The Role of the Communication and Informatics Service in Preventing the Spread of False Information to the Public in Sidoarjo District

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Submitted: 21 December 2021; Reviewed: 21 December 2021; Accepted: 31 January 2022

Abstract

In the current era of digitalization, everyone can easily create and share information without ascertaining whether the information is valid or invalid. In Sidoarjo District, Government agencies that play a role in preventing the spread of false information continue to occur in the public is a role that should be carried out by the communications and information service. The writing of this study aims to find out and analyze how the role played by the Communication and Information service of Sidoarjo District in preventing the spread of false information to the public in Sidoarjo District based on the focus of this research, namely the duties and functions of the Sidoarjo District Communication and Information Service, especially in the Information and Communication Public Management Sector. The data are presented through direct observation and interviews qualitatively analyzed. This study concludes that until now there is no policy or Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) that regulates the prevention of the spread of false information to the people of Sidoarjo, the action taken in handling cases of false information is only to clarify based on reports received from the people of Sidoarjo District.

Keywords: Analyze; The Government’s Role; False Information.


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ISSN 2085-0328 (Print) ISSN 2541-5913 (online)
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INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, the use of the internet is a necessity that cannot be avoided. This is why the use of social media in Indonesia is currently growing tremendously. Technological advances in the era of globalization make information widely circulated (Yuniani et al., 2019). With the existence of the internet, as an online medium, it is easy to spread unverified information in just seconds and can be directly accessed by the public through social media. Even so, this also has a positive impact as well as a negative impact, one of the negative impacts that are currently busy in the community is information that is spread intentionally which is false information, fake news, or facts that are engineered for certain purposes which nowadays people often call it a hoax. Any development activity can only take place and achieve the target if it is based on adequate information. Information is obtained through communication activities. However, what determines the value of communication is the information carried itself (Amar, 2018).

False information is an interesting form of crime to study because it is a combination of the sophistication of information technology, cybercrime, and law. Fake news can cause hostility that is not following the culture of the Indonesian nation which prioritizes tolerance (Widyaningsih & Kuntarto, 2020). The circulation of false information or fake news has become the daily consumption of the community and has been considered true information or news due to the massiveness of the fake news itself. Meanwhile, there is also no special education owned by the community to distinguish which information is right or wrong.

The number of Indonesian internet users continues to grow from year to year. According to a survey conducted by the Association of Indonesian Internet Service Providers (APJII) until the second quarter of 2020, the number of Indonesian internet users is 196.7 million, or 73.7% of Indonesia's total population of 266,9 million based on BPS data. Based on data from the Global Digital Report research in 2020, the number of social media users in Indonesia has reached 160 million users, or 59% of the total population in Indonesia. This figure increased by 12 million users or around 8.1% compared to the previous year. While the duration of time used to access social media is 3 hours 26 minutes per day. Like the number of internet users, the number of social media users in Indonesia also exceeds the global average duration of social media access which is recorded at 2 hours 24 minutes per day (Hidayat, 2020).

The average Indonesian population has 10 social media accounts per person, this figure includes both active and inactive social media accounts (Makhshun & Khalilurrahman, 2018). Although the responsibility for the phenomenon of false/hoax information cannot be fully borne by the government, including local governments. However, the government has several things, including the resources to take preventive and countermeasures against fake news and the impact it has (Putra & Surata, 2020). In this case, what is considered important is the effort to educate the public so that they can use social media healthily and responsibly.

Facing the spread of false information, the Government of Indonesia through the Ministry of Communication and Informatics is moving to regulate sites and social media accounts that are at risk of spreading false information, with a legal basis, namely Law No. 11 of 2008 concerning Information and Electronic Transactions (UU ITE) article 28 paragraph (1) which reads: "Everyone intentionally and without rights spreads false and misleading information that results in consumer losses in Electronic transactions". The criminal threat from this article is stated in Article 45A paragraph (1) of UU ITE No. 19 of 2016 namely imprisonment for 6 (six) years and or a maximum fine of Rp. 1.000.000.000,- (One Billion Rupiah) (Baqi & Wahyuningsih, 2020).

Sidoarjo Regency is the main support for the economy of the City of Surabaya and is also included in the Gerbangkertosusilo area, which has 12 residents totaling 2,266,533 people (2019 Population Census). In 2019, Sidoarjo Regency along with Surabaya and Banyuwangi was designated as a "Smart City" by the East Java Provincial government. The breakthroughs made by the Sidoarjo Regency Government are appreciated by the central government. Sidoarjo Regency is the only area that has fiber optic technology network infrastructure and data center independently by the Sidoarjo Communication and Information Office (home, 2021). However,
until now, Sidoarjo Regency has not been spared from false information.

