

# Audience Reception of Hoax Information on Social Media in the Post-Truth Era

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## Abstrak/Abstract

This research is an audience reception study of hoax information on social media during the 2019 Presidential Election campaign in the post-truth era. This research uses a qualitative method with a reception study approach and various theories of active audiences such as the encoding-decoding model from Stuart Hall, which was also elaborated by David Morley and Ien Ang. The result shows that there are three typologies in receiving hoax. Those are the pragmatic-creative, ideological, and critical-skeptical type of audiences. The three typologies of the audience have different characters in the reception of hoax information in political communication on social media. Some audiences are permissive-negotious, some are critically oppositional, and some are hegemonized by hoax information in the 2019 Presidential Election political moment in such a way that they are part of the increasing turbulence of hoax.

*Penelitian ini merupakan studi resepsi khalayak terhadap informasi hoaks di media sosial pada masa kampanye Pilihan Presiden 2019 dalam era pascakebenaran. Riset ini menggunakan metode kualitatif dengan pendekatan studi resepsi, dan menggunakan berbagai teori khalayak aktif seperti model encoding-decoding dari Stuart Hall yang dielaborasi juga oleh David Morley dan Ien Ang. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa terdapat tiga tipologi khalayak dalam menerima hoaks, yaitu khalayak tipe pragmatik-rekreatif, ideologis, dan kritis-skeptis. Ketiga tipologi khalayak itu memiliki karakter yang berbeda dalam meresepsi informasi hoaks dalam komunikasi politik di media sosial. Ada yang permisif-negosiatif, ada yang kritis oposisional, dan ada pula yang terhegemoni oleh informasi hoaks dalam momen politik Pilihan Presiden 2019, sehingga menjadi bagian dari peningkatan turbulensi hoaks.*

## Kata kunci/Keywords:

hoax, post-truth, reception

*hoaks, post-truth, resepsi*

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## Introduction

In the last decade, Indonesia has been passionately discussing the emergence of an era referred as digital age. It is an era where changes take place on technological aspects, which is the shift from analogue to digital systems. In addition, changes on various aspects of life which are significant. In the communication sector, this new era gave birth to what we refer to as new internet-based media and various social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and WhatsApp. Meanwhile, the presence of the digital era in the political sector is marked by the birth of digital or cyber democracy.

Cyber democracy as Poster (in Trend, 2001) said it is a new form of internet-based democracy which provides a free-from-domination public space. This echoes what Saco (2002) stated, though a slight difference lies in the choice of terminology. Poster used public sphere, while Saco termed public space. These two terms actually refer to a concept referred to as virtual public society, i.e. a term influenced by Haber-

mas's public sphere concept (in Hill & Sen, 2000). Meanwhile, Moyo argued that cyber democracy was understood as a medium to increase the public space. However, he preferred to use the term of digital democracy (Moyo, 2009).

Conceptually developed, cyber democracy has now delved into the birth of new media. And it has now taken democracy into a new phase, as observed in various countries. One of the most phenomenal events was the victory of Barack Obama in the United States' 2008 presidential election. It was the time when new media was intensively employed during the campaign (Baarda & Luppacini, 2014; Bimber, 2014; Carlisle & Patton, 2013). The new media have placed the audience into a highly active position in the political process, due to the social media features which offered a widely open access to political information.

The role of social media in the cyber democracy era provides ample opportunities for the public to involve in individual political activity. As Freelon said: "... to play active roles in sharing, modifying, and commenting on campaign content." (Freelon, 2017). Thus, people interested in the political process will be given adequate features by social media platforms to play an active role in sharing, modifying, and giving comments at their will on any campaign contents. If the public previously had to face various institutions either media or political organizations when participating in a campaign, currently social media has made the public to involve directly in political communication at certain political moments, such as presidential campaigns. However, such statements came from cyber optimists assuming that the new media offers access for the public to participate in the decision making instantaneously and triflingly. Political communication has become relatively egalitarian and hierarchical boundaries, either social or relationship between the elite and the public, faded steadily.

While the cyber pessimists argued that the internet and social media, which later gave birth to the cyber or digital democracy phenomenon, had also instigated issues related to class and identity. Regarding the issue of class, social media is often utilized by a group of political elites in collaboration with capitalists to control or herd public opinions as is media economic political assumption. In terms of the identity issue, oftentimes social media become a means for distributing contents which amplify the primordial identity. Social media becomes a means for political campaigns which intensify politics of identity by exploiting religious, ethnic, and race differences. This situation leads to excessive digital democracy which violates the values in democracy, namely tolerance, transparency and egalitarianism.

While an excessive digital democracy leads to new unsolvable issues, suddenly the post-truth era emerges. Post-truth is a linguistic situation

in which truth, fact, and reality is absent (McComiskey, 2017). It is an era in which the public receive messages of communication solely by their emotional considerations. The situation becomes increasingly topsy-turvy when the public enters the realm of political communications. It is where the messages are constantly manipulated by the political elites for the sake of acquiring power. Later on, the public are less concerned whether the message is factual or merely inciting anger. Truth is no longer important, and therefore the public tend to seek justification rather than validation.

Politicians who firmly hold on to the transmission model of communication and media effect on one side and how social media effects on the other side further assert the post-truth era. Therefore, hoaxes become rampant in the political and social communication exchange congesting social media with misinformation. The increase of hoaxes on social media found its momentum during the 2014 and 2019 Presidential Election. The polarization of two candidates competing in the presidential rally, i.e. Jokowi versus Prabowo Subianto during those two political Presidential elections events, have triggered hoaxes circulation and post-truth era political activities.

These post-truth political activities manifested in various political hoaxes which remain massively circulating on social media. Hate speeches, which are continuously exploited prior to political events, such as the Presidential Election, continue to flourish on social media. Each political competing side constantly produces contents such as hate speeches, primordialism-nuanced contents, instead of political education contents and professional program campaigns. Black campaigns, political hoaxes, and hate speeches continued to take place during the 2019 presidential campaign accompanying the digital democracy and post-truth era.

The Indonesian Ministry of Communications and Information (Kemkominfo) data stated that there were around 800,000 websites in Indonesia indicating to spread false information. Kemkominfo said that the internet has been exploited by some individuals to gain personal and group benefits. They distributed negative contents to incite unrest and raise suspicion among community members ([https://kominform.go.id/13 des 2017](https://kominform.go.id/13%20des%202017)). Meanwhile, a survey by MASTEL carried out in 2017 revealed that people receive hoaxes more than once in a day. The heavily utilized medium in distributing hoaxes is social media, i.e. 92.40 percent ([https://www.bkkbn.go.id/po-content/uploads/Infografis Hasil Survey MASTEL tentang Wabah Hoax Nasional.pdf](https://www.bkkbn.go.id/po-content/uploads/Infografis_Hasil_Survey_MASTEL_tentang_Wabah_Hoax_Nasional.pdf)).

A study shows that the senders or recipients of a hoax were individuals who disapproved of the government. Other message recipients were also individuals who felt unsatisfied and disdained hoaxes as support for the government. Political motive was very strong in this case and there was

an intention to overthrow the running administration or in one example to prevent Ahok to be re-elected as the governor of Jakarta. Hoaxes which are distributed massively and repeatedly through social media can construct a public opinion that the news is actually true (Juditha, 2018).

