

Construction of Digital Literacy in the 2024 Election to Stem the Flow of Hoax and Fake News

Dudi Iskandar¹, Geri Suratno², Didik Hariyadi Raharjo³

^{1,2}Faculty of Communication and Creative Design, Budi Luhur University, Jakarta

³ Faculty of Economics and Business, Budi Luhur University, Jakarta

e-mail: dudi.iskandar@budiluhur.ac.id^{1*}; geri.suratno@budiluhur.ac.id²; didik.hariyadiraharjo@budiluhur.ac.id³

*Corresponding author

ABSTRACT :

The 2024 General Election will be held on February 14th, 2024. As this nation's most significant political agenda, all groups are involved in the 2014 General Election. Because of this, there is expected to be a discourse battle in every election involving political actors, the mass media, and the public. Not only do information and news form positive discourse, but negative discourse also spreads. The public, candidates, and state actors color the public media space with clear information and good news and salt it with dirty information. Hoax on social media in media and fake news among the masses in the 2024 general election threaten social cohesion and national integration, as happened in the 2014 and 2019 general elections. There must be efforts to stem the spread of hoax and fake news. One of them is digital literacy, including digital media literacy. This research aims to analyze the construction of digital literacy, including digital media, in the 2024 general election to stem hoax and fake news in the 2024 general election. This research uses a qualitative approach with data collection techniques through observation, interviews, and library data. The research results show that, firstly, the election moment is a time that is prone to the circulation of hoax and fake news. This is where digital literacy skills, including digital media literacy, emerge. Second, at a macro level, the state is responsible for digital literacy programs, including digital media literacy. Third, public communication between the Ministry of Communication and Information and the community is a vital bridge that must continue to be maintained and improve its effectiveness and efficiency so that the state's role in building digital literacy, including digital media literacy, is realized as quickly as possible.

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INTRODUCTION

The 2024 President and Vice President Election was held on February 14, 2024. As this nation's most significant political agenda, all groups were formally and informally involved in the 2014 Election. Because of this, it was expected that each time before the election, there would be a discourse battle involving mass media, political actors, or society in general. Information and news form positive discourse, and negative discourse also spreads. Negative political discourse ahead of the 2024 elections caused the public media space to be polluted by hoaxes. The public, candidates, and state actors not only colored the public media space with clear information and good news but also salted it with dirty information. Hoaxes on social media in the mass media ahead of the 2024 elections threatened social cohesion and national integration, as happened in the 2014 and 2019 elections. Therefore, efforts were implemented to stem the spread of hoaxes and fake news. One of them was digital literacy, including digital media literacy.

Digital literacy including digital media literacy, was linked to eradicating hoax on social media and fake news in mass media. Eradicating phony information and news became one of the tools for digital literacy. In Indonesia, eradicating hoax and news had several legal bases. Notably, Law Number 1 of 1946 Article 14 concerning Criminal Law Regulations, Article 263 of Law Number 1 2023 concerning the Criminal Code (KUHP), and Law Number 19 of 2016 which amended Law Number 11 of 2008 concerning Electronic Information and Transactions (UU ITE). Additionally, Articles 14 and 15 of Law No. 1 of 1946, Articles 311 and 378 of the Criminal Code, along with Law Number 40 of 2008 concerning the Elimination of Racial and Ethnic Discrimination, played a role. Law 11 of 2008 on Information and Electronic Transactions (UU ITE) was pivotal. The ITE Law contained provisions prohibiting the spread of misleading and deceptive information. Article 28, paragraph (1) indicated that any person who intentionally and without right distributed, transmitted, or made accessible Electronic Information and Electronic Documents containing insulting or defamatory content was addressed in these regulations (Iskandar et al., 2023).

Historically, the 2014 and 2019 General Elections were marked by discourse battles that tended to be sarcastic on social media and mass media, as Iskandar, (2017). Hoax on social media and fake news in the mass media were circulated massively. By the time of the 2024 election, the situation had not changed much, It had become even more challenging (Sastramidjaja et al.,2022). The ease of using internet-based smartphones as a tool or medium for producing hoaxes and fake news is the main trigger in 2019 (Ramadani, 2019), the spreading hoax and fake news triggered social conflict, leading to a divided society (Syahputra et al., 2021; Iskandar et al.,2017) Thus, the spread of hoax on social media and fake news in the mass media ahead of the 2024 elections was a situation that threatened social segregation and national disintegration.

