

PUBLIC PERCEPTION AND ATTITUDE ON FACT-CHECKING: A CASE STUDY FROM INDONESIA

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ABSTRACT. Fact-checking, for over a decade, is part of misinformation debunking strategies. This initiative, during the period, get pros and cons regarding to its effectiveness. In the midst of the controversy, it is necessary to figure out whether this practice is widely known and public perception and attitude towards fact-checking. Survey was conducted to gather data from 13 provinces in Indonesia. The provinces were elected in purpose to represent three are in Indonesia namely west, central, and east. Quota sampling based on age group category was proportionally utilised regarding to sampling techniques (N= 846). Research depicts fact-checking is not popular among the respondents particularly women, people with low level of education, and older generation; thus, many of them rarely did fact-checking. Liputan6, Kompas, and Cekfakta.com are the most popular fact-checking organization while fact-checking by the government is the least popular. Most of the respondent have a positive perception and attitude on fact-checking such as read, re-share, and discuss the clarified information with other people.

KEYWORDS: fact-checking organizations, awareness, perception, attitudes, Indonesia

INTRODUCTION

Fact-checking, for over a decade, is part of misinformation debunking strategies (Porter & Wood, 2021). This initiative, during the period, get pros and cons regarding to its effectiveness. People who agree with fact-checking believe that the initiative quite effective in countering the circulation of misinformation because it can reduce people's belief on misinformation (Porter & Wood, 2021). However, some scholars offer a reverse opinion which argues several obstacles in doing fact-checking. First, fact-checking is vulnerable to bias since some fact checking organisations have an affiliation with certain party or it is usually called partisans (Fujishiro et al., 2020). As a consequence, some people did not believe on the fact-checker thus the organisation should transparent in explaining their information sources (Humphrecht, 2020). Second, the amount of clarified information which is produced from fact-checking is not equivalence with the misinformation. Hence, not everyone who got exposure to misinformation will get the clarified information and it makes fact-checking less effective.

In the midst of the controversy, it is necessary to figure out whether this practice is widely known since awareness is a first and important stage before affecting people to do fact-checking. If the result shows that most of people already familiar thus the fact-checker can implement some strategies to make them belief on it. In Indonesia,

fact-checker organisations have existed since ten years ago. However, the misinformation keeps distribute easily throughout the country and people are rarely recheck about the veracity of the information. If they did verification, they did it by asking it to their family. Therefore, this research investigate why Indonesian people rarely did information verification through fact-checker organisation by mapping out their awareness, perception, and attitude toward the fact-checker.

METHOD

Survey was conducted to gather data from 13 provinces in Indonesia. The provinces were elected in purpose to represent three are in Indonesia namely west, central, and east. Quota sampling based on age group category was proportionally utilised regarding to sampling techniques (N= 846) which consist of 56.6% female and 43.4% male respondents. Most of the respondent was a senior high school and college students.

The research utilized three independent variables namely gender, ages, and education regarding to find out whether those groups produce different score on perception and attitude toward clarified information. On the other hand, there are two dependent variables namely perception about fact-checking's organisation and attitude toward the clarified information. In term of public perception, the research examines public opinion on accuracy (whether the organization accurate in identifying misinformation), responsive (whether the organization quickly announce the identified misinformation), accessibility (whether the fact-checking website/social media accessible or not), clarified information (whether the information easily to understand)($\alpha=.79$).

The second variable is public's attitude on clarified information which measured by asking the respondent whether they want to read, re-share, and discuss the clarified information ($\alpha=.67$). The collected data was analysed using chi-square to figure out whether the perception and attitude's score difference among gender, age, and education. In addition, Google Trends will be used to elaborate the research findings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Fact-Checking Awareness

Research shows 56% respondents never heard about fact-checking organisation and most of them are women. In addition, a chi-square test for independence revealed no significant differences between gender regard to familiarity with fact-checking ($\chi^2 (1, n=846) = .22, p = .63, phi = .02$). The contingency table shows more than 50% men and women does not aware about fact-checking organization; however, men (57%) have bigger percentage compare to women (55%). It implies that fact-checking organization is less popular among women.

