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Hoax practices behind TikTok fake accounts in the 2024 presidential election contest

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ABSTRACT

In the context of rising misinformation on social media, this study examines the influence of hoaxes spread through fake TikTok accounts on public opinion during Indonesia's 2024 presidential election. The study aims to analyze how fake accounts, including notable examples like @ridwanyulio and @sendycahyani1744, leverage hoaxes to sway political perceptions, undermine trust in democratic processes, and foster social division. Using a qualitative approach, data was collected through observational analysis of comments, engagement, and content shared by these accounts. The data was then analyzed to explore patterns of misinformation, strategies used to manipulate narratives, and the resulting public impact. Findings indicate that these accounts employ targeted and organized hoax tactics, utilizing edited videos and images to propagate misleading narratives. The study concludes that such hoaxes pose a threat to information integrity, potentially leading to increased polarization and conflict. The implications of this research highlight the need for robust media literacy programs, stricter platform regulations, and collaborative efforts among stakeholders to combat misinformation, thereby supporting a healthier democratic environment.

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INTRODUCTION

In the increasingly evolving digital era, social media has become the main platform for disseminating information and influencing public opinion simultaneously and has become one of the most frequently used information channels by the public (Sani & Al-Qardhawy, 2024). This is also supported and aligned with the results of the study which showed that as many as 42.3% of people chose social media or social media—in terms of searching for information, including about general elections (Randyca et al., 2024). The phenomenon of hoaxes through fake accounts on social media, such as TikTok, is a major concern in political contests, including the 2024 presidential election, in the era of increasingly evolving technology. This practice causes many problems and affects various aspects of society and the democratic process as a whole. This practice also has relevant benefits, negative effects, and problems from hoax practices carried out through fake TikTok accounts in political contests, especially the 2024 presidential election.

The contestation of the 2024 Presidential Election in Indonesia has become a major concern in national political discussions (Apriando et al., 2023). One of the theoretical analyses related to the 2024 Presidential Election contestation is that black campaigns, or black campaigns, are strategies used to attack political opponents in unethical ways (Purwatiningsih, 2024). In the 2024 Presidential Election contest, hoaxes can be used as a way to attack political opponents and influence public opinion. Hoaxes can be in the form of spreading false information or hoaxes that can cause disputes and affect election results (Fikri, 2024).

In addition, hoaxes have the potential to damage public trust in the democratic process as a whole (Chambers, 2021). The political stability of a country can be threatened when people lose confidence in the information they receive, especially from sources that should be trustworthy (Krishna et al., 2023). The spread of misinformation can also lead to social tensions, which can lead to divisions among different groups of society. The practice of hoaxes can have positive effects, such as increasing public awareness and participation

in the democratic process. However, the negative effects can also be enormous, such as the spread of inaccurate and defamatory information, as well as disrupting political stability.

Other negative effects include social and psychological damage, as well as unbalanced community involvement in politics. These negative effects can be enormous, such as the spread of inaccurate and defamatory information, as well as disrupting political stability. In addition, another issue related to the hoax practice behind TikTok's fake accounts is how the government and related agencies can oversee and control this practice, as well as how people can be honed to have better digital skills and distinguish correct information from wrong information. Not only that, another problem related to hoax practices behind fake TikTok accounts is how the public can be actively involved in the supervision and control of hoax practices.

Several literature reviews on fake accounts have been conducted, such as Dewantara et al. (2022). The journal shows that fake accounts can be a dangerous tool in politics and can undermine democracy. It is important for the public to be careful about the information received on social media and to always check the truth of the information before disseminating it. In addition, Indah & Zuhdy (2022) participate in discussing fake accounts. This journal explains and shows that fake accounts can be a dangerous tool in disseminating information about Islamic issues and can undermine tolerance between religious communities. It is important for the public to be careful about the information received on social media and to always check the truth of the information before disseminating it. Furthermore, research conducted by Sugiono (2020) found that fake accounts are one of the tools used in the buzzer industry to achieve certain goals. The use of fake accounts can harm and contribute to the destruction of democracy and tolerance in society.

