THE PRINCIPLE OF NEWS SELECTIVITY AND VALIDITY IN ISLAM (Thematic Study of the Quran Surah Al Hujurat Verse 6)

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Abstract

The hoax phenomenon continues to spread in Indonesia, which has a Muslim population of 231.06 million (86.7%). The data from the report of the Ministry of Communication and Information Technology shows that hoax news during the pandemic reached 2,053. This phenomenon is a big question, because Muslims who all their life activities adhere to the Quran which teaches rahmatan lil alamin values, but they are still trapped in hoax that undermines national unity and integrity. This study aims to dissect the principles of selectivity and validity of news in Islam and how Muslims are able to build a selective culture of news and contribute to the suppression of hoaxes in Indonesia. The result of this research was that Muslims in Indonesia should do two things related to selectivity and validity, first, researching and selecting news sources, and second, selecting news content. If Muslims take these steps, then the number of hoax news will decrease.

Keywords: News Selectivity and Validity Principle, Islam, Thematic study of QS Hujurat verse 6

Problem Background

The hoax phenomenon continues to grow to this day. The findings of hoax news related to Covid-19 by the Ministry of Communication and Information of the Republic of Indonesia for the period 23 January 2020 - 03 January 2022 reached 2,053. While the findings of hoax news related to the Covid -19 vaccine as of Monday, 03 January 2022, there were 428 hoax contents (Kominfo, 2022). This is certainly very disturbing to the community and disrupts and even destroys the life of the nation and state. Due to the hoax news, people become restless, blaming each other, blaspheming and making unilateral judgments that lead to disunity between groups, tribes and religious communities.

It cannot be denied that every individual has a need for actual information to fulfil their knowledge both related to their work, passion and scope of life (Pannen, 1990). In daily life, there is a lot of information or news about phenomenon occurring in the country or abroad such as economy, business, labour, education, politics, weather forecasts, natural disasters, or others phenomenon. Interest in information about these phenomenon makes a person search for this news. The need for such news differs from one individual to another, depending on the type of work

activity, the discipline one is engaged in or one's position in the organizational structure or in society.

A few decades ago, people looked for news through mass media such as newspapers, magazines, tabloids, radio and television, which are often referred to as mainstream media. The broadcast of news in the mainstream media besides having to fulfil the 5W and 1H elements of news (What, Where, When, Who, Why, How) also has passed journalistic processes; news reporting, writing, and editing. As a result, the quality of news is in accordance with rules standard, principles, and journalistic ethics. The principle of making news that must fulfil these journalistic rules has faded since the emergence of the internet which gave birth to new media or what we know as social media networks where everyone can become a "journalist" (Heryanto, 2018). It means that they can produce news and broadcast it through their social media accounts like website, facebook, twitter, intragram, youtube, telegram, tiktok and others. News or messages conveyed through mass media and social media will be consumed by the public as it is without selection and criticism.

Social media is currently an effective medium for delivering information, news and entertainment to the public widely. Social media, which has a quite high effectiveness to convey messages, news and information, will make it easy for stakeholders such as government agencies, community organizations, economic organizations and financial institutions to use this media as their communication media with the public (community). Social media as a virtual free space has implications for the emergence of new things, both positive and negative (Mulyati, 2014).

Data from 2021, 231.06 million people (86.7%) of Indonesia's population are Muslims (Kusnandar, 2021). As a Muslim community, to carry out all activities of life, they will always be guided by the Quran which was revealed to the Prophet PBUH as a guide for the lives of Muslims. When the Muslim community faces problems that are developing at this time, the Qur'an provides a response to the situation and responds to various specific problems in concrete situations. The Qur'an provides answers for specific or general questions and problems (Muyasaroh, 2021).

In the context of information and news, Islam has provided guidelines for Muslim communities to be careful, thorough, and selective when receiving news. This attitude is a necessity in order to avoid ignorance attitudes that lead to accusations, blame and unilateral judgement. This is clearly seen in QS Al Hujurat verse 6:

"O you who believe! If a wicked person comes to you with news, then verify it, so that you do not harm people through ignorance. (carelessness), which you will eventually regret".