In terms of education, there is a very strong differences within education groups related to familiarity with fact-checking organization ($\chi^2 (5, n=846) = 34.5, p = .00, phi = .202$). People who took undergraduate or graduate study are likely to familiar with

fact-checking organization compare to others. In other words, educated people are likely to have a high level of awareness. In addition, the research shows a strong differences within age groups ($\chi^2(3, n=846) = 17.6, p = .00, \phi = .144$). Respondent who aged 11-24 (Z generation) and 25-40 (Y generation) are more aware about fact-checking organization compare to other generations. It implies the younger generation is more aware rather than older generation.

Based on analysis above, the research argues education and age have association with the fact-checking awareness; meanwhile, gender has no association with it. It is in line with prior study which shows that age and education can be used in predicting familiarity with fact-checking (Robertson et al., 2020). Furthermore, the prior study argues educated people, young, and male are more likely to be familiar with the fact-checking.

This research also investigate the most popular fact-checking website/social media. A huge number of respondent who are familiar with fact-checking state they are frequently access Liputan 6 cek fakta regard to do information verification, while the least popular website/social media is Kumparan and Kementrian Komunikasi dan Informasi (fact-checking website is owned by the government) (table 1).

In addition, the table shows fact-checking organization which are owned by the media are more popular compare to non-profit organization and government. It is a hazardous condition because of media's bias which can affect the fact-checking process.

Table 1 popular fact-checking organization

No	Fact-checking website	Owner	Percentage
1	Liputan 6 cek fakta	Media	24
2	cek fakta kompas	Media	9.8
3	cekfakta.com	Non-profit organization	7.1
4	Turnbackhoax.id	Non-profit organization	5
5	cek fakta tempo	Media	4.4
6	periksa fakta tirto	Media	2.4
7	Kalimasada	Non-profit organization	0.7
8	Kominfo	Government	0.2
9	Kumparan	Media	0.2
10	All of media		0.2
11	No access		46

The popularity of liputan6 is in line with Google Trends data which shows Liputan6 fact-checking is frequently searched by the society during 2019 until 2022 (figure 1). However, the second most searched website is Tempo and followed by Kompas and Kominfo. It is quite different from the survey's results thus it implies there is a difference preference among respondent and Google users. A large number of Google users prefer fact-checking organizations which are owned by media and the government; meanwhile, the respondents prefer fact-checking organization which are maintained by the media and non-profit organization.

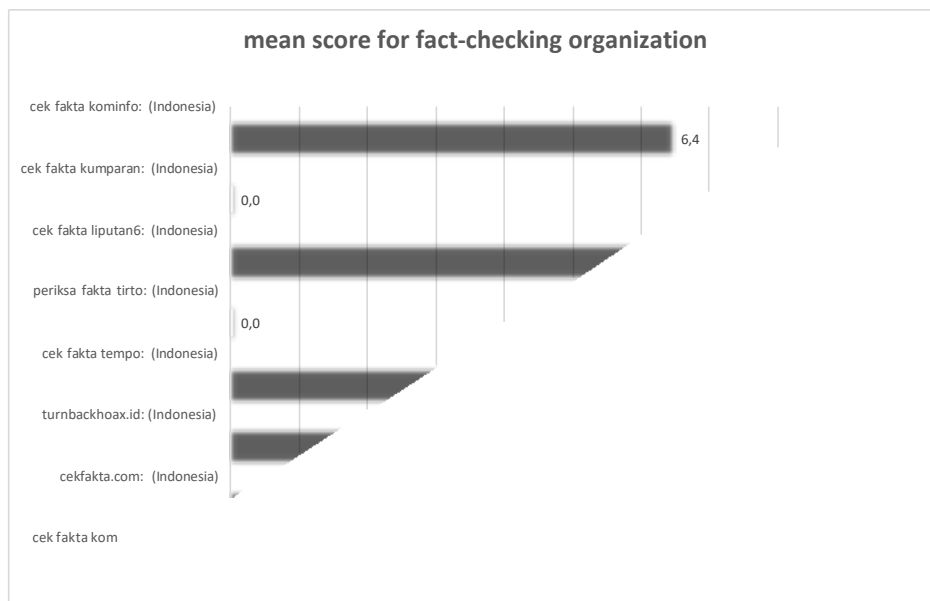


Figure 1 mean score for fact-checking organization based on GoogleTrends

Having a low familiarity with fact-checking organization, 77.9% of the respondents argue they never did fact-checking. In addition, in the last six months, 39% of respondents are rarely did the fact-checking. A chi-square test shows there is a strong difference among groups within age ($\chi^2(1, n=846) = 9.5, p = .02, phi = .106$) and education ($\chi^2(5, n=846) = 28.3, p = .00, phi = .18$). Younger respondents (people aged 11-40) are likely to do fact-checking rather than older respondents. Meanwhile, people with higher education (undergraduate and graduate) are likely to do fact-checking compare to others.

