

DKIS Cirebon City Communication Strategy in Tackling Hoaxes Through Instagram @cirebonsaberhoaks

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Abstract

This research analyzes the communication strategy implemented by the Department of Communication, Informatics, and Statistics (DKIS) of Cirebon City in tackling the spread of hoaxes through Instagram @cirebonsaberhoaks. The widespread dissemination of false information through various digital platforms has become a serious threat to healthy public information and communication. The purpose of this research is to analyze the communication strategies and challenges faced by DKIS Cirebon City in countering hoaxes. Using a qualitative descriptive approach, data was collected through observation, interviews, and literature studies. The results show that DKIS Cirebon City implements a communication strategy consisting of three key components: focused utilization of digital platforms, a dual-focus approach (information clarification and education), and publication of anti-hoax content. Nevertheless, the program still faces significant challenges in the form of evolving technology for hoax dissemination, limited reach of a single platform, and suboptimal inter-institutional coordination. This research contributes to the development of more adaptive and innovative public communication models in tackling hoaxes at the regional level.

Keywords: Communication management strategy, Hoax, Instagram



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INTRODUCTION

The rapid development of information and communication technology has transformed the way people access and disseminate information. Information flows seamlessly through various platforms, particularly social media. Social media has become one of the primary platforms people use to obtain news, share information, and interact quickly and easily. Social media, such as Instagram, is one form of scientific and technological progress (Indrawan et al. 2023). Various platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, and WhatsApp allow information to spread in seconds without limitations of space and time. This certainly brings great benefits to many parties, especially the Public Information and Communication Management Division (PIKP) of the Cirebon City Communication, Informatics and Statistics Agency (DKIS) in supporting the openness of information and public communication. However, on the other hand, the ease of accessing and disseminating information can also pose a serious challenge, namely the rampant spread of incorrect information or hoaxes. Social media is often used inappropriately by the public, including to spread false information, share and misuse personal data, and carry out various other detrimental actions (Noventa et al. 2023). This misuse opens up a very wide space for the circulation of hoaxes, because the open and fast nature of social media in distributing information allows misleading content to spread massively before its truth is verified. This phenomenon is known as "Hoax" or fake news which can cause feelings of fear, anxiety, threat, or perceptions that misinformation in society. Fake news (hoaxes) are news articles deliberately created to mislead readers (Adila et al. 2019). The proliferation of hoaxes spreading across various regions through digital platforms, including in Cirebon City, poses a serious threat to information transparency and healthy public communication. This requires the government to effectively manage information to prevent negative impacts on society.

In this context, the Public Information and Communication Management (PIKP) Division of the Cirebon City Communication, Informatics, and Statistics Agency (DKIS) plays a strategic role in ensuring that information received and shared by the public is accurate, credible, and accountable. One initiative is the management of the Instagram social media account @cirebonsaberhoaks, which aims to convey valid information and clarify issues circulating in the community, as well as disseminate educational content to combat the spread of hoaxes and improve the public's digital literacy. Amid the rampant spread of hoaxes in various formats such as text, images, videos, and even artificial intelligence-based manipulative content, information management can no longer be done conventionally. This demands innovative and adaptive communication strategies, as well as approaches that can educate the public to be more critical in verifying information before spreading it. Instagram has become a popular social network for its users to upload digital photos and utilize the filter feature to edit the appearance and share photos with other users (Zahra 2024). Through the interactive Instagram platform with its wide reach, especially among the younger generation, DKIS strives to optimize public communication to combat hoaxes by using communication strategies. Communication strategies are also referred to as communication plans and communication management (Suhaeri 2018). With this approach, DKIS can develop structured messages and select appropriate communication channels. Utilizing Instagram as the main media not only allows for the rapid and visual dissemination of information, but also opens up space for public participation through the comment feature and two-way interaction via Direct Message (DM). Therefore, the communication strategy implemented is designed in a planned, consistent, and adaptive manner to the dynamics of issues in society, in order to build collective awareness and improve digital literacy in dealing with the flow of potentially misleading information. With the creation of the @cirebonsaberhoaks account that has a strategy in combating hoaxes, this study will analyze the communication strategy implemented by DKIS Cirebon City, especially the PIKP Division in combating hoaxes

