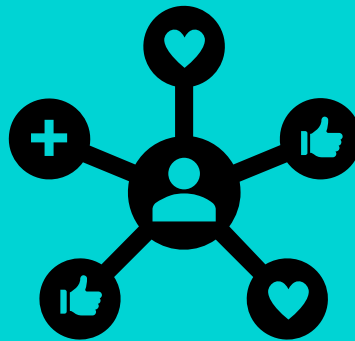


Assessing Media Literacy Gaps in Indonesia

Mythos Labs



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INTRODUCTION

The spread of false narratives is a growing problem in Indonesia. According to a [survey](#) conducted by Mythos Labs, 77% of the respondents in Indonesia believe online misinformation has increased over the past few years. Young internet users are most at risk – according to a [recent study](#), the largest group of internet users in Indonesia (85.4%) are between the ages of 17 to 25 years old. [Research](#) has also revealed that misinformation and negative online content can have a “major impact on the mindset and behavior of younger Indonesians and can often cultivate intolerant attitudes.” Therefore, there exists an urgent need to assess the media literacy gaps among local Indonesians in order to help inform and build programs that aim to increase resilience of Indonesian youth against mis/disinformation.

This report provides insights pertaining to social media literacy gaps among local Indonesian internet users disaggregated by gender, location, and age. Moreover, it also identifies the most prevalent tactics, topics and narratives being used to spread misinformation across social media platforms in Indonesia. The report also includes recommendations for programming to build social media literacy in Indonesia and immunize local populations against misinformation.

METHODOLOGY

Mythos Labs collected data using two methods — first, a survey was administered to 564 participants; and second, qualitative research was conducted to analyze misinformation on social media. The research period covered ranges from 16 October 2022 to 15 January 2023.

1. Survey

Designing the Survey

In October 2022, Mythos Labs designed an electronic survey to assess the media literacy levels of Indonesian internet users across different ages, genders, and locations. The survey was designed to be comprehensive yet easy-to-understand for all participants, regardless of their level of education or background. The survey questions sought to measure participants’:

- 1) Media consumption habits and patterns
- 2) Awareness of different types of media
- 3) Ability to critically evaluate media content.

Before being formally disseminated to 564 participants, survey questions were pilot tested with a group of 48 participants to identify and address any potential issues or ambiguities. Based on their feedback, survey questions were modified and finalized for dissemination