A research had discussed the widespread use of social media for the presidential campaign for its feature that could directly affect people. One of the important findings is that social media utilization for a political campaign tends to directly discredit opposing candidates (Irawanto, 2019). Another research elaborated the spread of hoaxes through social media. By applying Social Network Analysis, the results showed that news sources, the targeted location of the hoaxes, and the users had organized new networks to expand the hoaxes influence (Ginting et al., 2018). Another research also examined the hoax dissemination on social media distributed through interpersonal communication, either via direct communication or through media. Technological advancement has become the driving factor to speed up hoax distribution to the public, either by presenting a personal issue or any issue related to the state politics (Nugroho, 2018).

These studies did not merely become indicators of the widespread hoaxes in social media, but they also offered an opportunity to develop the concept and theoretical development. Nevertheless, these researches mainly focused on the influence and distribution of hoaxes emphasizing more on the aspect of the message production through communication on social media. They have overlooked the information consumption or reception, i.e. on how the public receives the hoaxes related to the political issues.

Even though the concern is obvious, the phenomenon above is more or less a logical implication of overflowing trust on the media effect theoretical assumption. Yet, it does not mean that the media power is inconspicuous. Rather it considers the public as passive subjects which are coherent to the technological determinism assumption and media also present risks. Therefore, as a vantage point, the active audience theoretical assumption is also necessary and it could be significant for the epistemology of communication science development. Thus, as social media have been heavily utilized on one hand, and on the other hand the rise of hoax-laden communication messages in the post-truth era is relevant and has prominent urgency. For these purposes, this research was conducted under following research questions: (1) what is the typology of the Millennials' reception who accept hoaxes during the 2019 Presidential Election?; (2) what is the typology of the public's reception who accept hoaxes during the 2019 Presidential Election?; and (3) what are the characteristics of the Millennials in perceiving hoaxes during the 2019 Presidential Election?

## Literature Review

This study applied several theories which were deemed relevant in order to explain and analyse research findings. The theories hitherto are not to be verified, but they serve more as a discussion reference as the consequence on any methodological choice, i.e. a receptive study which is included in the qualitative approach tradition. Several theories explored are, among others, theories and concepts associated with hoax, post-truth, and theories around active public issues.

Many experts suggest that hoax has flourished because we were in an era known as the post-truth. Post-truth was the most popular word in the 2016 Oxford English Dictionary. Post-truth is defined as relating to or denoting circumstances in which objective facts are less influential in shaping public opinion than appeals to emotion and personal belief (in Block, 2019). Post-truth has become very popular on the global level due to two events, namely the victory of Donald Trump in the United States presidential election and Brexit. Hoaxes are the main ingredients of post-truth where lies and truth are distorted. Fact is no longer the main resource. Instead, the emotions which accompany the message. Though the term of post-truth is often interchangeable with post-fact. Word selection, content manipulation, and information distortion used to convey half lies or half truth (Davis, 2017).

The activities of hoax politics and politics of hoax, have gained traction when Indonesia entered the post-truth era. In this post-truth era, the data are no longer important because people are prone to rely on self-justification on things they already believe. Post-truth is the situation where the populism political rhetoric fuelled by primordial sentiment receives emotional support from the public. According to Llorente (2017), the post-truth era is a "socio-political condition in which objectivity and rationality give way to feeling or passion even though the facts show the opposite. Another definition claims that post-truth is a linguistic circumstance where truth, fact, and reality are absent (McComiskey, 2017).

While McIntyre elaborated the concept of post-truth in response to the disappointment at the fact that the truth was abused. The term "post" does not refer to a time dimension in the past. But rather it is when the truth is obscured or hidden in order to be irrelevant (McIntyre, 2018). It indicates that the people who talk about the truth become less necessary and waste of time, because of the affective aspect dominating them. The emotion or affection could dwindle humans' logical reasoning when receiving a message during a communication process, particularly political communication. During this moment, people could no longer infer the message to be fact or fiction, and truth or hoax. What matters for them is how far the message is able to satisfy their emotional urge.

According to Haryatmoko (2019), the post-truth era gains its momentum because the public has been saturated and disdained the overwhelming messages and persuasions leading to a request to purchase, consume, choose, or give opinion or take part in social life. There are three situations which cause the post-truth era to be warmly embraced by the public. First, it is a form of truth devaluation due to a political narrative spreading demagogy. Second, many people or groups feel comfortable with the information they have chosen. Third, mass media emphasize more on the sensation. Therefore, only novel, spectacular, and sensational news are newsworthy. These situations incubate the hoaxes' livelihood.

Further Haryatmoko mentioned six novelties in the post-truth era compared to political forger of the past. First, social media and digital communication medium accommodate the access to information. Second, social media enables each individual to compose their own information. Third, media democratization and citizen journalism have compensated the dissatisfaction on mass media information and public disappointment on politics. Fourth, the development of analogous communities with similar ideology and the growth of congruous-belief groups increases false information acceptance. Fifth, technology has yielded a new logic on truth, i.e. being viral is more decisive than its quality and ethics. Sixth, the truth is no longer falsified or renounced, but it is runner-up. In such a context, the term "falsehood" has been disguised as "alternative truth" and hoax (Haryatmoko, 2017; Purnama, 2019).

The post-truth era emergence has clearly presented a serious problem in communication, especially political communication in which the ethical dimension is embedded. Referring to several aforementioned theories, there are three factors for contributing to the post-truth era ontogeny, i.e. social media, virtual world, and identity construction. Social media becomes compelling and provides relative autonomy to all social media users to act at their will. Meanwhile, the virtual world persuades the basic human impetus, i.e. the desire to be highly involved in anything social. Therefore, a kind of existential adagium appears, if I am being commented on, I exist. Meanwhile, people's identity construction found a new ground which is conceptually different from the conventional landscape on offline. In an online society, the identity construction allows people to neglect social relationships in the real communities. People become submerged in a virtual world when they construct their identity based on other users' assessment in the virtual world. Therefore, a lie is easily hidden due to the technology feature of the medium. People could effortlessly admit that they are 28 years old. Though they are 50 years old in reality. It is because they ignore the offline social relationship. Correspondingly, in political communication people will easily express lies to provoke chaos one swipe away from

their smartphone.

Relatively, yet, the media effect theoretical argument still influences political communication in the post-truth. It assumes that the media is powerful while the audience is passive. Therefore, it becomes necessary to consider the assumptions and theses of the theory of active audience. In terms of the communication messages production, it is clear that the theory of media effect and transmission model of communication occupy a significant portion online. However, from the messages consumption perspective, various public arguments theory should take the role to elaborate the communication in the post-truth. As a response for the dissatisfaction on the media effect theory and its assumptions, particularly in the mass media, there has been an alternative theory in the 1940s. It is known as audience theories.

Works from Herta Herzog, Paul Lazarsfeld, and Frank Stanton have at least implicitly reflected a study which pays attention to the active audiences, including audiences looking for gratification when they involve in the communication process through mass media. Lazarsfeld and Stanton (1942) produced a series of books and studies throughout the 1940s that paid significant attention to how audiences used media to organize their lives and experiences. For example, the researchers studied the value of early morning radio reports to farmers (Baran dan Davis, 2000).