In 2020 in Sidoarjo Regency, postings on social media and chain messages circulated, the content of the message was that there was a robbery that resulted in the severed palm of a man in the West Lingkar area, dean of the Mpu Tantular Museum, Sidoarjo. The information shocked and unsettled the local community. However, it has been confirmed by the Sidoarjo Police Chief that the information is not true (hoax) (MASPOLIN, 2020).

During this COVID-19 pandemic, the Sidoarjo Government is trying to optimize the provision of COVID-19 vaccinations to the public. However, the vaccination program organized by the Sidoarjo Regency Government was hindered by various hoax information on social media, one of which was false information or hoaxes circulating on WhatsApp groups related to information on mass vaccination implementation at Yon Arhanud, Gedangan. The information contains registration requirements that can be accessed by the public through the google form. As a result, there was a crowd of people in front of Yon Arhanud. Officers also found that many people were not registered but wanted to get vaccinated, this caused the road conditions along Buduran-Gedangan to be maxed because there was a queue in front of the Yon Arhanud entrance (Kurniawan, 2021).

Not long ago, there was a commotion in the community again because of false information that was again spread in Sidoarjo Regency through WhatsApp media. The information is about a little boy who was kidnapped and turned into a street busker. However, after being investigated, the information turned out to be incorrect or a hoax. The Buduran Sidoarjo Police Chief, Commissioner Samirin, confirmed that the photo was of a lost child who had been rescued by the police. The police also recorded a video of the child returning to his home in Banjarkemantren Village, Buduran District (Kurniawan, 2021).

The government at the East Java provincial level gave authority to the Office of Communication and Informatics of Sidoarjo Regency to prevent the spread of false information because basically, this is a much-needed role. According to Riyadi (2002) role is defined as the orientation and concept of the part played by certain parties in social opposition. In this role, individuals are expected to behave following the expectations of their environment. Roles can also be interpreted as demands that are given structurally (norms, expectations, responsibilities, etc.) (Lantaeda et al., 2017). Where in it there is a series of pressures to support its function in the organization. The role is a set of behaviors that are carried out in groups, both small and large.

By the function of the Ministry of Communication and Informatics as a guide for managing information technology applications, managing information, and public communication, it is hoped that all forms of information that are spread to the public, both real information and false information, can be managed so that they can be filtered before becoming public consumption. Currently, false information has become a threat to the Sidoarjo Regency Government, namely by the emergence of public doubts because of the increasing prevalence of information from irresponsible hoaxes.

Currently, information technology is developing very rapidly, this causes people to also hope to get satisfactory and quality information. So, on the other hand, service providers must also provide services that have quality standards (Amali, 2016). The Department of Communication and Information Technology is an office that has the task of carrying out regional authorities in the field of Information and Communication Technology management, one of the tasks it carries out is managing the production of information and publications in the community. The Department of Communication and Information has a role as a media that is responsible for conveying correct and appropriate information to the public. In this case, it has been determined that the function of the Office of Communication and Informatics is to formulate policies and implement policies on communications and information affairs in Sidoarjo Regency.

For this reason, the role of the Sidoarjo Regency government, especially the Communication and Information Office in carrying out preventive efforts against false information that is spread to the community is highly expected. As in the news published by sidoarjokab.go.id which was uploaded in
August 2018, PWI together with the Sidoarjo Regency Government, especially the Sidoarjo Kominfo Service, held an event to invite the younger generation and the public to fight false information. During the event, the Head of the Sidoarjo Communications and Information Office, Y. Siswojo, warned of the dangers of spreading unverified news, which could intentionally cause chaos and divide the community (KOMINFO, 2018). However, until now, false information is still widely spread in the Sidoarjo community through various media which then causes a bad impact on society in various fields and also causes public chaos.

Given the duties and functions carried out by the Communication and Information Office of Sidoarjo Regency based on what is written in PERBUP Number 89 of 2019 is to help the regent carry out government affairs in the field of communication and informatics in Sidoarjo Regency. The above phenomenon is the background for researchers to raise the title of the study, namely "The Role of the Office of Communication and Information in Sidoarjo Regency in Preventing the Dissemination of False Information to Communities in Sidoarjo Regency".

RESEARCH METHODS
According to Sugiyono, the notion of research methods is a scientific way to obtain data to be able to describe, prove, develop and find knowledge, and theories, to understand, solve and anticipate problems in everyday life (Sugiono, 2012).