Then there is a journal literature that discusses hoaxes written by Anissa et al. (2021). The research uses an exploration method that expects researchers to get problem identification. Using exportative research, a study that has not been used before will be clearer. Exploratory research relies on techniques, secondary research (processing data literacy, informal qualitative approaches by interacting with users, discussing projective methods with quantitative methods, and then interactive research using internet data. Then the discussion researched by the author is the respondent's profile, respondent's education, respondent's gender, respondent's profession, and the content of the hoax received from the respondent (Anissa et al., 2021)

An article written by Charisma D.W et al. (2024) uses a qualitative descriptive research method aiming to collect information about what is happening. The discussion researched by the author is the Buzzer Phenomenon in the world of politics ahead of the election, the strategy used by the buzzer in relation to elections.

A similar article written by Sellita (2022) uses a qualitative method by using data collection methods, archives, observing behavior, and interviewing participants. The results of the discussion written by the author include Discussion of interview results, mainstream media data from 2014, and social media data from 2019, differences between the 2014 and 2019 presidential election campaigns, and digital campaign strategies from presidential election candidates.

Research conducted by Damayanti & Prasetyawati (2023) use a positivism paradigm with a qualitative approach. This research is to develop science through hypothesis testing. Rambe Kamarul Zaman & Misna (2021) studied the political infrastructure towards the 2024 presidential election in the construction of social media using constructivist with a descriptive method.

The purpose of this research is to investigate the description and dynamics of the impact of hoax practices through fake TikTok accounts in the 2024 Presidential Election contest in Indonesia. The research will focus on describing and analyzing how these fake accounts can influence public opinion, undermine trust in the democratic process, and potentially contribute to social and political tensions from the hoax news they spread. Therefore, it is necessary to conduct in-depth research to prevent and ensure the integrity of the democratic process in the 2024 presidential election in order to reduce the negative effects of hoax practices through fake accounts on TikTok. However, the existing research has not delved deeper into the phenomenon that the author found, so that the gap in the research space needs to be filled immediately. Other studies generally only discuss and look at the context of fake accounts in general. From this description, the author pays attention to researching how Tiktok fake accounts can influence public opinion through Hoax Practices in the 2024 Presidential Election Contest.

METHOD

This study uses a qualitative research method. Data mining was based on an initial literacy survey on three fake accounts, namely @ridwanyulio, @sendycahyani1744 and fake accounts from qualitative analysis @projomakasar. Observations made through qualitative methods where the author observes from several comments in the 3 paslu accounts from the @ridwanyulio account, the author observes several comments that discuss paslon 1 where the account contains 32 fake news content about candidate number 1, fake accounts @sendycahyani1744 the author also observes that there is a video content of the number of people who watched as many as 4 million people where the content contains about comparing the wives of paslon 1 and 2 As well

as paslo 3, and the author observed fake accounts @projomakasar where those who saw the posts and left several comments or responses that reached 60 content posts with false information about paslon 3 candidates.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Social media platforms like Tiktok have become an inseparable part of the lives of modern people. Behind its excitement and entertainment. This platform is not spared from fraudulent practices and the spread of misinformation (hoax). One of the modes that is widely used is through fake accounts (Lumakto & Dewi, 2021). Fake accounts on Tiktok are created with the aim of deceiving and misleading users (Amanda et al., 2022). These accounts usually impersonate well-known individuals or organizations, such as celebrities, influencers, or well-known brands.

Buzzer Identity

The practice of hoaxes and fake accounts on TikTok can have a significant impact on democracy. In a democracy, accurate and honest information is key to enabling people to make wise decisions. However, with the practice of hoaxes and fake accounts, inaccurate information can be spread and affect public opinion.