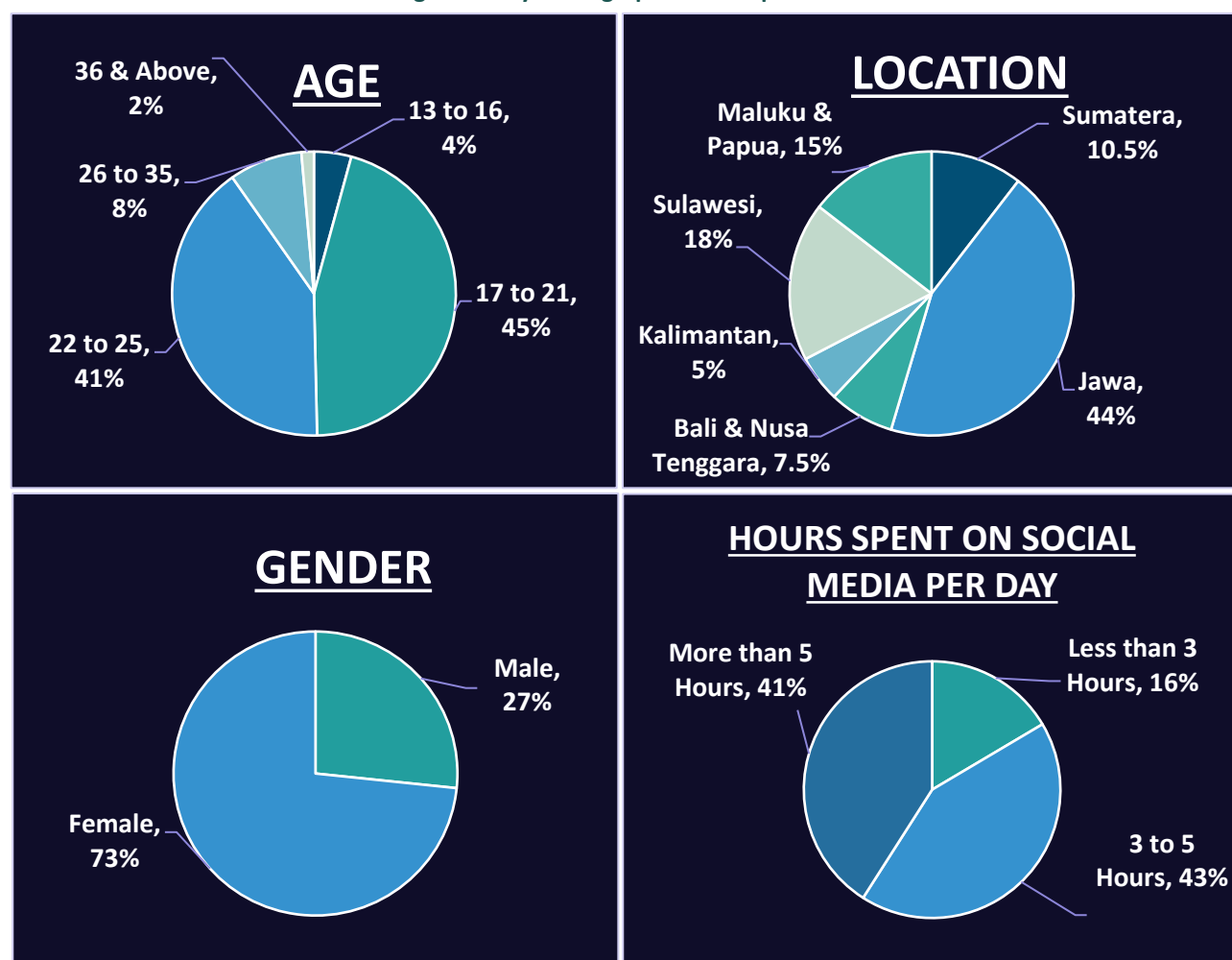
Format of Survey

The survey consisted of an online questionnaire hosted as a Google Form. Hosting the survey as a Google Form ensured Mythos Labs was able to track survey results in real-time. The survey consisted of multiple-choice, Likert scale, and open-ended questions to gather both quantitative and qualitative data. To maintain the anonymity of the participants, the survey did not collect any personally identifiable information. Please view Appendix for the full survey (in English and Bahasa).

Survey Dissemination

The goal of the survey was to garner at least 500 respondents. This goal was met and exceeded as the final count of respondents totaled 564 Indonesian internet users. The survey was disseminated through multiple channels to reach a broad cross-section of the Indonesian population. The survey link was distributed through social media platforms including Facebook and Twitter, as well as online forums and discussion boards on WhatsApp and Telegram. The survey was also disseminated via email to local media outlets and CSOs. Participants were encouraged to complete the survey at their convenience and were given a deadline to submit their responses. To ensure the survey was disseminated to a group representative of the overall population, survey recipients represented different regions across Indonesia, including urban and rural areas. The survey was circulated in both English as well as Bahasa, to ensure increased participation. Participants were also assured of the confidentiality and anonymity of their responses.

Figure 1: Key Demographics of Respondents



2. Qualitative Research

Using Mythos Labs’ MIDAC social media monitoring software as well as the expertise of local human researchers, Mythos Labs’ research team identified and analyzed over 100 social media posts spreading misinformation on social media platforms in Indonesia. Mythos Labs’ researchers further categorized the contents of these posts as well as the tactics that were being used to spread them.

