social practices and relationships, and the ability to overcome various problems.

The various abilities covered in the definition of literacy as described above are: reading ability, writing ability, ability to achieve the learning continuum, ability to think using knowledge sources, ability to communicate in society, practical skills and social relations, ability: to identify, determine, finding, evaluating, and creating in an effective and organized manner, as well as the ability to communicate information to solve various problems, are various basic human abilities in the current information age. All these abilities are possible to achieve through lifelong learning.

### METHOD

This study used a qualitative study (qualitative approach). Bogdan and Taylor as mentioned by Moleong [9] and Denzin & Yvonna [10] say that qualitative research is a research procedure that produces descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words from people and

observable behavior. While the approach used is ethnography which is commonly used in social research. Enterography is a written description of social organization, social activities, symbols and materials, and characteristics of a group's interpretation practices. Ethnography is also research on the way of life of society [11], [12].

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Mediating Hoax Reporting

The problems of hoax reporting in the media today have had various consequences for social disharmony, especially about strategic matters relating to public policies. This happened not only at the national level but also at the local level, such as in Aceh. The leadership contestation in the 2014 presidential election, and 2019 in the second term of President Jokowi's leadership, the President of the Republic of Indonesia, found a lot of news in the media classified as hoax news as the data submitted by the Ministry of Communication and Information of the Republic of Indonesia during August 2018 - April 2019.



Figure 1. Data on Hoax Issues Findings

(Sources: kominfo.go.id)

Based on the data above, it can be seen that the number of findings on hoax issues has increased significantly, increasing every month from August 2018 to April 2019. It can be seen that accumulatively the findings of hoax issues have reached 1,731 cases. This is in line with what was conveyed by Respati [13], two factors can cause someone to tend to believe in hoaxes easily. People are more likely to believe in hoaxes if the information matches their opinion or attitude.

Another example of the cause of hoax reporting is if someone believes that flat earth understands information from the media that discusses various conspiracy theories regarding satellite photos, instinctively that person will easily believe because he supports the flat earth theory he believes in. Naturally positive feelings will arise in a person if their opinion or belief is affirmed so they tend not to care whether the information they receive is true or false and it is even easy for them to spread the information back. This can be exacerbated if the hoax spreader has inadequate

knowledge of using the internet to find more accurate or less information for fact-checking and checking.

The example above is not much different from what happened in the period of political contestation at both the national and regional levels, as well as the reporting of the Covid-19 pandemic where the post-truth theory perspective applies to the cases mentioned above, namely if hoax reporting is repeated-repeat, it will become justification news in the community. As a result, people who do not have strong literacy skills on these issues will easily believe even though in essence the news has been packaged with fake news.

In addition, based on the findings of the hoax issue in Figure 1., it can be seen that hoaxes are increasing significantly every month, and will even continue to target other aspects as shown in Figure 2.

### Jenis Berita Bohong yang Sering Diterima

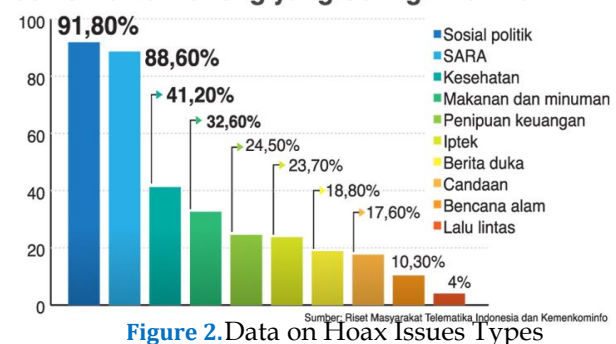


Figure 2. Data on Hoax Issues Types

(Sources: kominfo.go.id)

Based on the figure 2 it can be seen that the socio-political aspect ranks first in the type of hoax reporting. This is in accordance with what has happened in the 2014 and 2019 presidential election contestation of the emergence of various hoax reports in various online media, such as Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, Twitter to YouTube content. Socio-political issues have become a sexy issue in political contestation at both the central and regional levels. Likewise, the issue of SARA was ranked second in the 2014 and 2019 elections. The third issue in the health aspect is in line with the current conditions in which the issues of the Covid 19 pandemic are trending themselves in hoax reporting in online media.

### Impact of hoaxes on Government Policy

The impact of hoax reporting on government policy is the occurrence of social chaos on strategic and main issues that actually the community must be able to help the government in strengthening all aspects of the policies taken by the government, especially those related to the lives of many people. If hoaxes continue to roam in the media, the policies that will be carried out will be held back and constrained in the midst of society so as to harm the community itself. Therefore, it is very necessary for the



government and the community to straighten out hoax reporting in the media.