The type of research used in this research is descriptive qualitative research to provide a comprehensive and in-depth description of the role of the Office of Communication and Information in Sidoarjo Regency in Preventing the Dissemination of False Information to Communities in Sidoarjo Regency. Methods Qualitative research is a research method based on the philosophy of postpositivism, which is used to examine the condition of the natural object of research, (as opposed to experimentation) in which the researcher is the key instrument.

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A research location is a place or area where research is carried out to obtain a direct picture of a phenomenon that occurs in the object of research. From the explanation of the background of the problem, this research was conducted at the Communication and Information Office of Sidoarjo Regency. The selection of research locations was carried out so that researchers could understand the role of the Sidoarjo Regency Communication and Information Office in preventing the spread of false information to the public in the Sidoarjo Regency.

The focus in qualitative research is closely related to the formulation of the problem to be studied where the research problem is used as a reference in determining the focus of the research. By the formulation of the problem and research objectives, the focus of this research is to see and describe the role of the Department of Communications and Information Technology in preventing the spread of false information to the public in the Sidoarjo Regency. This research is used as a reference in determining the research focus. So the researcher uses the classification theory of the implementation of the role of government proposed by Irving Swerdlow which states that government involvement in the process of developing community activities can be done in five ways, namely direct operation, direct control, indirect control, direct influence, and indirect influence (Akbar, 2021).

The data source is an important instrument in qualitative research because it is the subject from which data can be obtained. If the researcher makes observations, the data source is in the form of objects, emotions, or processes. If you use documentation, then the document is the source of data in the research (Barlian, 2016).

Judging from the data source, then data collection can use primary sources and secondary sources. According to Sugiyono (2012), the types of data in this study are primary data which includes informants and documents, and secondary data which includes written sources, photos, words, and actions.

In this study, the informant determination technique was carried out intentionally or purposive sampling, where the selected informants were those who were
considered to know and understand the most about the role of the KOMINFO Sidoarjo Regency in preventing the spread of false information to the people of Sidoarjo Regency. The key informants in this study were Mrs. Anita Yudi as the First Expert Public Relations Officer of the Information Management and Public Communication Section of the KOMINFO Sidoarjo Regency and the informants in this study were journalists and the people of Sidoarjo Regency.

To be able to answer the formulation of the problem empirically in this study, relevant data is needed so that phenomena that occur in the field can be known directly. Data collection in research is intended to obtain reliable materials, information, facts, and information (Barlian, 2016). In this study, researchers used data collection techniques through direct observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation.

In qualitative research, data analysis is used to process and process data not numbers which are then referred to as qualitative data. Data analysis techniques were continuously carried out from the beginning of the study to the end of the study. In this study the data analysis method used according to Miles and Huberman (2014) in which qualitative data analysis was carried out in several stages, namely data collection, data condensation, data presentation, and drawing conclusions or verification.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
Implementing Policies Related to the Management of False Information, Management of Public Opinions and Aspirations in the District

To achieve a goal, a policy made by the government is needed which is a series of concepts and principles that serve as guidelines in carrying out a certain activity or job so that there is no chaos or activities that are not by Pancasila. This study is based on the first focus, namely the role of the communication and informatics office in implementing policies related to the function of managing false information to support national and district policies, as well as managing public opinion and aspirations in the Sidoarjo district.

Regarding the special policy that regulates the spread of fake news in Sidoarjo Regency, Mrs. Anita Yudi Jayanti as the First Expert Public Relations Officer of the Information Management and Public Communications Section of the Sidoarjo Regency Communications and Informatics Service stated that there is no policy or still in the process of making policies. She or Mrs. Anita Yudi also said that in the role of the Service regarding preventing the spread of false news to the public, the Service conveyed educational programs regarding the urgency of disinformation to the public through various media.

Regarding the role carried out by the KOMINFO Sidoarjo Regency, namely implementing policies related to the information management function to support national and district policies, as well as managing public opinion and aspirations in the district, until now there has been no specific policy that regulates the prevention of the spread of false information in the district. Sidoarjo. The policy regarding this issue is still in the stage of the formulation process, so if the public reports false information or disinformation, this can only be followed up by a team that has been formed by the Communications and Information Office of Sidoarjo Regency.

According to Anderson in Tahir (2014) Policy is an action taken by one or more people as a guide in solving a problem. Meanwhile, policy implementation is the implementation or implementation of the policy itself which leads to certain activities, actions, actions, or mechanisms that are formed systematically. Policy implementation is a planned activity that is carried out seriously based on a reference to certain norms or procedures to achieve a goal (Ramdhani & Ramdhani, 2017).

