Challenges of Implementing the ITE Law against Hoaxes in Indonesia: An Exploratory Analysis

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Abstract

Indonesia has a very high level of hoax circulation, so the ITE Law has been implemented to fight it. This article describes a qualitative study in three provinces, namely DKI Jakarta, West Java, and Banten, to investigate the challenge of implementing the ITE Law to reduce the circulation of hoaxes in the community. Semi-structured and in-depth interviews with 33 netizens at the provincial, city, district and village levels were conducted by one academician and two well-trained communication masters students. This data is complemented by data from FGDs with Communication and Law students and discussions with academics and is also complemented by literature studies and documentation related to hoaxes and the implementation of the ITE Law in Indonesia. Results show that Indonesian people's digital literacy is still low. Therefore, it is hoped. The government could keep going by increasing digital literacy programs in the community. Besides, the implementation of the ITE Law is expected to be more optimal. Its implementation is fair and equal before the law, and the articles rubber in the ITE Law can be quickly revised.

Keywords— Hoax, ITE, literacy, digital

Introduction

Indonesia is one of the countries with the most prominent internet users globally. According to the, *We Are Social report*, 204.7 million internet users in the country as of January 2022. That number increased slightly by 1.03% compared to the previous year. In January 2021, Indonesia's number of internet users was 202.6 million. The number of internet users in Indonesia has continued to increase over the last five years. Meanwhile, the internet penetration rate in Indonesia reached 73.7% of the total population in early 2022. It was recorded that the total population of Indonesia was 277.7 million people in January 2022 (We Are Social, 2022).

The Indonesian Telematics Society (Mastel) surveyed hoax news to see the development of public perceptions of the spread of false news and its Impact on the nation's life. About 61.5% of respondents think that hoaxes disturb the survey results. This number increased from 43.5% in a similar survey conducted by Mastel in the 2017 period. The survey, released on April 10, 2019, also revealed that 81.9% of respondents believed hoaxes disturbed social harmony in 2019, increasing from 75.9% in 2019. 2017. Then, those who think that hoaxes greatly hinder development increased from 70.2% to 76.4% in 2019. Meanwhile, there are 54.3% of respondents think that the spread of hoaxes is used as a tool to lead public opinion, including black campaigns. A total of 5.8% of respondents also think that some use hoaxes for business purposes. The survey was conducted online from February 28 to March 15, 2019, with 941 respondents. The age range of respondents is 20-24 years (27.8%), 25-40 years (35.8%), 41-55 years (25%), above 55 years

(4.90%), 16-19 years (6.1%) and under 15 years (0.30%) (Mastel, 2019).

From several questions posed in the survey, responses were also obtained regarding the definition of hoax, community behavior in responding to it, forms and channels of hoax, impact, and prevention of hoaxes. As many as 88% of respondents answered that hoaxes are intentional lies. 49% think hoaxes are news that incites, 61% think hoaxes are false news, and 31% think hoaxes are news vilifies other people. The results can be interpreted that the public is susceptible to news that vilifies other people. Meanwhile, the respondents admitted that they received more fake news about politics. As many as 93.2% of respondents think the news about social politics is the content of hoax news they often receive (Mastel, 2019). Many experts define hoaxes or fake news (Situngkir, H., 2011; Park, K., & Rim, H., 2020).

Saracen syndicate, creators and spreaders of fake news, in mid-August 2017, further strengthened people's awareness of the dangers of hoax information. The police finally caught the Saracen fake news syndicate case. Manufacturers use public cyberspace to seek financial gain from user activities. The false news business is also valued at a high value. Political entities also become the primary consumers. Spreaders of false and hateful news, such as Saracen, which were revealed by the police, he said, had hundreds of thousands of accounts that became 'accomplices' to spread hoaxes (Wibowo, AT, 2021).

It was also revealed that there were 2,000 accounts specifically tasked with cornering Islam and 2,000 accounts for cornering Christianity, and tens of thousands of accounts used to attack the government, political figures, and others. The presence of the Saracen group, which has been proven to take advantage of political moments since the 2014 Presidential Election and 2017 Regional Head Elections, has become an evaluation material to improve cyber security. Cyber monitoring carried out by the police is not only for law enforcement but also to clarify many hoaxes scattered on social media. Disclosure of hoax groups, such as Saracen, is one of the momentums to improve the national political climate. This is because political practice in Indonesia will not be good if there are still individuals or political organizations that use hoax producer groups (Tapsell, R., 2020).

Meanwhile, Kominfo data on March 21, 2022, shows that there are 2,149 hoaxes related to the COVID -19 issue via the Internet (Kominfo, 2022).