The above verse provides guidance to the Muslim community so that in social life they do not receive information or news in haste, but they must be careful, thorough, selective and critical (tabayyun / clarification) to avoid mistakes and result in harm to themselves and others. The common question is why Muslim communities that have guidance on communication principles and ethics are still trapped in the hoax phenomenon? This will be the focus of this research.

Literature Review

Research on *the Basic Principles of Islamic Communication Science* written by Maghfira Septi Arindita, et al from the Islamic University of West Java entitled Basic Principles of Islamic Communication Science, published in the Journal of Religion, Social and Culture Vol.1, No.5 September P-ISSN 2022: 2962- 6560 . In this study the authors examine the principles of communication contained in the Al-Quran in general. So don't get hung up on the principle of selectivity and validity of news in Islam.

The research entitled *Post-Truth, Hoax, and Religiosity on Social Media*, was written by Ulya, from the Holy State Islamic Institute, which was published in the Fikrah Journal: Journal of Aqidah Science and Religious Studies Volume 6 Number 2-2018. This research focuses on the hoax phenomenon in the Post Truth era, where in this era objectivity and rationality of news are not the main thing, but sensational and emotional factors are put forward. The results of this study indicate the prevalence of hoaxes in Indonesia. Furthermore, research conducted by Massa Rico K. Yudhaswara and Dasrun Hidayat from Adhirajasa Reswara Sanjaya University (ARS University) entitled Selective Behavior in Choosing Covid-19 Information in the Mass Media. This research only focuses on reporting on COVID-19 in the mass media (television), not touching new media (social media).

Compared to previous research, this research on the Principles of Selectivity and Validity of News in Islam (Thematic Study of Surah Al Hujurat Verse 6) focuses more on the values of Islamic teachings which are emphasized to Muslims in the context of implementing freezing and voting. . valid sources to trust the news.

Research Methods

This study was a qualitative research using library research approach. Qualitative research is generally assumed to be research that is intuitive and systematic to help writers gain knowledge and

understanding of the problem under study, by focusing on meaning and understanding. In this study, the data were obtained through a literature review which was then analyzed in depth to produce answers to research questions (Bakry, 2016).

Discussion

Hoax news on Social Media

News is a report of an event that is important and can attract public attention (Astqolani, 2017). News is any report on events, occurrences, ideas, facts, which attract attention and are important to be conveyed or published in the mass media to be known and become public awareness (Barus, 2010). News texts are formulated and compiled based on journalistic rules, so that the information received can be proven true. A report of an event can be categorized as news if it fulfils the 5W+1H news elements (what, where, when, who, why, and how), without these elements an information or news does not have any meaning. As for assessing the level of quality and integrity of news; whether an event really happened, how it actually happened, and other information, then there is a process that must be passed, namely crosscheck or what is known as selectivity and validity.

The term hoax is a term that is very familiar in everyday conversations and in daily life. When someone in the middle of a conversation tells a lie, then he is declared to be doing a hoax. Hoax is defined as an attempt to deceive many people with lying news; deceive some or a group of people by making them believe in something that has been falsified (University, 2018). The outbreak of hoaxes cannot be separated from the pace of development of information and communication technology in the form of the internet which gave birth to new media (new media) or what we know as social media. With these social networks, everyone can produce news and broadcast it through their social media accounts such as web, facebook, twitter, intragram, youtube, telegram, tiktok and others without paying attention and complying with journalistic rules and ethics. Social media as a virtual free space has implications for the emergence of new things, both positive and negative (Mulyati, 2014).

Social media, like other media, has advantages and disadvantages. Some of the advantages of social media are: it is cheap, provides many conveniences such as being easy to access, use and manage, has a wide and unlimited reach, can be broadcast anytime and from anywhere and can be connected to anyone who is connected to its network. It is not surprising that political figures and

even world figures greet their citizens using social media; such as the President of the United States Joe Biden uses Instagram to communicate with his citizens (@joebiden), the President of the Republic of Indonesia Ir. Joko Widodo also uses Facebook (President Joko Widodo) and also Instagram (@jokowi) to greet the people of Indonesia.