Figure 1. TikTok Hoax Account @ridwanyulio
Source: Tiktok, 2024

In presidential election contests, these practices can be used to influence public opinion and manipulate the information disseminated. One of them is a TikTok account with a @ridwanyulio username that spreads hoax news about the number one presidential candidate, Anies Baswedan. This account spreads fake news in the form of a video narrated with several pieces of images that seem to justify the false information. This account has a total of 496 followers and there are 6,395 total number of likes on posts from the account. This account made its first upload in 2022 with its first post in October. The account has uploaded a total of 36 posts, of which 32 contain fake news against Anies Baswedan. The post containing fake news received various comments or responses from people who saw the upload.

Furthermore, the researcher also found a fake account that was similar but spread fake news or hoaxes to the number 02 candidate, namely an account with a username or username @sendycahyani1744 that spread hoax news about the number two presidential candidate, namely Prabowo Subianto. This account spreads fake news in a video accompanied by several pieces of images that seem to support the fake news. This account has 7120 followers and 171.4 thousand people liked his post. The account has uploaded more than fifty posts containing fake news about Prabowo Subianto's candidate.

Figure 2. TikTok Hoax Account @sendycahyani1744
Source: Tiktok, 2024

Similar to the previous two accounts, the author found a similar fake account that spread false information or hoaxes about candidate number 03; this account used @projomakasar username and spread false information about the number three presidential candidate, Ganjar Pranowo. The account spread fake news in its video, which also included several pieces of images that seemed to support the fake news. A hoax account where the number of followers or followers is not as many as the previous two accounts; it only has 2001 followers and 143.6 thousand people like his posts. The account has uploaded more than 60 posts containing false information about candidate Ganjar Pranowo. Those who see the post leave a comment or response. For content that states that Ganjar Pranowo is supported by 30,000 villagers, 1261 accounts have been liked and there are 110 who interact through the comment column.

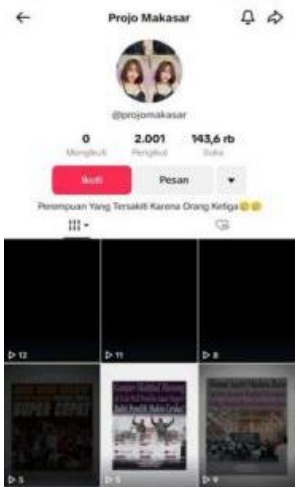

Figure 3. TikTok hoax account @projomakasar
Source: Tiktok, 2024

Relationships Between Actors

Based on the description above, hoax practices on TikTok show complex and dynamic relationships between actors. Each account that spreads hoaxes has a different agency and habitus, but they are bound in the same social field, namely the TikTok platform. These hoax accounts can be seen as agents who have different symbolic and material capital. @ridwanyulio account, with 496 followers, has a lower symbolic capital than @sendycahyani1744 account which has 7120 followers. However, @ridwanyulio account has a higher material capital, which is 6,395 likes per post compared to @sendycahyani1744 account which has 171.4 likes per post. This difference in capital affects the strategy they use to spread hoaxes. @ridwanyulio account uses videos and images to narrate fake news, while @sendycahyani1744 account uses videos comparing the wives of the candidates. Although they do not have a direct relationship, these accounts are bound in the same social field, namely the TikTok platform. This social landscape has its own rules and norms that affect how these accounts operate. Bourdieu explained that habitus is a disposition system that agents have based on their experience and

position in the social field. This habitus affects the way agents think, act, and interact with others In this case, the habitus of hoax accounts is shaped by their experiences on the TikTok platform. They learn how to use these platforms to disseminate information in an effective way. Although there is no direct relationship between accounts, their habitus is tied up in the same social field. This allows them to learn from each other and develop new strategies to spread hoaxes.

