

The Dangers of Hoaxes and Efforts to Overcome them in the 2024 Indonesian Presidential Election

Alwern Molley bin Johnling^{1*}, Olyvia Wahyuningsih², Tedi Herdianto³

¹Swinburne University of Technology Sarawak Campus, Sarawak, Malaysia.

²Politeknik Siber Cerdika Internasional, Cirebon, West Java, Indonesia.

³Universitas Catur Insan Cendekia, Cirebon, West Java, Indonesia.

Email: alwenmjohn02@gmail.com^{1*}, olyviawahyuningsih4@gmail.com², tedi.herdianto07@gmail.com³

ABSTRACT

Hoaxes are often the dominant element in every electoral process, whether in regional or presidential elections. The spread of fake news or false information through hoaxes can be done for a variety of purposes, ranging from jokes to serious political purposes. Incomprehension of political education and misuse of social media have become fertile fields for spreading hoaxes, especially in every election. In maintaining vigilance and facing the wave of hoaxes in the 2024 presidential election, research methods that can be used are content analysis and social network analysis. The purpose of this study is to detail the causes and consequences of the spread of hoaxes in the General Election, as well as present recommendations related to effective political education strategies to prevent and overcome the spread of hoaxes in the context of elections. This research is expected to contribute conceptually and practically to minimize the negative impact of spreading hoaxes on elections and increase public understanding of elections through the application of political education. To achieve this goal, this research will involve literature analysis and case studies of the spread of hoaxes in elections.

Keywords: Hoaxes, Presidential Election, 2024, Indonesia.

INTRODUCTION

On February 14, 2023, Indonesia held simultaneous General Elections, including the election of President and Vice President and Members of the Legislature at the central, provincial, and district/city levels (Jompa et al., 2023). The Head of the Sub-Directorate of Government Institutions and Representative Institutions of the Ministry of Home Affairs (*Kemendagri*), Dedi Taryadi, conveyed this information and emphasized that the simultaneous election was the first time in Indonesia. This moment is not only an ordinary election event but

also a historical episode that records an important milestone in the journey of democracy in Indonesia (Beeson et al., 2021; Khairi, 2020; Setijadi, 2021).

Furthermore, Dedi emphasized that in accordance with its mandate, the government is responsible for ensuring the smooth implementation of elections, both at the central and regional levels. One of the steps that must be taken is to provide the necessary facilities so that the election process can run well. The election itself is considered a means of exercising people's sovereignty carried out directly, in line with Article 6A paragraph (1) of the 1945 Constitution, which states, "The President and Vice President are elected in a pair directly by the people" (Ahmad, 2020; Salahudin et al., 2020).

In Indonesian history, elections have been held 12 times, covering 1955, 1971, 1977, 1982, 1987, 1992, 1997, 1999, 2004, 2009, 2014 and 2024 this year. Wulan Maulidia added that elections have many benefits that can be taken, showing their important role in democratization and national self-determination.

First, elections are considered a forum for citizens to participate in political activities. This concept was affirmed by Samuel P. Huntington and Joan M. Nelson in their work entitled "No Easy Choice: Political Participation in Developing Countries" (Arshad & Khurram, 2020; Eriksen et al., 2021). They state that political participation includes individual activities aimed at influencing the decision-making process by governments (Khlaif et al., 2021; Wagner, 2021). Therefore, the participation of the younger generation in elections is considered to have a significant impact on the formation of various policies in the future.

Secondly, elections are considered a manifestation of popular sovereignty, where the highest power is in the hands of citizens, and they are the key elements in shaping the structure of the state (Hartwell & Devinney, 2021). Elections are one of the various means used to realize people's sovereignty. Through this process, the people have an active role in determining the direction and policy of a country. Thus, elections are considered important in maintaining democratic principles and involving the people in shaping the country's fate (Tanjung et al., 2020; Zaslove et al., 2021).

