



Hoax-Free Movement: The Role of Inter-Institutional Communication in Asahan in the 2024 Election

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Abstract

This research aims to examine the effectiveness of communication strategies in mitigating the spread of hoaxes during the 2024 Election in Asahan Regency. The research method used is a case study with a focus on collaboration between institutions such as the Communication and Information Service, Police, Bawaslu, KPU, and civil society organizations. Data was collected through in-depth interviews with representatives from each institution as well as analysis of related policy documents. Data analysis was carried out using a qualitative approach to identify effective communication strategies and the obstacles faced in their implementation. The research results show that coordinated collaboration between institutions is the key to tackling the spread of hoaxes. Communication strategies involving early detection, quick response to hoaxes, and digital literacy education campaigns have succeeded in mitigating the negative impact of hoaxes on the democratic process in Asahan Regency. This research contributes to strengthening election integrity, increasing public trust in democratic institutions, and building awareness of the importance of accurate information in political decision making.

Introduction

Elections are one of the main pillars of a healthy and functioning democratic system (Fadilah, 2021). During the election period, the dissemination of accurate information becomes very crucial because this information influences voters to make informed and informed decisions (Fadilah, 2021; Mulyo, 2022). Accurate information helps the public understand the policies, vision and mission of competing candidates or parties, as well as various important issues that are the focus of campaigns. With access to correct and credible information, voters can better evaluate candidates and vote based on facts, not false perceptions or misleading information (Crescimbene et al., 2023; Quimby, 2022).

In today's digital era, the spread of misinformation or hoaxes is a big challenge. Hoaxes can quickly spread through social media and other online platforms, creating confusion and distrust among voters (Huyen & Mai, 2023; Kamil & Indah, 2022). Inaccurate information can lead voters to the wrong decision, damage a candidate's reputation, and even influence the overall outcome of the election. Hoaxes can also trigger social tension and conflict, which is detrimental to the stability and harmony of society. Therefore, ensuring that the information circulating during elections is correct and reliable is very important to maintain the integrity of the election process (Rahmaniah et al., 2023).

Apart from that, accurate information during elections is also important to maintain public trust in the electoral institution itself (Rosyidi et al., 2022; van Elsas & Fiselier, 2023). When voters believe that the information they receive is correct, they are more likely to believe in the election results and accept the results with grace (Roberts, 2022; Toha & Harish, 2020). On the other hand, if misinformation is allowed to spread unchecked, this can erode public trust in electoral institutions and the democratic system as a whole. Thus, efforts to ensure accurate information and counter hoaxes are not only important for fair and transparent elections, but also for maintaining public trust in the democratic process and its institutions.

In elections in Indonesia, the spread of hoaxes has become a serious problem that can affect the democratic process. According to data from the Ministry of Communication and Information (Kominfo), during the 2024 election period, there were more than 700 hoax cases identified related to the election (Awalluddin, 2024; Maulana et al., 2024; Sarwono, 2024; Tuwu & Teke, 2024). This false information covers various issues, ranging from claims of election fraud, fake news about candidates, to unfounded accusations against election organizers. For example, one of the widespread hoaxes was the claim that 7 million ballot papers had been cast and found overseas. Even though it was later denied by the KPU and related institutions, this hoax caused an uproar in society (Larope et al., 2024).

The impact of spreading this hoax cannot be ignored. Hoaxes that spread not only affect people's perception of elections but can also reduce the level of trust in election management institutions (Ar-Ridho et al., 2023; Batubara et al., 2023). Based on a survey conducted by a national survey institute, around 40% of respondents admitted to having received hoax information during the election and around 20% of them believed the information before finally finding out that it was a hoax (Asmaranti et al., 2024). This situation shows how important the active role of the government, election organizers and society is in preventing the spread of hoaxes. With more coordinated joint efforts, it is hoped that we can reduce the negative impact of hoaxes on the democratic process in Indonesia.