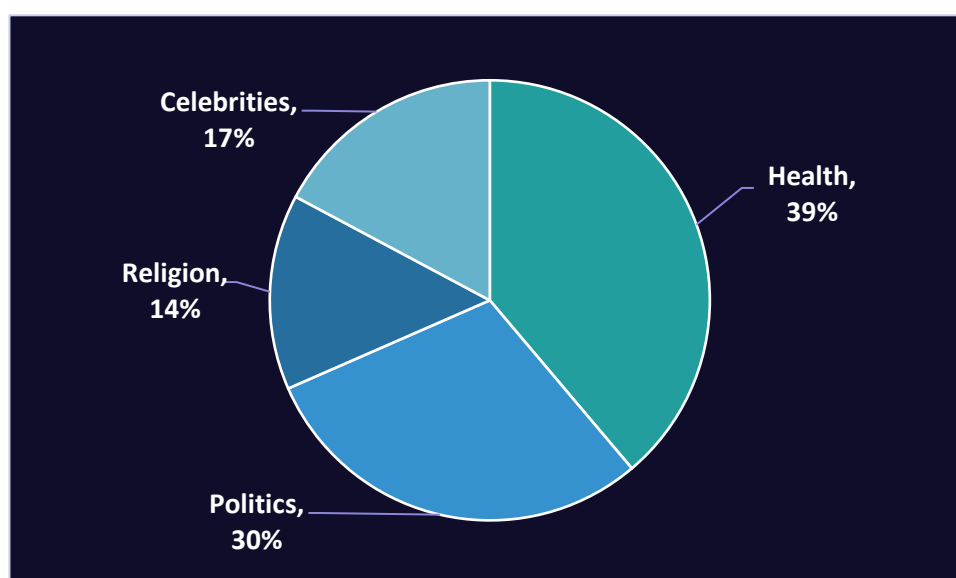
Additionally, Mythos Labs conducted a Google Trends analysis to identify the most searched keywords related to misinformation narratives in Indonesia. This analysis was helpful in revealing which narratives were most popular at what time during the research period of October 2022 to February 2023.

KEY FINDINGS

1. Politics and Health are Among the Most Prevalent Topics for Misinformation in Indonesia

When asked which topics are most prone to misinformation online, about 70% of respondents named either Politics or Health.

Figure 2: Topics Most Prone to Online Misinformation in Indonesia



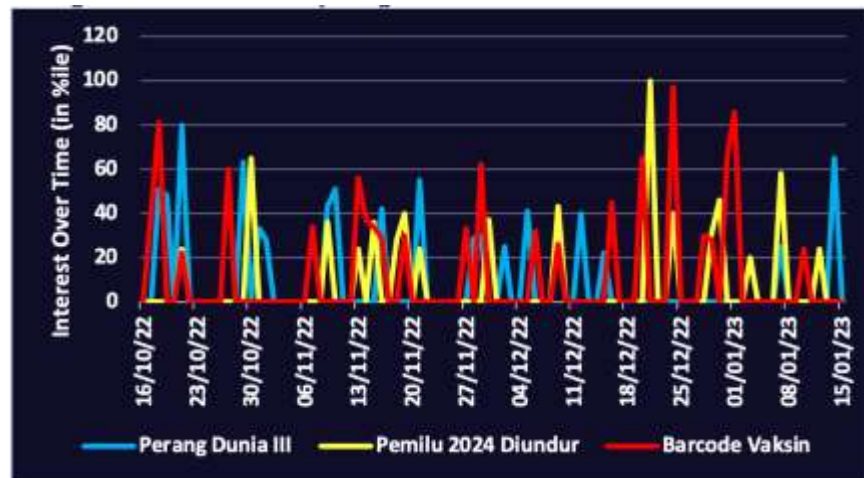
A Google Trend analysis by Mythos Labs revealed that between 16 October 2022 and 15 January 2023, the most commonly Googled misinformation narratives in Indonesia were related to politics and health. These include:

- a) “Perang Dunia III” – a conspiracy theory that the Russia-Ukraine conflict is the beginning of World War 3. Searches for this term in Indonesia spiked during the third week of October prior to the G20 event in mid-November 2022, which was also attended by the Russian Foreign Minister. The Russia-Ukraine conflict affected the imports and exports in Indonesia, especially leading to high prices of flour. The pre-

existing conspiracy theories about the Russia-Ukraine being a World War III created more panic among the public and added fuel to the searches.