Reporting from reuters.com, claims of AIDS cases caused by the Covid-19 vaccination, or "VAIDS" as claimed in the upload, are entirely unfounded. The term VAIDS itself also does not exist in the medical world. Stephen Gluckman, MD, a Professor of Infectious Diseases at Perelman School of Medicine at the University of Pennsylvania and Medical Director of Penn Global Medicine, said "VAIDS" is an actual evidence is condition. There no of immunodeficiency associated with the Covid-19 vaccine. Furthermore, Donna Farber, Head of the Division of Surgical Sciences and Professor of Microbiology & Immunology at Columbia "There is no known University, said, phenomenon of vaccine-induced immunodeficiency syndrome. It is not a real syndrome." Farber also explained that the vaccine is unlikely to cause an immune deficiency.

In contrast, vaccines stimulate immune cells to be activated, divide and produce molecules such as antibodies and soluble factors to recognize pathogens and clear them from the body (Kominfo, 2022). Then a hoax states that "The Omicron Virus is a biological weapon." Furthermore, there was a hoax: "The PCR test is the same as getting a Covid vaccination (Kominfo, 2022).

In Indonesia, many regulations regulate the issue of hate speech and hoaxes, such as Law No. 40 of 2008 concerning the Elimination of Racial and Ethnic Discrimination; Law No. 11/2008 concerning Information and Electronic Transactions, until the Circular Letter of the Chief of Police No. SE/6/X/2015. Hoax spreaders will be subject to the Criminal Code, Law No. 11 of 2008 concerning Information and Electronic Transactions (ITE), Law No. 40 of

2008 concerning the Elimination of Racial and Ethnic Discrimination, as well as actions when hate speech has caused the social conflict (Kominfo, 2017). From the legal aspect, the act of a hoax producer is the recklessness and courage of a professionally organized cybercrime to fight against the applicable law. Law Number 11 of 2008 concerning the ITE law contains a rubber article or multiple interpretations. Therefore, this article aims to discover the challenges of implementing the ITE Law in overcoming the circulation of hoaxes in digital media in Indonesia are?

Along with the development of technology, Internet has caused the appearance of the socalled crime with *Cyber Crime* or crime through Internet networks. As for understanding, *Cyber Law* is the aspect of the law that the term originated from *Cyberspace Law*, and the space scope covers every related aspect with individuals or subjects. The law that uses and utilizes internet / electronic technology started at the moment start "online" and enter the *cyber* or virtual world. In a country that has proceeded to use the internet/ electronics to facilitate every aspect of life, the development of world law virtual is already very forward (Hidayat, T., & Mahardiko, R., 2020).

As for the scope of *Cyber Law*, there are several things, Among other: *Hate speech*, *Trademark*, *Defamation*, *Copyright*, *Privacy Duty Care*, *Criminal Liability*, *hacking*, *Viruses*, *Illegal access*, *Regulation of Internet resources*, *Procedural issues*, *pornography*, *Robber Y*, *Electronics contracts*, *e-commerce*, *E-Government* and *Consumer Protection* (Ketaren, E., 2016).

Literature Review

Information and Electronic Transactions Law (ITE Law)

In tackling the spread of hoaxes or fake news through social media and other digital platforms, the Government of Indonesia has made various efforts through several related parties. One of them is by establishing a legal protection that can ensnare and take firm action against the perpetrators of making and spreading information that cannot be proven true. Several legal sanctions can be imposed on perpetrators of hoaxes, one of which is implementing the Information and Electronic Transactions Law or Law Number 11 of 2008, which was later changed to Law Number 19 of 2016. This law is the legal protection that regulates information and electronic transactions and information technology and applies to all Indonesian citizens (Idris, 2018).

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ITE Law explains that there is freedom of opinion, expression of thoughts, and obtaining information by utilizing information technology for the people of Indonesia. However, the government still has to limit it. In Law No. 19 of 2016 concerning Electronic Information and Transactions, there are rules for spreading the news about the coronavirus (COVID-19), which impacts defamation carried out through electronic systems such as social media. The rules regarding this matter are contained in Article 27, paragraph (3) of the ITE Law, which reads:

: Everyone intentionally and without rights distributes and transmits and makes accessible electronic information and electronic documents that contain insults and defamation. Furthermore, regarding the dissemination of false information on social media, Article 28 paragraph (1) also states that anyone who intentionally and without rights spreads false and misleading news that causes consumer losses in electronic transactions.

Usage and Gratification Theory

Blummer and Katz developed the uses and gratification theory (UGT) in 1974 and considered one of the axiomatic theories used in the communication discipline. UGT aims to explain how one seeks out media that fulfill their needs and generate ultimate gratification (Lariscy et al., 2011).

