# POLITICAL NEWS IN ONLINE MEDIA AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF HOAX NARRATIVES IN THE GUNUNG SARI ISLAMIC BOARDING SCHOOL, WEST LOMBOK

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## Abstract

*This article aims to analyze politics on online media and its relationship to the development of hoax narratives in Islamic boarding schools located in the Gunung Sari area, West Lombok. Through a comparison of the Islamic boarding school in Tegal and Kekait, this study examines the forms of response from the students at both Islamic boarding schools to the political news they receive. The main focus of this research is on the online media aspect and the responses of the students at the pesantren to the various hoax narratives that are spreading. This research uses a sociological approach with a qualitative method. Data was collected from structured interviews and non-participant observation. Additionally, this research used an analysis of various fake news stories circulating in online media accessed by the students as supporting data. The findings of this study are that online media contributes to the spread of hoax narratives in Islamic boarding schools in Gunung Sari. The forms of hoax narratives that spread depend on the type of online media accessed by the students.*

**Kata Kunci** : *Online Media, HOAKS, Boarding School, Gunung Sari*

## A. Introduction

The internet has become a necessity for people around the world; with the internet, access to information, communication, and interaction is much easier. The internet's presence continues to evolve with a wide range of innovations, giving rise to social media. People can easily obtain international, national, regional, and sectoral information simply by typing keywords into the internet.[1]

The abundance of information circulating on social media makes it difficult to distinguish between fake and factual information. Lailatul Utiya Choirroh explains that hoaxes are the intentional manipulation of news aimed at providing false recognition and understanding. Hoaxes have existed since 1808, during the Industrial Revolution in England.[2] The availability of information on the internet has led to the faster spread of hoaxes, making them a common element in some political news on social media. Christiany revealed that fake news is exploited by irresponsible parties to sow slander and hatred, while Gumgum explained that fake information appears repeatedly in various contexts of information dissemination, including political, economic, cultural, health, public affairs, and even personal privacy.[3]

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[1] Masoud Hashemi and Masoud Azizinezhad, "Teaching Media Translation: Which One to Choose, Technical or Nontechnical Media-Based Lessons?," *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences* 28 (2011): 444–47, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2011.11.085.

[2] Jonathan Harris, "Nativist-Populism, the Internet and the Geopolitics of Indigenous Diaspora," *Political Geography* 78 (April 2020): 102124, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.polgeo.2019.102124.

[3] Yoki Firmansyah and Udi Udi, "Penerapan Metode SDLC Waterfall Dalam Pembuatan Sistem Informasi Akademik Berbasis Web Studi Kasus Pondok Pesantren Al-

Hoax narratives are spreading across various institutions, including Islamic boarding schools.

Based on data from the Ministry of Religious Affairs, the most frequently consumed forms of fake news narratives by students in many Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia are religious fake news narratives and political fake news narratives. These narratives spread massively in 2023 and 2024 across some 42,000 Islamic boarding schools located in various regions.[4] Among the many types of online media used by students in these Islamic boarding schools, the WhatsApp platform is the most frequently used.

The increasing phenomenon of the spread of hoax narratives in Islamic boarding schools across Indonesia raises an important question about the need for a deeper study of the dissemination of hoax narratives in these institutions. In this space, it is important to outline how the form and structure of hoax information on social media received by students at the Islamic boarding school are presented.

## B. Method

This research uses a qualitative method with a sociological approach. As for analyzing the findings, the study employs content analysis and semiotics, or semiology, using the theories of Ferdinand de Saussure and Roland Barthes. Qualitative methods are

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Habib Sholeh Kabupaten Kubu Raya, Kalimantan Barat," *Jurnal Teknologi Dan Manajemen Informatika* 4, no. 1 (2017), https://doi.org/10.26905/jtmi.v4i1.1605.