through the Instagram account @cirebonsaberhoaks, as well as analyze the impact of the strategy used on public awareness regarding hoaxes. This research aims to provide an in-depth understanding of local government efforts to combat hoaxes and strengthen public digital literacy. Furthermore, this research is expected to formulate strategic recommendations for combating hoaxes, strengthening public digital literacy, and enhancing the ability to verify false information so that it can contribute to the development of a more adaptive, innovative, and trustworthy public communication model in Cirebon City and other areas.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach aimed at understanding in-depth the public communication strategies implemented by the Cirebon City Communication, Informatics, and Statistics Office (DKIS) in combating hoaxes through social media platforms, specifically the Instagram account @cirebonsaberhoaks. Qualitative methods were used in this study to analyze the actual situation and to accurately reflect the situation at the time of the study without manipulating it (Wacika, 2021). Descriptive methods were used to systematically describe the facts found in the field and analyze the communication strategy patterns implemented by local government institutions in addressing the challenges of disinformation.

The types of data used in this study are primary and secondary data. Primary data is data collected directly from original sources or first parties (Novaldy and Mahpudin, 2021). Primary data was obtained directly through the author's active participation, observation, and interviews with the Head of the Communication and Public Information Management Division of the DKIS Cirebon City, the Sub-Coordinator of Public Communication, and employees of the Communication and Public Information Management Division. Secondary data is data obtained from other parties or through indirect sources, namely data that has been previously collected and compiled by other parties (Novaldy and Mahpudin, 2021). Secondary data was obtained through a literature review that included digital references relevant to the research context. Data collection techniques were carried out triangulating, namely by combining observation, interviews, library research, and document analysis to increase the validity and depth of the information obtained. The data collection instruments used in this study included an interview guide in the form of a list of questions compiled to obtain information from key informants, a mobile phone as a documentation tool and voice recorder, and a laptop for data management and analysis. All data were analyzed following the steps of data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions based on the results of interviews and the author's active participation in DKIS Cirebon City.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The DKIS Cirebon City, specifically the Public Information and Communication Management (PIKP) Division, has a communication strategy to combat the spread of hoax information through the Cirebon Saber Hoaks program implemented on the Instagram platform with the account name @cirebonsaberhoaks. Based on the results of an interview with PIKP Field Employee, Rendi Saeful Azid, this program is a response to the increase in fake news or hoaxes in online media that can influence public opinion and social stability in society. The flow of information becomes difficult to control because every individual feels they have the freedom to access various sources of information, references, and data through the internet (Maulidya et al. 2023). The increase in the circulation of hoaxes occurred during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020-2021. Before the @cirebonsaberhoaks account, West Java already had an account created with the same goal of combating hoaxes at the provincial level, implemented on the Instagram platform with the account name @jabarsaberhoaks. The establishment of Cirebon Saber Hoaks is a duplication of the Jabar Saber Hoax program that

has been in existence since 2019. The initiative to establish a channel to combat hoaxes at the regional level by the DKIS of Cirebon City, especially the PIKP sector, is an initial step that has inspired many regions in West Java to contribute to combating hoaxes.

The Cirebon Saber Hoaks program is not merely a regional initiative, but rather part of a national effort coordinated by the Ministry of Communication and Informatics (KOMINFO), now renamed the Ministry of Communication and Digital (KOMDIGI). Although it lacks a legal basis at the level of a presidential or regional regulation, the program is still implemented structurally from the central to the regional levels to facilitate coordination and accelerate information in tackling hoaxes. The Cirebon Saber Hoaks team was formed and is run by the PIKP Division, involving ICT Volunteers under the auspices of the Cirebon City DKIS as its primary support.