Much research has been done on eradicating hoax and fake news, but little has been done on digital literacy, including media literacy, before the 2024 elections. Research on digital and media literacy was strategic in eradicating fake information and news. Moreover, before the 2024 election, hoax and fake news were spread and circulated in society on an

extraordinary scale. Research on eradicating hoax and fake news was (Nurlatun et al., 2021; Megasari, 2020). So far, existing research tends to discuss the triggers of hoaxes and fake news, thus finding three steps to eradicate hoaxes and fake news through socialization, cooperation and supervision (Hakim & Rochim, 2022; Yashila & Athifahputih, 2022) Meanwhile, Arwendria & Oktavia, (2019) examined the eradication of false information on several online news sites with an Islamic background.

In several countries, discussions of hoax and fake news in various studies were widely conducted. In Malaysia (Wibisono, 2012), while the problem of hoax and fake news in India was discussed, as well as in the United States, during the 2016 presidential election when Donald Trump was elected president. UNESCO even published guidelines to eradicate these issues (Ireton et al., 2020). Thus, there were fundamental differences between previous research and this research. Specifically, the construction of digital literacy, including media literacy for the 2024 Election, to stem the spread of hoax and fake news. Therefore, the problem formulation in this research was how to construct digital literacy in the 2024 Election to stem the flow of hoax and fake news.

RESEARCH METHOD

The object of this research was the construction of digital literacy in the 2024 Election to combat the spread of hoax and fake news. This topic was fascinating as the stages of the 2024 election had already commenced, with the registration of executive and legislative candidates generating significant buzz. This environment led to intense discourse battles among contestants from political parties, including presidential and vice presidential candidates, those running for seats in the central legislature, and at the provincial and district/city levels. They were all keen on building their images in society through mass media and social media, where hoax and fake news were rampant.

The research adopted a qualitative approach to understand phenomena within their specific context. In this particular study, the focus was on the context of digital media literacy in the 2024 Election. A case study method was employed to concentrate on how the Ministry of Communication and Information aimed to build digital media literacy to fight against the tide of hoax and fake news leading up to the 2024 Election.

Table 1 Informant's Name

No	Name	Institution
1	Taufik Hidayat	Ministry of Communication and Information
2	Gun Gun Heryanto	Syarf Hidayatullah State Islamic University
3	Septiaji Eko Nugroho	The Chairman of the Presidium of the Indonesian Anti-Defamation Society
4	Ika Ningtyas Anggraini	Secretary-General of the Southeast Asia Freedom of Expression Network (Safenet)

Data collection techniques included interviews with informant in Table 1, observation, and searching for library data, including online media. Interviews were conducted with several competent informants with characteristics per the research object. The research data that had been collected, including interviews, observations, and literature data, was then presented. The next stage involved sorting and selecting data and findings in the field based on the categorization required during writing the article. Subsequently, all data was reduced according to research needs. Data processing was necessary to fit the research framework. Unnecessary data was set aside. Finally, the data was analyzed, and conclusions were drawn.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Digital literacy, including digital media literacy, was in line, linked, and in tandem with eradicating hoax and fake news. Digital literacy was broader than media literacy, which was only explicitly related to skills in processing information and news. Based on research results, several points existed in the effort to construct digital literacy for the 2024 Election. First, digital literacy standards were needed to meet government/state and community communication demands. Second, the presence of public communication to overcome the black campaign, especially in facing the 2024 Election from candidates and their supporters. Third, digital literacy also requires participation from educated community groups, such as universities, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and mass media.

Digital Literacy Standards

The Head of the Public Relations Department of the Ministry of Communication and Information, Taufik Hidayat, explained that the increase in literacy could be seen in the data index held by the Ministry of Communication and Information. There has been an increase in digital literacy. However, it was generally unsatisfactory because the scale had not been met. Digital literacy was measured by four components: digital skills, digital ethics, digital safety, and digital culture.