One of the first mass communication textbooks, *The Process and Effects of Mass Communication*, was the first reference which offered the active audience conceptualization. The book was written by Wilbur Schramm, who proposed a question, "What is the thing which determines that the mass communication offer will be individually selected?" The answer he offered which is referred to as a fraction of selection, its formula is as follows.

$$\frac{\text{Expectation of Reward}}{\text{Effort Required}}$$

The point is people consider the gratification level they expect from the media or message to correspond to the effort they have taken in order to secure such gratification (Baran and Davis, 2000).

In the view of the conceptualizing initiative of the theorists, it can be said that the studies focusing on the audiences have sketched the communication epistemology process. They rely on the argument that the audiences are not simply passive; they are potentially active in interpreting and selectively constructing the media messages. In other words, the assumption that the media seem to be a determining factor in controlling the audience should also be adjusted significantly. Thus, the audience is also capable of becoming the determining factor in the communication pro-

cess. It is similar to Barker's statement:

*"watching television is a socially and culturally informed activity which is centrally concerned with meaning. Audience are active creators of meaning in relation to television (they do not simply accept uncritically textual meanings) and they do so on the basis of previously acquired cultural competencies forged in the context of language and social relationships. Further, it was argued that texts do not embody one set of unambiguous meanings but are themselves polysemic, that is, they are carriers of multiple meanings, only some of which are taken up by audiences"* (Barker, 2000).

In the next theoretical development, it had attracted the attention of other theorists to initiate a reception study. One of the reception study models which attracted much the attention of the academics was Stuart Hall's encoding-decoding model and was further improved by Morley. Meanwhile, Ian Ang's work had also discussed the reception study, i.e. a study on *Dallas* show audiences in which Liebes and Katz (1991) studied the similar audience as well.

Hall in Barker (2000) construed the television encoding process as an articulation of production, circulation, distribution and reproduction moments which are interconnected yet different. Each moment has a specific practice which surely exists in the circuitry. But it does not guarantee it will happen on the following moment. Even though the meaning attaches on each level, it is not automatically meaningful in the following moment within such a circuitry. Specifically, the production of meaning does not ensure any consumption of the meaning as intended by the coder. For television messages, which are constructed as a system of symbols with various components, are polysemy in nature. In short, the television messages indeed contain various meanings and can be interpreted differently. Though this does not suggest that all meanings are equal. However, texts will be "constructed under supervision" which led to "the intended meaning", i.e. the meaning we control by using texts.

Then, Hall proposed a model which contains three positions in the decoding process. Hypothetically, it is formulated as follows:

- Encoding/decoding in the dominant-hegemonic position which embraces "the intended meaning"
- Codes are negotiable in which it admits the legitimization of the abstract hegemonic code, but they create their own rules and adjustments based on certain situations.
- Codes are oppositional in which people infer preferable encoding but they rebuke it and decode otherwise.

Using those hypotheses of position, Morley carried out a research on audiences of a UK new "magazine" programme, *Nationwide*. Based on Hall's encoding-decoding models, the research aimed to test a hypothesis that various decoding was framed based on three factors, i.e. socio-demographical factor (class, age, sex, race); competency factors and specific cultural factors. The results showed that the dominant-hegemonic decoding was carried out by a group of readers who have social attributes as a manager. The negotiated decoding was carried out by a group of workers union; and the oppositional decoding position was attributed to groups of shopkeepers, black students, and other groups which considered the *Nationwide* programme irrelevant to their life.

Meanwhile, Ang's study (1985) also focused on active audiences, i.e. audiences of *Dallas* in the Netherlands. By applying the symptomatic analysis, i.e. looking for the audiences' attitude beyond text, Ang sent a letter to the audiences of *Dallas* related to their experience. Ang explored the constraint between active audiences' logic and meaning structuration by texts. The central argument was the audiences of *Dallas* actively involved in the production of meaning manifested in various forms which cannot be reduced by the text structure, ideology effect, or political project. The findings in general proved that the thesis of active audience during the media message acceptance was feasible. The audiences of *Dallas* expressed diverse attitudes. Some felt guilty, while some considered the program as "rubbish", and other audiences stated that it was acceptable. Meanwhile, audiences affected by the ideology of populism defended themselves under an argument that they were entitled to enjoy anything suitable to their cultural taste (Barker, 2000).

The studies which associate active audiences and ideology sparked various debates. Some researchers argued and others assumed that the audience are futile from any ideological influence so their active participation level is indeed high. However, there were researchers who argued that the role of ideology is more or less visible to control the audience. A study by Liebes and Katz (1991) on the *Dallas* television programme audiences in the United States showed the role of the ideology. The U.S audiences consider *Dallas* as mere entertainment. As a consequence, they view television is a business establishment. Meanwhile, the U.S audiences who came from Russia consider that *Dallas* was ideological, and were biased on the Western interests. While the U.S audiences who came from the Middle East considered that *Dallas* indiscriminately pose the tendency of orientalism. Based on Liebes and Katz's research, a thesis can be proposed that the role of nationality and ethnic identity are quite significant in the decoding process.

Referring to several theories of active audiences, such as Hall's encoding-decoding model which was later developed by Morley and Ang, the the-

ory is used in this study to analyze data on the audience's reception to hoaxes during the 2019 Presidential campaign. Although the communication media in the theory is mass media, it is still considered relevant to explain the reception of audiences to social media messages. As said by Baran and Davis, this theory emphasizes on the study of audiences or referred to as an audience-centred theory. Of course this study of reception does not intend to verify the theory. Instead, this study aims at opening discussion with the findings related to the audience's reception to hoaxes during a political moment of the 2019 Presidential campaign.

The post-truth concept and assumption were applied to explain the current context of the increasingly extensive use of social media for political activities, such as the 2014 and 2019 Presidential campaigns. The fact also exhibited that the social media dynamics contains many false news or hoaxes, hate speeches, and other information which distort the communication. How the post-truth assumption was applied in the current situation of free access to information and to interact through social media on one hand, and on the other hand, how the public are unfettered to express their political preference in an emotional state and lack of logical judgment. The post-truth assumptions are also employed to explain the psychological situation of the public acceptance to hoaxes during the 2019 Presidential campaign. Therefore, the train of thought of this research is as follows.

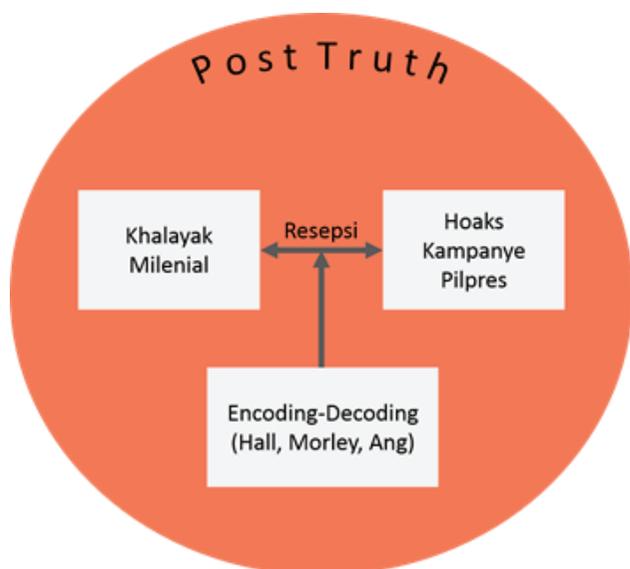


Figure 1. Train of Thought of the Research

### Research Method

This research is a reception study or consumption study which employed theoretical assumptions in the audience research school of thought. In contrast to the assumption study which is based on the positivist paradigm, this study conforms to the constructivist paradigm and slightly poses a critical paradigm. The study proposed

that the audience was an active subject who is able to interpret, construct, and construct the world around him. In this context, the audience is an active subject or producer of meaning in receiving false information or hoaxes relating to the political moment of the 2019 Presidential Election. Barker (2000) stated as follows:

“Exponents of reception or consumption studies argue that whatever analysis of textual meanings a critic may undertake, it is far from certain which of the identified meanings, if any, will be activated by actual readers/ audiences/consumers. By this is meant that audiences are active creators of meaning in relation to texts. They bring previously acquired cultural competencies to bear on texts so that differently constituted audiences will work with different meanings”.

