Online Media Literacy among Gen Z in Kendari City in the Post Truth Era

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Abstract

Information and communication technology development allows every individual to obtain and produce information quickly. This development brings us to the post-truth era, where truth is relative. Generation Z is among the most intense social media user groups. Based on this, this research wants to look at online media literacy among Gen Z in Baruga District, Kendari City, in the post-truth era. This research method is descriptive qualitative by analyzing the individual competence framework, namely data analysis through data analysis techniques, to determine online media literacy skills from three levels: basic, medium, and advanced. The study results show that the online media literacy level of gen z Kendari City in responding to hoax news on social media is still at a basic level. The technical skill ability of Gen Z based on indicators of the individual competence framework is at a medium level. Critical understanding ability is still at the basic stage. Meanwhile, social competence, which consists of Communicative abilities, is still at a basic level. Gen z media literacy skills in Kendari City still need to be improved. Efforts that can be made to increase gen z online media literacy are conducting training related to online media literacy for gen z, both carried out by the local government and support from religious leaders.

Keywords: Online media literacy, Gen Z, Post-truth era

Introduction

The development of information technology is currently moving fast and is accompanied by various innovations. Currently, there are almost no more boundaries for humans in communicating. Now we can communicate anytime and anywhere. Advances in technology and information and the increasing sophistication of the devices produced by the industry are like presenting "the world in hand". This term is in line with what Thomas L, Friedman stated as the world is flat, that the world is getting flatter, and everyone can access anything from any source (Rulli, 2017). The ease and abundance of information caused by technological advances have brought us to the post-truth era, where truth is relative. Fake news is sometimes felt or believed to be true because of encouragement from real netizens who also do not know for sure the truth of the news. Oxford Dictionaries defines Post Truth as "relating to or denoting circumstances in which objective facts are less influential in shaping public opinion than appeals to emotion and personal belief". Based on this definition, it can be interpreted that post-truth prioritizes emotional arguments and personal beliefs rather than objective factors in building public opinion and does not prioritize rational discourse (Gunawan, 2021).

Living in the post-truth era with various challenges, the rapid development of the communication system, and the tightness of the media (media-saturated world) makes everyone have to be aware of any information conveyed. As a result of the development of mass media like that, the Indonesian people have to face new conditions, where people have to be more selective in sorting and selecting the information they receive, especially from social media. Social media is currently filled with false information (hoaxes), provocations, hate speech, and bullying. Users can post anything on social media, such as pictures and videos, and share hoax information freely according to their wishes. Social media can also be tampered with according to the owner's wishes to influence perceptions and shape public opinion. Social media is indeed a place for audiences to express their aspirations, but on the other hand, it is used by individuals or groups with various interests. (Ilyas, Januari 2017 Wajah Ganda Media Sosial http://www.kompasiana.com/moh.Ilyas/wajah-ganda-media-sosial_58710Wajah d31137f61920bc97a43),

The impact of social media presence is very influential for young people or also known as generation z or gen z. This age group is the largest number of social media users. Generation Z is also a generation exposed to technology from an early age. Gen Z grew up with the social web, they are digital-centered, and technology is their identity Sing & Dangmel in Firamadhina, 2020). Helsper and Enyon in Supratman (2018) said that Generation Z is included in the Digital Natives community, namely the generation that has been introduced to the internet since birth and cannot be separated from the internet because it is part of their life.

According to Kemp in Supratman (2018), the latest data states that 50% of Indonesia's population of more than 265 million uses the internet, and most of these internet users are digital natives. The results of a survey conducted by We Are Social in Singapore show that the highest activity of social media users in Indonesia is done by digital natives, namely 62% of the total internet users. Other data put forward by Hidayat (Supratman, 2018) states that Indonesia has the sixth largest internet user population in the world.

Seeing the presentation of the data above, Gen Z must have good media literacy skills to deal with this situation. By definition, media literacy comes from English, namely Media Literacy. The word Media means a medium where messages are exchanged, and the word Literacy means literacy, both known as Media Literacy. According to Poerwaningtias in the book Models of the Media Literacy Movement and Indonesian Media Monitoring (Arnus, 2018), Media literacy relates to how audiences can take control of the media. Media literacy is a skill for assessing the meaning of each type of message, organizing that meaning to be useful, and then constructing a message to convey to others. Media literacy, better known as media literacy, is one of the many terms often raised on various occasions, both in informal conversations and academic discussions.

The term media literacy is interpreted quite varied. The definition of media literacy explained by Lawrence Lessing in Arnus (2018) is as follows:

> *"Media literacy is an individual's ability to perform real activities when dealing with the media."*

Lawrence argued that media literacy is analyzing and deconstructing media imagery.