Third, implementing general elections (elections) is considered a tool to change leaders constitutionally. Successful leadership succession is considered very important to encourage the emergence of new, more qualified ideas. Through elections, we have the opportunity to eliminate leaders who are judged to be unable to carry out the duties that have been entrusted to them properly. This process is the foundation for realizing sustainable development and positive growth in leadership.

Fourth, elections are also considered an instrument that gives legitimacy or legitimacy to political leaders. This concept was stated by David Easton, who stated that legitimacy is "the belief on the part of a member (of society) that it is natural for him to accept and obey the ruler and meet the demands of that regime." By involving the public in the electoral process, elected leaders get justification from the people to carry out their duties and represent the people's

aspirations. Therefore, elections become a process that produces constitutionally legitimate leaders and strengthens the link between the government and the people.

The 2024 general election will be attended by three pairs of candidates, namely Anies Rasyid Baswedan-Muhaimin Iskandar, Ganjar Pranowo-Mahfud MD, and Prabowo Subianto-Gibran. The excitement and enthusiasm have been felt since the start of the campaign period for the three pairs of candidates. The 2024 election is expected to be significantly influenced by Novice Voters, often called the Millennial Group (Sabarudin & Purwadi, 2023).

The importance of political participation from first-time voters is a major concern, which has been well realized by the political parties participating in the elections and their candidates. According to Sitepu (2012), political participation is an activity carried out by citizens directly or unintentionally related to government policies. These activities can be carried out spontaneously or mobilized by certain individuals or groups.

Herbert Mecklosky, as stated in the work of Elly M. Setiadi and Usman Kolip (2013), explains that political participation is a series of voluntary activities by community members. Through this activity, they take an active role in shaping and influencing existing policies. Thus, political participation becomes a way in which people can voice their aspirations and positively contribute to the country's political process.

In the stage of selecting the ruler, either directly or indirectly, general policies are formed. The number of first-time and younger voters currently stands at around 14 million, a significant number that can influence legislative and presidential candidates in their efforts to gain support from young voters. Novice voters, which refer to citizens who first cast their votes in the General Election (*Pemilu*), are regulated in Election Law No. 10 of 2008 Article 19 paragraph (1). According to the law, first-time voters are Indonesian citizens who, on polling day, have reached the age of 17 years or more or who have been or have been married and have the right to vote.

Election for Novice Voters Module I of the KPU (2013) explains that the category of Novice Voters includes citizens who first exercise their right to vote in election activities. They can come from Indonesian citizens (WNI) who are 17 years old or older or who are not even 17 years old but have been married.

According to Perludem Executive Director Titi Anggraeni, young voters account for more than 50%, and if categorized up to 35, the number reaches 79 million. However, if it is expanded to 40, it is as high as 100 million. Anggraeni explained that millennial groups have different political adaptations to older age groups. They are dynamic and rapidly changing in their political perception, mainly because they are strongly affected by the environment. Therefore, good management and understanding of first-time and millennial voters is important in the election process.

The importance of good support can be a determinant of success in winning elections. However, it is unfortunate if young voters are influenced by the less positive political values of

the surrounding environment. Therefore, a significant challenge for candidates is to win the hearts of young and millennial voters by carrying out progressive politics and ideas that can drive nation building.

In this case, it becomes strategic for candidates to focus on millennial voters, who are considered potential voting bags. The need for an approach that is in accordance with the dynamics of the current times is an important condition to achieve this goal. Therefore, candidates are expected to build strategies that are relevant and responsive to the needs and aspirations of young voters and millennials.

In the face of today's realities, candidates need to ensure that their politics are not only attention-grabbing, but also relevant and in line with the values valued by young voters. Thus, they can gain strong support and win over young voters, who are the group of voters who have a major impact on the outcome of the election.

Fake news or what is often referred to as "hoax" is often in the spotlight in every election process, be it in regional elections (pilkada) or presidential elections (pilpres). Hoaxes can be defined as false information, fake news, or facts that are distorted or manipulated for various purposes, ranging from jokes to serious ones, especially in a political context. In the fifth edition of the Big Indonesian Dictionary (KBBI), the term hoax is translated as hoax, which has the meaning of untrue, lying (fake news).

