

The Role of Employee Digital Literacy in Combating Mass Layoff Hoaxes on Social Media Platforms

Jaenal Hasyim Maddi¹, Marlinda Irwanti Purnomo²

^{1,2} Universitas Sahid, Indonesia

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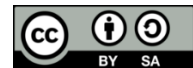
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ABSTRACT

The advancement of digital technology has accelerated the flow of information widely and rapidly, but it also presents challenges in the form of hoaxes that can harm individuals and organizations. In the corporate context, mass layoffs (PHK) often become targets of fake news, causing panic and instability in the workplace. Employees play a crucial role in countering these hoaxes through strong digital literacy. This article examines how employees' digital literacy can contribute to combating mass layoff hoaxes on social media to maintain corporate stability. Using Katherine Miller's organizational communication theory and the concept of digital literacy, this study highlights the importance of education and digital awareness in the workplace.

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Corresponding Author:

Name: Jaenal Hasyim Maddi

Institution: Universitas Sahid, Indonesia

Email: enalkatangka@yahoo.com

1. INTRODUCTION

The rapid development of digital technology has changed the way of communication in the workplace. Social media has become one of the main communication tools, both for personal and professional purposes. However, the rampant spread of inaccurate information or hoaxes on this platform is a threat to the stability of the company, especially regarding the issue of mass layoffs. Employees have a strategic role in preventing the spread of hoaxes by increasing digital literacy. This article aims to examine the role of digital literacy in helping employees fight hoaxes related to mass layoffs in order to maintain company stability. where social media has become a very effective tool for sharing news and information in real time. However, along with this convenience, new challenges arise. Hoaxes and inaccurate

information often spread faster than valid facts, causing confusion and panic among the public. Therefore, it is important for users, especially employees who are active on social media, to develop strong digital literacy. With a good understanding of how to assess and verify information. Social media facilitates the easy spread of information, but it also has a negative side. Organizational Communication Katherine Miller in her book "Organizational Communication: Approaches and Processes" highlights the importance of internal communication in a company. According to Miller, organizational communication not only includes delivering messages but also establishing a communication culture that supports digital literacy.

Hoax is information that has been manipulated and circulated in society, even though its truth cannot be accounted for.

Hoaxes have spread widely and are often used to spread false information, provoke division, and exploit public misunderstanding, which can lead to inaccurate or wrong judgments [1]. Hoaxes can disrupt social stability and reduce public trust in valid information. Most individuals do not have adequate digital literacy skills to distinguish between fact and fiction, making them more vulnerable to information manipulation [2].

Digital Literacy According to [3], digital literacy is the ability to understand and use information in various formats from various sources delivered via computer. With the increasing role of social media, digital literacy is key to sorting and disseminating credible information.

Misinformation is information that is spread without a clear purpose. On the other hand, disinformation is incorrect information that is deliberately spread for a specific purpose. In this case, disinformation serves to confuse others and make true facts seem invalid. Meanwhile, malinformation is information that is true but is used to threaten certain individuals or groups. Hoaxes, in this context, can be categorized as a form of misinformation or disinformation [4].

Differentiating between misinformation, disinformation, and malinformation is crucial, especially in the digital age of information overload. Understanding the differences between these three terms can help individuals be more critical in evaluating the information they receive. With the increasing spread of hoaxes and fake news on social media, the public must be trained to recognize the characteristics of questionable information.

By increasing our understanding of these three concepts, we can build a healthier and more sustainable information environment.

Throughout 2024, various industrial sectors in Indonesia experienced a wave of layoffs, which had a significant impact on workers and the national economy. Factors such as the weakening global economy, increasing business competition, and the

rapid development of digitalization have triggered major changes in the world of work.

Deputy Minister of Manpower (Wamenaker), Immanuel Ebenezer, who is familiarly called Noel, revealed that since the beginning of the year until December, at least 80,000 cases of layoffs were recorded. Noel considered the figure very worrying. The Ministry of Manpower even received a report that there would be potential for additional cases of layoffs of workers from more than 60 companies.