- b) “Pemilu 2024 Diundur” – a false claim that the Indonesian 2024 elections have been postponed. Searches for this term in Indonesia spiked during the third week of December 2022, amid election campaign season when claims of the elections being postponed to 2025 or 2029 were gaining momentum online.
- c) “Microchip Vaksin” – a false claim that the Covid-19 vaccine is embedded with micro-chips. Searches for this term in Indonesia spiked in December 2022 around the time many Indonesians were being encouraged to get second COVID-19 booster shot.

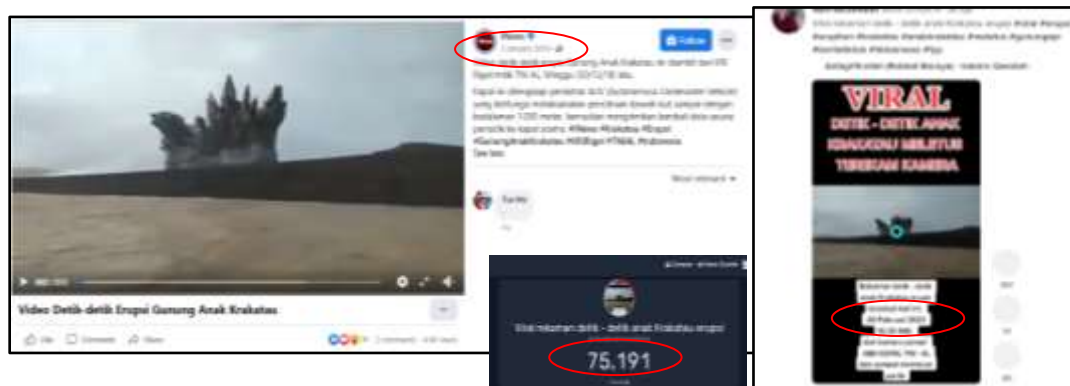
Figure 3: Most Commonly Googled Misinformation Narratives in Indonesia



II. Decontextualizing and Spoofing are Among the Most Prevalent Tactics for Spreading Online Misinformation in Indonesia

Mythos Labs’ analysis revealed that decontextualizing, i.e. removing context from text/images/videos to change their intended meaning, was a commonly used tactic to spread misinformation in Indonesia. For example, Mount Krakatau had erupted in 2018, but the below social media post shared a video of the eruption along with a false caption stating it happened on 4 Feb 2022, creating panic among the public.

Figure 4: Example of Decontextualizing



Spoofing, i.e. imitating the look and feel of reliable news sources by using names/layouts/logos designed to look like legitimate news sources, was another common tactic used to spread misinformation in Indonesia. For example, the below social media post claimed a site called pedulilindungi.com was the only official platform for vaccination registration and COVID-19 updates, even though the correct website is Pedulilindungi.id.

Figure 5: Example of Spoofing



Please view Appendix for a complete list of the most popular false narratives in Indonesia.

III. Most Young Indonesians Consume their News from Social Media and Overestimate their Ability to Identify Misinformation

65% of all survey respondents reported that they use social media for obtaining news. 79% of respondents aged 17-25, reported using social media as a source of news. This reveals the importance of training the youth to critically evaluate media and news content online. 60% of respondents aged 17-25, who rated their confidence as 5/5 while identifying misinformation, were unaware of the correct meaning of “misinformation.” This suggests that young people may be more vulnerable to false or misleading information than they think. Thus, there is a need for greater media literacy education among youth in the country.