The spread of hoaxes during elections has a significant negative impact on the democratic process. First, hoaxes can obscure the truth and cause voters to make decisions that are not based on facts (Aisyah et al., 2022). When voters are exposed to false or misleading information, they may change their political views or preferences based on the lies. This damages the decision-making process which should be rational and based on accurate information (Larope et al., 2024). For example, hoaxes spread about certain candidates being involved in scandals or election fraud can damage their image, even if the information is not true. As a result, voters may be influenced not to vote for those candidates, even though they are actually viable candidates.

The spread of hoaxes can also reduce voter participation levels. Widely circulating false information can create distrust of the election process and the institutions that organize it (Wahyuni, 2020). When voters believe that the election will not be fair or transparent, they may feel there is no point in participating. This could reduce voter participation, which in turn could affect the legitimacy of election results. A clear example is claims about mass fraud which, although not proven, can cause people to doubt the integrity of elections and choose not to exercise their right to vote.

Apart from that, hoaxes can trigger social tension and polarization in society. False information is often designed to divide, create distrust, and fuel conflict between societal groups (Matondang et al., 2023). During elections, hoaxes that spread can pit supporters of different candidates against each other, exacerbating political divisions and creating an atmosphere of hostility. This tension not only endangers social stability during elections but can also leave

long-term impacts that disrupt social harmony. For example, hoaxes targeting certain ethnic or religious groups can increase negative sentiment and lead to discriminatory or violent actions. Therefore, efforts to overcome the spread of hoaxes are very important to maintain social peace and stability in the context of democracy.

Communication between institutions plays a crucial role in preventing hoaxes during elections (Oxford Analytica, 2021). With effective and coordinated communication, various institutions can work together to detect, identify and respond quickly to the spread of hoaxes. For example, the Communication and Information Service (Kominfo), the General Election Commission (KPU), the Election Supervisory Body (Bawaslu), and the police must have open and structured communication channels. Through this collaboration, information about circulating hoaxes can be immediately shared and followed up (Moonti et al., 2024). This allows these institutions to educate the public and correct false information before the hoax spreads more widely and causes significant damage.

Apart from that, communication between institutions is also important for developing effective educational strategies and campaigns. With coordination, various institutions can develop consistent and credible messages to convey to the public (Ningtias, 2021). For example, digital literacy campaigns and educational programs on how to recognize and report hoaxes can be co-designed and disseminated through various channels, including social media, television, radio and other online platforms (Matondang et al., 2024). The involvement of various institutions in this campaign helps ensure that accurate and important information reaches a wider audience and increases public awareness about the dangers of hoaxes and how to deal with them.

Strong communication between institutions also strengthens public trust in the government's efforts to counter hoaxes (Khatami, 2023). When the public sees that various agencies are working together transparently and effectively, they tend to have more confidence in the information provided by the government. It also helps relieve tension and polarization caused by the spread of hoaxes. For example, a joint press conference held by the Ministry of Communication and Information, the KPU, and the police to clarify certain issues can provide reassurance to the public that steps have been taken to address hoaxes. Thus, communication between institutions not only plays a role in the technical handling of hoaxes but also in building and maintaining public trust, which is an important component in a healthy democratic process.

The spread of hoaxes during election periods, such as what occurred in the 2024 elections in Indonesia, has a significant impact on the integrity and trust in the democratic system. Hoaxes can influence voters to make wrong decisions based on false or misleading information, threaten a candidate's reputation, and even disrupt social stability. To overcome this challenge, effective communication between institutions such as Kominfo, KPU, Bawaslu and the police is very important. This collaboration enables early detection and rapid response to hoaxes, as well as strengthening public trust through coordinated education campaigns. Thus, this joint effort not only maintains fairness and transparency in elections, but also maintains social stability and the integrity of democracy as a whole.

Methods

This study adopts a qualitative approach using a case study method in Asahan Regency to explore the phenomenon of the spread of hoaxes during the 2024 Election. In the context of new media theory, this approach makes it possible to understand how new media and digital technology influence political communication patterns and information dissemination at the local level (Dako-Gyeke, 2019). The case study method was chosen because it provides an

opportunity to explore in depth the specific social and political dynamics in Asahan Regency, especially in the context of policies and communication practices used to tackle hoaxes.