This phenomenon highlights the importance of caution in addressing information during the election period, given the potential spread of fake news that can affect public perception. Therefore, vigilance against hoaxes is key in ensuring the integrity and continuity of the democratization process during elections.

According to the Practical Dictionary by Andreas Halim (2000), hoaxes can be interpreted as mockery or deceptive actions. The hoax phenomenon is growing along with the increasing popularity of social media. The existence of social media provides an opportunity for anyone to become a publisher or disseminator of news, even including in presenting "news" that they create themselves, including fake news or hoaxes. Hoaxes generally have the purpose of entertaining or presenting elements of humor. However, hoaxes can also be used as a propaganda tool with political purposes.

Thus, hoaxes are not only limited to mocking or deceiving, but can also have a political dimension. Especially with the rise of social media, hoaxes can be an instrument used to influence public opinion, create confusion, or even manipulate people's political views. Therefore, it is important to increase public understanding of the existence and impact of hoaxes, as well as involve criticism and caution in consuming information in this digital era.

An example of an action that can be considered a hoax is an attempt to build a positive image or vice versa, which is to damage the image of a person or group. According to the Press Council, there are several characteristics that can be used to identify hoaxes as they can be identified, one of which is inaccurate or incorrect information. In addition, hoaxes are generally

conceived with the intention to mislead or manipulate public opinion, creating uncertainty regarding unreliable sources of information. There is also a tendency for hoaxes to have a political purpose or be sensational, with attempts to create dramatic effects or trigger certain feelings. In addition, hoaxes tend to come from unclear or untrustworthy sources. In the era of social media, the spread of hoaxes is increasingly widespread, utilizing these platforms to reach the target audience more effectively, and this is a challenge in dealing with the spread of inaccurate information.

The phenomenon of spreading false information or hoaxes in the General Election (Pemilu) shows a shortage in the political education system in Indonesia, as revealed by Akhrani et al. (2020). Political education has a vital role in shaping people's understanding of rights and obligations as citizens and the significance of maintaining integrity in elections. Unfortunately, the reality is that there are still many people who need an adequate understanding of elections and are easily influenced by fake news that spreads on social media. Septanto (2018) stated that hoaxes or fake news are a form of cybercrime that seems simple but has a major impact on people's social lives. Both views indicate that hoaxes can be considered character assassination in the form of cybercrime.

In line with the post-truth era, Syuhada (2018) raised the media issue, mentioning that the world is currently haunted by twisted news circulation and false information, especially through social media, focusing on Facebook, which benefits from spreading negative news on their timelines. However, almost all social media platforms are experiencing a similar situation, namely the spread of fake news or hoaxes is increasingly widespread in the social media environment. In this context, analysis of the spread of hoaxes in elections is important to understand the causes and identify ways to overcome this phenomenon. The perspective of political education can contribute to formulating effective political education strategies to prevent and overcome the spread of hoaxes in elections, by the views of Afifuddin (2020). Therefore, this study will explore the analysis of the spread of hoaxes in elections from the perspective of political education.

The purpose of this study is to detail the causes and consequences of the spread of hoaxes in the General Election, as well as present recommendations related to effective political education strategies to prevent and overcome the spread of hoaxes in the context of elections. This research is expected to contribute conceptually and practically to minimize the negative impact of spreading hoaxes on elections and increase public understanding of elections through the application of political education. To achieve this goal, this research will involve literature analysis and case studies of the spread of hoaxes in elections.

In addition, this section will discuss implementing these methods in the context of electoral political education. The fourth part will discuss the research results related to the spread of hoaxes in elections and provide recommendations for further research development. Research related to political education and handling the spread of hoaxes during elections will

be described in detail, and the study's findings will be analyzed and discussed. The recommendations will be based on those findings. Finally, the fifth section will evaluate the findings and recommendations of this journal. This section will describe the conclusions of the analysis and provide general recommendations for developing political education and handling the spread of hoaxes in future elections. It is hoped that this journal can make a valuable contribution in developing political education and handling the spread of hoaxes in elections, both in Indonesia and other countries.