A similar argument was raised by Hall (1981) in Barker (2000) that the production of meaning does not maintain the consumption of meaning as intended by the coder. It is because the messages in the media, which is constructed as a system of symbols with multi-accentuated components, namely polysemy in nature. Thus, they may illustrate more than visible potential series of meaning. When the audience is involved in a process of communication to follow the logic of the producer. The audience's decoding is equivalent to the textual encoding. However, if the audience has a different social position either on social class or gender, they are adept to decode the message differently and even provide alternatives.

In the further development, this reception study had begun to be applied in many reception studies on media using the constructivist and critical perspective. A reception study on media has long been carried out by academics. This study explores how audiences can interpret the mass media messages. The study is a synthesis between social science, linguistic, and approach of cultural studies in film and television as a medium of communication. By combining various theories, such as symbolic interactionism, psychological approach, cultural theory of the Marxist Frankfurt School, mass communication research, linguistics, semiotics theory, psychoanalysis, and cultural study, Staiger showed that various theories constitute a device to understand a complex relationship between the film and audiences. In an attempt to explain the complex relationship between media and audiences, a reception study on the media is a fruitful resource necessary for everyone interested to understand the mass media effects under the constructivist and critical approach (Staiger, 2005).

Reception studies have also been used to examine the internet-based media. Utilizing the concept from a French philosopher, Pierre Levy, key concepts such as cyberculture and collective intelligence are used to explain various phe-

nomena of communication via the internet. In cultural studies, the presentation of Jesus Martin-Barbero, in particular, offered a technical concept in correlation with the mediation and other concepts. Among other scholars, some refer to Manuel Castells and his idea of network; refer to Stuart Hall for the concept of cultural identity and encoding/decoding process, as well as John B. Thompson's concept of reflection on the media. All of these concepts can be employed to conduct an internet reception study with a critical approach (Schmitz et al., 2015).

This research uses the reception study to figure out and analyse how the public's acceptance toward hoaxes on social media during the 2019 Presidential campaign. Audiences of this research were Millennials students studying in Yogyakarta who came from various universities. They were selected as audiences because they were the crucial entity in the political debate associated with their perception and participation in digital democracy. Yogyakarta was chosen as the location because this city is one of the major education cities in Indonesia. It has diverse students characteristics of background, religion, race, ethnicity, and political ideology preferences.

### Data Collection and Analysis

The data of this research were hoaxes circulating during the 2019 presidential campaign. They had been widely distributed and identified on various social media platforms. The information categorized as hoaxes came from Kemkominfo debunking and promoted through social media and mass media. Some hoaxes were classified based on the target candidates either Prabowo-Sandi and Jokowi-Ma'ruf pairs. Then, the hoaxes were confirmed to the informants who received them and how these hoaxes were interpreted and construed.

According to the Kemkominfo debunk, hoaxes had significantly increased prior to and during the 2019 Presidential campaign. There were hundreds of hoaxes circulated on social media. The following figure showed this:

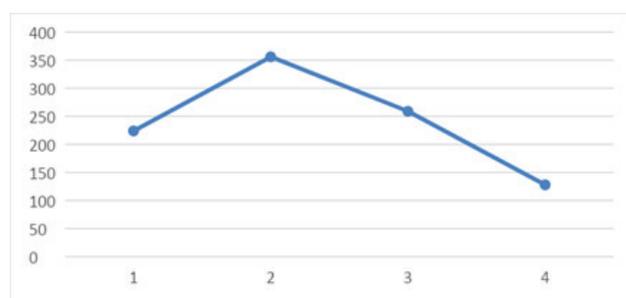


Figure 2: Number of hoaxes during and after the 2019 Presidential campaign

Source: Riyanto, et al. (2019)

The data above displayed a significant increase of hoaxes in April 2019. For this month was the culmination month of the political rival-

ry between the two pairs of presidential candidates. The month was also the sign of the upcoming 2019 Presidential Election D-day. The hoaxes during and after the 2019 Presidential Election had been circulating on social media platforms. There was a distinctive amount of distribution in each social media platform as following chart shows.

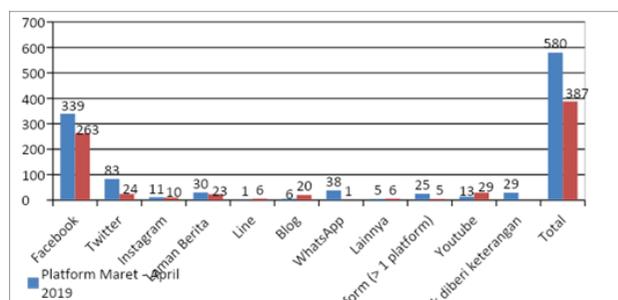


Chart 3: Dissemination of Hoaxes in Various Social Media Platforms

Source: Riyanto et al. (2019)

The above chart displayed hoaxes dissemination on social media during and after the 2019 Presidential Election was mostly on Facebook, followed by Twitter, and Whatsapp. It seemed that the hoax peddlers and dealers mainly targeted lower income people. Facebook is very popular for lower income people. While for most Millennials university students, almost all social media platforms are familiar for them as a medium of communication.

As there were a vast amount of hoaxes on social media, this research identified several hoaxes which are relevant to the research focus. The criteria used to determine the relevant hoaxes to this research is that with the nuance of campaign, political identity, resonance, and the information during the campaign rally. The politics of identity is chosen because of its relation to the post-truth era. Under these criteria, the hoaxes for this analysis, among others were: news of "One Container of Ballots Has Been Casted for 01 Candidate"; "Jokowi Is a Chinese Christian"; "Prabowo Doesn't Know How to do Salat"; and "Prabowo Wins the 2019 Election". The criteria for selecting the hoaxes are summarized in the following chart.

The reception process of the hoaxes on social media during the 2019 Presidential Election was collected from a series of in-depth interviews with respondents, i.e. the Millennials university students. The respondents consisted of 15 individuals coming from various universities in Yogyakarta. The informants were selected purposefully, specifically based on their preference for the Presidential candidates. However, some of them were selected because they claimed to be neutral. Criteria for the respondents selection were Millennials, netizens, activists in a student organization, interested in politics. The data were analysed descriptively-interpretatively and reviewed with reflective theory explanation.

