

**Journalism Training to Improve Political Literacy
for Muhammadiyah Leuwiliang Students**

**Mulkan Habibi* , Hiru Muhammad, Hari Eko Purwanto, Lutfi, Alfareji Febrian,
and Hafsyah Abida**

Communication Studies, Universitas Muhammaadiyah Jakarta, Jakarta, Indonesia

*mulkan.habibi@umj.ac.id

Abstract: People who lack political literacy and are not wise when using communication media are often trapped by the flow of wrong information. So, literacy or education about journalism must be carried out from the early generations. Those who are still students need to prepare themselves from the start to be able to understand the quality of the various information they receive, including political information. This community service aims to provide understanding and increase journalistic literacy for Muhammadiyah students who are members of the Leuwiliang Muhammadiyah Student Association organization in Bogor Regency, West Java. Community Service Method using approach Participatory Action Research (PAR) carried out in the form of socialization and assistance to Muhammadiyah Leuwiliang students carried out in several stages, including mapping the conditions of problems faced by partners, preparing training program steps, preparing the division of tasks for each service team, and then carrying out training in the form of providing journalistic material and various types of hoax information, which is usually spread through various social media platforms. The results of community service conclude that students need a variety of information or a collection of data or facts that can be managed into something useful for the recipient. Muhammadiyah students need information that supports various processes such as education, political participation, and Muhammadiyah's missionary needs.

Keywords: journalism; literacy; muhammadiyah students; political

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INTRODUCTION

The development of communication technology has significantly impacted human life. The advent of two communication media platforms, social media and online media, has made it easier for people to obtain necessary information and facilitate interactions. As social beings, humans live together

and cannot carry out social activities without involving others (Hantono & Pramitasari, 2018). The use of social media as an inevitability of technological advancement means that most of society, especially students, are adept at using social media. Even political figures utilize the media as their political communication tool. Research

by Habibi et al. (2022) notes that at least three regional heads actively used Facebook accounts as a means of political communication to provide important information related to local government policies, public facilities, and their daily activities as regional heads.

One of the essential needs that humans must meet in every activity they undertake is the source of information. Information is the first instrument humans need to complete various interactions. With information, people will be able to determine their attitudes when interacting with and influencing others. It can even become a factor that hampers fulfilling various needs and maintaining their lives. Social life requires actions and reactions among social beings, creating interactions among humans (Mulyadi & Liauw, 2020). Only with the right information can someone's interactions and actions benefit the social life of humans.

Various pieces of information possessed by someone become an important strength in the context of social life because information is a collection of data or facts managed into something beneficial for the recipients. Ideally, information is processed first so that recipients can easily understand it. Information should be disseminated in a valuable or meaningful form. However, in reality, this is only sometimes the case. Information presented to the public must often align with actual data and facts. Such information is spread for purposes other than providing beneficial information and is usually found during the run-up to or during political years. 2023 is a political year because all political elements, including political parties and politicians running for legislative and presidential elections in 2024, will work hard to pass the 2024 election threshold and support their candidate to win the 2024 presidential election.

In Indonesia, a political year is not only a contest of political ideas but also often features various black political strategies. Various hoax information colours the political contest openly. Groups deliberately presenting and spreading false information to bring down someone or a certain group pose a dangerous act to Indonesia's political education. In a society with inadequate political literacy, it is easy to be influenced by misleading information. Hoax news is often found on online media platforms and spread through social media. The presence of social media as a digital communication tool can have a positive impact by providing easy access to important information. However, it also has negative impacts if used unwisely.

The spread of hoax news about political information during the 2019 election threatened public tranquillity. Tranquillity, an implementation of national resilience, is needed to face an era where various false news stories tarnish information values. Therefore, national resilience in the post-truth era must be continuously maintained in society, nation, and state life, serving as a strength to face global challenges (Amilin, 2019).

Hoax news is currently widespread in society and across various social media platforms. Groups create hoax news intentionally for various interests that can harm others and even the state. Such conditions worry many people, especially during this political year, as spreading hoax news can harm individuals or groups. If society cannot understand the true information, conflicts may arise. Hoax news affects all societal groups, including students, who are highly vulnerable to becoming victims of hoax news. Therefore, it is crucial to provide students with journalistic literacy and understanding. High school students, in particular, are a major age group with voting rights and

are future political decision-makers in Indonesia. If political information circulating among students contains false elements, it will mislead and result in the wrong political choices.