The implementation of policies that are carried out in earnest so that they are efficient and on target will be able to realize the objectives of making these policies so that they can solve complex problems properly and deeply. After that, an assessment of the implementation of the policy is carried out so that the policies that have been made can solve a problem/problem solving and prioritize the interests of the community (Desrinelti et al., 2021).

The classification of the implementation of the government's role put forward by Irving Swerdlow states that the implementation of the government’s role is one of the direct
operations where the government directly carries out government activities. In preventing the spread of false information carried out by the Communication and Information Office of Sidoarjo Regency, this role is carried out by directly following up on reports of false information reported by the public to the KOMINFO Service call center that has been provided. However, a written policy or regulation is needed as a guide for the implementation of the roles carried out in solving these problems. This policy is not only useful for administrative actors so that the policy can be implemented effectively, but it is also necessary for the role of the community in its implementation so that it can achieve the goal of being able to prevent the spread of false information in Sidoarjo Regency.

**Develop Norms, Standards, Procedures, and Criteria for the Implementation of the Management of Lies in the District.**

In this era, everyone, including ordinary people, can produce their news or information and disseminate it independently even though it has not been confirmed by a competent authority, this is one of the reasons why false information is so easily accepted by the public.

Based on the results of an interview with Mrs. Anita Yudi as the First Expert Public Relations Officer of the Information Management and Public Communication Section of the Communication and Informatics Office of Sidoarjo Regency related to the role carried out by the Office, namely carrying out the function of compiling norms, standards, procedures and implementation criteria related to the information management function to support national policies and district, as well as the management of public opinion and aspirations in the district, until now there are no norms, standards, procedures and special criteria that can be used as a reference for information to be said to be valid or invalid. However, if there are issues that are spread in the community even though they are not true, the Sidoarjo Regency agency or official will clarify the information through the government's official social media and personal social media so that there is no chaos in the community.

The classification of the implementation of the government's role proposed by Irving Swerdlow is based on the focus on compiling norms, standards, procedures, and implementation criteria related to the function of managing false information to support national and district policies, as well as managing public opinion and aspirations in the District which are classified as indirect control, where how to carry out The role of government by providing certain arrangements and conditions have not been carried out by the Communication and Information Office of Sidoarjo Regency regarding the prevention of the spread of false information to the public in Sidoarjo Regency.

The preparation of norms, standards, procedures, and criteria regarding the prevention of false information is needed because of the urgency of false information that continues to spread and is easily accepted by the people in the Sidoarjo Regency. With the norms, standards, procedures, and criteria regarding the prevention of false information, it is hoped that it will make it easier for the public to filter the information received and also for government agencies in Sidoarjo Regency so that they can be faster and more decisive in preventing the spread of false information in Sidoarjo Regency.

**Providing Technical Guidance and Supervision Regarding the Management of False Information in the District**

From the results of interviews conducted by the author, the KOMINFO Service carrying out its role is to prevent the spread of hoax information by conducting training for stakeholders. This has become a routine activity carried out by the service every year, only the name is often changed, such as coordination meetings or technical guidance. The purpose of this training, in addition to media relations, is to improve the ability of stakeholders, namely PPID, LAPOR admin, and PERS Agencies.

This was conveyed by Mrs. Anita Yudi Jayanti as the First Expert Public Relations Officer of the Information Management and Public Communication Section of the Communication and Informatics Office of Sidoarjo Regency as follows “...We hold this technical guidance every year, the point is that apart from media relations, namely upgrading the skills of our stakeholders, This is accompanied by quality resource persons. Regarding the issue of preventing the spread of false information in the Sidoarjo Regency, there
is no specific technical guidance regarding this matter. However, it is always mentioned in the material, such as an invitation from media colleagues to be more selective. The training that we are doing is by the purpose of the program, essentially inviting friends and stakeholders to work together and be more selective regarding disinformation." (Results of interview 8 December 2021).

Based on the results of the interview, it can be proven that the Department of Communication and Information has carried out its role in preventing the spread of false information in Sidoarjo Regency related to the function of providing technical guidance and supervision related to the information management function to support national and district policies, as well as managing public opinion and aspirations in the district through training activities with stakeholders so that together they are more selective in presenting news and giving appeals to the public to be even more selective in receiving information.

Technical guidance or commonly called technical guidance is an activity where the specific goal is to increase employee capacity by providing knowledge so that they can create an effective work team (Prasetyo, 2020). According to Irving Swerdlow, one of the implementations of the government's role is carried out by direct operation, where the government directly carries out government activities. To prevent the spread of false information in Sidoarjo Regency based on research results, the Department of Communication and Information Technology has carried out technical guidance which is carried out regularly every year. However, there is no implementation of technical guidance that specifically discusses or evaluates the role of the service in preventing the spread of false information. This is because there are no written rules or Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) that regulate the problem of false information in the Sidoarjo Regency.