Table 1. Criteria and Characteristic of Hoax Information during the 2019 Presidential Election

Hoax Information	Campaign Nuanced	Political Identity	High Resonance	Distributed during the campaign
One Container of Ballots Has Been Casted for 01 Candidate	V		V	V
Jokowi Is a Chinese Christian	V	V	V	V
Prabowo Doesn't Know How to do Salat	V	V	V	V
Prabowo Wins the 2019 Election	V		V	V

**Results and Discussion**

As previously described, the questions of this research are first is the typology of the millennial audiences receiving hoaxes during the 2019 Presidential Election. Then, the next question is what the typology of the audiences who receive hoaxes during the 2019 Presidential Election. Finally, what are the characteristics of the Millennials in receiving hoaxes during the 2019 Presidential Election. After conducting the the field observation through a methodological procedure, the findings of this research are as follows:

*Typology of the Audiences*

Similar to Hall’s scheme in categorizing the encoding/decoding model audiences for the mass media message, this research also identified several audience typologies when they received hoaxes on social media during the 2019 Presidential Election. As social media users, Millennials university students can be classified into three typologies, i.e. recreational-pragmatic, ideological, and critical-sceptic. The audience typology identification findings had brought viable implications to the audience’s attitude when they received hoaxes propagated by social media during the 2019 Presidential campaign and ahead of the Presidential inauguration. Elaboration of how each audience typology received hoaxes on social media described below.

*Recreational-Pragmatic Audience’s Reception*

The hoax of “7 containers trucks of ballots have been casted by the 01 supporters” were viral on social media in the beginning of January 2019. It had caught the attention of netizens, including the Millennials university students in Yogyakarta. Based on several sources, the chronology of the hoax dissemination can be described as follows:

A news site, Tempo.co, on 10<sup>th</sup> January 2019 wrote that a tweet was circulating on Twitter on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2019 at 23:35. “There is information. It is said that 7 containers (trucks) were found in Tanjung Priok dock. The containers (trucks) are sending ballots and the ballots have been casted

on the picture of candidate number one ... Still do not know whether this is a hoax or not. Let us check together to Tanjung Priok now ... Cc @fadlizon, @AkunTofa, @AndiArief\_ @FahriHamzah.”<sup>1</sup> The Tempo.co news site on 4<sup>th</sup> January 2019 has written news under the headline: “5 Facts and the Chronology of the Hoax of 7 Containers Trucks of Ballots Have Been Casted.” It was written “At the beginning, there was a voice note from an unknown source viral on WhatsApp. “It said that there were 7 containers trucks at Tanjung Priok. Something bad would happen. The Marine had come and opened one (container). It contained ballots which had been casted for 01. Casted for Jokowi. Such ballots possibly came from China,” those were approximately said by a panic person on such voice recording. Andi Arief then tweeted something referring to the viral voice note. “Please check whether it is true. It is said there are 7 containers of ballots at Tanjung Priok which have been casted. Please check the truth to avoid scandal, because this news has been circulated,” tweeted Andi through his Twitter account, @AndiArief\_, two days ago.”<sup>2</sup>



Photo: Illustration by Mindra Purnomo/detikcom

The hoax spread to the digital world and became a hot topic on social media. Negative con-

<sup>1</sup> <https://nasional.tempo.co/read/1163426/hoax-7-kontainer-surat-suara-bagus-bawana-sebut-akun-4-politikus/>

<sup>2</sup> [https://nasional.tempo.co/read/1161417/5-fakta-dan-kronologis-hoax-7-kontainer-surat-suara-dicoblos?page\\_num=1](https://nasional.tempo.co/read/1161417/5-fakta-dan-kronologis-hoax-7-kontainer-surat-suara-dicoblos?page_num=1)

tents and hoaxes are viral through instant messaging applications. The motive is by uploading negative contents and hoax on social media, i.e. Facebook and Instagram in the form of videos, memes, or pictures. Then, the contents will be screen captured and distributed fervidly not on social media, but it will be made viral on messaging applications like Whatsapp. Then, the 7 containers of casted ballots hoax was massively distributed on social media.

In addition, during the 2019 Presidential campaign, there were hoaxes and news on social media alleging Prabowo did not understand how to perform salat (Islamic prayer). As this hoax repeated over and over again on social media, this hoax was picked up on the following news.

Trending Topik #PrabowoTdkBisaSholat, Ini Kultwit Gerindra

15 Agustus 2018 | 22:48:12



Prabowo salat berjamah di Rumah Kartanegara, Sabtu (28/7) dimami Gubernur DKI Jakarta Anies Baswedan. (Foto: Instagram @rizky\_irmansyah)

Source: <https://www.public-news.com/berita/nasion-al/2018/08/15/22327/trending-topik-prabowotdkbisasholat-ini-kultwit-gerinda.html> which was accessed on 16<sup>th</sup> November 2019

The above image became a trending topic on Twitter and found its way to become viral. This hoax went more viral when La Nyalla Mattalitti, once a supporter of Gerindra Party, made a statement that Prabowo's habit of praying together was questionable. His statement can be found below.

"I hide many of Prabowo's mistakes. I know Prabowo. If we talk about Islam, Mr. Jokowi is better. Mr. Jokowi doesn't have any problem conducting salat," said La Nyalla at Ma'ruf's house in Menteng, Jakarta on Tuesday (11/12). La Nyalla then went on accusing Prabowo that he would not dare conduct prayer together or recite Quran better than Jokowi. According to him, Prabowo do not understand the Islamic teaching well (quoted from <https://www.cnnindonesia.com/nasional/20181211154204-32-352811/la-nyalla-prabowo-tak-berani-pimpin-salat-dan-baca-alquran>. Retrieved November 16, 2019).

How do the Yogyakarta university students, as audiences, receive such hoax? This research identified various reactions from the informants regarding such hoax under their respective audience typologies. For recreational-pragmatic typology audiences, hoax of *one container ballots*

*being casted for 01* was just another news. They even treated it as an entertainment. This type of audience admitted that they perceived news like this as entertainment. They were even eager to seek information related to hoax news, such as memes. Moreover, some of them even admitted that they reproduced the news as meme material. They would edit it using photo editing applications such as Photoshop, Corel Draw, and other applications. They prefer social media as a medium of expression of identity which answer their need to be fashionable. They are prone to get influenced by new up-to-date items. But the items should be fashionable, fun, and leisurely. Social media becomes a means to express their identity in which they would post a message seemingly corresponding to a trend. However, this scheme is restricted to modern symbols related to any leisure activities, such as playing games, online music, online stylish appearance, and adherent to entertainment, traveling, and sportiment sites.

This recreational-pragmatic audience type is unaware of politics turmoil. Therefore, they rarely take part in digital democracy. They seldom or hardly ever use social media to express their aspiration in decision or policy making. They scarcely had any argument or heated debate regarding any political issues. They are not concerned about who the future president is. They did not care whether the president was Prabowo or Jokowi. Whoever the president is, it is not an issue. Provided that the fact does not incur any mishap on their interests of continuously becoming an online generation. Nevertheless, this does not suggest that they are entirely apathetic to political issues circulating on the online media. They could be interested if political issues are modified into entertainment, funny, and stylish contents. When they receive hoaxes, such as the 7 containers of ballots casted for 01, Jokowi was claimed as Chinese Christian, Prabowo did not understand how to conduct salat, Prabowo won the 2019 Presidential Election, they did not consume these hoaxes news seriously as stated by one of the respondents as follows.