[4] Febri Nurrahmi and Hamdani M. Syam, "Perilaku Informasi Mahasiswa Dan Hoaks Di Media Sosial," *Communicatus: Jurnal Ilmu Komunikasi* 4, no. 2 (December 26, 2020): 129–46, https://doi.org/10.15575/cjik.v4i2.9215.

a research approach that focuses on a deep understanding of human behavior or social phenomena.[5] Qualitative methods aim to explore the deep meaning, interpretation, and perceptions of individuals or groups regarding specific situations or events.

Qualitative research collects data from document analysis or descriptive analysis to reveal emerging patterns, themes, and relationships. Researchers prioritize context and complexity, allowing researchers to holistically understand the perspectives of research subjects and gain deep insights, including a rich understanding of social situations within society. Content analysis is a method used to analyze and understand the meaning of text, images, or other media. Content analysis is used as the primary analysis that can be applied to analyze various types of data, including images, text, video, and audio.[6] The steps used in the data analysis of this research include data collection, data coding, data analysis, and interpretation of results. Semiotics is an analytical tool used to find the meaning of a language. It can be said to be the study of the signs contained within and how these signs create meaning in communication or language.

Research on public understanding of content analysis was conducted through participant observation and unstructured interviews. Focusing on the analyzed content in the media, this method not only explicitly examines the text's content but also

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[5] Jhon W. Creswell, *Research Design Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Methods Approaches*, 4th ed. (London: SAGE Publications, 2014).

[6] Sugiono, *Metode Penelitian Kuantitatif, Kualitatif Dan R & D*, 1st ed. (Bandung: PT Alfabeta, 2011).

understands the implied meaning, patterns, ideology, and social context. Teun A. Van Dijk, in his critical discourse analysis, examines how language is used in discourse to reproduce power, domination, and social injustice.[7] The focus of his theory is on developing a model for analyzing the relationship between text structure, social cognition, and social context in communication.

## C. Discussion

### 1. The Use of Media in the Gunung Sari Islamic Boarding Schools

Gunungsari Village is one of the villages located in Gunungsari District, West Lombok Regency, NTB. From the 90s until the early 2000s, Gunungsari District was known as a tourist town. One form of tourism offered is craft and community economy tourism, one of the centers of which is in Gunungsari Village. However, after the division of Gunungsari District into Gunungsari and Batu Layar Districts in 2000, Gunungsari District's status became the Bamboo Tourism City.[8] Gunungsari Market, which was originally envisioned as a model traditional market, is no longer visited by foreign tourists as it once was. On the other hand, the waste problem in West Lombok Regency has

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[7] Jia Li, Amareen Brar, and Novera Roihan, "The Use of Digital Technology to Enhance Language and Literacy Skills for Indigenous People: A Systematic Literature Review," *Computers and Education Open* 2, no. April (2021): 100035, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.caeo.2021.100035.

[8] Baharudin Baharudin, Muhammad Adi Junaidi, and Lalu Muhammad Ariadi, "Authenticity of Traditional Houses, Islam and Cultural Tourism Products and Services," *Ulumuna* 27, no. 1 (September 29, 2023): 467–99, https://doi.org/10.20414/ujis.v27i1.776.

recently become quite concerning.[9] Piles of garbage are scattered at strategic points, predominantly in public areas such as markets, roadsides, and tourist destinations. Some Islamic boarding schools located in Gunung Sari are Pondok Pesantren al-Aziziyah, Kapek, and Pondok Pesantren al-Halimy, Sesela.

Some forms of issues and media frequently consumed by students at the Gunung Sari Islamic Boarding School include:

a. Trump's issue regarding Iran

The information was disseminated by the ANTARAKALSEL media on the Medium platform on Saturday, June 28, 2025. News topic: "Trump furious; media says US gave Iran financial aid." This news shows the US president is not accepting and is angry at the media for reporting that Trump gave financial aid to Iran to build non-military nuclear facilities. If analyzed using content analysis, the first thing to look at is the source of the news, which was published in South Kalimantan by news. which is a regional media outlet in South Kalimantan and not a national or international media outlet. Both were mentioned by Antara, citing sources from Xinhua (China's official media), which has a tendency toward geopolitical bias toward the US-Iran.