RESEARCH METHODS

In maintaining vigilance and facing the wave of hoaxes in the 2024 presidential election, research methods that can be used are content analysis and social network analysis. The content analysis method analyzes the content and messages spread in the hoax wave. Researchers can collect identified hoax data and analyze elements such as topics, sources, narratives, and their impact on the presidential election. By using this method, a better understanding of hoaxes and smart strategies to deal with them can be developed.

In addition, the social network analysis method involves analyzing patterns and relationships between individuals and organizations in spreading hoaxes on social media. Researchers can identify accounts or groups that play an important role in spreading hoaxes and identify typical dissemination patterns. By obtaining this information, smart strategies can be developed to deal with hoaxes by targeting accounts or groups that are the source of spreading hoaxes.

By combining these two research methods, researchers can better understand the wave of hoaxes in the 2024 presidential election. The results of content analysis help identify the characteristics of hoaxes and their impact. In contrast, social network analysis allows researchers to identify the main actors in the spread of hoaxes and the patterns involved. With this information, smart strategies can be formulated to deal with hoaxes by educating the public, increasing digital intelligence, and targeting prevention efforts to accounts or groups that influence the spread of hoaxes.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Various types of hoaxes often appear in elections, which can vary depending on the political, social, and cultural context in each country. Some hoaxes that often appear in elections include Hoaxes about political candidates or parties: The spread of false or inaccurate information about candidates or political parties aimed at influencing public opinion or gaining political advantage. Hoaxes about election results: The spread of false information related to election results can create uncertainty and tension in society and potentially affect election results by resulting in voter absenteeism at polling stations. Hoaxes about the opposing party: The spread of hoaxes related to the opposing party can be used to damage the image of the

opposing party or gain political gain. Some characteristics of spreading hoaxes in elections include: Taking advantage of sensitive political situations: Hoax spreaders tend to take advantage of heated political situations to spread false information with the aim of gaining political gain. Use of social media: Hoax spreaders often use social media as the primary means of spreading false information, as social media provides an easily accessible platform and can reach many people in a short period of time. Dissemination of information without verification: Hoax spreaders often do not verify the veracity of the information they disseminate, so that information can be easily spread and trusted by individuals who are less conscientious. Use of emotional narratives: Hoax spreaders often use emotional narratives to attract people's attention and make them believe information that is actually wrong (Silalahi et al., 2017).

Internal and external factors have the potential to influence public perception regarding the spread of hoaxes in the election. A number of factors that play a role in shaping people's perceptions are as follows:

Internal Factors

Education: The role of education is very significant in shaping one's outlook. Individuals with higher levels of education tend to have the ability to process information more accurately and meticulously compared to those with lower levels of education. **Intelligence:** An individual's level of intelligence can also affect how they process information. Individuals who have a higher level of intelligence are usually better able to understand information deeply and thoroughly. **Attitude:** An individual's attitude towards politics and political actors can affect his perception regarding the spread of hoaxes in elections.

External factors

Media: Mass media, especially social media, has an important role in shaping public perceptions regarding the spread of hoaxes in elections. Information published by social media can shape perceptions of a particular candidate or political party. **Social Groups:** Social groups, such as family, friends, and co-workers, also contribute to shaping public perceptions about the spread of hoaxes in elections. Opinions that arise from social groups can influence an individual's perception of an issue or event. **Political Culture:** The political culture that develops in society has an impact on people's perceptions regarding the spread of hoaxes in elections. People who have a tendency to be skeptical of political actors can form different perceptions regarding the spread of hoaxes.

In addition to the factors mentioned, there are also other variables that can influence people's views on the spread of hoaxes in the context of elections. These aspects include personal experiences, psychological factors, and the impact of political policies. A person's personal experience can influence how he or she assesses an issue or event. For example, individuals who have been victims of fraud or the spread of hoaxes may become more skeptical of the information received.