On the contrary, social media has weaknesses. First, the news or information broadcast is often inaccurate because the news does not go through journalistic processes like rules and ethics of journalism including checks and rechecks. Second, social media which has fluid characteristics, very high individual freedom, is often used by anyone who has certain interests (Heryanto, 2018); such as broadcasting hoax news with fake accounts. Therefore, people must be critical of the news conveyed by mass media and social media so as not to be trapped in hoax news that harms many parties.

Principles of News Selectivity and Validity in Islam

In daily life, news almost fills the mass media and online media frequently, whether news about politics, economy, social, entertainment and other news. Nowadays in the digital era, news is presented almost every time, especially those presented through online media. When there is an event that occurs in the country or abroad, then at that time the public has immediately received the news. Information technology makes it easy to broadcast news and in a very short time the news has spread to all parts of the world. Meanwhile, an individual will access the news according to his tendency and passion.

Two very urgent principles in Islam are selectivity and validity. When information or messages received are not clarified, it is very likely that their accuracy is not guaranteed, and it causes a person to be trapped in hoax news that could lead to harm many parties. This principle is so. Allah has warned the Prophet to be careful in receiving news and clarifying news that is not clear before making a policy (Muyasarah, 2020).

In Islam, news selectivity is termed tabayyun. Islam regulates all human life, including the social communication system that takes place in society. Islam teaches sorting, checking and clarifying every news to avoid misunderstandings that causes property and social losses. Currently, this tabayyun command is increasingly important, because the phenomenon of disunity in society caused by hoax news is getting stronger. The ease and progress of information and communication technology seems to make people lulled and neglect a critical attitude towards information obtained

from mass media and social media. Therefore, the basic principles of communication and media in Islam are urgent to be restated in order to guide Muslims in dealing with the hoax phenomenon lately.

This principle is clearly read in QS Al Hujurat [49]:6

يٰٓاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْٓا اِنْ جَاۤءَكُمْ فَاسِقٌۢ بِنَبَاٍ فَتَبَيَّنُوْٓا اَنْ تُصِيْبُوْا قَوْمًاۢ بِجَهَالَةٍ فَتُصْبِحُوْا عَلٰى مَا فَعَلْتُمْ نٰدِمِيْنَ

Meaning: "O you who believe! If a wicked person comes to you with news,
then verify it, so that you do not harm people through ignorance.
(carelessness), which you will eventually regret".

Regarding the above verse, Quraish Shihab says that the word *naba'* is used in the sense of important news. It is different from the word *khabar*, which means news in general, whether the news is important or not. Therefore, it is very important for a Muslim who gets certain information, to clarify the truth of the information and investigate the integrity of the communicator, whether it can be trusted or not. When the information delivered is unimportant and inappropriate news, a Muslim does not need to waste his time investigating the truth (Shihab, 2012).

The hoax phenomenon actually has existed since the beginning of Islam, when the Prophet PBUH sent a messenger named al Walid Ibn 'Uqbah Ibn Abi Mu'ith to collect zakat to Bani Musthalaq. When the Banu Musthalaq heard that the Prophet's messenger was coming, they flocked to welcome the Prophet's messenger while bringing their zakat, but al Walid thought they would attack him. Thus, he immediately returned to the Prophet and reported that the Banu Musthalaq were reluctant to pay zakat (in another narration they had apostatized). Hearing the information brought by Al Walid, the Prophet was angry, then sent Khalid Bin Walid to investigate the actual conditions. In fact, the village community of Bani Musthalaq still recited the adhan and prayed together. When Khalid Bin Walid visited them, the people of the village came to Khalid bin Walid to submit the zakat (Shihab, 2012).

Therefore, the Quran, as the main source of Islamic teachings, reminds Muslims to always be careful and select the level of validity of the news that comes to them in order to avoid mistakes that harm themselves and others. Besides, when unimportant news is delivered, a Muslim does not need to waste his time investigating the truth. The Prophet himself has given an exemplary attitude towards selective information in the case of al Walid Ibn 'Uqbah Ibn Abi Mu'ith and Bani Musthalaq.