This guidance or supervision is carried out and managed directly by the Communication and Information Office of Sidoarjo Regency regarding preventing the spread of false information to the public in Sidoarjo Regency.

Carrying out Clarification of False Information on Reports and Public Opinions to the Press/Mass Media

The implementation of clarification of the existence of false information spread to the people of Sidoarjo Regency is an effort made by the Communications and Information Office of Sidoarjo Regency related to the function of the service, namely carrying out clarification of false information, news, and public opinion to the Press / Mass Media so that the public is more aware of the clarity of information. Mrs. Anita Yudi said that the KOMINFO Service has not yet played a role in preventing false information from continuing to spread among the people of Sidoarjo Regency. However, if there are complaints from the public, clarification will be carried out using the right of reply as soon as possible.

The current weakness regarding the role of the Communication and Information Office of Sidoarjo Regency in preventing the spread of false information in the community is that no written policy or regulation regulates this matter so what the Department is currently doing is using its right of response to the press media to clarify if there are reports regarding the reported information and it turns out to be valid or invalid.

If more and more false information is spread to the public, this can lead to the emergence of distrust or suspicion from the public towards the government and the press/mass media. For this reason, the government must also cooperate with other agencies, for example with the press and verified online media. This verification has a goal, namely to prevent the spread of false news from continuing to occur by increasing the professionalism of stakeholder companies, maintaining the quality of news, and preventing news that has a tense content (Rasidin et al., 2020).

According to Irving Swerdlow, one of the classifications of the role of government can be done in five ways, one of which is as an indirect influence which is the lightest form of government intervention in the implementation of development. In this case, what the Sidoarjo Regency Communication and
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Information Office does in preventing the spread of false information to the public is to clarify the existence of false news through the press or mass media.

By clarifying, it can answer the public's doubts that arise due to the spread of fake news. This can have an indirect effect. From the results of the discussion regarding the function of the service in conducting clarification through the press or mass media, it can be concluded that the Service has carried out its role in preventing the spread of false information as an indirect influence.

Develop and Implement Minimum Service Standards (MSS) for Management of Information and Public Opinion

SPM is an abbreviation of Minimum Service Standards which is the type or quality of basic services that every citizen has the right to obtain. The Communication and Information Office of Sidoarjo Regency related to official functions, namely compiling and implementing Minimum Service Standards (SPM). Yudi "This year there is an SPM on our official website, however, there is no information regarding valid or invalid information, so the handling is only by case. But for small examples, we have a call center, for example regarding Covid, there is a task force at the pavilion and also the official website, namely covid19.sidoarjokab.go.id. there is a channel for the public to clarify there too. However, there is no SOP yet." (Results of interview 8 December 2021).

In her interview, Mrs. Anita Yudi also said that until now at the Communications and Informatics Service there has been no discussion of SPM regarding preventing the spread of false information in Sidoarjo Regency.

In carrying out its obligations, the regional government in carrying out supervision of the duties and obligations carried out by the regional government is through the concept of mandatory government affairs which includes the fulfillment of Minimum Service Standards (SPM) (Tantowi, 2019). To increase the effectiveness and efficiency carried out by government institutions, a minimum service standard is needed which also acts as a guide in improving services to the community.

Based on the classification of the implementation of the government's role according to Irving Swedlow quoted by Akbar (2021), the focus is on compiling and implementing Minimum Service Standards (MSS) for Management of Information and Public Opinion, including indirect control in which control is carried out by providing certain arrangements and conditions. However, based on the results of research conducted by the author, the Office of Communication and Informatics of Sidoarjo Regency has not set certain Minimum Service Standards (SPM) relating to the management of information and public opinion.

SPM is a guideline for assessing the quality of services owned by the government as a form of its commitment to providing fair services to the community. Thus, regarding the problem of false information in the Sidoarjo Regency, it is necessary to have a Minimum Service Standard (SPM) as a standard.

CONCLUSION

The results of the research above show that the Communication and Information Office of Sidoarjo Regency has not been able to play an optimal role in carrying out its TUPOKSI related to preventing the spread of false information in Sidoarjo Regency. This happened because there were no regulations or certain Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) that specifically regulate the prevention of the spread of false information in the Sidoarjo Regency. The Sidoarjo Regency Government should make policies or regulations that specifically regulate this problem because until now false information continues to spread to the people of Sidoarjo Regency.

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