Rubin (1994) added that the uses and gratification theory explains the psychological needs that shape why people use media and what motivates them to engage in certain media use behaviors for gratification that meet these intrinsic needs.

Windhal (1981) argued that scholars need to have a combination of viewpoints in order to refine the theoretical basis of UGT, and that is : (1) media perception and expectations guide people's behavior, (2) interest and externally imposed constraints derive one's needs and motivations, (3) there are functional alternatives to media consumption, and (4) media content plays an essential role in media effects.

Sundar & Limperos (2013) argued that the traditional UGT also experienced information and communication technology developments with the advent of new media. They illustrated that recent research on UGT utilized the traditional scale of gratification formulated for old media, which lacks specificity.

Methodology

Collection Data

This study was drawn from the responses of 33 interviewees living in DKI Jakarta Province, West Java, and Banten Province and was selected through non-representative purposive sampling (Battaglia, 2008). One academic and two trained communication studies masters students conducted 33 semi-structured and indepth interviews lasting 60–80 minutes. Interviews were conducted between January and February 2022. Interviews were conducted via Google Meet and Zoom, conducted in Indonesian.

The Interview Guide is (available at: https://docs.google.com/document/d/1wPnoPU 5hx8RVBmc0VVmIozlu9HImO9PwGUWt2tZJ NgU/edit?usp=sharing was first tested on two participants and subsequently refined following discussions among the team members. Interviewees were informed about the purpose of the study. They were asked about technology and social media use and their response to hoax or disinformation content. With the participants' permission, all interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim. A pseudonym reflecting the region and gender of the participant is used to protect confidentiality. Besides that, data collection is also carried out with literature review and documentation related to online media coverage of hoaxes and the ITE Law. Types of secondary data other uses include:

1. Primary legal materials, namely primary legal materials that are binding and consist of:

a. Law Number 11 of 2008 concerning Information and Electronic Transactions (ITE Law)

b. Law Number 19 of 2016 concerning Amendments to Law Number 11 of 2008 concerning Information and Electronic Transactions (ITE Law).

2. Secondary legal materials consist of books, newspapers, magazines, research results, scientific works, journals, articles, and the Internet.

Participant

Sociodemographic characteristics of the interviewees (gender, age, marital status, living arrangement, employment status, level of study, occupation) and are available at: https://docs.google.com/document/d/1w6uCfwl EcaxQHCMjmHD7K6fAXCBGxgTDHxsBQa5 cK3I/edit?usp=sharing. There is an equal gender division among interviewees in DKI Province and West Java, while in Banten Province, the ratio is 40% female and 60%, male. The mean age of the interviewees was quite similar, 22.5 and 23.5 years, respectively, for the interviewees from DKI Jakarta and West Java provinces, and slightly higher, 2 4.2 years, for the interviewees in Banten Province. In DKI Jakarta, the majority of interviewees were single (70%), while most had a partner or were married in West Java (50%) and Banten (60%). Regarding living arrangements, 40% of interviewees in DKI Jakarta lived with their children, while this was the case for 30% of participants in West Java and Banten. Regarding job characteristics, most of the interviewees had part-time jobs (70% in Jakarta, 60% in West Java, and 60% in Banten), covering a variety of occupations.

Thematic Analysis

To understand how people respond to hoaks or disinformation and the challenges of implementing the UU ITE, we manually use semi-structured, in-depth interviews that highlight illustrative quotes and contextual factors. We performed a thematic analysis (Guest, MacQueen, & Namey, 2012) to stay close to the data and group the findings into clusters. During the thematic analysis process, meetings with team members are frequent and lengthy, and the coding scheme is adjusted and refined as necessary. The citation matrix was compiled with research questions and manually explained along with the interviewees' sociodemographic information (gender, age, marital status. residence arrangement, employment status, type of occupation, and education level).

After that, triangulation between the data obtained from interviews, literature review studies, and documentation for exciting conclusions.

Result

Hoax Exposure

When exposed to hoax news, some people reveal that they sometimes only read the headline or the news title. It has become a habit because there is too much content and information on social media. However, some claim that they tend to read

news or information containing hoaxes. It is as stated by Sinta below :

"... I am just curious to understand the hoax news . However, there are visible signs that the news is indeed disinformation" (Sinta, 22, Jakarta).

Meanwhile, during the pandemic and post the COVID-19 pandemic, the spread of hoax news related to health is increasing. Outbreaks of harmful content are increasing in number on social media. Therefore, not a few people only

read a piece of news or information that contains hoaxes.