IV. There is Room to Increase Awareness and Usage of Fact-Checking Websites

By not using fact-checking websites or engaging in fact-checking practices, individuals may be more susceptible to misinformation and disinformation. 53% of respondents aged 26 and above do not use fact-checking while using social media. In addition, 46% of respondents aged 17-25 who use social media for more than 5 hours per day reported that they don’t use fact-checking. The high amount of time spent by the youth on these platforms can make them especially susceptible to the effects of false or misleading content.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1) Conduct Media Literacy Trainings for Local Youth with an Emphasis on how to not only Identify but also Report Online Misinformation.

61% of survey respondents did not know the correct meaning of “misinformation.” 86% of all survey respondents said they would be interested in attending a training for countering misinformation. Thus, there exists a need as well as demand for media literacy trainings in Indonesia. Moreover, only 55% of respondents who rated their confidence in identifying misinformation as 5/5, rated their confidence on reporting misinformation as 5/5 as well.

Thus, an equal emphasis must be placed on both identifying and reporting misinformation during capacity-building programs.

2) *Design Targeted Programs that Focus on Relevant Skill Gaps and Social Media Platforms for Different Age Groups*

None of the survey respondents aged 36 and above said they use Instagram and TikTok. Among respondents aged 17 – 25, however, 33% said they use Instagram and 30% reported using TikTok. This highlights the importance of developing tailored curriculums for specific age groups that cater to countering misinformation on social media platforms popular among each group.

Table 1: Break-down by Age of Most-Used Social Media Platforms in Indonesia

Rank	13-16	17-21	22-25	26-35	36 and above
#1	TikTok (46%)	TikTok (34%)	Instagram (35%)	WhatsApp (49%)	WhatsApp (62%)
#2	Instagram (21%)	Instagram (32%)	TikTok (25%)	Instagram (30%)	Facebook (13%)
#3	WhatsApp (21%)	WhatsApp (27%)	WhatsApp (23%)	Facebook (6%); TikTok (6%)	Twitter (13%)

3) *Increase Media Literacy Capacity Building in Underserved Regions such as Sulawesi, Maluku, Papua and Kalimantan*

66% of survey respondents in Sulawesi, Maluku and Papua were not able to define the term “misinformation” correctly, a significantly larger proportion than the average among other regions (55%). Additionally, the share of respondents who reported using fact-checking websites was lowest in Kalimantan (33%) as compared to other regions. It is imperative, therefore to increase media literacy trainings and capacity-building efforts in these regions where audiences are particularly vulnerable to online misinformation.

APPENDIX

Questionnaire Survey (English)

1. Name
2. Email ID
3. Age
 - a) 13 - 16
 - b) 17 - 21
 - c) 22-25
 - d) 26 - 35
 - e) 36 and above
4. Location
 - a) Sumatera
 - b) Java
 - c) Bali & Nusa Tenggara
 - d) Kalimantan
 - e) Sulawesi
 - f) Maluku & Papua
5. Gender
 - a) Male
 - b) Female
 - c) Other:
6. Please select all social media platforms on which you are active:
 - a) WhatsApp
 - b) Instagram
 - c) Facebook
 - d) TikTok
 - e) Twitter
 - f) Other:
7. How many hours a day do you spend on social media?
 - a) < 3 hours
 - b) 3 - 5 hours
 - c) > 5 hours
8. Which social media platform do you spend the MOST TIME on every day?
 - a) WhatsApp
 - b) Instagram
 - c) Facebook
 - d) TikTok

- e) Twitter
 - f) Other:
9. What do you use social media for?
- a) Entertainment
 - b) News
 - c) Communicating with friends and family
 - d) Learning new skills
 - e) Other
10. Which of the following influencers do you follow?
- a) Maudy Ayunda
 - b) Najwa Shihab
 - c) Irfan Bachdim
 - d) Kalis Mardiasih
 - e) Prof. Rhenald Kasali
 - f) Other
11. Which of the following sources do you use to access news?
- a) Detik.com
 - b) KOMPAS
 - c) TEMPO.CO
 - d) Narasi TV
 - e) Tribunnews
 - f) Other:
12. What does “misinformation” mean?
- a) False information
 - b) False information spread with the intent to deceive
 - c) False information spread without the intent to deceive
13. Over the last few years, the amount of misinformation you see online has:
- a) Increased
 - b) Decreased
 - c) Stayed the same
14. Which topic do you see misinformation about the most on social media?
- a) Misinformation related to health (e.g., COVID-related)
 - b) Misinformation related to politics
 - c) Misinformation related to religion
 - d) Misinformation related to celebrities
15. On which platform do you see the most amount of misinformation?