DKIS Cirebon City Communication Strategy in Tackling Hoaxes Through Instagram @cirebonsaberhoaks

The Cirebon City Communication, Informatics, and Statistics Agency (DKIS), through its Public Information and Communication Management (PIKP) Division, plays a strategic role in managing and communicating public information to the public. Facing the challenges of the digital era, characterized by the rampant spread of false information or hoaxes, the Cirebon City DKIS has developed a comprehensive communication strategy through the Instagram account @cirebonsaberhoaks. This communication strategy is implemented to combat hoaxes spreading in the community. The DKIS communication strategy in combating hoaxes through the Instagram account @cirebonsaberhoaks consists of several important components:

1. Focused Utilization of Digital Platforms:

As part of a targeted public communications strategy, the Cirebon City Communications, Informatics, and Statistics Agency (DKIS) is utilizing digital platforms in a focused manner by establishing the Instagram account @cirebonsaberhoaks. This platform functions specifically as an anti-hoax information center, providing fact clarification, digital literacy education, and a reporting platform for the public. Utilizing this single, focused channel allows for more consistent, faster, and more accessible messaging. This approach also demonstrates the efficient use of social media as a local government communication tool that adapts to the dynamics of public information consumption patterns. With this strategy, DKIS not only strengthens the credibility of official information sources but also builds a digital channel capable of reaching a wider audience with targeted and targeted messages.

2. Dual-Focus Approach

The communication strategy implemented by the Cirebon City Communication, Informatics, and Statistics Agency (DKIS) through the Instagram account @Cirebonsaberhoaks demonstrates a dual-focus approach: fact-checking and providing education. This strategy is not only reactive, responding to circulating hoaxes, but also preventive, aiming to educate the public and enable them to be more discerning in filtering the information they receive. The clarifications are swift and data-driven, helping to mitigate the negative impact of the spread of hoaxes. Furthermore, digital literacy education, communicated visually through infographics and reels, can improve the public's ability to recognize and avoid false information. Digital literacy can be defined as the ability to read, write, and understand information in a digital context (Rahmawati et al. 2023). These two approaches complement each other, creating an educational cycle that not only provides accurate information but also fosters a more critical and responsible citizenry when using digital media. With this strategy, @cirebonsaberhoaks not only becomes a platform for the public to seek truthful

information, but also plays an active role in building a more responsible and informative digital space in Cirebon City.

3. Publication of Content to Counter Hoaxes

The PIKP Division actively creates and publishes content to combat hoaxes, as outlined in the dual-focus strategy: fact-checking and educational content. Fact-checking is the process of evaluating the veracity of a statement, whether delivered in writing or verbally (Guo et al. 2022). The fact-checking content created and published not only addresses hoaxes occurring within the Cirebon City area but also includes higher-level hoaxes or those occurring outside the Cirebon City area but potentially spreading to the local community. With this broader scope, clarification efforts become more anticipatory to the dynamics of digital information dissemination across regions. The content creation process begins by tracing hoax news circulating on various platforms, both local and national, and then classifying them based on the type of disinformation. Each clarified piece of content is accompanied by a detailed explanation of the context, source, image, and reasoning behind the categorization of the information as a hoax. After going through a verification process and developing an appropriate narrative, the content in the form of a feed is published through official channels to provide a comprehensive understanding to the public, while also strengthening digital literacy and preventing the spread of misinformation.

Meanwhile, educational content is developed as part of a strategy aimed at increasing public understanding of the characteristics, forms, and negative impacts of the spread of false information or hoaxes. This content plays a strategic role in fostering public awareness to be more selective and responsible in consuming and sharing information on social media. In practice, educational content is packaged in the form of video reels or infographic feeds designed with visually appealing designs to increase appeal and facilitate understanding for various groups. This visual format was chosen based on the consideration that visual media is easier to access, digest, and disseminate through digital platforms, particularly social media, which is currently the primary platform for information distribution. Through communicative and informative delivery, educational content is expected to strengthen the public's digital literacy and encourage an active public role in creating a safe and responsible information environment.