"With so much hoax content, I prefer to use a computer that is connected to a smartphone phone . So it is faster to respond to that information." (Ulva, 23, Banten)

In one week, around 7 to 10 hoax content was found on social media. When they find the hoax news, they respond to netizens by deleting the content (Jamal, 22, West Java).

Desire to Spread Hoaxes

The news is often contained hoax content. Usually, there will be an invitation to forward the content back to several other friends. If this happens, it is necessary to be vigilant and reverify before re-sharing.

"I once accidentally forwarded a message that contained hoax news . When I realized that I had accidentally sent the hoax news, then at the first opportunity, I corrected the post and deleted it" (Ima, 22, Jakarta).

Melly said the same Thing below :

"In my heart, I have no intention and not sure that I want to spread fake news. It goes against my conscience. But I just want to pass on the unique information" (Melly, 21, Jakarta).

This problem is sometimes due to a desire to be the first-time disseminator of information related to a particular issue.

Hoax Identification

Various ways are done to identify whether a news piece is a hoax. Currently, there is an increase in corrections or clarifications from social media and mass media. Meanwhile, to identify hoaxes or not, they also get input from close friends or relatives.

"In identifying hoaxes or not, I often correct them by looking for trusted references, such as family" (Rudi, 23, Banten).

The news's characteristics are hoax news or fact news by looking at its unique content. Usually, there is an invitation to disseminate and make the information viral at the end. Then, sometimes old news that has been published is republished again. The job of identifying fake news or facts is a challenge in itself.

Hoax Spreading Experience

We have accidentally spread news or information which later turned out to have hoax issues or fake news.

The reason for spreading the news or information is because they want to be the first to exist by sending photos about specific issues.

"Yes...we want to exist and be the first to raise issues (Lili, 22, West Java).

There is a sense of regret for spreading hoax news and a desire to take the message back from social media. It is challenging to eliminate the digital footprint in the virtual world (Soni, 23, Banten). Hoaxes are sometimes unintentionally spread because the information comes from a trustworthy person.

Content Containing Hoaxes

Hoax news content that is often encountered is in politics and health. During the Covid- 19 era, issues regarding the health sector became an issue that often appeared on social media.

"The most active media in spreading hoaxes is social media . There are many issues related to COVID-19 circulating in the community" (Juan, 21, Banten).

Social media hoaxes are wrapped in several forms, including writing, infographics, memes, and video graphics. The form of messages packaged with video graphics tends to be more touching and gives its nuance (Rosita, 22, West Java).

Community legal awareness & ITE Law

Article 28 paragraph (1) of Law Number 11 of 2008 concerning Information and Electronic Transactions (ITE) regulates the criminal act of spreading false news. Most of the informants were aware of the legal consequences of hoax spreaders.

"I already know the article on the ITE Law regarding hoaxes or fake news, and we need to

be vigilant before spreading information through social media " (Ridwan, 22, Jakarta).

In Article 28 paragraph (1) of Law Number 11 of 2008 concerning Information and Electronic Transactions (ITE), the punishment is a maximum imprisonment of 6 (six) years and a maximum fine of Rp. 1,000,000,000.00 (one billion rupiah).).

"However, it is unfortunate that the implementation of the ITE Law still seems selective. Multiple of the buzzers government critics are arrested, but they seem to be above the law for the buzzers who support the government" (Sisca, 21, West Java).

Discussion

The level of use of social media that is not accompanied by knowledge and literacy of digital media has led to an outbreak of the phenomenon of spreading fake news or hoaxes. The increasing and almost unstoppable spread of hoaxes requires the government to take the initiative to make various efforts, one of which is implementing laws related to Electronic Information and Transactions (ITE). It is stated that those who spread hoaxes or false information can be threatened with Article 28, paragraph 1 of the Electronic Information and Transactions Law or the ITE Law.

Results show that part informants often only read the headlines or titles from the news. These Y generations tend to be lazy to read information or news whole, potentially becoming a victim of hoax news and even becoming potential hoax spreaders. Because their habit for carrying on unique information in an opportunity first

Happening deployment of hoax news or disinformation occurs because no to do verification repeat to information obtained before continuing to other people. When you get information from a trusted person, the inclination is to carry on information without verification or crosscheck the truth of existing information. Impact by no purpose herself has become a hoax spreader on social media or other online media.

Although so, some others make hoax identification with method ask the people they believe, like ask information or news the to family, friends, or party government-related. Activity to read the book, which tends to be low among Generation Y and Millennials too, results in a lack of power analysis to hoax content or existing disinformation.