Research data was collected through in-depth interviews with officials from the Communication and Information Service, Police, Bawaslu, and KPU. This approach is consistent with the new media theory approach which emphasizes the importance of interactions between technology, information content and society in the modern political communication process (Eghtesadi & Florea, 2020; Jeon et al., 2020; Rosaliza et al., 2021). This interview not only aims to understand the concrete strategies used by these institutions in dealing with hoaxes, but also to explore how information and communication technology (ICT) facilitates and moderates public interaction with political information (Izquierdo & Anguera, 2021).

In addition to interviews, this study involves direct observation of related activities, such as anti-hoax campaigns and the use of social media by related institutions (Noyes et al., 2019). These observations provide practical insight into the implementation of policies and communication strategies designed to overcome hoaxes. Analysis of policy documents and anti-hoax campaigns is also an integral part of this research, to complete an understanding of the policy context and communication strategies used.

Data analysis was carried out using thematic analysis techniques, which enabled the identification of main patterns and themes that emerged from interviews, observations and document analysis. This is in accordance with the new media theory approach which emphasizes the importance of understanding how digital content and online interactions influence the formation of public opinion and local political dynamics. It is hoped that the implications of this research can contribute to the development of communication strategies that are more adaptive and responsive to the challenges of spreading hoaxes during elections, as well as strengthening integrity and trust in the local democratic process.

Results and Discussion

The Role and Strategy of Inter-Agency Communication in the Hoax-Free Movement

The role and communication strategy between institutions plays a crucial role in efforts to reduce the spread of hoaxes during the 2024 election period in Asahan Regency. Basically, effective coordination between related institutions such as the Asahan Regency Communication and Information Service, the Police, the Election Supervisory Agency (Bawaslu), the General Election Commission (KPU), and civil society organizations is the main foundation of the "Hoax-Free" movement. This strategy not only involves rapid detection and handling of emerging hoaxes, but also focuses on prevention through educational campaigns and promotion of digital literacy among the public.

The Asahan Regency Communication and Information Service plays an important role in facilitating effective communication between local government and the community. They are responsible for managing official election-related information and disseminating accurate and verified content to the public. Apart from that, they also play a role in monitoring and managing official local government social media to ensure that these platforms are not misused to spread hoaxes.

The police, Bawaslu and KPU have complementary roles in monitoring and dealing with hoaxes during the election period. The police are responsible for investigating and taking legal action against perpetrators of spreading hoaxes, thereby providing strict sanctions for violations of related laws. Bawaslu, as an election supervisory institution, has a role in monitoring and responding to complaints regarding election violations, including the spread of false or

misleading information that could affect election integrity. Meanwhile, the KPU is tasked with ensuring that the election process takes place fairly, transparently and based on accurate facts.

Apart from government institutions, civil society organizations also play an important role in the "Hoax-Free" movement. They often act as independent monitors who observe and report on activities during elections, including the spread of hoaxes. This organization can also play a role in supporting digital literacy campaigns among the public, raising awareness of the dangers of hoaxes, and teaching skills to recognize and respond wisely to incorrect information.

The communication and implementation strategy in the "Hoax-Free" movement in Asahan Regency involves several crucial steps to face the challenge of spreading hoaxes during the 2024 Election. One of the main steps is the preparation and implementation of a comprehensive anti-hoax policy. This policy not only sets standards for managing correct and verified information, but also regulates procedures for quickly handling detected hoaxes. With this policy, institutions such as the Communications and Information Service can be more effective in managing information disseminated by local governments, as well as provide clear direction to the public regarding the actions they should take when they encounter incorrect information.

Table 1. Communication Strategy Steps

Communication Strategy Steps	Description
Preparation of Anti-Hoax Policy	Establish standards for managing true and verified information, as well as procedures for quickly handling hoaxes.
Coordination and Collaboration	Intensive collaboration between the Police, Bawaslu, KPU, and the Communication and Information Service to detect and respond to hoaxes effectively.
Digital Education and Literacy Campaign	Educate the public in recognizing, avoiding and reporting hoaxes, as well as building awareness of the importance of accurate information.
Using Tik For Fast Response	Utilize information and communication technology to disseminate official information, manage information crises, and respond quickly to hoaxes on social media.