"... for me, hoaxes such as ballots casted for 01 or Prabowo winning the 2019 Presidential Election are deliberately created for a specific purpose. It's a hoax, why we have to take it seriously. I will prefer the response to so-called hoaxes, because it's funny and laughable."

There is a lenient attitude towards hoaxes on social media which the peddlers intended to influence the process of forming public opinion. Such a permissive attitude indicates the audience's character which is challenging to be formed by the media message. Through the languid attitude and dull responses full of humour sense, it suggests audiences' skill in the selecting skill and become active to yield meaning according to their

reference when they receive hoaxes and news. This fact corresponds to Hall's argument about discreteness in each level of meaning. Although the meaning is inherent in each level, it is not necessarily meaningful at the following moment in the circuitry. When a hoax is produced, the coder attached various meanings for a specific purpose. And at the consumption level, as shown by the reception of the recreational-pragmatic audience type, the audience also attached his own interpretation which was different from the encoder desired meaning. Moreover, during the reception level, the recreational-pragmatic audience type does not only consume messages. But at the same time, they also produce the message. even though the hoax was added with nuance of humour in the form of a meme. Thus, this type of audience is involved in a circuitry process of meaning which is not a part of the meaning reproduction. But the audience consumes and at the same time produces new meaning by embedding a creative nuance. Thus, this recreational-pragmatic audience type is not just simply a code negotiated in the Hall's model. Nonetheless they also became a new code producer with new meaning.

In the post-truth era, which explores the affective domain to obtain demagogic sensational political effect during the 2019 Presidential Election, had been altered by information permissiveness balance by the active recreational-pragmatic typed audience. A movement to create panic through social media by producing hoaxes was unsuccessful as well in creating political chaos within the political communication audiences. The audience's resilience against the political humdrum through hoaxes on social media, however, remains potential. They not only negotiate the hoax message but also produce new meaning with a sense of humour. It is a receptive strategy of "catch-me-if-you-can" from the recreational-pragmatic typed audience. As a consequence of the unconcerned toward hoaxes, this type of audience does not always become a part of the expressive post-truth era, such as producing hate speeches, fake news, and various other hoaxes.

### **Ideological Audience's Reception**

In contrast with the characteristics of the pragmatic-recreational type, the ideological audiences tend to be more thoughtful about various recent political issues. They construct a political foundation on specific ideological preferences which they believe as the alternative force to seize power. For them, a political choice is a conscious activity of adhering to a certain ideology. Democracy for them is the arena for an ideological struggle, particularly through a political moment of Election. This type of generation from their early years in university, have taken an ideological position to determine their preferred presidential candidate or political party. There are at least two major categories in this ideological audience, i.e. Islamic ideological audience and nationalist ideological audience.

### **Islamic Ideological Audience**

The Islamic ideological audiences tend to refer to Islamic value in the scripturalistic procedure when they construct politics. They are very sensitive to various issues of injustice, poverty, and unemployment. For them, Islam is an idealistic choice as well as effective solution to overcome various problems of the state and nation, such as corruption, unemployment for educated groups, social inequality, and of course various forms of immorality such as prostitution, pornography, and Westernized lifestyle.

In the view of Roy (1994), Islamism is a contemporary Islamic concept or movement which perceive that Islam is political ideology, not merely a religion. This view was developed among Westerners. The phenomenon of the Islamic movement who fight for Islam to be a political and more practical ideology for any country, derived from the view that Islam is merely just a system of belief. But it is also a political ideology (Muhsin, 2015). Meanwhile, according to Bayat, Islamism emerges as the language of affirmation to mobilize the middleclass society who are marginalized by the dominant economic, political or cultural mechanism within their society, and also they have felt any failures in the capitalist modernity and socialist utopia. Thus, they create the language of morality (religion) as an alternative politics (Bayat, 2007).

The nationalist ideological audience has several digressions from the Islamic ideological type. Even though they are both ideologically-laden generations. Their differences may be significant, especially when the differences are related to the relationship between the state and religion. For this type of Millennials, the state and religion must be separated. The state is secular. On the other word, they need Indonesia unlike the Islamic state. But it is rather Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (NKRI) based on the Pancasila ideology.

One of the characteristics of this nationalist ideological audience is a high awareness of the state symbols such as the logo of Garuda Pancasila, National Red and White flag and the national anthem of Indonesia Raya. If these nation symbols are abused, they will be extremely angry. On behalf of the country they often advocate the symbols in various forums, including on social media. Therefore, if there is any radical Islamic generation who refuse to sing the national anthem during any flag ceremony at school or college. They would regret that these people exist. In various forums on social media, they would argue and defend on behalf of those nation symbols as they consider those symbols as something sacred.

In this study, the ideological background also correlated to the attitude and perception when receiving hoaxes information and news during the 2019 Presidential campaign and prior to the inauguration of the President. Their ideological

preference simultaneously becomes the basis to strive for a political position and would support the two candidates pairs competing in the 2019 presidential election. The scripturalistic puritan Islamic ideology group highlights more support for the Prabowo-Sandi pair, while the audiences of nationalist ideology supports the Jokowi-Ma'Ruf pair. Thus, when they receive hoaxes and news on social media during the 2019 Presidential campaign and prior to the inauguration of the President, their ideology will be manifested in their attitude and views.

Hoaxes and news which defamed and discredited each presidential candidacy pair had circulated on social media. For example was the hoax news about Jokowi who was claimed as Chinese Christians descendant.

Allegedly, Jokowi is of Chinese Christian descendant. A repetitive propaganda of the 2014 presidential election was rigged unintentionally by a rival candidate. The hoaxes seek for public sympathy, especially from fellow Moslems. One of the hoaxes which went viral on the social media distributed through the following link: <http://duniamuallaf.blogspot.com/2015/04/innalillahiternyata-presiden-sarang.html> (re-accessed on 5<sup>th</sup> May 2020). The links were then re-distributed via Facebook, Twitter, or WhatsApp Group.

For audiences who uphold an Islamic political preference, the issue had quite resonance. This has formed an echo chamber of the racism and primordial hoaxes. The issue of religious difference for the Islamic group is always considered a decisive issue as it is related to the governmental level. For this group, it would be a great humiliation when they are ruled by a person who embraces different religions. Take for example the case of Ahok who was the former governor of DKI Jakarta. For this group, his administration was a grim and even hurtful example because Ahok is in fact Chinese descent and is a non-Muslim. Therefore, if they receive news that Jokowi is a non-Muslim, it is something that prefer not to acknowledge and even hate it. As stated by one of the respondents as follows:

“I am very disappointed in Jokowi after I received the news that he is of Chinese descent and is a Christian. That's why he partnered with Ahok when he was the governor of DKI. It turns out he is Chinese. In my opinion, Chinese in Indonesia only think about money and money. I am doubtful if they have a loyalty for this country. For me, the Chinese are opportunists, and just think of their own race by draining the wealth of this country. So, I am very disappointed that Jokowi turns out to be a Chinese descent. Moreover, he is a non-Muslim. No wonder if his policy is always pro-PRC and unfavorable for the Moslem.”