Media Literacy is intended to make viewers aware of how media is constructed and accessed.

One definition that is widely used is the definition from The National Leadership Conference on Media Literacy, which formulates media literacy as "the ability to access, analyze, evaluate, and produce media for a specific purpose". Does Sonia Livingstone reinforce this definition in the article " What is Media Literacy? Defining media literacy as "the ability to access, analyze, evaluate and create messages in various contexts" (Fitryarini, 2018). In addition, the definition of media literacy is also contained in the elucidation of Article 52 of Law No. 32 of 2003 concerning broadcasting, which contains ways to interpret media literacy as an activity to increase the critical level of society.

It can be defined that media literacy as the ability to access, analyze and evaluate the power of images, sounds, and messages that we now encounter every day are an important part of our contemporary culture, as well as to communicate in media, including television and film, radio and recorded music, print media, the internet, and other new digital communication technologies. Thus, media literacy is a form of criticism and analysis of a media message, so it takes work to accept a message. It can also be said with an attitude that must be fortified when faced with media content. This attitude is included in categorizing the ability to filter news from social media.

In the Al-Quran it has also been explained about media literacy, namely in Surah Al-An'am: 104,

> *"Indeed, clear evidence has come from your Lord: then whoever sees (the truth), then (the benefit) is for himself; and whoever is blind (does not see the truth), then his harm will return to him. And I (Muhammad) am not (your) keeper. (QS. 6:104)*

The verse explains that actually, Allah Subhanahu wa Ta'ala has provided instructions for mankind to seek the truth with clear evidence. The verse certainly has something to do with choosing the truth of information. When faced with information, they must filter it by evaluating, criticizing, and seeking the truth.

Based on this explanation, the authors are interested in knowing the level of media literacy of Gen Z, especially in Kendari City. Gen Z, who became the informant in this study, focused on those who live in Baruga District, an educational area and a residential area for students and students who have schools or campuses around the area. Their age is in the vulnerable age group, which includes the Z generation category, namely 17-25 years. Apart from that, wifi facilities, boarding houses, coffee shops around campus, and settlements make it easy for them to access the internet anytime and anywhere. The form of digital-based learning that is applied in schools and campuses is why they have greater intensity in using online media daily. The author took this age group on the grounds that this group is of productive age and based on the data they have obtained, they are the age group with the biggest social media users. Based on these reasons, the purpose of this research is to map the ability of Gen Z media literacy, which can later be used as a guideline to increase media literacy among Gen Z in Kendari City.

Researchers used Individual Competence analysis to analyze Gen Z's media literacy abilities. Analysis Individual competence

is a person's ability to use and utilize the media. Some of the abilities to use and utilize the media include using, producing, analyzing, and communicating messages through the media. Individual Competence has two variables: 1) Personal Competence, which is a person's ability to use and analyze internet media content. The two dimensions of personal competence include a) Technical Skills, namely technical skills in using internet media. b) Critical Understanding is a cognitive ability to use internet media, such as understanding, analyzing, and evaluating internet media content. 2) Social Competence is a person's ability to communicate and build social relations through internet media and can produce content on internet media. Social Competence consists of Communicative abilities, namely, building social relations and participating in society through the media. In addition, it also includes the ability to create and produce content on Internet media. (Santoso, 2018).

This research can be reviewed from several relevant studies that have been carried out, including by Ayu Rahmawati, "Media Literacy Level of Students of the Faculty of Da'wah and Communication Sciences, UIN Jakarta Regarding Hoax Information About Telecommunication Service Customer Registration Policies Based on Individual Competence Framework". The difference between the research conducted by Ayu Rahmawati and the research conducted by the author is that the research subject and focus are on hoax information related to registration policies regarding telecommunication service customers. The research conducted by the authors focuses on Facebook's social media content as a whole. Competence consists of Communicative abilities, namely an ability

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Riyodina G. Pratikto conducted the second study entitled Z generation digital media literacy (a case study of social networking addiction in adolescents in Jakarta). The difference between the research conducted by Riyodina and the research conducted by the author is in the research method used. Riyodina's research used a case study method related to networking addiction. In contrast, the research conducted by the author used a qualitative method on Gen Z research subjects in Kendari City, especially in Baruga District.

Kamilatus Sya'diyah conducted the third research entitled the influence of media literacy on the Behavior of spreading hoaxes among generation z. The difference between the research conducted by Kamilatus Sya'diyah and the research conducted by the author is the method used. Kamilatus Sya'diyah's research focuses on the behavior

of spreading hoaxes, while what researchers do is more broadly related to content on social media, especially on Facebook.