"Yesterday I discussed with my friends that there are around 60 companies that will be laying off workers. This is very scary," said Deputy Minister of Manpower, Immanuel Ebenezer. Deputy Minister of Manpower, Immanuel Ebenezer said, based on information he obtained from reports from business circles and labor unions, it was stated that Permendag Number 8 of 2024 concerning import policies and regulations was the mastermind behind the weakening of the industrial sector, and triggered a wave of layoffs.

While the news of the wave of layoffs is far from over, an important aspect of digital literacy research is critical among employees in combating misinformation. Employees with strong digital literacy skills are able to critically evaluate sources, distinguish credible information, and recognize false narratives. These skills not only improve employee performance, but also encourage responsible information sharing practices, and prepare employees for the complexities of the digital information landscape [5]–[8].

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study uses a qualitative approach to explore in-depth understanding of employee perceptions of hoax news related to the wave of layoffs. This approach prioritizes direct interaction between researchers and subjects in their social context to gain comprehensive insight [9]. Through qualitative techniques, data is collected by observing the speech, behavior, and interactions of subjects in a particular environment, so that a comprehensive

understanding of the phenomenon being studied is created [10]. The constructivism paradigm underlying this study sees that each individual constructs a unique social reality, so that various views of subjects are considered valid and valuable [11].

This study selected employees at Indomaret in five branches in Makassar city aged 21-23 years as samples, with the assumption that this age range is expected to be more critical and can distinguish between true and hoax information. A total of five employees who actively use social media were selected as research subjects, so that the data obtained is relevant to the phenomenon of employee perceptions of hoax news related to the wave of layoffs, such as the origin of the news, affected companies, and government policies in dealing with this crisis. The selection of this age range aims to understand the thinking patterns of employees who are actively involved in obtaining information about this problem.

Data were collected through interviews to obtain primary information from employees and through documentation of various written sources for secondary data. Purposive sampling technique was used to determine the sample with certain relevant criteria, namely knowledge of Hoaxes and employee involvement in social media as a source of information. This approach allows researchers to obtain more focused data on employee understanding of hoax news, so that the research results can be more representative [12].

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study aims to explore employees' understanding regarding their perceptions of

hoax news about the wave of layoffs on social media.

1. Employee Digital Literacy Level

Studies show that most employees have good digital skills, but are still lacking in critically recognizing hoax news.

2. The Impact of Layoff Hoaxes on Company Stability

Hoaxes related to mass layoffs that spread on social media can have various negative impacts such as increased uncertainty among employees, decreased public trust, and disruption in internal communication.

3. Digital Literacy Strategy to Counter Layoff Hoaxes

- a. Regular digital literacy training.
- b. Developing policies for the use of social media in the work environment.
- c. Internal campaign on the importance of sharing credible information.
- d. Using technology to detect and report hoaxes faster.

To gain in-depth insights, researchers conducted interviews with five employees at Indomaret in 5 branches in Makassar city who had met the established research criteria. The list of selected informants became a representation of the research subjects, and through this interaction, researchers were able to further understand how hoax news was received and understood by Indomaret Employees in the context of their daily lives. The results of interviews conducted by researchers with 5 Employees who met the research criteria are as follows, with a list of informants including.

Table 2. List of Research Informants

No	Name/Initials	Age	Gender
1	Ask	22	Man
2	Why A	21	Man
3	ARB	22	Woman
4	Ncty	23	Woman
5	BRs	21	Man

Source: Primary data processing (2024)

Digital Literacy According to [3], digital literacy is the ability to understand and use information in various formats from various sources delivered via computer. With the increasing role of social media, digital literacy is key to sorting and disseminating credible information.

In the ever-evolving digital era, the internet has become the main platform that offers easy access to information for the public, providing a variety of almost unlimited sources of information that currently often use the internet to obtain information from various sites, access news, and use social media as a tool to facilitate information searches [13]. This digital literacy is an essential skill to understand how the media works, analyze the messages conveyed, and use them wisely.