Another impact is the delay in the wheels of the economy initiated by the government, especially in the face of the Covid-19 pandemic. A large number of hoax reporters about Covid-19 have caused integrated handling of Covid-19 to experience less than optimal which can harm the community itself. In addition, the impact of hoax reporting will also experience instability in socio-political life due to the emergence of public distrust of the policies issued by the government. This is despite the fact that political stability and the running of the economy and social harmony are the main keys in the implementation of good and equitable development.

This is in accordance with the essence of the results of interviews with informants from the Ministry of Communication and Information and Sandi Kota Lhokseumawe and Aceh Utara [14].

*"Hoax reporting through the media creates its problems for the running of a good government because a lot of untrue reporting will cause social divisions in the delivery of information to the public, which has to go through one door as in the news about Covid-19, besides it creates distrust between the public towards the government, both for the handling of the Covid-19 pandemic as well as other efforts by the government such as refocusing the budget for handling the Covid-19 outbreak and restoring the community's economy."*

### Hoax reporting prevention strategies

The efforts that can be made as a strategy to prevent hoax reporting are as follows:

#### Strengthening the Role of Government and Society

One of the strategies that need to be carried out in preventing hoaxes in the community is to encourage the role of the government and society where the government's attitude must be firm in law enforcement to the hoax spreaders in the community by implementing strict laws as regulated in Law No. 11 the Year 2008 concerning Information and Electronic Transactions (ITE), Law No. 40 of 2008 concerning the Elimination of Racial and Ethnic Discrimination. Not only that, hoax news spreaders can also be subject to articles related to hate speech and those that have been regulated in the Criminal Code and other laws outside the Criminal Code.

Besides, the role of the government needs to collect data on hoax news that spreads so that it is not affected by invalid reporting. Besides, people from intellectuals, ulama, traditional leaders, youth leaders as well as civil apparatus, and village government units who are in direct contact with ordinary people need to help the government to straighten out information that can mislead the lower class.

This is in accordance with the essence of the results of interviews with informants from the Ministry of Communication and Information and the Code of Aceh Province (2020).

*"The role of community leaders, clever cleverness, especially religious leaders is very much needed in straightening out various information circulating in the community through social media which according to government data the news is far from a reliable source."*

Apart from those mentioned above, one concrete strategy is suggested for the government to do the following:

- a. Blocking sites with problems with the target site can no longer be accessed.
- b. Strengthening and optimizing the role of the National Cyber Agency with the target as an umbrella or regulator as well as executor of all activities in the cyber world.
- c. Collaboration with the Press Council with the target of media verification to ensure that the media work professionally.
- d. Collaboration with existing social media platforms in the community with the target of increasing news filtering to reduce the spread of hoax news.

#### Strengthening of Literacy Education

The next strategy that is no less important is to strengthen the role of literacy education for the lower classes. Literacy education, including media literacy or what is called media literacy, is the most important part in fortifying the public against the influence of news because someone who has a strong literacy education will not be quickly influenced or quickly believe in information spread in cyberspace without a valid source.

Media literacy is a perspective that can be used when dealing with the media in order to interpret a message conveyed by news makers. People tend to build a perspective through knowledge structures that have been constructed in the ability to use information [16]. Also in another sense, namely the ability to evaluate and communicate information in various formats including written and unwritten.

Media literacy is also a set of skills that are useful in the process of accessing, analyzing, evaluating, and creating messages in various forms. Media literacy is used as an exploratory-based instructional model so that individuals can more critically respond to what they see, hear, and read.

In addition to refining various educational programs that play a role in instilling character, from the aspect of education, the government can fight hoaxes by increasing reading interest, based on the study "Most Littered Nation In the World" conducted by Central Connecticut State University, Indonesia is ranked number one. 60 out of 61

countries about reading interest [17]. This is classified as dangerous because combined with the fact that Indonesia is the country with the highest social networking activity in Asia, which means that it is very easy for Indonesians to spread hoax information without examining the information it disseminates. One of the strong characteristics of society towards media literacy education is the use of the internet or social media platforms to be used healthily and safely. This is following the essence of interviews with informants, namely Information Technology academics from Malikussaleh University [18].

*"According to my knowledge in the field of information technology, not all news spread in the media is true or has valid source accuracy, therefore media users are advised to understand the content by prioritizing correct media literacy, such as checking news sources before being distributed to others."*

## CONCLUSION

The form of hoax reporting through the media greatly influences various government policies in Aceh and nationally, and it can harm efforts to create socio-political and economic stability as well as national and regional development policies. One of the strategies to prevent hoax reporting that can be done is to strengthen the role of the government and society, as well as to strengthen media literacy education during the development of hoax reports in the community.

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## Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that they have no competing interests

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