Level	Ability Description
Basic	Individuals have a set of capabilities that enable the basic use of media. Individuals at this level still have limitations in using internet media. Users know the basic functions and are used for specific purposes without clear directions. The user's capacity to think critically in analyzing the information received still needs to be improved. Communication capabilities through the media could be improved.
Medium	Individuals are fluent in the use of media, know the functions, and can carry out certain functions and more complex operations. Internet media users can continue as needed. Users know how to obtain and assess the needed information and use specific information search strategies.
Advanced	Individuals at this level are very active in media use, becoming aware of and interested in the various regulations that affect their use. Users have in-depth knowledge of techniques and languages and can analyze and change the conditions affecting them. Can perform communication relationships and the creation of messages. In the social field, the user can enable him to solve problems.

Method

This type of research is descriptive qualitative. This study describes how online media literacy skills among Gen Z in Kendari City respond to hoax news on social media in the post-truth era. In this study, the research subjects were residents of Baruga District, Kendari City. The research location was deliberately chosen because it is an educational area, so many student settlements and school students live there. Informant criteria in this study have an age range of 17-25 years. Has a Facebook social media account and is active in using social media. Data collection was done by way of interviews and observation. The data analysis technique in this study uses the Individual Competence Framework analysis. The Individual Competence Framework can be seen in Table 1 below.

Results

Based on predetermined criteria, the number of informants in this study was 20. Sixteen informants were female, and four informants were male.

D.1 Gen Z Online Media Literacy Ability to Respond to Hoax News on Social Media.

The ability of informants' media literacy is divided into two categories: Personal Competence, which consists of technical skills and critical understanding, and Social Competence, which consists of communication skills or conveying correct information to the public. The following is the author's explanation regarding the research results from each category.

D.1.1 Technical skills

Based on the results of observations and interviews conducted with informants to find out the informants' technical abilities in using the media, it was found that all informants could operate communication media devices. It can be seen that all informants have used communication media in the form of smartphones with various brands and their respective advantages. Most of the informants have reasons to buy a certain brand or type of smartphone, as said by Rusnia, one of the informants in this study.

"I chose to use the Samsung J7 Prime brand because the camera is very focused and beautifying, and then the RAM is also very high, and the network is also, of course, 4g"

Another reason was put forward by Dina (the informant of this study) for choosing the type of smartphone, namely:

"I chose to buy the Oppo brand because it has many features, it is very good to use for the internet, the network speed is also quite above average, and the camera is very good."

Some of the informants above chose a particular type or brand of smartphone because the camera type of the device was better and more focused so that it could produce beautiful pictures to share on social media. Other informants had reasons for buying communication devices. Apart from having a camera that can beautify pictures, this device can make learning easier for them. In addition, the informant also said that the reason for choosing a smartphone was because it had high RAM, had good sound, and was comfortable listening to music. In addition, several informants also said that the reason for choosing a smartphone was because it had a large internal storage memory, a durable battery, and a reliable processor.

In addition to having their reasons for choosing the type of smartphone, the informants also quite understand the features and applications on their smartphones. The applications most often used by most informants are social media such as Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, and Google applications which support them when doing school assignments or coursework materials given by their lecturers on campus. Some Gen Z informants use smartphone media to learn recitation and read the Koran.

D.1.2 Critical Understanding

In this case, the ability to analyze and evaluate media content is specifically for hoax news spread on Facebook social media. One of the statements from informant Nilma is related to hoax news on Facebook social media.

"I know it is a hoax. It is false news. The way to differentiate it is to see the aspect of the language used. Usually, using excessive language is a feature of a hoax. We can also check the truth of the news by browsing the internet. My reaction is that when I get hoax content on social media, I often ignore it."

Other informants explained that to identify whether the news is a hoax or not, you can look at the source of the news. We must be more critical in accepting information circulating from less trusted sites. The ability to sort and analyze media content on Facebook to be selective in sharing news that cannot be accounted for (hoaxes) requires an understanding that what is displayed by the media is a construction of events formed by the media so that analysis is needed in advance in addressing what is conveyed in the media, especially on social media Facebook which is famous for the many hoaxes circulating in the media.

D.1.3 Social Competence

Social competence is related to the ability of informants to communicate and build their social relations through social media and to be able to produce media content. Based on the results of the interviews, it was found that the informants had done well in establishing friendships and communication through social media. This can be seen from their friendships, which reach thousands of people. They also find it easier to communicate through social

media. They also use social media as a venue for trading, posting the latest photos, or just sharing their daily activities.