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[9] Wahyu Khalik, "Kajian Kenyamanan Dan Keamanan Wisatawan Di Kawasan Pariwisata Kuta Lombok," *Jurnal Master Pariwisata (JUMPA)* 01 (2014): 23–42, https://doi.org/10.24843/jumpa.2014.v01.i01.p02.

Fig. 1.Trump responds to Iran news.



The main claim in this news is that Trump is angry because US media reported $30 billion in aid to Iran for non-military nuclear facilities. This news lacks clear verification from official US media reports such as CNN, Reuters, AP, and others regarding US aid to Iran. The US and Iran have long been hostile, especially after the US withdrew from the Iran Nuclear Deal (JCPOA), making such a large amount of aid difficult for the US to provide. This news does not have primary sources from the outlets, does not align with the facts on the ground, and the US is tightening sanctions against Iran under Trump. The headline is designed to provoke readers' emotions by using harsh language like "furious," "scoundrel," and "ridiculous" without strong evidence.

b.  Twitter and Sara News

The news spread via the social media platform X (formerly Twitter) on the account "Tita83079013," which was uploaded on July 11, 2025, with the headline "King Salman calls Indonesia the most hypocritical country." The post has already received 111 comments, 143 shares, 492 likes, and 15,000 views. The information being spread is fake because the news was taken from CNBC with such a distorted framing. CNBC media never uploads such posts; the news source is unclear or unreliable; the post was intentionally created as a form of propaganda and fake news to manipulate public opinion.[10]

Fig. 2 Indonesian Islamic Boarding School News.



The third news item was taken from X (Twitter), which was uploaded on Monday, July 28, 2025. This news discusses the Quran being used as evidence of terrorism in Indonesia and 198 Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia being affiliated with

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[10] Sulaiman Ainin et al., "Sentiment Analyses of Multilingual Tweets on Halal Tourism," *Tourism Management Perspectives* 34, no. January 2019 (2020): 100658, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tmp.2020.100658.

terrorism.[11] It already has 321 likes, 53 comments, 5.7 thousand views, and 121 shares. This information was disseminated by the social media account "Tita83079013" through a post on the X media platform, which consisted of a news video clip taken from a detikNews post on Friday, May 18, 2018, titled "Is the Quran being used as evidence of terrorism?" The information being spread has no clear source, and there is no confirmation of the data obtained, including details of the data not being shown. The narrative is provocative and uses sarcastic language, calling Islam a hotbed of terrorists and claiming the government tends to corner Muslims.

Further information was taken from X, or Twitter, media posted by the account "Tita83079013" on July 25, 2025. This post contains the Minister of Religious Affairs stating, "The safest place for children is pesantren." The information being spread lacks clear data and reliable sources, consisting only of narrative claims that pesantren are the safest place for children. However, this contradicts the numerous media reports of frequent sexual abuse cases in pesantren over the past few years and up to the present.

2. **Hoax Narratives in Islamic Boarding Schools from a Social Theory Perspective**

The research findings prove that hoax information circulates more widely on the X media platform than on Medium among

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[11] Nurrahmi and Syam, "Perilaku Informasi Mahasiswa Dan Hoaks Di Media Sosial."

people in boarding school in Gunung Sari. Here are the research findings from an in-depth analysis of the data obtained using content analysis and semiotic analysis, applying the theories of Ferdinand de Saussure and Roland Barthes:

a. International Geopolitical News

The information was disseminated by the ANTARAKALSEL media on the Medium platform on Saturday, June 28, 2025. News topic: "Trump furious; media says US gave Iran financial aid." This news shows the US president is not accepting and is angry at the media for reporting that Trump gave financial aid to Iran to build non-military nuclear facilities. In the first news content analysis, there was no clear data source to support the narrative presented. The news was reported by regional media, not international media, and the context of the news coverage was outside the scope of that media. Additionally, the ongoing conflict between Iran and the United States, which continues to this day, indirectly contradicts the narrative "Trump funded Iran in building non-military nuclear facilities" circulating in the media.[12]