- a) WhatsApp
 - b) Instagram
 - c) Facebook
 - d) Tiktok
 - e) Twitter
 - f) Other:
16. On a scale of 1 - 5, how confident do you feel in your ability to IDENTIFY misinformation on social media platforms?
- | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
- Not confident
- Extremely confident
17. On a scale of 1 - 5, how confident do you feel in your ability to REPORT misinformation on social media platforms?
- | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
- Not confident
- Extremely confident
18. Do you use fact-checking websites to verify information?
- a) Yes
 - b) No
19. If yes, which fact-checking websites do you use?
- a) Kominfo.go.id
 - b) Google Fact Check Tools/Explorer
 - c) Periksa Fakta oleh TEMPO.co
 - d) Cek Fakta oleh KOMPAS.com
 - e) TurnBackHoax MAFINDO
 - f) Other:
20. Would you be interested in attending a training led by global experts to learn more about identifying, reporting and fighting misinformation online?
- a) Yes
 - b) No

Questionnaire Survey (Bahasa)

1. Nama Lengkap
2. Email
3. Usia

- a) 13-16
 - b) 17-21
 - c) 22-25
 - d) 26-35
 - e) 36 ke atas
4. Lokasi
- a) Sumatera
 - b) Jawa
 - c) Bali & Nusa Tenggara
 - d) Kalimantan
 - e) Sulawesi
 - f) Maluku & Papua
5. Jenis Kelamin
- a) Laki-laki
 - b) Perempuan
 - c) Yang lain:
6. Silakan pilih media sosial mana saja yang aktif digunakan:
- a) WhatsApp
 - b) Instagram
 - c) Facebook
 - d) TikTok
 - e) Twitter
 - f) Yang lain:
7. Berapa lama biasanya menggunakan media sosial dalam sehari-hari?
- a) < 3 jam
 - b) 3 - 5 jam
 - c) > 5 jam
8. Di antara platform media sosial berikut ini, manakah yang paling menyita waktu setiap harinya?
- a) WhatsApp
 - b) Instagram
 - c) Facebook
 - d) TikTok
 - e) Twitter
 - f) Yang lain:
9. Untuk tujuan apa saja menggunakan media sosial?
- a) Hiburan
 - b) Berita
 - c) Berkomunikasi dengan teman dan keluarga
 - d) Mempelajari keahlian baru
 - e) Lainnya

10. Manakah influencer yang Anda ikuti di media sosial?
- Maudy Ayunda
 - Najwa Shihab
 - Irfan Bachdim
 - Kalis Mardiasih
 - Prof. Rhenald Khasali
 - Lainnya
11. Darimana saja sumber berita yang Anda akses?
- Detik.com
 - KOMPAS
 - TEMPO
 - Narasi TV
 - Tribunnews
 - Yang lain:
12. Apa arti "misinformasi" yang Anda ketahui?
- Informasi yang keliru
 - Informasi keliru yang tersebar dengan tujuan membohongi/mengelabui
 - Informasi keliru yang tersebar tanpa tujuan membohongi/mengelabui
13. Dalam beberapa tahun terakhir ini, bagaimana perkembangan misinformasi daring (online)?
- Telah meningkat
 - Telah berkurang
 - Sama saja
14. Topik misinformasi manakah yang menurut Anda paling menjadi soal di media sosial?
- Misinformasi terkait kesehatan (misalnya berkaitan dengan COVID/Coronavirus Disease)
 - Misinformasi terkait politik
 - Misinformasi terkait isu agama
 - Misinformasi terkait dunia selebriti
15. Menurut Anda, platform media sosial manakah yang paling banyak adanya misinformasi?
- WhatsApp
 - Instagram
 - Facebook
 - TikTok
 - Twitter
 - Lainnya
16. Dari skala 1-5, seberapa yakin Anda untuk MENGIDENTIFIKASI misinformasi di media sosial?