Discussion

Based on the research results described in the previous section, the researcher will discuss it from a theoretical point of view and the study of communication science. In this section, the researcher will discuss the parts of individual competence that informants want to know: technical skills, critical skills, and social competence.

From the research results related to the technical skills of the informants described in the research above, the technical skills of Gen Z based on indicators in the individual competence framework are at a medium level when they can operate communication devices and know the functions of these devices. One of the efforts to improve technical skills is by studying various techniques found on smartphones that can be obtained through training or workshops.

Based on the research results, the ability to understand and sort out messages or content related to hoaxes on social media is quite good. From the interview excerpts, we can see that they have been able to sort out the messages they found, and they can analyze which messages are true and which messages are lies or hoaxes. The messages they get that they consider hoax news are ignored, and they do not share them with others. This initiative is an effort that, although simple, can at least stop the spread of hoax news. It can also be seen that they have ways of seeking the truth from the messages they receive, like searching for the truth through other websites or looking at the news title more

critically. Because usually hoax news titles are provocative and seem exaggerated, the ability to analyze hoax news on social media is quite good from the opinions expressed by the research informants. This hesitation can be seen in the comments of some informants who say they are lazy to share content or news that smells of hoaxes on social media where the truth could be clearer because it is not very good for society.

From the research results, the informants have not yet taken action to evaluate the hoax news on the social media they see. Most of the informants could only sort and analyze the content that smelled of hoaxes they encountered on social media and only looked at it without disseminating it or ignoring it. They stop there and do not evaluate the content, such as how it develops or criticize content that is detrimental to many people. Even though the goals of media literacy according to Bajkiewich, the goals of media literacy are developing critical thinking on media, developing critical autonomy, decoding, evaluating, choosing to mean, studying authorship and reasoning (Iriantara, 2018). Therefore the goal of media literacy is to have the ability to access, analyze and evaluate media content to generate critical thinking. Critical thinking is the main goal of analyzing content or information from something conveyed by the media. Based on these results, the critical understanding ability of Gen Z in Kendari City is still at the basic or basic stage and needs improvement.

Based on the social competence analysis results described in the research results section reveal that research informants can produce media content. The informants have done well in establishing friendships and communication through social

media. According to J.B. Walther, social communication activities through computer intermediaries are considered more attractive than face-to-face communication. This tendency follows new media researchers Himanshu Tyagi and Scott E. Caplan (Subandi, 2014), who said the younger generation needs more social skills and needs to communicate face-to-face. Their form of social media behavior is more towards sharing messages that they consider important, such as health information, campus information, or useful information. They rarely express their opinions or respond to news or events on social media. The lack of expression in social media shows that they still need to improve in producing media content. In conclusion, the social competence of Gen Z in Kendari City is still at a basic level and needs to be improved.

Conclusion

Based on the research that has been done and data analysis using the Individual Competence Framework, the authors draw the conclusion that gen z online media literacy skills in Kendari City, especially in Baruga District, are still at the basic level. Seeing the high intensity of the use of social media by informants with media literacy levels that are still at the basic level, it is necessary to make efforts to increase media literacy skills for Generation Z in Kendari City. Even more so when we look at social media content in the current post-truth era, which requires the ability to analyze and sort out social media content for its users, so they avoid falling prey to even being provoked by news that cannot be accounted for.

One of the efforts that can be made to increase the median online literacy of gen z in Kendari City is by increasing online and offline mentoring training on media literacy. Of course, this needs support from the central and regional governments, down to the sub-district and village levels. Government support can be in the form of providing a special allocation of funds to implement the training. Providing understanding in the form of training can also be carried out by academics, especially those working in communication and Da'wah. This training can be done in the form of community service. Community service success is possible considering that Baruga District is inhabited by many Gen Z students who study at several campuses within the Baruga District, Kendari City.

In addition, of course, the role of religious leaders and preachers must be addressed. Dissemination of the importance of filtering messages on social media and selecting the correctness of messages before spreading messages on social media is urgently needed, both through the pulpits at mosques and in the form of special studies in community groups, for example, studies on youth mosques, majlis taklim, etcetera.

The author hopes that this research can make a theoretical contribution to the field of communication science, especially in the study of social media, which is currently a concern in society with all the problems and conveniences it brings. This research is also expected to be of practical use in society. This research is expected to be a reference in determining policy by the government in making policies related to the use of communication and information technology, especially social media, because, as we know that the government is currently intensively increasing online media literacy skills in society along with the development and rapid

use social media nowadays so that people or netizens can be wiser and smarter in sorting messages on online media, especially in the post-truth era where the truth of news is very difficult to distinguish.

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