Building a Selective News Culture in Muslim Societies

Information and Communication Technology is so rapid that information and communication is easier to do and continues to grow on a very fast and large scale. But considering the limitations of humans who cannot reach all information, they need other people who have integrity and honesty to get true and accurate news (Shihab, 2012).

Meanwhile, the ethics of a Muslim when receiving news is to select the validity (truth) of the news both on its content and on the news carrier (communicator). Here the Muslim community is required to be intelligent and critical of the news conveyed to them, because believing in a news without investigating and investigating the truth first will have implications for disadvantages which in the end will only be regrettable (Hefni, 2017).

The Muslim community must certainly make QS Al Hujurat [49]: 6 as a guideline (principle) in sorting, selecting, validating and investigating the accuracy of news. But in reality, hoax news is still often spread in the midst of Muslim society, which is certainly very contrary to the spirit of selectivity and validity contained in QS Al Hujurat[49]:6. To track the level of validity (truth) of a news, it must be selected on two (2) things, first, selecting news sources, and second, selecting news content. In terms of selecting news sources, several scholars give almost the same opinion, namely the first thing when receiving news, news, then check and investigate the integrity and track record of the news carrier (news source). Experience has taught us that the high number of people reporting on something does not automatically guarantee that the news is true.

Imam Qurtubi said that QS Al Hujurat [49]: 6 indicates the permissibility of trusting the news of one person when he is trustworthy (fair) because what is recommended is to seek the truth. When taking information from a wicked person (proven that he is wicked) the information cannot be justified, Meanwhile, wickedness is an indicator that can damage the news (Samsudin, 671). In addition, Imam At Thabari said that every believer anywhere and anytime must be selective when getting information. They are encouraged to trace the truth in terms of the source of information, so that no one is harmed just because of information from people of doubtful credibility (At Thabari).

So, both Imam Qurthubi and Imam At-Tabari provide direction and opinions, that to select the truth of a news the first thing to do is to investigate its validity by looking at the integrity and track record of the news carrier. Experience has taught us that a high number of people reporting on something does not automatically guarantee that it is true. Therefore, investigating the integrity and

track record of a news carrier (communicator) is very urgent because it will greatly affect the quality and validity of the news he carries.

As for tracking the level of validity (truth) of a news in terms of news content, Imam Zamkhsari argued that when a wicked person (doubtful credibility) conveys any news, it is better not to respond to it before seeking clarity from the news. Tabayyun or seeking clarity and the real truth will protect oneself and others from the attitudes of irresponsible (wicked) people (Az Zamakhshari, 1407). The same opinion was also conveyed by Quraish Shihab. According to him, it is very important for a Muslim who gets certain information, to select the truth of the information and investigate the integrity of the communicator whether it can be trusted or not. And when the information is delivered is news that is not important and not appropriate, then a Muslim does not need to waste his time investigating the truth (Shihab, 2012).

Thereby, in facing of rampant hoax news, Muslims must adhere to what is taught by QS Al Hujurat [49]: 6 and exemplified by the Prophet PBUH to be thorough and critical (tabayyun) before deciding certain policies, critical and thorough to the source (carrier) of the news or to its content. By implementing this attitude, Muslims have helped to minimize the spread of hoax news in this beloved country.

Conclusion

From the above explanation, the author provides conclusions:

1. Hoax news is increasingly widespread due to the emergence of new media (social media) which for various advantages makes everyone a journalist in the sense that they can produce and broadcast news without going through the rules of journalism.
2. The hoax phenomenon has existed since the time of the Prophet PBUH, therefore Islam provides guidance to Muslims to stop the hoax culture as exemplified by the Prophet PBUH against Bani Musthalaq.
3. Indonesian Muslims must build a selective culture of news as conveyed by QS Al Hurarat [49]: 6 and exemplified by the Prophet PBUH by selecting the source and content of the news.

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