

# The Impact of The Behavior of Smartphone Usage on The Consumption of Fake News by Student

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## Abstract

The background of this research is the increase in the distribution of fake news in cyberspace to coincide with the 2019 general election (Pemilu) campaign in Indonesia. Undergraduate students in Indonesia are beginner voters in the 2019 election, are one of the most critical campaign targets calculated by each political party. Fake news produced massively and structurally by political parties to get voters' support can break the nation's unity and harmony. As young people whose mindsets are critical and have idealism in fighting for their ideas, students must be able to distinguish between true and fake news for the safety of their own insights. The research method used is quantitative to understand students' behavior in using mobile phones, the fastest media for disseminating information through the internet. Understanding these behaviors will provide an overview of the impact of the application or information channel most often opened by someone on their ability to distinguish between true and fake news. This study aims to get a strategy to improve student behavior in using mobile phones, which will affect the quality of information obtained from the internet via mobile phones. Productive people with the proper insight are not easily provoked by fake news from the internet.

## Keywords:

Students, Fake-news, Mobile Phones, Internet

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## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Use of a Smartphone

Communication activities with devices are currently dominated by smartphone usage, a transformation from mobile phones. Smartphones that can provide more features and services than ordinary mobile phones are in great demand because of various variants and advantages in the operating system [1][2]. The oxford dictionary defines the word smartphone as "A mobile phone that performs many functions of a computer, typically having a touchscreen interface, Internet access, and an operating system capable of running downloaded apps. This definition illustrates how various users can utilize features. It is no exception to obtain news and essential information from various media on the internet, including instant messaging applications, social media, news portals, and others [3].

Data released by We Are Social regarding Indonesia's digital statistical indicators in January 2019 explained that of 265.4 million Indonesians, 177.9 million were mobile device users. With internet users, as many as 132.7 million people and 130 million people are active social media users. In more detail, the data shows that 60% of the total Indonesian adult population uses smartphones [4].

The explanation above shows that smartphones with internet connections have become a vital part of everyday life. In addition to using smartphones for daily utility purposes such

as functioning alarms, checking the weather, or taking photos and videos, smartphones are also widely used to socialize and exchange stories and news. Both through social media, as well as other online news portal sites.

## **1.2 The Spread of Fake News**

The development of communication technology and the increasingly massive use of the internet as a medium to disseminate information have an impact on the freedom of everyone to express their opinions through the internet. This increases the intensity of the news that someone receives from cyberspace [5]. The presence and progress of the internet also allow the exchange of information without being hampered by distance and time. All people can spread what is happening around them to the world very quickly. This fact then made the internet a new media used by non-journalist communities to publish news on new media [6].

Shayne Bowman and Chris Willis define citizen journalism from this phenomenon as "the act of citizens playing an active role in the process of collecting, reporting, analyzing, and disseminating news and information." This understanding implies that everyone can now make and disseminate the information they want [7]. But on the other hand, the opportunity for everyone to produce and spread the news diminishes the control of the truth of the information. Moreover, a person can throw information digitally to an audience with an anonymous identity, so it is pretty challenging to track where the information originates.

This makes fake news spread widely among citizens. The impact of the circulation of fake information is the formation of public opinion, which leads to excitement in society, uncertainty in information, and creates fear in the masses. The destructive impact of spreading false information is directed not only at individuals but also at government and private institutions [8]. Fake news, which is widely known as a hoax defined as a lie made intentionally to disguise the truth that exists. KBBI online describes hoaxes as (1) incorrect, lying (about news, messages, etc.); (2) fake news. In its development, a hoax refers to fake news or information intentionally created and disseminated to seek public excitement or lead opinion [9].

Fake news spread through the internet, especially social media, proved to have been used as a black campaign to overthrow political opponents. This phenomenon can be seen from the election of the DKI Jakarta governor in 2012, which continued until the 2014 Indonesian presidential election [10]. Meanwhile, related to the 2019 presidential election, the Ministry of Communication and Information (Kemenkominfo) stated that more than 1000 news hoaxes were distributed from the beginning of the campaign until mid-October 2018 [11].

## **1.3 The Spread of Fake News Through Smartphones**

The high number of internet users worldwide makes the internet a new medium for political leaders and their success teams to campaign and persuade the wider community to be influenced to become voters in each political camp. The dominance of smartphones as the most widely used tool to access the internet has also made applications and frequently opened sites with smartphones, such as instant messaging apps, news portals, and social media to be the most critical media for propagating political interests. The political campaign is carried out by conveying the vision, mission, and various programs that will be implemented if someone becomes a winner in the election. Unfortunately, dropping political opponents in a campaign by spreading false news is still common [12].

Students, as part of the community whose intensity in using smartphones is relatively high while still not having the identity in politics that is strong enough, become an easy

target for political campaigns carried out through social media to achieve as many votes as possible. They are persuaded by deliberately deflected information to build a particular opinion. The opinion that was made can have implications in the form of support for one political camp while also hating the stronghold of his opponent [13].