Most informants confess to understanding the ITE Law to be aware of not violating the law with Becomes hoax spreaders. The Information and Transactions Electronics - ITE Law is expected to protect various interest laws to protect freedom of talk and convey opinion with oral and appropriate writing Article 28 F of the Constitution Republic of Indonesia 1945 (Nasution, L..2020). *Furthermore, suitable base fundamental rights* will protect dignity, and name good people other, protected based on Chapter 28 G paragraph (1) constitution Republic of Indonesia 1945 (Salsabila, RA, 2021).

The ITE law was born in 2008, then changed by limited on the Year 2016, with scope constitution this which nature arrange all Thing related utilization technology which Information and communication, amount the material not yet capable respond various utilization current challenge internet technology. In revision law ITE in the Year 2016, no change in the existing fundamental problem. The real issue of the ITE Law is in trouble articles problematic rubber and multiple interpretations (Wulandari, S. et al., 2021)

The ITE Law has been sued seven times in Court Constitution (MK). Lawsuit related _ freedom of expression is always rejected. Only a very just lawsuit against chapter tapping was granted in 2010. MK always refuse lawsuit which sends related law ITE because they still believe in the importance of this law (Rohmy, AM et al., 2021).

Government declares to revise. However, there are also who propose existing guidelines interpretation. There are problems with lawrelated formula offenses in ITE Law, born from conventional acts. However, the conclusion offense in act criminal conventional in the Criminal Code (acts) the set from Articles 310, 311, and 316 of the Criminal Code, 207 and 208 of the Criminal Code up to Articles 154-156 of the Criminal Code and Article 160-161 of the Criminal Code does not there is problems (Khotimah, K., 2021).

One of them is in an article related to humiliation and slander name good, Article 27 paragraph (3). That deeds that belong to as insult and pollutionname good meant in the chapter the no loaded by the detail and clear so that many application chapters the rated no right (Jamal, F., 2020).

The polemic caused by the ITE Law back happens. Need is known that the ITE Law has once experience revision, namely in 2016 with the birth of Law no. 19 of 2016 concerning Amendment to Law no. 11 the Year 2008 about Information and Transaction Electronics. If this revision is enforced, law ITE will be revised a second time (Alhakim, A., 2022).

Related implementation ITE law, feel not enough fulfill flavor justice. With the publication of Letter Circular, Police chief No. SE/2/II/2021 about Awareness Culture etiquette for Realize Room Digital Indonesia, Clean, Healthy, and Productive dated February 19, 2021. Through the SE, investigators should own the principle that law criminal to be effort final in handling cases of the ITE Law. Investigators are asked to prioritize the approach of *restorative justice* in law enforcement (Valeta, E., 2022).

The police chief also has published Letter Telegram numbered ST/339/II/RES.1.1.1/2021, which contains guidelines for handling cases act criminal crime cyber that use ITE law. Letter Telegram numbered ST/339/II/RES.1.1.1/2021 about Ethical Cultural Awareness for Create Room Digital Indonesia which Clean, Healthy, and Productive, containing classification case handling ITE law which can solve with *restorative justice* which ones are not, along with the references to the articles. The case can be solved by *restorative justice*, namely defamation of good, slander, or insult Valeta, E., 2022). This does not apply to criminal acts that have the potential to divide the nation. Some conditions must be complied with regarding reporting, that reporter should be the victim direct, and no \circ n e can represent.

Following In Articles 27, 28, and 29 of the ITE Law, as long as this known with chapter rubber with that interpretation wide. Articles 27, 28, and 29 rated many expert law circles not fulfilling condition legality. Meanwhile, to reduce the number of misinformation through three perspectives - identification of misinformation, platforms, and support for targeted people (Angeline, M., Safitri, Y., & Luthfia, A., 2020)

Based on results and interviews show, the implementation of the ITE Law to overcome the spread of hoaxes needs to continue balanced with the enhancement of digital literacy for Indonesian people in the use of social media. Therefore, the implementation of the ITE Law is also expected to be more effective in catching hoax spreaders with the method without cutting down selection. Because everyone is equal by the law, use respect supremacy law, not supremacy politics.

Conclusion

The challenge implementation of the ITE Law in reducing the spread of hoaxes in Indonesia, among others, the need for quick-to-do revisions chapter existing rubber. The government is also expected could upgrade digital literacy comprehensive for the public so that they are not easily deceived by the spread of hoaxes that are still rampant on social media especially approaching the Election General President of Indonesia in 2024.

Besides, an existing political buzzer is also necessary to set with applicable laws and regulations to not precisely become hoax manufacturers and avoid a split between child nations in the Unitary State Republic of Indonesia.

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