Coordination and collaboration between institutions is also the basis for an effective communication strategy in dealing with hoaxes. The police, Bawaslu and KPU play an important role in detecting, monitoring and reporting hoaxes that emerge during the election campaign period. This collaboration allows incorrect information to be identified more quickly and addressed with a timely response. Apart from that, this coordination also involves intensive exchange of information between institutions, thereby strengthening the ability to tackle efforts to spread hoaxes collectively and efficiently.

Digital education and literacy campaigns for the public are an integral part of the communication strategy to combat hoaxes. Through this campaign, the public is empowered to recognize, avoid and report hoaxes they encounter. This digital literacy program not only teaches technical skills in evaluating the truth of information, but also builds awareness of the importance of trustworthy sources of information. Thus, this campaign not only aims to protect the public from the negative impact of hoaxes, but also to strengthen their capacity to participate in the democratic process with wisdom and accurate information.

The implementation of this communication strategy is also supported by the use of sophisticated information and communication technology (ICT). Relevant institutions use digital platforms to disseminate official information, manage information crises, and respond

quickly to hoaxes that appear on social media and other online platforms. With this approach, it is hoped that the "Hoax-Free" movement can reduce the level of spread of hoaxes during the 2024 Election, as well as build a healthier and more trustworthy communication environment in Asahan Regency.

Evaluation of the Effectiveness of the Hoax-Free Movement

The main success in preventing and countering hoaxes during the 2024 elections lies in effective coordination between various institutions. Diskominfo, KPU, and Bawaslu have succeeded in forming a strong communications network, which allows the exchange of information quickly and accurately. Through the use of horizontal and vertical forms of communication, information regarding potential hoaxes can be immediately passed on to related parties for quick action. This shows that with structured and efficient communication, the threat of hoaxes can be minimized.

Table 2. Efforts to overcome Hoaxes in Asahan Regency

Aspect	Effort	Person responsible	Information
Inter-Agency Coordination	Establishment of a cross-sectoral coordination team involving Diskominfo, Police, KPU, Bawaslu and other related institutions.	Diskominfo, Police, KPU, Bawaslu	Hold regular coordination meetings and build an emergency communication system.
Reporting and Follow-up	Establishment of hoax reporting channels that are easily accessible to the public, such as mobile applications or hotlines.	Diskominfo, Police	Ensure quick response to public reports and follow up on incorrect information.
Collaboration with the Media	Collaboration with local media to disseminate correct information and respond quickly to hoaxes.	Diskominfo, Local Media	Involving journalists in special training on hoaxes and accurate news dissemination.
Public Campaign	Implementation of public campaigns through posters, banners and electronic media to remind the public about the dangers of hoaxes.	Diskominfo, Communications Service	Utilizing public spaces and communication media to spread anti-hoax messages.
Collaboration with the Community	Collaboration with community organizations and local communities to combat hoaxes at the grassroots level.	Diskominfo, Local Organization	Holding community activities that focus on preventing hoaxes and disseminating correct information.

Another success is through a massive digital literacy campaign. The government and related institutions have succeeded in increasing public awareness about the importance of verifying information before sharing it. This campaign involves direct education through social media, seminars, and collaboration with schools and universities. With increasing digital literacy, people are more alert to false information, thereby helping to reduce the spread of hoaxes.

The application of advanced technology to detect and block hoaxes has also been a significant success. AI-based technology is used to monitor and analyze millions of messages on social media in real time, enabling rapid detection of fake news. The use of special algorithms to identify hoax patterns has proven effective in reducing their spread.

However, the biggest challenge faced is the complexity of coordination between institutions. Even though there has been success in several aspects, differences in bureaucracy and goals between institutions often hinder smooth communication. For example, limited access to information or sensitive data that cannot be shared openly becomes an obstacle in implementing joint strategies. In addition, differences in priorities and approaches between institutions can also hinder the effectiveness of coordination.

Another challenge is the speed at which hoaxes spread in the digital era, which is difficult to keep up with. Even though detection and education efforts have been increased, the viral nature of social media means that hoaxes can spread very quickly before there is any preventative action. This challenge requires more proactive and innovative strategies, including increased technological capacity and closer collaboration with social media platforms to quickly act on suspicious content.