Psychological factors, such as levels of anxiety, worry, or cognitive biases, also have a role in shaping public perceptions of the spread of hoaxes in elections (Susilo et al., 2019). High levels of anxiety or worry can make people more vulnerable to trusting information without being verified. In addition, psychological factors such as cognitive biases can also have an impact on the way society responds to information.

The influence of political policies can also be an important determinant in shaping public perceptions related to the spread of hoaxes in elections. Non-transparent policies or attempts to conceal information by authorities can undermine people's trust in the information they receive. Therefore, the implementation of transparent and open policies is very important to prevent the spread of hoaxes in elections (Komarudin et al., 2023; Tchakounté et al., 2022).

The spread of false information in elections can have detrimental effects on society and democracy as a whole (Chambers, 2021; Jungherr & Schroeder, 2021). Some of the possible impacts include: Reducing the quality of political information: The spread of hoaxes can lead to the spread of inaccurate and unsubstantiated information. This situation has the potential to reduce the quality of political information received by the public and can influence the political decisions taken by them.

Amplifying polarization: The spread of hoaxes can deepen divisions among groups of people with different political views. This can lead to political conflicts that further increase inequality in society. Fueling distrust of democratic institutions and processes: The spread of hoaxes can undermine public trust in democratic institutions and processes. An understanding that elections are not fair or transparent, as well as distrust of the authorities, can permeate people's minds.

Increase the risk of political violence: The spread of hoaxes can trigger conflict and political violence. People provoked by false information may engage in acts of violence as a form of protest or revenge. Increase vulnerability to foreign influence: The spread of hoaxes can also increase a country's vulnerability to foreign influences seeking to influence election outcomes or political policies. This situation can be detrimental to the political integrity of a country.

Therefore, serious and firm handling of the spread of hoaxes in elections is a must by the authorities (Dua, 2020; Prawiraharja, 2023; Rosyadi, 2023). This is crucial to ensure that the democratic process can run smoothly, and that people have accurate and valid information when choosing leaders. The impact of spreading hoaxes on elections can also cause people to become apathetic to the political process and democracy. The confusion that arises from the difficulty of distinguishing true and incorrect information can cause a loss of public interest in actively participating in the political process, making them passive in democracy.

The impact of spreading hoaxes also has the potential to increase the tendency of people to seek information from less trusted sources, such as social media or unverified chat groups.

This risks worsening the condition of political information and increasing the potential for the spread of hoaxes in the future.

In the long run, the impact of spreading hoaxes on elections can damage democracy as a whole. People who do not get accurate and correct information may lose confidence in the political process, which can encourage them not to participate in democracy (Heryanto, 2018). This impact can lead to a decrease in political participation and participation in the democratic process, potentially threatening the sustainability of democracy itself.

CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis of the spread of hoaxes in elections from the perspective of political education, it can be concluded that the impact on society and democracy is very significant. The types of hoaxes that generally appear during elections include political hoaxes, sectarian hoaxes, and hoaxes related to campaign jargon. The characteristics of spreading hoaxes in elections involve various motives, such as political, financial, and ideological interests. There are several internal and external factors that also influence public perception of the spread of hoaxes in elections, including environmental influences, mass media, and political behavior. Political education is considered an effective solution to prevent the spread of hoaxes in elections by increasing people's digital and critical literacy. Proven effective political education strategies and methods involve social media campaigns, trainings, seminars, and discussion forums. A more critical political education approach is expected to help prevent the spread of hoaxes in elections while increasing people's digital literacy. In the context of more critical political education, a learning approach that emphasizes problem-solving and active participation is expected to help increase public awareness of the importance of truth and integrity in information and the electoral process. A critical political education approach is also considered to help build community capacity in assessing and evaluating various sources of information, so as to reduce the risk of spreading hoaxes in elections. In an effort to prevent the spread of hoaxes in elections and build more critical public awareness, collaborative efforts from various parties, including educational institutions, media, government, and the public at large are needed. These efforts include the development of relevant educational curricula, training and certification for teachers and journalists, and public campaigns to raise public awareness of the dangers and impact of spreading hoaxes on elections.

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