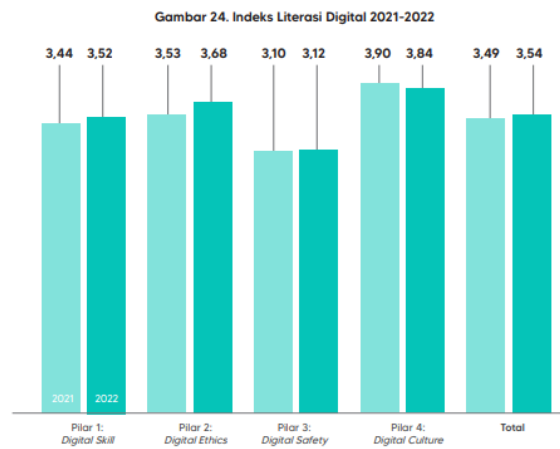
Digital skills were one of the pillars of the 2022 Digital Literacy Index, and they were increasing, one of the highest indicators in this pillar was the ability to download files. The lowest indicator was the ability to search for true or false information.

Digital Ethics was the pillar whose score increased significantly and was the largest among the other pillars. The contribution to the increase in this pillar came from several indicators with high scores, such as encouraging people not to comment negatively (index 4.07) and not sharing screenshots on social media (index 3.97). The indicators with the lowest index were respondents who would not share accident information directly.

Digital safety was one of the pillars that experienced the slightest increase. In this pillar, most of the indicators contributed to the habit of creating secure passwords with a combination of numbers, letters, and punctuation. Meanwhile, the indicator of the ability to distinguish emails containing spam/virus/malware contributed the least.

Digital Culture was the only pillar whose index decreased from the previous year, although generally, it was still the pillar with the highest score. In this pillar, most had an index

between 3.8 and 3.9. Only one index had a value below this range, including the author's name when reposting, namely at a score of 3.57 (Gunarjo, 2023).



(Source : Kemenkominfo, 2022)

Figure 1 Image of the 2021-2022 National Digital Literacy Index

The Figure 1 explained that the Digital Literacy Index 2022 increased by 0.05 points to 3.54 from the index achieved in 2021. Three pillars saw increases, namely, Pillar 1 (Digital Skill), which increased by 0.08 points; Pillar 2 (Digital Ethics), which rose by 0.15 points; and Pillar 3 (Digital Safety), which rose by 0.02 points. However, Pillar 4 (Digital Culture) decreased by 0.06 points. Digital skills were highlighted as one of the 2022 Digital Literacy Index pillars that saw an increase. (Kemenkominfo, 2022)

“Literacy has three essential components. First, there was an emphasis on the need for everyone to strive to increase their knowledge through studies, workshops, seminars, and workshops. Second, the improvement of skills or abilities was underscored, such as how to access information to identify a website's credibility, learn the characteristics of fake information and news, and identify such information and news to counteract hoax and fake news effectively. Third, digital and media literacy related to attitudes towards hoax and fake news was emphasized; the attitude fostered was refraining from spreading hoax and fake news. All three components were to run in parallel, with none being overlooked or deemed less necessary.” (Gun Gun Heryanto)

In elections, hoax and news were always crucial in escalating and circulating information due to various interests leading up to electoral contestation, which was increasing. At least four factors that triggered this were identified. First, there was an increase in efforts to support various causes. Second, there was an increase in news framing, leading to battles of discourse. Third, the Echo Chamber or discussion pool on social media increased. Fourth, what is referred to as a communication network was noted. This interpersonal or inter-individual communication then led to a more intense chain of messages, resulting in an increase in hoax, fake news, hate speech, doxing, and cyberbullying, among others.