## **2. Methodology**

This research was conducted with quantitative methods, namely by making a series of closed questions in one questionnaire and distributing them to students of state and private universities in Yogyakarta for seven days, starting from 15 to 22 March 2019. At the end of the data collection, there were 124 respondents across study programs from 5 different universities. The respondents are students from semesters 2 to 8, ranging from 17 to 25 years. There were as many as 14 respondents whose data were not included because they did not have the university data.

Further, the data is processed by correlational analysis methods to find relationships or influences between two or more variables. In the context of this study, the connection or influence sought is the behavior of gadget usage among students towards their responses and actions when getting news from a smartphone.

## **3. Findings and Discussions**

### **3.1 The Proximity of Smartphones with Students**

It is undeniable that smartphones have become an essential part of everyday life, including for students who, in their activities, always need speed, efficiency, and effectiveness at work. Smartphones that offer many features and daily utility services are very suitable for students. This was proven by the presence of 42 out of 124 respondents (34.3%) who gave eight on a scale of 1 to 10 regarding the influence of smartphones on their daily activities. This fact is reinforced by the fact that almost half of the respondents took the time to open a smartphone and use it for various purposes. More clearly, 50 (40.7%) respondents claimed to take the time to open a smartphone.

Many activities can be done with smartphones, but generally, users use them more to socialize and exchange information through the internet. Conversations dominate activities with smartphones through 89 (72.4%) instant messaging apps acknowledging that the main activity carried out with smartphones is communication with the chat application. As additional information, 101 (82.1%) respondents preferred to use WhatsApp as a chat application compared to other applications for reasons simpler and easier to use.

Socializing and seeking information through social media is also still in great demand. We have seen 74 (60.2%) respondents who use smartphones to access social media. This is not surprising, considering that for some people, social media can be a means of entertainment to escape the fatigue of daily activities. Of the 124 respondents who filled out the questionnaire, 43 (35%) used smartphones more than 5 hours per day for various purposes. Then, 33 (26.8%) used smartphones for 3 to 5 hours, 26 (29.3%) used them for 1 to 3 hours, and only 11 (8.9%) claimed to use smartphones for no more than one hour per day.

### **3.2 Smartphone Use Behavior and Its Impact on Information Dissemination**

In this study, smartphone usage behavior as the basis for comparison with other variables surrounding the spread and consumption of false news is the duration of smartphone use in a day and the initial assumption of information obtained through the

chat application. Respondents in this study, concerning the time of smartphone use in a day, were divided into four groups. The first group is those who use smartphones for more than 5 hours per day, the second group is those who use smartphones for 3 to 5 hours per day, the third group is those who use smartphones for 1 to 3 hours per day, and the last is those in a day, using a smartphone less than one hour.

In this grouping, communication through chat applications is still dominant compared to other interests they do through smartphones. In each of the groups above, the use of smartphones to chat through applications is 69 to 83.3 percent. In more detail, users of smartphones with a duration of less than 1 hour have the highest percentage of chat application usage, namely 83.3% of respondents. This shows that those who use smartphones for less than an hour are more focused on using devices to just communicate with friends or business relations.

The results also show that many smartphone users use these tools to read news from chat applications and online news portals. The percentage of smartphone users reading the information is higher than accessing social media in smartphone user groups for 0 to 5 hours a day.

The most significant difference is that the smartphone user group is less than one hour daily. Only 27.3% use smartphones for scrolling down social media timelines. Meanwhile, more than half (54.5%) use smartphones to read the news. Meanwhile, in the user group of more than 5 hours per day, opening social media to see the latest updates was higher (70.4%) than news reading activity (60.5%). Regardless of the difference between using open social media or reading news, the explanation above shows that among students, the movement of reading news and seeking information with smartphones is still far above other activities, such as playing games.

In this study, we divided respondents into three groups based on their initial assumptions about the truth of the news they received from smartphones, primarily through the chat application. The data retrieval results show that the more someone does not trust the news he gets from smartphones, the lower the possibility of disseminating that information to others. As many as 81.1% of respondents said they were doubtful about the news they got from the group chat. Then 9.8% claimed to believe immediately, and the remaining 9% did not think about the news they got from the group chat.

As many as 8.3% of respondents who immediately believed in the news, they received claimed to have shared the information with others, even though 83.3% of them checked the truth before sharing it. Then, only 4% of those who doubted the news from the chat group participated in forwarding the news to others, and 94% checked the truth before continuing. And the rest respondents who did not believe the news they got from the chat group chose not to share the news they brought. And in a forced state, all respondents do not ensure the truth of the news or information that will be forwarded.

## **4. Conclusion**

Smartphones become an integral part of daily activities and proven to be the most accessible tools to get the latest news and information from various parts of the world on various topics. This study discussed about how to use smartphones and refutes one's attitude toward information obtained through smartphones. In future research, it will be terrific to discuss the content submitted to the trust in any information or news obtained. Technical knowledge deals with methods to distinguish between false news and can prevent the younger generation from misleading information and improper public opinion formation efforts.

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