Providing journalistic and media literacy to students, including Muhammadiyah students in Leuwiliang, is essential to helping them understand the various information and news they receive, identify hoaxes, and know how to handle them (Hamzah & Putri, 2020). Community Service aims to provide understanding and improve journalistic literacy for Muhammadiyah students in the Ikatan Pelajar Muhammadiyah Leuwiliang organization in Bogor Regency, West Java, as community service partners. This activity is part of a follow-up program from previous community service activities. In the previous community service, the team conducted training on the wise use of social media with the same partner, Ikatan Pelajar Muhammadiyah Leuwiliang.

Thus, there is continuity in social media education and journalistic training so that Muhammadiyah students can use social media wisely with strong literacy, obtain reliable information, and avoid hoaxes. The best information is free from hoaxes when it is well-processed, meaningfully presented, and disseminated appropriately so that recipients understand its intent and purpose. Muhammadiyah students need information that supports various processes, such as education, political participation, and Muhammadiyah's religious outreach.

METHOD

The implementation method of this community service utilizes the Participatory Action Research (PAR) approach (Rahmat & Mirnawati, 2020), which focuses on developing and mobilizing knowledge among students to become agents of change in

journalism. It was conducted through socialization to strengthen student journalistic literacy and was held on Sunday, August 27, 2023. This community service activity was carried out by a team of four lecturers assisted by two students and the program partner, managing the Ikatan Pelajar Muhammadiyah (IPM) Leuwiliang organization in Bogor Regency, West Java Province. The stages of the event implementation are as follows:

1. Mapping the partners' current issues includes assessing their understanding of journalism. To understand the partners' situation in detail, an initial survey and mapping of potential participants in the journalism training will be conducted.
2. After mapping the partner's issues regarding the utilization of communication media for their organization, a program outline will be developed to train partners in using and improving social media skills to disseminate accurate information and avoid misinformation.
3. Tasks are allocated for each community service team based on expertise and training needs. The team consists of three lecturers who act as chairpersons and members in conducting the event, each providing material and preparing assessment and evaluation instruments. The other team members consist of educational staff and students responsible for preparing various administrative needs and equipment for the community service event. Additionally, they are tasked with accompanying speakers, filling out necessary instruments during training, and assisting participants during practical sessions and training evaluations.
4. Delivery of training materials to participants. Some topics to be

covered in the training include basic journalistic insights, the Journalism Code of Ethics, and the dangers of hoaxes on social media during political years.

Activity Evaluation. This evaluation is one of the efforts made to determine the extent to which this training activity can be considered successful. The evaluation of this training program is holistic and used to assess its effectiveness and efficiency.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The community service was conducted according to the initial plan as scheduled by the community service team and the partner. The journalism training occurred on Sunday, August 27, 2023, at SMK Muhammadiyah 6 Leuwiliang, Bogor, West Java. Four lecturers from the Muhammadiyah University of Jakarta served as speakers in the first community service activity. They are: Mulkan Habibi, S.Kom.I., M.I.Kom, a lecturer in the Communication Science Program specializing in broadcasting, and also the head of the Community Service with expertise in broadcasting; Hiru Muhammad, M.I.Kom, is a lecturer in communication science specializing in journalism with experience as an editor at *Republika Media*; Hari Eko Purwanto, M.I.Kom, is a lecturer in communication science who specializes in public relations (PR); Lutvi, M.P.D., is a lecturer in educational science who specializes in academic writing based on the EYD method.

The community service activity was conducted in the form of journalism training to improve the political literacy of Muhammadiyah Leuwiliang students. 2024 is a political year, and political activities are closely related to disseminating political information. Individuals need to wisely understand the various evolving pieces of information so that their tendency to be

involved in the circulation of hoax information will be greater. Therefore, there is a need for a strong understanding and literacy of journalism to shield students from unclear information flows.

During the training, the event began with an opening ceremony led by a master of ceremonies. The opening ceremony included the recitation of the holy verses of the Qur'an, singing the Indonesian national anthem, the *Mars Muhammadiyah*, and the *Mars Ikatan Pelajar Muhammadiyah (IPM)*. This was followed by a speech from the Chairman of the Muhammadiyah Students' Union (IPM) Branch of Leuwiliang, Bogor, West Java, and Ipmawan (the title for male IPM members). This can be seen in the following Figure 1.