The threat of hoax and fake news increases from election to election, there are several reasons. First, digital media is developing very rapidly. Increasingly, social media is becoming more numerous and diverse. News is increasingly open, and there are so many social media opportunities to spread hoax. Second, the internet penetration rate in Indonesia has exceeded 70 percent. This means that internet penetration is calculated from the total population. Then, with increasing numbers, social media usage automatically also increases. On the other hand, hoax and fake news spread due to low political literacy; digital or media literacy is still low.

Mass media and social media, including news aggregators, must be responsible for the spread of hoax and fake news. They do not just dampen it. If it is suppressed, it has developed into a suppressed state but has also been detected from the start. So start from detecting—fake checking. Submerging also includes not amplifying or not resonating with hoax and fake news. Mass media, social media, and news aggregators must commit to not reporting on their websites. So, it is not enough to apologize and then repeat. Platforms like Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, and Google must be held accountable. In some countries, such as Germany, there are sanctions or penalties if social media platforms are proven to be spreading hoax and fake news. Eradicating hoax and fake news is one way to be effective if the ITE Law is strict. Law enforcement must be promoted more vigorously. Hoax and fake news, at a minimum, must have limited space for movement.

Higher education has four leading roles in digital literacy. First, continuous research must be conducted; never stop. This research aims to map new patterns, issues, and modes of dissemination of hoax and fake news that are increasingly sophisticated. Second, inter-academic networks must be involved in eradicating hoax and fake news. This must cross different scientific disciplines and studies. Third, it is necessary to have specific skills to provide oneself as an expert witness to incriminate those who are proven to be spreading hoax and fake news in court. Fourth, academics and students create information and fake news chains. This community is at least a counter to hoax and fake news. In Indonesia, there are thousands of campuses. If every village has this community, it will effectively prevent the spread of hoax and fake news.

In an interview, it was mentioned by the Chair of the Presidium of the Indonesian Anti-Defamation Society (Mafindo), Septiaji Eko Nugroho, that there had been an increase in digital literacy, including digital media literacy. This was observed in the annual data index the Ministry of Communication and Information released. However, this increase was deemed insufficient as it did not meet all the necessary criteria. Despite the rise in smartphone usage, it was noted that users relied mainly on their experiences rather than formal learning, indicating that current levels of literacy were inadequate. Nugroho stressed the need for innovation and strategic plans to enhance media and information literacy.

“Mafindo acknowledged that the national digital literacy movement had been conducted effectively and intensely, with considerable research efforts leading to implementing recommended strategies. Collaboration with academics was highlighted as a positive aspect, though it was also mentioned that research ideas could sometimes become fragmented.” (Septiaji Eko Nugroho)

A major challenge identified was integrating digital literacy, including digital media literacy, into society. There was a call for widespread, systematic, and measurable education efforts from the government to enhance public understanding of digital literacy. Adding to the discussion, the Secretary General of the Southeast Asia Freedom of Expression Network (Safenet), Ika Ningtyas Unggarini, pointed out that people still struggled to discern truth from falsehood in the digital era. She noted that literacy was often influenced by ideology and societal beliefs, complicating the acceptance of information from groups with differing viewpoints. Despite introducing more literacy programs, the division caused by ideology or fanaticism towards certain groups or individuals made it harder to convey the truth. Unggarini criticized the approach to literacy improvement as incomplete, highlighting that digital literacy had not been incorporated into formal education curriculums and was inadequately supported by Kominfo projects.

Taufik mentioned that the national literacy movement began in 2016. As the national coordinator, the Ministry of Communication and Information worked with a range of entities showed in Figure 2. This included state agencies like the police and the State Intelligence Agency (BIN); it also involved Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), managers of social media platforms, stakeholders within the mass media, and universities.



(Source: Gunarjo, 2022)

Figure 2 Collaboration between the Ministry of Communication and Information and Stakeholders in Digital Literacy in Indonesia, including eradicating fake information and news

This national Literacy movement was inaugurated by President Joko Widodo in 2020. It covered everything about digital literacy, including media literacy, such as hoax and fake news. The movement had four curricula: digital skills, digital ethics, digital safety, and digital culture. The Ministry of Communication and Information supported two paths in digital literacy: firstly, facilitating in the context of informatics empowerment for the use of technology in productive activities and supporting aspects of the digital economy, and secondly, addressing matters of

mental health, child protection, and women's empowerment, with cross-sectoral ministries taking responsibility.