This informant was born around the end of 1990s and gained the Islamic concept mainly from his campus when he was in college. He admitted that he once joined a Student Organization on religious development. After the fall New Order era, students' activity organizations are mostly controlled by a right wing party which holds stricter Islamic ideology, such as KAMMI affiliated to the Prosperous Justice Party (PKS). Although KAMMI is a student's organization which has been established for quite a long time, after the New Order era has more exposure to Islamic thoughts from the Ikhwanul Muslimin movement in Egypt. Through the Internet, this Islamic hard-liner students' movement has gathered many supporters for Hasan Al Banna's thoughts. Hasan Albana understands Islam textually and singularly and the thoughts must be reflected on daily life. PKS is also a political party which has reformed campuses as its mass bases since its inception, and KAMMI was a frontline student's organization. Therefore, for any political moment such as the Presidential Election, the Islamic students cling and even become the main cadre to support the candidate pair who represent the Islamic political aspiration. When PKS supported the Prabowo-Sandi pair, Siti, the informant who is also the supporter of PKS felt reluctant to a non-Moslem and Chinese descent figure. This sectarian and racist attitude is deeply embedded in PKS cadres and also other Islamic mass organizations such as Hizbut Tahrir, FPI, and other Islamic troops.

When the nationalist ideological students received the information on Prabowo's incapability in doing salat together, they trusted the information. They approved hoaxes hinting political preferences which support the Jokowi faction. Any information discrediting Prabowo was considered true without any further questions. An active power or ability to render different meanings from the coder's intention suddenly disappears when these students receive any information that caters their emotion.

Such data should confirm the Hall's and Morley's statement on audiences being controlled by their cognitive structure. Taking the Hall's concept, the reception of the ideological audiences is similar to the dominant-hegemonic character. It means the ideological audiences are dominated and charged by the ideological structure hegemony which makes the text structure in the communication message via media. The ideological audience phenomenon when receiving the hoax complemented the thesis which states that anything taking place during the encoding process will be directly equal to the decoding process.

This ideological audience organizes their ideology regularly and systematically in various extracurricular activities. There is a robust cohesiveness of the ideology, which their cognitive structure internalized. Therefore, this leads to dominate the audience's political attitude and

action. The ideological process certainly has implications on the reality the audience perceives. This process can be explained through two processes, i.e. insanity and amnesia. Both processes target the minds. In the politics of memory, insanity is a memory which is continuously subsided to remember something non-existent. After some period of time, the individual will believe the non-existent to be existing. In turn, amnesia is when memory is ordered to release something and in the long run, the existing thing will become non-existent.

People with insanity and amnesia cannot distinguish what is real and not real, and what is the fact and what is the fiction. Those who do not understand the complexity of the naive reality, declare anything with additional hasty remarks: that is the fact (Redana, 2017). Borrowing the term from Marx, such process is coined as false consciousness, i.e. a re-efficacy by George Lukas, hegemony by Gramsci, administered according to Adorno, and repressive desublimation by Marcuse (Agger, 2006). The ideological audience in receiving hoaxes on social media undergo various critical unconsciousness conditions. They cannot differentiate fact from fiction, or real from illusion. This audience type considers that it is neither important nor urgent to distinguish facts from fictions.

The media have the ability to abate the critical unconscious. Electronic media dramatically boost and intensifies the production and distribution of ideologies, which cannot be fathomed carefully. However, it should be read fast and shift quickly from each performance. Thus, it hides an impression that the media does not present any text. Rather, it demonstrates the world without bias (Agger, 2006).

It is this type of ideological audience who adorns the post-truth era on social media. They become a part of the hoaxes turbulence because they quite often and actively join in disseminating various hate speeches, fake news, and other ideological sentiments on social media. Even though they are in the opposite position in receiving any hoaxes, the substantial reception is the same. As both are ideological in nature. They simply receive the information without further scrutiny. Sociologically, they are indeed performing a high social attribute, i.e. university students who are considered to have higher logic than ordinary people. Nevertheless, the fact showed that ideological influence is stronger than academic aptitude. Their cultural resources are neglected while selecting meanings attached during the encoding process. Therefore, social media text is taken literally. Information with less accurate data is received verbatim. It is because it can fulfil their affection urge. For this type of audience, the most important issue is looking for justification instead of validation.

### **Reception of the Critical-Sceptic Audiences**

This research also identified some Millennials university students belonging to the critical-sceptic audience. They were critical and sceptical of Indonesian political development in the post-truth era. They were active subjects who interpreted politics critically against various elite political practices in the digital democracy era. They underscore the political practices by elite political groups who seek competition in the political system by disrespecting political ethics. Egocentrism and primordial political practice by the elite political groups is considered harmful to democracy by these audiences. They also expressed critical evaluation for democracy for its tendency to support primordialism instead of professional performance.

These sceptical audiences demonstrated political belief which is based on critical attitude to various elite political activities. Whether the elite are in the government or acts as opposition parties. The main issue is not all ideological aspects. Instead, they underlie the elite's inability to run the government and also how the opposition could offer an alternative. In other words, this generational type is more moderate in nature when constructing the political practices of the Indonesian elite political groups. Through the online media, this type of audience articulated the importance of more moderate political governance by utilizing the current resources. It should not be managed by ideological methods while overlooking real problems such as poverty, unemployment, and future uncertainty faced by the Millennials.

Therefore, this skeptical audiences group is highly selective when they receive hoaxes and news circulating on various social media platforms during the 2019 Presidential campaign. Furthermore, this audience type opposed each hoax because it is an outright lie. They do not support any presidential candidates and routinely evaluate both candidates using alternative points of view. The logical mindset and supportive or unsupportive attitude to some information on social media are the priority in countering hoaxes.

The hoaxes circulated around the political communication interaction on the social media during the 2019 Presidential campaign, such as the 7 containers trucks of ballots casted for 01, Jokowi was claimed as Chinese Christian; Prabowo did not know how to conduct salat; Prabowo won the election, were mere rumour for them. They did not understand why people are very enthusiastic to produce hoaxes, and why many people talk about those hoaxes. They were more interested in feasible program campaigns and public interest orientation. Even though these matters may not be too pleasing for many people on social media. The audience of this type was critical toward the elite political groups' promises and they

even considered the political elites are boastful.

In the post-truth era, this specific audience is the balancing power in the meaning production on social media, in which it is related to how hoaxes were trending. The boost of hoax production, widely circulated on the political communication interaction via social media, was not automatically received literally. They would select and negotiate the information, some is rejected. This type of audience is similar to Hall's terminology, i.e. an opposition who decodes otherwise. Furthermore, this type of audience takes an oppositional side to all hoaxes in political communication. Therefore, they are not a part of the clamorous post-truth era in the digital world. Instead, they evaluate, provide insights, and offer an alternative.

### **Audience's characteristics**

Taking the above scheme of the three Millennials audience typologies in receiving hoaxes on social media during the 2019 presidential campaign. Some of the audience's characteristics can be identified, among others, active production of meaning, and autonomous-reflective.