On the other hand, gender has no a strong difference within groups regard to do fact-checking ($\chi^2(1, n=846) = 22.7, p = .34, phi = -.016$). The table contingency shows men have a big percentage compare to women regard to do fact-checking. It implies men are likely to do fact-checking rather than women. In conclusion, related to fact-checking activity, young, educated, and men are likely to report doing fact-checking. The finding is not in line with prior literature which shows only age can be predicted fact-checking, while education and gender cannot be used (Robertson et al., 2020).

There are five topics that frequently checked by the respondent who did fact-checking namely health (30.6%), politic (30.1%), entertainment (17.2%), crime (10.8%), and religion (7.5%). Health has a big proportion since the survey was conducted during the pandemic; thus, people are likely to verify health information. In addition, women report they are frequently do fact checking on health topic compare to men. The other topics which are frequently verified by women are religion and entertainment. Meanwhile, men are likely to do fact checking on political and criminal topic.

In term of education level, respondent who took junior high school are likely to do factcheck on health and religion topic; while, senior high school respondents are likely to verify health and entertainment topic. Furthermore, people who took undergraduate program are likely to check health and politic topic; meanwhile graduate respondents are likely to do fact checking on politic and entertainment topic.

People categorized as Z, Y, and X generation are likely to do fact checking on health and politic topic; while, baby boomer are likely to verify politic and criminal topic. In conclusion, health topic are frequently checked by women, all level of education (except graduate level), and all generation (except baby boomers). However, politic are frequently checked by men, people with higher education, and all generation.

Fact Checking Perception and Attitude

The analysis demonstrates there was no significant difference in perception's score among male ($M= 23.14$, $SD= 3.6$) and female ($M= 21.8$, $SD= 3.9$); $t(846) = 1,82$, $p= .07$). It implies both male and female are likely to have the same perception on fact-checking organization works. For example, both genders mostly agree that the organisation accurately identify the misinformation, unresponsive in delivering clarified information and the clarified information is easy to comprehend, supported by comprehensive explanation and data.

The research also found that there was no significant difference score among male ($M= 10.7$, $SD= 2.6$) and female ($M= 10.1$, $SD= 2.7$); $t(846) = 1,62$, $p= .11$) regarding attitude toward clarified information $t(846) = 1,62$, $p= .11$). The finding indicates male and female are likely to have a positive attitude on clarified information namely read, re-share, and discuss the clarified information with other people. The same attitude is also expressed by respondent no matter how the education level.

This research argues that future research should focus on investigating the reason why fact-checking are not widely acknowledged even though the initiatives have been started for more than decade. Regarding to self-report method, the future research should utilise experiments to get the real respondent's response toward clarified information. Furthermore, future research could begin to figure out alternative solution for debunking misinformation since this research demonstrates that people does not familiar with fact-checking practices.

CONCLUSION

Fact-checking is believed as an effective strategy in countering misinformation; thus, many fact-checking organizations can be found across the world. However, it is necessary to investigate public awareness on fact-checking organization and practices.

The research argues a large number of respondents are not familiar with fact-checking organization, particularly among women, low level of education, and older generation; thus, most of the respondents argue they never did fact-checking. In addition, in the last six months, 39% of respondents are rarely did the fact-checking.

There are three types of fact-checking owner in Indonesia i.e. media, non-profit organization, and government. Liputan6 (media), Kompas (media), and Cekfakta.com(NGO) are the most popular fact-checking organization among the respondents; meanwhile, fact-checking owned by the government is the least popular compare to other organizations.

In general, the respondents have a good perception on fact-checking process thus it is followed by positive attitude. For instance, read, re-share, and discuss the clarified information with other people.

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