The Dialectic of Hoax Transformation

Hoaxes on TikTok are also increasingly targeted, directed at certain groups of people with the aim of triggering division and polarization. Organized hoax networks have also begun to emerge, using these platforms to spread propaganda and certain political agendas. The impact of hoaxes on TikTok is increasingly widespread and dangerous. Hoaxes can damage public trust in institutions and leaders, trigger social polarization, and even trigger violence. Therefore, efforts to mitigate hoaxes must be carried out comprehensively and involve various parties. The government needs to strengthen regulations and work with social media platforms to combat hoaxes. Public education and increasing media literacy are also the main keys. The public needs to be equipped with the ability to identify and verify information, as well as be critical of news spread on social media. Social media platforms such as TikTok must also be responsible in fighting hoaxes. They need to develop technology that is able to detect and remove hoax content quickly and effectively. Research and development of anti-hoax technology must also continue to be carried out to combat the evolution of hoaxes that are constantly transforming. By understanding the dialectic of hoax transformation and formulating a comprehensive strategy, we can jointly combat hoaxes on TikTok and maintain a healthy democracy.

Hoax Versus Fact

From the search conducted by the researcher using the website to check the validity of hoax accounts, the researcher found facts related to hoaxes made by individuals or perpetrators of fake accounts spreading fake news. First, the content contains a narrative that paslon 01 or Anies Baswedan "Married Siri to one of the beautiful artists". The comments on the post contained several responses such as defending Anies Baswedan's candidate, some were provoked until some were affected and encouraged to comment that the hoax post was true. In this post there are a total of 1,042 people who like, as many as 166 comments and 153 of them people save the fake post. In the post, there are also 122 accounts that redistribute or share the content.

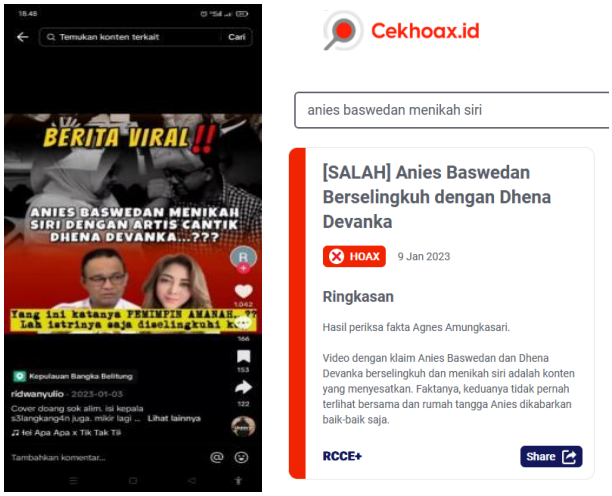

Figure 4. Hoaxes vs Facts
Source: cekhoax.id, 2024

Researchers found that the fact of the video stating that Anies Baswedan had an affair with Dhena Deevanka – the ex-wife of actor Jonathan Frizzy was a hoax. In the video, it is stated that they got married secretly in Singapore in 2021. December 31, 2022 is the date the video was uploaded. According to Suara.com, there are no reliable news sources that mention that Anies and Dhena got married randomly, as mentioned in the video. Moreover, they had never met each other. In addition, Anies Baswedan's relationship with his wife, Fery Farhati, seems to be going smoothly. This is evidenced by the video upload shared by Anies and his wife on January 6, 2023, where the two celebrated the Christmas and New Year holidays. The Mafindo website, published on January 9, 2023 and indexed on June 8, 2023, is considered a reliable source of information references.

The second content contains a narrative that paslon 02 or Prabowo Subiatno who said that paslon 02 was a fugitive due to corruption alustitsa. The content has been witnessed by 7,631 TikTok users. Some people responded to the post in various ways, including defending Prabowo Subianto's candidate, provoking, and being influenced to say that the hoax post was true. This post has 157 likes, 16 comments, and 17 people saved the fake post. In addition, there are 88 accounts that share or spread the content. After a search, it was evident that Prabowo did not commit corruption in defense equipment as he said in the video. Previously, it was announced that the Ministry of Defense was included in the ten ministries that directly received the 2023 Budget Implementation Table of Contents (DIPA). A budget of Rp 134 T will be allocated for the procurement, maintenance, and support of defense equipment. Prabowo also warned TNI members on November 8, 2022, to avoid corruption in the procurement and maintenance of defense equipment. Therefore, the content disseminated by the TikTok account is fake. This article comes from the Mafindo website, which has been verified as a reliable source of information reference, published on November 10, 2023 and indexed on November 15, 2023.