Figure 1 Opening ceremony: Speech by IPM chairman

The community service partner responded positively to the implementation of the activity because the training was very relevant to the student's situation and the community's current situation. Many students in Indonesia become victims of fake news, especially in the lead-up to political years when various groups resort to any means to achieve their goals. This was the closing remark from the Chairman of IPM, Leuwiliang Bogor. The participants in this community service activity were representatives of Muhammadiyah student council members from junior and senior high schools in the IPM Leuwiliang Branch. Figure 2 shows Muhammadiyah student participants in the community service activity.



Figure 2 Community service participants

Next on the agenda was a speech by the head of the Community Service Program (PKM), Mulkan Habibi, S.Kom.I., and M.I.Kom. In his address, the PKM Chairperson from the Muhammadiyah University of Jakarta expressed gratitude for the warm reception and enthusiasm of the participants in joining the community service activity. IPM Leuwiliang, as a partner in this community service program, left a strong impression, and the theme discussed was highly relevant to today's society. Students, especially those in Muhammadiyah, are a crucial generation that needs to be equipped with knowledge and learning to build the nation's future. Students must have strong characters as they carry the trust of being the younger generation, as building the nation requires great strength that can be built from a strong personality, nationalistic spirit, fighting spirit, and a strong grasp of knowledge and technology to face global competition. Students are also referred to as youth who must understand their designated function from the beginning, which is to be pioneers and agents of change, moral forces, and social controls so that various segments of society can feel the activities of students.

The Muhammadiyah students participating in this community service activity were given an understanding of media development, especially social media. Almost all participants answered yes when asked if they owned a mobile

phone capable of accessing the internet and operating social media. All participants had smartphones that could access the internet, and they also acknowledged having multiple social media accounts and being quite active in accessing those accounts.

Therefore, the community service team highlighted the development of digital technology in their presentation. Community participation has increased in digital literacy activities, utilizing digital media and the internet as sources of information and public services (Intan et al., 2021). However, on the other hand, internet-based media today is like a double-edged sword. On one hand, it provides convenience for individuals, especially in achieving their goals. However, on the other hand, it also has negative impacts that can be damaging if not handled wisely.

The number of internet users is increasing every year, with an increase of 80.1%, according to (Oviani et al., 2024). The primary reason for internet usage is information-seeking. Along with this, misinformation circulates. Therefore, participants understood the importance of being wise when using the various conveniences offered by social media. Among the conveniences social media provides is quick and vast access to information. Additionally, it serves as a medium for exchanging information and interacting more intensively with others, even those at a distance.

Documentation of the Head of Public Service's remarks is shown in Figure 3.



Figure 3 Speech by the head of community service

However, advancements in media technology can also bring about negative impacts that may not have been previously considered. One dangerous negative aspect of societal stability is the rampant spread of fake news or hoaxes (Saputro et al., 2023). Fake news is easily disseminated through social media and other internet-based media outlets. The spread of various hoaxes becomes massive through certain irresponsible groups producing and reproducing hoaxes for their own purposes. Through various false information or hoaxes, they attempt to exploit someone's psychological vulnerabilities, leading to unrest, anxiety, discomfort, loss of dignity, and, even more dangerously, the potential for conflict and division within society (sindonews.com, 2019). Student groups are particularly vulnerable to becoming victims of hoaxes because they easily believe false information and are likely to spread it. Generally, they share false messages or information without much thought. Therefore, education or increasing journalistic literacy for school students is crucial in combating this issue. While teachers play an essential role as educators in schools, with increasing other responsibilities, it becomes increasingly challenging for them to educate students about the dangers of fake news. The danger of hoaxes will impact the future of the nation. Therefore, the future of our nation lies in the hands of those currently undergoing education at the school level.



Figure 4 Presentation on social media users in Indonesia

In addition to being active social media users and serving as a means of spreading hoaxes, high school students are also the age group with the right to determine Indonesia's political future in the upcoming 2024 elections. Therefore, it is necessary to provide journalistic literacy to students so that they can be wiser and more cautious in receiving and disseminating various political information that will be presented during the political year, even starting before the presidential and legislative elections in 2024. Muhammadiyah Leuwiliang students are very enthusiastic about thinking about Indonesia's political future, so in dialogue with the speakers, they also expressed concerns about various information obtained through social media that could sometimes be more trustworthy. Various unclear information sources are easily spread through various social media platforms, including WhatsApp groups and other social media platforms.