With these skills, it is hoped that the public, especially employees, can think critically, avoid the influence of fake news, and develop a more advanced mindset, as shown in the research by [14], where media literacy is an important key in countering hoaxes.

a. How Informants Obtain Information

Digital literacy plays three important roles in digital media communication. First, the increasing frequency of digital media use in society makes it a primary need and a source of information that is always available without limitations of space and time [14]. Second, digital media is now a reliable solution for various needs, so that people's dependence on it continues to increase [15]. Third, digital literacy skills are important for filtering the information received, because critical reading skills are needed so that people can capture the essence of the information accurately [16].

The results of the study show that the five informants obtained information related to the Mass Layoff news through online news portals spread across the Indonesian internet. The choice of platforms they

accessed was based on their respective experiences in reading news on digital media, as well as the types of news they were interested in.

—I often see news about the Wave of Layoffs, which companies are affected and in which sectors, and how the government and company policies respond to this, and how many employees have been affected.

—I usually visit online news sites such as Metro News Tribunnews, Detik.com, and Kompas

The results of the study also showed that informants obtained information about the Impact of Mass Layoffs through their social media, which often included links to related news pages. Ease of access to information was the main reason. One informant stated:

“Nowadays, the most helpful way to get instant access to news is through Facebook, Instagram, TikTok and other online news portals.” Many people today use mobile phones, so they are more likely to get news from Instagram, Facebook and Twitter than watching TV. This may be different for the older generation.”

The ability to search for information on the internet not only involves the skills of using search engines, but also includes an understanding of the internet and the ability to utilize various online activities, such as participating in discussion forums, managing email, searching for news, and enjoying entertainment via the internet, such as listening to music or watching videos [17].

b. How to understand the information

To be able to sort information received from various sources, a

person needs certain skills to understand and evaluate the information. In this case, digital literacy is very important because it provides the ability to assess and control the process of understanding the messages received, so that individuals can distinguish the correct information [18].

The results of the study showed that two out of five interview informants only understood literacy in a general sense, without fully realizing the overall meaning of the concept. Overall literacy involves the ability to use and understand information from various sources, which includes reading skills as well as critical thinking skills to evaluate the information obtained.

"In my opinion, literacy is our ability to understand, comprehend and manage information or problems that we face in everyday life."

"Literacy is very important today, because digital literacy can help people to increase useful knowledge in dealing with various problems. We as employees must also be critical of the phenomena that occur fundamental problems, so that we can make the right decisions and how we should prepare ourselves."

The results of the study also showed that some informants have understood how to distinguish whether information spread on digital media is a hoax or not. As is known, a hoax is information that has been engineered and spread without a basis that can be accounted for, so that its truth is doubtful.

—What makes me doubtful is that there are still many media that spread and write news without being supported by data. For example, data on the

percentage of employee cuts and the number of companies affected

"For me, the level of trust in a news is still 50:50. This is because not all news includes concrete data. In my opinion, without clear data, I cannot be sure that the news is accurate. News that is not equipped with data is the same as nonsense or hoax news."

Furthermore, the interview results showed that there were informants who tended to doubt the truth of information circulating in digital media, including the social media they use. One informant stated,

"Actually, I don't necessarily believe the news, because I think this is just a game to damage the country's economy and is an excessive media trick."

"Sometimes, the media conveys excessive information. In my opinion, the news is not actually something that is scary or threatens the stability of the company. However, the media presents the news as if the Mass Layoffs have a big impact on the company's growth."

Understanding the information received, whether true or false, is an important basis for assessing the accuracy of information. The ability to understand information is invaluable in assessing information based on various relevant aspects and considerations. With a good understanding, individuals can develop an open mindset towards all circulating information, so that they are able to evaluate and determine which information is valid and which is not. This is very important in

today's information age, where much of the news circulating cannot always be accounted for [19].

c. How Informants Evaluate Information

A person who has literacy skills is not only able to obtain information, but can also analyze the content of the information. They need to consider the source of information, its usefulness, benefits, and relevance in everyday life. These questions are important to ensure that the information obtained does not harm others and can be used for the common good, and contributes to improved learning [20].