Kemenkominfo had an automatic detection machine for hoaxes, and fake news called the Automatic Identification System (AIS), which, from 2018-2023, found 11,357 pieces of hoax and fake news. According to Taufik, the AIS is detected automatically, using processes similar to media monitoring or tracking. However, its sources were exclusively online. Results captured by the AIS through various channels, from WhatsApp and social media to content complaint websites, were verified by the Ministry of Communication and Information's team. They checked the information with keywords to find the source and then classified and assessed it to determine its veracity.

Public Communication Problems

One of the fundamental problems regarding digital literacy, including digital media literacy, was the communication problem between state institutions such as the Ministry of Communication and Information, the police, and BIN, with the mass media, private community institutions (NGOs), and the community itself. Communication was still incidental and not structured and systematic. Communication carried out by these institutions occurred when there was a problem. Once there was no turmoil, there was no public communication within the institution, even though communication is vital in digital literacy, including digital media literacy.

"Collaboration with private institutions was not only being explored, but we were already working together to use the platforms frequently and mutually. "In the past, Mafindo was manual and relied on one person at a time, then they also developed something called the Kalimasada application," (Taufik Hidayat)

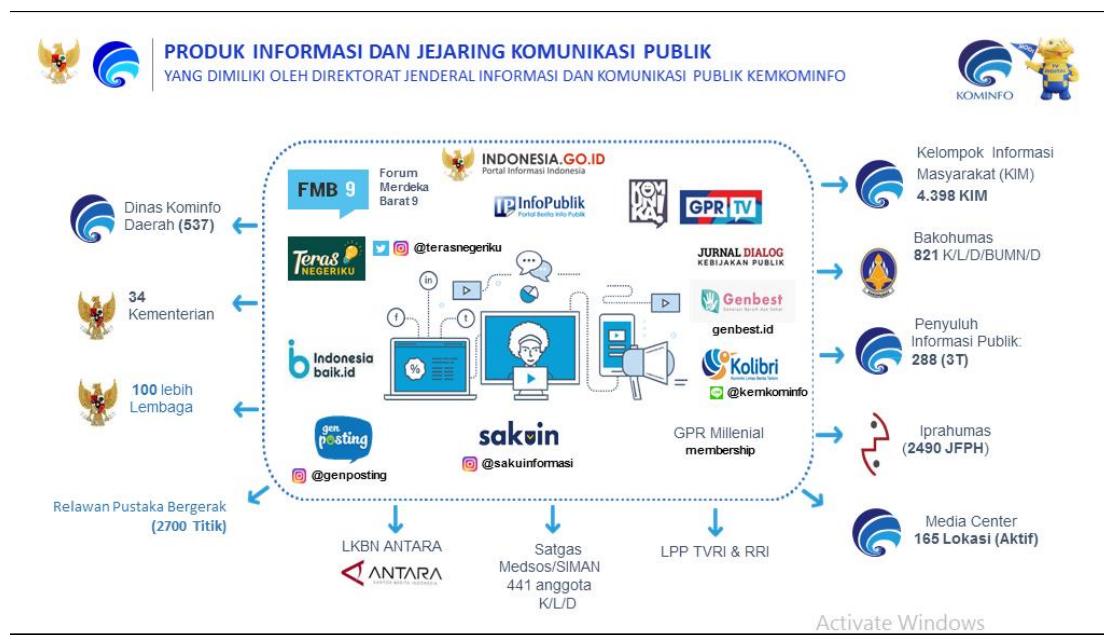
"Civil organizations often carried out digital literacy. They were more dominant with volunteers in the field. Many people worked together. "But the driving force was Mafindo," added Taufik. "The Ministry of Communication and Information carried out digital literacy training. Google and Facebook facilitated this event. They also involved academics in mass media training. For example, in LKBN Antara. "So starting from direct training to the community as well as training for fellow figures, here the facilitator became a facilitator and trainer." (Ika Ningtyas Anggraini).