Challenges for the Cirebon City DKIS in Tackling Hoaxes

The dynamics of technological developments and patterns of hoax dissemination pose significant challenges for the Cirebon Saber Hoaxes Program. In the ever-evolving digital era, hoax spreaders actively exploit technological advances such as artificial intelligence (AI), manipulation, and digital platform algorithms to create and distribute false content that is increasingly difficult to distinguish from valid information. Social media has become a major factor in the widespread spread of hoax content because it allows each user to independently create, produce, and disseminate messages or information without undergoing a rigorous verification process (Febrainsyah and Muskin, 2020). The pattern of hoax dissemination also shows increasing complexity, no longer linear but spreading exponentially through various digital platforms by exploiting social networks and public emotions. This forces the Cirebon Saber Hoaxes team to continuously adapt and increase its capacity to detect various forms of hoaxes that continue to evolve, ranging from deepfakes and misattribution to manipulation of information context. Furthermore, a fundamental challenge faced by the Cirebon Saber Hoaxes program is the limited reach and interaction with the public through the Instagram platform. Although Instagram is a popular social media platform, especially among the younger generation and urban communities, the reality is that not all segments of Cirebon City actively use this platform. The digital divide remains evident among certain groups, such as the

elderly, low-income communities, and those in areas with limited internet access. This situation means that the clarifying and educational information disseminated through the @cirebonsaberhoaks account has not reached the entire target audience potentially exposed to hoaxes.

Another challenge faced by the DKIS in its implementation is inter-agency coordination. Good coordination between units or sections within an organization will support a smooth communication flow and encourage improved performance in every activity undertaken, which will certainly impact the optimization of program implementation (Waruwu 2016). As part of the national effort to combat the spread of hoaxes, this program requires good coordination between the DKIS Cirebon City and relevant institutions at the provincial level. In its implementation, these coordination challenges include the speed of information exchange, standardization of verification processes, and alignment of messages conveyed to the public. Differences in priorities often lead to inconsistent responses to the same hoax. When false information spreads rapidly across administrative regions, delays in coordination can reduce the effectiveness of clarification. Furthermore, differences in communication approaches between institutions at the regional, provincial, and national levels sometimes result in inconsistent messages, which can confuse the public and reduce trust in official information sources. Despite the existence of clear structural coordination channels, smoother implementation still requires the development of operational standards and a more integrated and responsive communication platform.

CONCLUSIONS

The communication strategy implemented by the Cirebon City Special Capital Region (DKI) through the Cirebon Saber Hoaks program on Instagram has proven to be a strategic step in combating hoaxes at the regional level. Through a dual-focus approach that integrates information clarification and digital literacy education, this program has succeeded in establishing an information protection mechanism for the people of Cirebon City. Utilizing the Instagram platform as a focused channel has facilitated the delivery of consistent, fast, and easily accessible information to the public, although it has not yet reached all levels of society. The clarification content produced not only covers local or regional hoaxes but also national levels, demonstrating an anticipatory approach to the dynamics of information dissemination across regions.

In its implementation, Cirebon Saber Hoaks still faces various quite complex challenges, ranging from the rapid development of increasingly sophisticated hoax spreading technology that makes it difficult to detect, to the limited audience reach that is not evenly distributed across all levels of society, especially those with low digital literacy or living in areas with limited access to information. Furthermore, coordination between institutions involved in tackling hoaxes is still not optimal, both in terms of rapid data exchange and in standardizing the information verification process, so that responses to hoaxes are often late and uncoordinated.

According to the authors, strengthening a more segmented public communication strategy for all groups, increasing the team's human resource capacity for in-depth focus, and increasing the speed and accuracy of identifying false information are necessary. Equally important are instruments to measure the program's success and its impact on the community's digital literacy levels and the reduction in the spread of hoaxes, which can serve as a basis for evaluating and refining similar programs in the future.

Further research is needed to develop a more comprehensive hoax mitigation model that adapts to advances in information technology. The effectiveness of a multi-platform approach in expanding the reach of anti-hoax programs to various segments of society, particularly vulnerable groups with limited digital access, is also a pressing research issue. Developing

artificial intelligence-based hoax detection technology tailored to the capacities of local governments is also an urgent research priority.

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