1	2	3	4	5
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Tidak yakin – Sangat Yakin

17. Dari skala 1-5, seberapa yakin Anda untuk melakukan REPORT misinformasi di media sosial?

1	2	3	4	5
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Tidak yakin – Sangat Yakin

18. Apakah Anda menggunakan situs pengecek fakta untuk memverifikasi informasi?
 - a) Ya
 - b) Tidak
19. Jika "Ya", manakah situs pengecek fakta yang Anda gunakan?
 - a) Kominfo.go.id
 - b) Google Fact Check Tools/Explorer
 - c) Periksa Fakta oleh TEMPO.co
 - d) Cek Fakta oleh KOMPAS.com
 - e) TurnBackHoax MAFINDO
 - f) Yang lain:
20. Apakah Anda tertarik mengikuti training bersama pakar global untuk mempelajari identifikasi, pelaporan dan melawan misinformasi daring (online)?
 - a) Ya
 - b) Tidak

Table of Popular False Narratives Circulating in Indonesia

The following table lists common false narratives circulating in Indonesia, in order of their popularity.

Popularity	Topic	Narrative 1	Narrative 2	Narrative 3
1	Elections 2024	Presidential Election 2024 is postponed to 2029	Incumbent President Joko Widodo runs for Presidential Election 2024	The KPU (General Elections Commission) annulled the decision of the 2024 election
2	Internal Affairs	Salary IDR 5 Million per month is subject to 5 % Tax	Bank Indonesia to collect tax amnesty from the public	Tax late paying vehicles for 3 years or more would be grounded by official government
3	Entertainment	Two Mini Cooper giveaway from RANS Entertainment (owned by Raffi Ahmad and Nagita Slavina)	Indra Bkti, a popular presenter, died on January 1, 2023	Hotman Paris policed Nikita Mirzani and Farhat Abbas
4	Ferdy Sambo Case (the murder of police by high-level-2 starred-senior police in Indonesia)	Ferdy Sambo and Putri Candrawathi have been sentenced to death	Video of Ferdy Sambo not accepting the judge's decision and	Ferdy Sambo was acquitted by the Police

			threatening to kill Bharada E Link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RFtUN5j2CMw	
5	Geopolitics	Russia-Ukraine war is The Third World War	Indonesia to announce a compulsory military programme for the youth, supporting the Russia-Ukraine war	Russia uses nuclear weapon against Ukraine
6	Covid	Covid19 vaccine causes infertility and DNA change in women	Covid19 is communist China's conspiracy to commit genocide against native Indonesians and then conquer the lands	The Covid19 Vaccine Is embedded with micro-chips that will enter the human body
7	Religion	A man burns after burning Al-Qur'an	Hajj departure canceled due to funds used to build IKN (Indonesia's new capital in Kalimantan)	Habib Ja'far Husein (a muslim founder of Pemuda Tersesat YouTube channel) is a Shia
8	Climate Change	Climate Crisis and Carbon Dioxide do not threaten earth	Climate Change is part of a Conspiracy Theory	Video of snow falling on the Masjidil Haram, Mecca 2023
9	Gender Issues	Mahkamah Konstitusi (The Constitutional Court of the Republic of Indonesia) to legalize the LGBT	The LGBT Constitution has been ratified	Vice President, Ma'ruf Amin asked for government to support LGBT
10	Digital Economy	IDR paper money will be replaced by digital money, starting 2023	Binomo is a legal investment	OJK (The Financial Services Authority) granting business licenses in the field of E-commerce Merchant Platform Orders to Shopee
11	Bjorka	Bjorka is a boy from Cirebon	Bjorka has been in jail	Bjorka hacks President Jokowi's secret letter