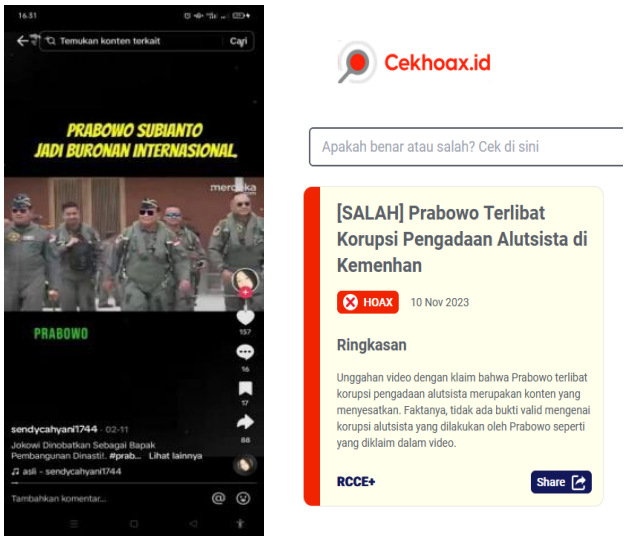

Figure 5. Hoaxes vs Facts
Source: cekhoax.id, 2024

The author found a fake account similar to the previous two accounts that spread false information or hoaxes about the number 03 passport. This account uses @projomakasar username and spreads false information about the number three presidential candidate, Ganjar Pranowo, who stated that 30,000 villagers in GBK shouted at Ganjar the President of the Republic of Indonesia. After viewing, the video thumbnail is similar to the image from the KOM YouTube channel. The declaration was made at Bandari Beach in Jepara, Central Java.

Representatives from 35 city districts in 32 provinces throughout Indonesia also attended the National Declaration of Des Ganjar Volunteers. Thumbnails and video stories are not related, as described above. The video thumbnail is similar to the video thumbnail "National Declaration of Des Ganjar Volunteers" from the KOMPAS TV JATENG channel, so it is clear that the thumbnail is an image that has been edited and put into the wrong context category. This search was carried out by the Mafindo website, published on November 9, 2022 and indexed on June 8, 2023, considered a reliable source of information references.

The spread of hoaxes (fake news through fake accounts on TikTok has become a profound and complex phenomenon in the contemporary social media environment. Accounts such as @ridwanyulio that regularly spread false information about presidential candidate Anies Baswedan, and other accounts such as @sendycahyani1744 that promote Prabowo Subianto as a presidential candidate, and @projomakasar that concentrate on Ganjar Pranowo as a presidential candidate, point to serious problems for democracy and information integrity.

A thorough analysis of this phenomenon reveals various elements that encourage the spread of fake news on social media. Users of TikTok and other social media have low levels of digital literacy, which allows them to critically evaluate the truth of information (Lestari & Saidah, 2023; 70). One of the reasons why many users tend to get caught up in the spread of fake news is a lack of knowledge about media and digital literacy, as well as the ability to distinguish fake or manipulative content (Setyawan, 2023; 47). Another contributing factor is that psychological and social also contribute to the spread of hoaxes (Putra & Patra, 2023; 98).

Figure 6. Hoaxes vs Facts
Source: cekhoax.id, 2024

Forms of society acting on fake content show their various attitudes and perceptions about the information presented. Some groups of people may be influenced or provoked by false information due to confirmation bias or ignorance, while other groups may try to defend or question the truth of the information. Hoaxes can have a major impact on people's political perceptions and behaviors due to complex social dynamics in the digital era, where information is widespread and easily accessible (Au et al., 2022).