Taufik continued. So, the solution to creating a national digital literacy movement lies in the assistance provided by digitally literate groups. In this context, they used community friends. Community friends had more roles, even upstream; they had also done this.

Communication is a process where a person, group, organization, or society creates and uses information to connect with their environment (Hasmawati, 2018). In line with this, Herman, (2020) defined public communication as a technique of speaking to a group of people in a structured manner to provide information and influence listeners. In the broader space, communication was needed to provide information and educate or persuade the public to follow a policy (Dewi, 2021). Furthermore Saleh, (2021) stated that public communication

significantly influenced the quality of public services, where quality was determined by five dimensions of communication: communicator, message, media, communicant, and effect. To have a good influence on the level of knowledge, understanding, and participation of the community, public communication needs accurate, complete readiness, mature strategies, continuous monitoring, and evaluation (Alfreda, 2021). Indicators of the success of public communication could be seen through massive mass media coverage, positive and neutral quality, and minimizing negative news (Ramadani, 2019).

Figure 3 shows public communication could be instrumental and direct. (1) Communication was instrumental, for example, communication between government, institutions, or organizations to the community or members (Priyatna et al., 2020). This communication was usually conveyed through circulars, interpreted as the organization's official position. In line with this, Kusumaningtyas (2021) stated that one form of institutional communication, for example, appeared in several circulars, instructions, results of bahtsul masa'il, edicts, and fatwas related to the response of NU, Muhammadiyah, and MUI mass organizations to the Covid-19 pandemic situation. (2) Meanwhile, communication was found in various face-to-face activities, such as public lectures, sermons, large meetings, briefings, lectures, and activities involving large crowds. This communication allowed direct one-way communication without intermediaries to the general public; thus, whether instrumental or direct, public communication was a monologic communication because it only involved a communicator in sending messages to the public.



(Source : Gunarjo, 2023)

Figure 3 Ministry of Communication and Information Public Communication Patterns and Networks

Black Campaign through Hoax and Fake News

One of the biggest problems with digital literacy, including digital media, was hoax and fake news. Hoaxes are related to false information, while fake news relates to journalistic products from digital media or online media. Hoax and fake news were problems that continued to exist in the digital world. Hoax and fake news pollute the online world and could become a disease of digital society if left untreated.

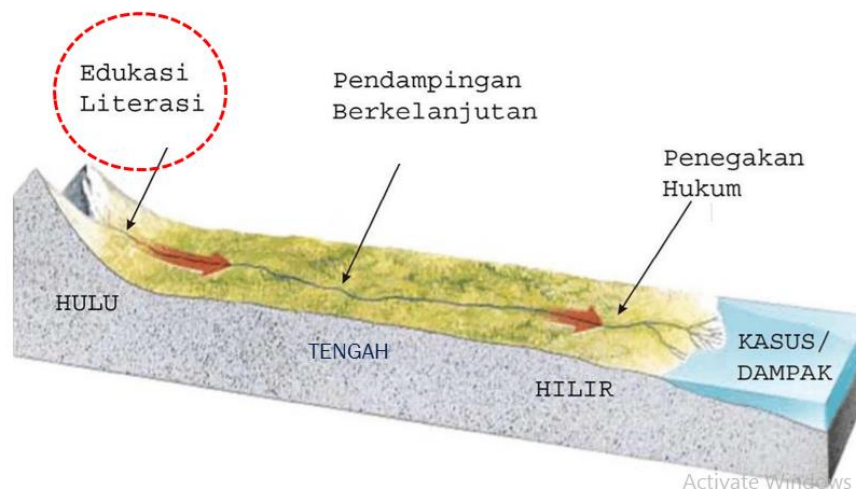
The distribution of texts, photos, and videos, motivated by momentary interests such as politics, economics, and culture, was a source of social unrest. Massive and uncontrolled spread caused the disintegration of the nation. The various cases should have been a lesson, especially in political contestation. The 2014 and 2019 presidential elections and the 2017 DKI Jakarta regional elections show how fake information and news divided the nation's children.