The team's next topic is journalism and education about journalism. News or information disseminated through mass media and online media is called journalistic activity. However, in practice, journalistic methods are often violated by those who intentionally create false information for the benefit of certain groups or individuals. In conclusion, it can be almost certain that any information disseminated containing hoax information is not a legal journalistic product. Although the journalistic code of ethics stipulates that freedom of opinion, expression, and the press are human rights protected by Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution, press freedom is a means for society to obtain information and communicate to meet fundamental needs and improve the quality of human life.

Presentation on journalistic ethics in Indonesia is shown in Figure 5.



Figure 5 Presentation on journalism ethics in Indonesia

Efforts to realize press freedom in Indonesia are based on the interests of the nation, social values, diversity of community groups, and the content of religious norms. The press respects the human rights of individuals in carrying out their roles, functions, rights, and obligations. The press must be professional and open to societal control (Samsuri, 2013). It cannot be avoided that the personal opinions of journalists accompany information produced by the press. However, the boundary is very clear when such additions cause originally factual information to become hoaxes. Therefore, everyone must understand that before disseminating news, especially through social media, they must first seek the truth of the data and facts so that the news spread is true and beneficial to the recipients of the information. However, this needs to be addressed by those who disseminate information (Rahmadhany et al., 2021).

The next topic is about the dangers of fake news or hoaxes. According to the speakers of this community service, fake information will spread more easily through social media platforms because no boundaries and rules limit the information entering someone's social media account. As a result, those who spread and produce fake news may face threats using the ITE law with various applicable provisions (Munir et al., 2020). Unlike credible television, print, and radio media, where every piece of information disseminated has gone

through various stages in the media policy system regulated by broadcasting laws (Undang-Undang Penyiaran, 2002) and SP3SPS. Hence, there must be more opportunities to engage in various activities that disseminate false information in mainstream media. The development of methods and media publications should provide ample opportunity for individuals to sift through news and sources of information that can be trusted.

Presentation on the dangers of hoaxes is shown in Figure 6.



Figure 6 Presentation on the dangers of hoaxes

Information disseminated, especially from media outlets, is known to have the power to convince public trust, so it is crucial to pay attention to the news and the quality of a media institution. The quality of information or news is judged by the data presented and the author's perspective. Currently, many media outlets present hoaxes and lack balance in reporting (Amin et al., 2021).

Next, the activity continued with a question-and-answer session and an evaluation. The participants were very responsive, and their enthusiasm for the discussion was quite high. This indicates that the material presented had a positive impact on them.

Some participants were allowed to ask questions about the presentations delivered by several speakers during the community service activity. This was done to deepen and enrich the material on journalism and the dangers of hoaxes for the event attendees.

Next, to evaluate the activity's success, the speakers also provided stimuli and case examples related to journalism and fake news. The participants were then asked to provide answers and solutions to the questions and case examples. The speakers did this to gauge the extent of the participants' understanding of the material presented earlier. The participants were able to provide positive arguments in response to the evaluation, leading the speakers to conclude that the material presented at the beginning was understandable to the participants. They were also able to implement various strategies provided to avoid engaging in the practice of spreading fake news on social media. Students refrain from disseminating news whose sources and accuracy cannot be verified, critically analyze various news presented, and act wisely without becoming subjects or perpetrators of spreading fake news.

Finally, the activity concluded with a group photo session and the distribution of certificates by the partner, in this case, the Chairman of the Muhammadiyah Students Association (IPM) Branch in Leuwiliang, Bogor Regency, West Java Province.

The head of the IPM Leuwiliang branch expresses gratitude to the speakers as well as the community service team from the Muhammadiyah University of Jakarta. Similarly, as the head of the community service, I thank the PC, IPM Leuwiliang, and the participants sent to attend this community service activity.



Figure 7 Group photo

CONCLUSION

Based on the entire series of activities that have been carried out, there has been an improvement in the participants' knowledge of journalism. Participants can understand that the process of information, before being disseminated as news, is first processed well, transformed into a valuable or meaningful form, and disseminated carefully so that recipients understand the purpose and intent of the information. Muhammadiyah students need information to support various processes such as education, political participation, and the needs of Muhammadiyah's dakwah (Islamic propagation). Journalistic literacy for Muhammadiyah students in Leuwiliang is becoming mandatory amidst the advancement of media technology and this political year.

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