#### **Active Production of Meanings**

Although the three typologies of audiences vary in how they address the hoaxes on social media during the 2019 presidential campaign. There was a similarity in character, namely they are an audience actively producing meaning. The hoax peddlers and dealers had wished the target audiences were able to be influenced or at least shift their political preferences according to the communicator's choices. Yet it apparently did not happen to the audiences. The audiences' reception varies in accordance with their respective selective power or ability. The pragmatic-recreational typological audiences have a more dynamic characteristic. In the sense that they would always consider their self-interests. The hoax was exploited for their pragmatic interests, such as adding commercial benefits by producing hilarious memes which are re-circulated to social media. Or it was used to accommodate their content needs such as, for jokes. This pragmatic-recreational type of audiences is constantly being permissive. Their attitude of permissiveness is a foundation to produce meaning when they receive the hoax message and information during the 2019 presidential campaign.

While the ideological typology of the millennial audiences also produces meaning, their foundational production of meaning is not based on critical thinking. They interpreted hoaxes during the 2019 Presidential campaign by repeatedly referring to their ideological references, either Islamic or nationalist. That was, although they have the relative autonomy to social media as a means for distributing hoax on one hand, But on the other hand, they were powerless to their ideological domination. It indicates that this ideological type of audience continues to have further indoctrination in their campus activity, both inside and out-

side their campus.

As for the critical-skeptic type of audiences, they also posed a character who actively produced meaning when they received hoaxes on social media during the 2019 Presidential campaign. Moreover, this type of audience possessed an ability to be selective for the content and also evaluated and analysed the hoax message. They distrust the hoax information, and also regretted for why the social media information distorted to be used for something counterproductive for the public interests. This type of audience offered an alternative to prevent hoax information, such as stopping the circulation by never posting any hoaxes they receive, and also providing more impartial and educational information in accordance with the media literacy. They always warn other people to be selective of all hoaxes and encourage media literacy implementation.

#### **Autonomy towards Social Media**

Although these three types of Millennials audiences were varied in their response and conduct on the hoaxes during the 2019 presidential campaign. All three groups have one character in common, which is relatively autonomous of social media. The three types of audiences always provide a distance with the media. Or they do not immediately join the logic of the media when they are involved in the political communication process during the 2019 Presidential campaign, particularly relating to the hoax issue. Here, social media is not a decisive medium. Instead, the three types of audiences are more autonomous and not controlled by social media messages.

During the period, the position of the media had transformed into a means of political expression for all three types of audiences when they were exposed to the hoaxes of the 2019 Presidential Election. Although social media have the resources to control audiences. In the context of hoaxes, the audiences were able to utilize social media as a means to express their existence. This indicates that every media message is not only always accepted by the audiences in a polemical manner, i.e. as the assumption of active audience theory. But the audiences also demonstrated relative autonomy over social media.

### **Conclusion**

Based on the description and data analysis as an answer to both main questions of this research, the following conclusion can be drawn.

First, the audiences of Millennial students who received the hoaxes on social media at the time of the campaign Presidential Election of 2009 can be identified into three typologies, namely pragmatic-recreational, ideological, and critical-sceptic. Each type of audience had affected the variation of the attitude and acceptance. The pragmatic-recreational audience type is not so keen on the political world. Yet they show a permissive attitude when they received any hoax. Substantively the attitude has the power of selec-

tion. And it shows their activeness in receiving a social media message. In fact, the pragmatic-recreational audience type did not merely consume the message. But at the same time also produced a message. Even though the hoax is then converted with loads of humor in the form of a meme. Therefore, this audience type was involved in a circuitry process of meaning and this audience is not a part of the meaning reproduction. However, they consumed and simultaneously produced new meaning with recreational nuance. Therefore, this pragmatic-recreational type of audience is not simply being in the negotiated code position in the Hall's model. Instead they also became a novel code creator. Thus, in conjunction with the post-truth era, this type of audience did not take part in the hoaxes of fictional content reproduction which led to political chaos in the digital world.

Meanwhile, the ideological audiences' reception was even more conservative. In the context that they did not have any selective power when receiving the hoaxes on social media during the 2019 Presidential campaign. The ideological drive was strong on this type of audience. When they receive the hoaxes, they will receive them biased by the sake of ideology. This indicated that the audience posed a lack of self-liberation or has not been able to escape the domination of the ideology which shapes them. In short, they lack critical thinking.

The assumption of a reception study that the audience is always active is implausible. It is even more apparent when ideological basis intensifies the polarization between Jokowi-Ma'ruf faction and Prabowo-Sandi side. Most of the audiences reproduced the primordialist issue when they received hoaxes, such as religion, race, ethnicity, and intergroup differences. The involvement of the audience in the hoax acceptance process inclined to the hate speech reproduction. Thus, instead of looking for the truth, they looked for vindication.

The post-truth era is obvious when spreading and receiving hoaxes on social media. The audiences still prioritize feeling rather than logic. In other words, the audiences' emotion or affection remains a decisive factor in interpreting hoaxes. Thus, the logical communication process did not occur. The audiences remain far from utilizing the media literacy principles when they receive hoaxes. The audience's mastery in media literacy is absent. They are overwhelmed by the ideological drive when receiving hoaxes. While the socio-political communication is laden with ideological distortion which prioritize the politics of identity.

Interestingly, the audiences' character had actually come into existence in the democracy era. While also thrived during postmodernism's bleak vision of big narratives domination era. Or it is said as a pandemonium era. However, the contrary phenomena actually happened. In this digital democracy era, humans persevere in the

middle of the rise of an ideology. The ideology should not relate to socio-economic classes as the base. Instead, it is an ideology which solidifies the primordialism identity. We are now in the post-truth era, in which one group of audiences become actors to produce, consume, and concurrently disseminate contents of hate speeches, fake news, and other hoaxes.

However, there is a group of audiences who stand on a non-ideological attitude, i.e. critical-sceptic audience. These audiences have a critical and selective attitude toward hoaxes on social media during the 2019 Presidential campaign. In the middle of the boisterous post-truth era, this type of audience contributes more impartial information which prioritizes logic than the emotion. Thus, they are not the part of the post-truth era pandemonium in the digital world. Rather, they evaluate, reflect, and offer alternatives.

Second, although three audience typologies are different in their attitude when receiving hoaxes on social media during the 2019 Presidential campaign. They have one character in common, which is they are active in the meaning production and relatively autonomous of social media. As the meaning modifier, they do not receive what intended meaning by hoaxes peddler and dealers. The audiences who are active in producing meaning were not affected by the intention of the hoax peddler. The audiences demonstrated different responses in accordance with their ability to select, even if the response is individual.

Although these three types of Millennials audiences varied in their response and activity on the hoaxes during the 2019 Presidential campaign. They all have one character in common, namely relatively autonomous to social media. They always secure some distance with the media. Or they are not immediately manipulated by the logic of the media when involved in a political communication process during the 2019 Presidential campaign, particularly the discussion of hoaxes. Here, social media is not a crucial element. Instead, the three types of audiences are more autonomous and not influenced by social media information.

Based on the findings of this research, we offer practical and scientific suggestions. In terms of practical suggestions, given the increasingly integral part of social media in various socio-political activities on the one hand. And on the other hand the circulation of hoaxes tend to expand during political events such as the Presidential and regional elections. It becomes necessary to organize political and media literacy education for the Millennial, especially for the ideological audience. For the scientific suggestion, considering the limitation of this research, it is still deemed necessary to carry out other research focusing on active audiences from different perspectives and methods. It is as part of efforts to enhance and renew audience-centred theories of communication in the increasingly dominant digital age.

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