Overall, although there are significant challenges in preventing and countering hoaxes during the 2024 elections, the various efforts that have been made have shown positive results. Success in coordination between institutions, increasing community digital literacy, and the use of advanced technology are important foundations for this effort. However, to face existing challenges, more integrated and sustainable efforts are needed in the future.

New Media Analysis in the Hoax Free Movement

Analysis of the use of New Media in the "Hoax-Free" movement reveals various aspects that are relevant in combating the spread of hoaxes during the 2024 Election. In this context, New Media plays a crucial role in providing a platform to communicate, disseminate information and respond to hoaxes quickly and effectively.

New Media provides the ability for government institutions and stakeholders to disseminate official information directly and instantly to the public (Eghtesadi & Florea, 2020). Social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and WhatsApp have become the main channels for institutions such as the Communication and Information Service, Police, Bawaslu, and KPU to provide clarification and counter-narratives to hoaxes that are currently circulating. In this way, New Media allows local governments to maintain control over the public narrative during crucial periods such as elections.

New Media's ability to facilitate public participation is also key in the "Hoax-Free" movement. The public can be more active in reporting hoaxes they encounter or have doubts about, as well as contribute to identifying and disseminating correct information (Pramana et al., 2020). Through platforms such as the hoax reporting feature on Facebook or through the portal provided by Bawaslu, public participation in fighting hoaxes becomes easier and more efficient.

Even though it has great potential, the use of New Media also faces several challenges. One of them is ensuring speed and accuracy in conveying official information. Sometimes, responses to hoaxes can be delayed or hindered by complex government regulations or procedures. This can allow hoaxes to continue to spread and influence public opinion before clarification can be provided.

Another challenge is the risk of more sophisticated manipulation of information through technology. The use of bots or fake accounts to spread hoaxes or amplify false narratives is a serious threat. Although social media platforms have increased efforts to identify and disable fake accounts, there is still work to be done to improve the security and authenticity of the information shared.

Apart from that, digital and media literacy aspects are also crucial in the analysis of New Media in the "Hoax-Free" movement. The level of public understanding of how to distinguish valid information from hoaxes, as well as their ability to evaluate information sources, will influence the success of hoax prevention efforts. Therefore, sustainable and comprehensive digital literacy programs need to be improved to build public awareness of the threat of hoaxes and effective ways to respond to them.

Evaluation of the use of New Media in the "Hoax-Free" movement needs to pay attention to sustainability aspects. The presence of social media platforms and digital technology continues to develop, so strategies and approaches in fighting hoaxes need to be continuously adjusted. The implementation of new technology or changes in user behavior can also affect the effectiveness of hoax prevention efforts carried out by government agencies and related stakeholders.

Conclusion

In the context of the "Hoax-Free" movement during the 2024 Election in Asahan Regency, collaboration and coordination between institutions is a crucial factor in facing the challenge of spreading hoaxes. The Communication and Information Service, together with the Police, Bawaslu, KPU, and civil society organizations, play an important role in building a solid foundation to fight hoaxes. A coordinated communication strategy including early detection, quick response to identified hoaxes, as well as digital literacy education campaigns for the public are an integral part of this effort.

The implementation of the "Hoax-Free" movement in Asahan Regency shows that with effective collaboration between institutions, the implementation of a comprehensive anti-hoax policy can have a significant positive impact. This movement not only aims to maintain the integrity of the election, but also to strengthen public trust in the democratic process. Through proactive education, people are taught to be more critical in consuming information, thereby helping maintain social stability and building awareness of the importance of access to accurate information in political decision making.

By drawing conclusions from this movement, Asahan Regency is able to mitigate the negative impact of the spread of hoaxes on the democratic process. The success of this movement can be seen not only from reducing the spread of hoaxes, but also from increasing public participation and trust in the election process. Well-coordinated steps between institutions underscore the commitment to ensure that the information the public receives is reliable and contributes positively to the development of a healthy and sustainable democracy. Thus, the "Hoax-Free" movement in Asahan Regency is not only an example of how effective coordination between institutions can overcome the challenges of spreading hoaxes, but also as a model for other regions in building strong information resilience in the context of modern democracy.

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