A black campaign was carried out by spreading fake news and propaganda to bring down and reduce the credibility of the opposing party (Prayogo, 2018). Abdullah et al., (2019) revealed that black campaigns did not influence political perceptions but strengthened existing political choices. This was because various aspects, including political ideology, social status, culture, past experiences, and family characteristics, influenced society's acceptance of the black campaign. So, a collective society was divided into specific groups based on political ideology and environmental culture. In line with this, Doly, (2020) stated that the persistence of the black campaign movement was influenced by several factors, including unclear legal regulations, a lack of expert black campaign law enforcement officials, limited infrastructure, a society that was apathetic toward political actions, and cultures with minimal digital literacy. Black campaign actions tarnished the excellent names of election participants and violated people's rights to obtain accurate and objective information (Nisa et al., 2020).

The black campaign movement was carried out through discourse, which was campaigned physically and virtually through leaflets and memes (G. Saleh, 2018). (1) The black campaign phenomenon was seen in a discourse that linked the issue of SARA with politics ahead of the 2019 Presidential Election. This connection gave rise to several perspectives and assumptions that religion was a political tool or what is known as the politicization of religion, that religious values were manifested in politics, which gave birth to the opinion of the caliphate system of government in Indonesia. This phenomenon could trigger divisions in society because Indonesia has citizens with diverse backgrounds (Pamungkas & Arifin, 2019). (2) Virtual black campaigns, as shown by Sofian, (2020), appeared when creating memes in photos and videos with the addition of short sentences or phrases to emphasize the meaning. Memes were intended to visualize political messages based on the interests of each group. In the larger campaign space, this movement gave rise to ideological contestation. Thus, it appears that physical and virtual black campaigns had a widespread influence on people's political attitudes.

In Gunarjo's view, three layers stemmed the spread of hoax and fake news at a macro level, including in the 2024 election in Figure 4.

Tiga Layer Kewaspadaan



(Source: Gunarjo, 2023)

Figure 4 Three Layers of Indonesian Digital Literacy, according to the Ministry of Communication and Information

The first layer was literacy education. Second, continuous assistance. Third, law enforcement. Each layer had different stages. Each stage had a different operationalization as well. The Ministry of Communication and Information implemented various digital literacy programs, including media literacy in each stage. With other stakeholders, since the national literacy movement was launched by President Joko Widodo, the Ministry of Communication and Information continuously created programs, facilitated various parties, and supervised and maintained the continuity of this digital literacy program. Thus, there were three layers of vigilance to ward off the flow of hoax and fake news in the country, including when the momentum for the 2024 Election was running on track.

CONCLUSION

Several conclusions were drawn based on the research results and discussion mentioned earlier. First, political moments like elections were prone to hoax and fake news. This was where digital literacy skills, including digital media literacy, emerged. Second, at a macro level, the state, in this context, the Ministry of Communication and Information, was responsible for digital literacy programs, including digital media literacy. The Ministry of Communication and Information had to provide various regulations and facilities for media and digital literacy activities. Third, public communication between the Ministry of Communication and Information and the community (NGOs, academics, mass media, and so on) was a vital bridge that had to continue to be maintained and improve its effectiveness and efficiency so that the state's role in building digital literacy, including digital media literacy, was realized as quickly as possible.

Thus, the construction of digital literacy in the 2024 election to stem the flow of hoax and fake news had three layers. Namely, the first was literacy education. Second, continuous assistance. Third, law enforcement. Each layer had different stages. Each stage had a different operationalization as well.

This research certainly provided practical and theoretical benefits. Theoretically, research on digital literacy, including digital media literacy, was in contact with communication studies, mass communication, and journalism. Also, the realm of public communication was a vehicle for implementing the state's function in protecting society from digital crime attacks.

Meanwhile, practically, this research could be a recommendation for the Ministry of Communication and Information and other officials or institutions in making regulations on digital literacy, including digital media literacy. The police, BIN, and local governments needed to increase their collaboration with community stakeholders in digital literacy, including digital media literacy. This collaboration was the key to the success of government programs and public acceptance, on the other hand.

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