The results of the study showed that several informants interviewed had realized the importance of evaluating information, especially hoaxes, and tried to check the truth of the information before sharing it with others. This awareness reflects the increasing literacy among individuals, where they not only consume information, but are also active in the process of assessing and verifying the information received.

"I usually compare information with reliable sources and review the news I receive, so I can better deal with the spread of hoaxes."

The results of the study also showed that there was a lack of informant roles in evaluating information obtained from digital media, such as social media and online news portals. One informant stated,

"I personally don't really care whether the news is a hoax or not, because I myself don't consider it a threat. So, I tend to be indifferent."

The main aspect in the ability to evaluate information is understanding the importance of ensuring the consistency of

information and the methods used to analyze the background and truth of the information received. Ensuring the consistency of information is very important in determining the accuracy of information, because it can affect how informants understand the information and the steps taken after the evaluation process. Mismatches in the information received can lead to misunderstandings and inappropriate decision making [21].

Good evaluation also involves the ability to distinguish between fact and opinion, and to recognize biases that may exist in information sources. By developing these skills, individuals can make more accurate and critical assessments of the information they receive, which in turn can improve the quality of decision-making in various aspects of life.

d. Actions taken from the evaluation results

Evaluation is the process of collecting data and information about individual learning abilities, which serves to assess the extent to which learning has taken place. This process also helps in determining whether the objectives and learning processes in developing knowledge have been achieved properly. Thus, evaluation plays an important role in supporting the progress and development of individual learning outcomes [22].

"My hope is that others will do the same thing I did, which is to compare news from platform A with platform B and ensure the accuracy of data from trusted sources. I want them to also spread the information and data to the media they use, so that not only my friends get the information, but also their friends and so on,

maybe even reaching a wider environment."

"I try to filter and search for information from various official government platforms and the Ministry of Manpower, so that I can ensure that the information I obtain is true."

"Hopefully the people around me will be more critical and not easily influenced by hoax news, and be wiser in filtering the information circulating."

Digital literacy is currently very important because this ability allows individuals to find accurate and relevant information more efficiently. Especially for employees, digital literacy is the key to analyzing and evaluating the information they receive, so that they can be more critical in responding to various sources of information available. Findings regarding the public's understanding of digital literacy can be obtained through an analysis of the definition and competency of digital literacy that they have.

Digital literacy is defined as the ability to find, evaluate, and use information effectively through various digital media. This ability includes an understanding of how technology works, as well as skills in managing and utilizing information obtained from digital sources [23]. Thus, digital literacy includes not only technical aspects, but also critical skills needed to adapt to rapidly changing information in today's digital world.

Based on the results of the study, two out of five Indomaret employees in Makassar define digital literacy as the skills to search, calculate, read, understand, and utilize information contained in

digital media. This study shows that employees at Indomaret in Makassar do not yet have a clear understanding of internet media literacy, so they tend to have personal views about it. However, after being given an explanation of media literacy, they finally realized that internet media literacy is important knowledge for internet users to be able to distinguish between true and false news.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the research conducted, it can be concluded that the understanding of digital literacy among Indomaret employees in Makassar city, especially related to hoaxes, including those related to the threat of mass layoffs, is still relatively low. This can be seen from two out of five informants interviewed who have not reached the stage of digital literacy according to the digital literacy theory proposed by Paul Gilster. The digital literacy skills possessed by these informants are still lacking, due to minimal understanding of information obtained from digital sources and a lack of awareness in evaluating the information. As a result, they tend to be less critical in responding to phenomena that occur around them. In addition, this study found that one in five informants expressed their distrust of the news of Mass Layoffs, due to excessive news delivery by the media, which ultimately resulted in a loss of trust in the information conveyed.

Thus, if awareness of digital literacy among the public, especially Indomaret employees in Makassar city, can be increased, it is hoped that hoaxes circulating in digital media—both on social media and online news portals—will not spread more widely to the public. The hoax can be considered invalid information. In addition, with increased digital literacy skills, the impact will not only be felt by individuals, but will also have a positive effect on the surrounding environment, so that the role of digital literacy can be realized properly and correctly.

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