Trump's funding of Iran in building non-military nuclear facilities became a global issue, and the United States strongly opposed Iran, leading to its withdrawal from the nuclear agreement known as the Iran Nuclear Deal (JCPOA). Additionally, nuclear tensions have characterized the

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[12] Hashemi and Azizinezhad, "Teaching Media Translation: Which One to Choose, Technical or Nontechnical Media-Based Lessons?"

relationship between the United States and Iran to this day. Furthermore, Trump, as President of the United States, was very vocal in opposing Iran, leading to the imposition of economic sanctions against Iran. The news source mentioned does not accurately and definitively identify the media, so the word "media" used by Trump is biased, or it is uncertain which media outlet is referred to as the main source of the news. Trump called the media "fake news" because he was angry about the spread of the news. The $30 billion figure contradicts the sanctions imposed by Trump on Iran. The macrostructure generally utilizes the popular narrative of Trump vs. the media.[13]

On the other hand, the news spread via the social media platform X (formerly Twitter) on the account "Tita83079013," uploaded on July 11, 2025, with the headline "King Salman calls Indonesia the most hypocritical country." The post has already received 111 comments, 143 shares, 492 likes, and 15,000 views. The content pattern used is in the form of data source forgery, using the name of CNBC Indonesia, one of Indonesia's leading news media. The content structure is unclear because the source and data are not mentioned, including the publication time of the news in the content, which does not

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[13] Peci Lyons, Sara Mynott, and Jess Melbourne-Thomas, "Enabling Indigenous Innovations to Re-Centre Social Licence to Operate in the Blue Economy," *Marine Policy* 147, no. November 2022 (2023): 105384, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.marpol.2022.105384.

adhere to news publication standards and uses biased language.


b. The Global Issues

The global issue shared by the account "Tita83079013" was taken from the news source CNBC, which is one of the most reputable media outlets in Indonesia. The relationship between Saudi Arabia and Indonesia is generally good, and discussions in the media often revolve around economics and religion. King Salman, the highest authority in the country, rarely provides information or statements to the media about other countries. The news source was taken from CNBC Indonesia but uses an unofficial writing format, using "set" instead of "source." This information has been verified by Mafindo as "manipulated content," meaning the information is a hoax.

The claim made in the news, stating that "Indonesia is the most hypocritical country, ranking number one," is an ambiguous statement. With 14,000 views, 459 likes, and 143 shares, this indicates the potential for algorithm manipulation.[14] A sensational title is used in the name of King Salman for legitimacy. The date and time format used is not

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[14] J. Loehr et al., "Safer Destinations, Healthier Staff and Happier Tourists: Opportunities for Inclusive Water, Sanitation and Hygiene in Tourism," *Tourism Management Perspectives* 40, no. April (2021), https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tmp.2021.100883.

official, only using "2004 07.40," which is a non-standard format, and the news source used is unclear because CNBC has never published a news article with such a title. The macrostructure generally leverages the name of King Salman's authority and the credible media outlet CNBC Indonesia.