A thorough evaluation of these events shows that various parties need real and thorough action. Social media platforms should step up their efforts to find and remove fake content as well as fake accounts (Dwiyanti et al., 2023). This can be achieved by creating more sophisticated algorithms to find patterns of the spread of false information (Utama et al., 2023). In addition, education and training on digital literacy must be a priority, both at the school level and the general public. This will help people become smarter in using and assessing the information they encounter on the internet (Dwiyanti et al., 2023).

It is increasingly urgent that governments, social media platforms, and the public must work together. Taking strong precautions, strict law enforcement, and joint efforts to improve digital literacy are the only ways to maintain information integrity, strengthen democracy, and ensure that social media remains a useful tool for society. The spread of hoaxes on TikTok and other social media platforms is a problem that cannot be ignored. To overcome this problem, we must come together by understanding its complexity (Adelia et al., 2024). Ensure that social media remains a useful tool for society as a whole while maintaining information integrity and healthy democracy by increasing digital literacy, improving detection and action against fake content, and strengthening regulations to stop the harmful practice of spreading fake news (Purwatiningsih, 2024).

It is important to understand that the spread of hoaxes on social media can have an impact on social stability and community harmony, in addition to influencing public opinion politically (Utama et al., 2023). Incorrect information can lead to conflict or tension within groups, which can lead to deeper divisions and polarizations in society (Ronika et al., 2024). It has the potential to disrupt social harmony and exacerbate existing gaps and conflicts. Therefore, not only governments and individuals are responsible for combating hoaxes, but everyone is also responsible for maintaining peace and unity in society (Gulo, 2024).

The spread of hoaxes shows the imbalance of power in the digital world. Fake networks or accounts that spread false information usually have a specific political purpose or interest (Hidayati et al., 2024). The spread of hoaxes has a secret purpose to influence public opinion, change political stories, or obtain certain benefits (Basuki & Setyawan, 2022). Therefore, efforts to combat the spread of hoaxes should also involve a more in-depth assessment of the power structures and motivations underlying the practice. The psychological effects of the spread of hoaxes must be considered where if people continue to be exposed to false information, they can experience anxiety, confusion, and uncertainty (Amrihani et al., 2020). Hoaxes can also exacerbate overall social tensions and affect a person's mental health. Therefore, a holistic approach to combating the spread of hoaxes must also consider the mental health of the community (Kurnia et al., 2024).

It is crucial to emphasize that social media platforms must be transparent and responsible in dealing with the spread of hoaxes because, since they play a major role in facilitating the dissemination of information, they must also be responsible for the effects caused by the content disseminated through their platforms. To ensure that decisions taken by such platforms take into account the public interest and business profits, transparency about fake content handling policies, moderation processes, and the algorithms used to display content should be improved

CONCLUSION

The use of fake accounts on social media platforms like TikTok, such as @ridwanyulio, @sendycahyani1744, and @projomakasar, has led to the spread of false information and hoaxes related to presidential candidates. These accounts use various strategies to achieve specific political goals or interests. The hoax phenomenon on TikTok has evolved over time, with hoaxes becoming more organized and targeted, triggering social division and polarization. The spread of hoaxes on TikTok has a significant impact on information integrity and democracy, damaging public trust, triggering social conflicts, and affecting political behavior. To combat hoaxes and maintain information integrity, stricter regulations, better media literacy, cross-border cooperation, and shared responsibility between governments, social media platforms, and society are needed. Future research could explore the effectiveness of regulatory approaches, develop and test advanced machine learning models to detect hoaxes in real-time, examine the role of media literacy programs tailored to different demographics, and analyze cross-disciplinary partnerships between social media companies, governments, and non-governmental organizations to reduce misinformation and strengthen democratic processes.

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