Ferdinand de Saussure's theory identifies the word "King Salman" as a signifier of authority and credibility, the signified being the misuse of King Salman's name to manipulate news with the aim of playing on readers' emotions. The signifier "most hypocritical country" is an informal term not found in standard vocabulary. The signified is the attempt to build an image of Indonesia as a hypocritical country or a negative image for the public. Roland Barthes' theory of denotation regarding King Salman's statement about the Indonesian state, and the connotation of Indonesia being portrayed as a hypocritical country, contradicts the good relations between Indonesia and Saudi Arabia. The myth being constructed is an attempt to incite distrust toward nationalistic sentiment by using foreign authorities who criticize Indonesia.[15] The unclear sentence content is used, such as "the most hypocritical country, number one in Indonesia." There is no standard structure used in the grammar. The hoax pattern used is the falsification of sources, claiming to be CNBC Indonesia, one of the mainstream media

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[15] Nurrahmi and Syam, "Perilaku Informasi Mahasiswa Dan Hoaks Di Media Sosial."

outlets. The content is manipulated to spread narratives in the media. Microstructure is generally used unclearly in news and viral figures as a form of false legitimacy.

Sensitive issues are raised as headlines in the news; the issue of the Quran and terrorism is sensitive for Indonesian society, just as the issue of pesantren and religious institutions being linked to terrorism.[16] The news source is taken from detik, but the format used is not standard, such as the date format "2018-22-10 WIB" which is not commonly used in news. There is no link to the original article on the detik.com website. The main claim used is that 198 Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia are affiliated with terrorism. The Quran is used as the main evidence of terrorist crimes, with the National Counterterrorism Agency (BNPT) and the police as the main actors or authorities involved. The post was taken from the official Twitter or X account @kemenag_RI. No specific pesantren were mentioned or names listed. There is no evidence to indicate that the source is clearly from the police or BNPT. The date format used is unclear, making the information shared invalid.

Ferdinand de Saussure's semiotic theory: the signifier (the sign) of the words "al-Qur'an" and "terrorism" are directly linked; the signified is the narrative that the state authorities criminalize the al-Qur'an and Islamic boarding schools, accusing

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[16] Yusuf Hanafi et al., "The New Identity of Indonesian Islamic Boarding Schools in the 'New Normal': The Education Leadership Response to COVID-19," *Heliyon* 7, no. 3 (March 1, 2021), https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2021.e06549.

them of being terrorist havens in Indonesia; the signifier is 198 Islamic boarding schools, a significant number without objective data on which schools they are and strong evidence as the main reference; the signified is the effort to create a framing of tension between Muslims and the government.

Roland Barthes' theory of news denotation is about the pesantren and terrorism, the connotation of the pesantren and the Quran being considered a criminalized threat, the authorities being seen as having a single (authoritarian) interpretation, and the government-built myth being anti-Islamic religious people and/or the pesantren as a hotbed of terrorists in Indonesia. The content analysis includes the provocative sentence "How can the Quran be?" which is a rhetorical question used to stir the reader's emotions. The use of social media accounts @kemenag_RI and @Tita83979013 (unclear accounts) is used to add validity to the information being spread.

Additionally, there is no evidence of the statement made by BNPT officials claiming that 198 pesantren are affiliated with terrorism. Official statements issued by the Ministry of Religious Affairs are always moderate and emphasize pesantren as safe educational institutions. In the context of Indonesian law, the Quran has never been used as evidence of criminal acts or crimes, let alone terrorism, because the evidence used consists of sharp weapons, chat logs in the form of text or phone calls, or other documents. The pattern used is a sensational headline linking the

Quran with terrorism, and the number 198 is presented as a case of considerable scale but without clear data to support it. The overall microstructure of the language uses emotional language, fictional figures, and unclear quotations.

## D. Conclusion

The form of political information discourse from the news found spreading in the Islamic boarding schools in Gunung Sari is more clickbait, confirmation bias, and misinformation. Additionally, there are propaganda hoaxes, satire, fake news, and post-truth. Fake information is more prevalent on the X or Twitter media platform, while it is less so on Medium, but there is still fake news information in the form of misinformation and confirmation bias from Medium. The structure of fake information is quite complex, as found in this study, because the structures used are interconnected, making it increasingly difficult to distinguish fake information from factual information. Some of the most common structures found are sensational and provocative headlines, unclear sources, manipulative narratives that attack specific groups, and weak supporting data.

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