

Optimising 'Lambe Hoaks' Digital Literacy to Strengthen National Resilience Against Hoaxes

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Abstract

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Purpose: The spread of hoaxes has intensified in recent years, posing a threat to national resilience due to their potential to incite national disintegration. This study aims to optimise the "Lambe Hoaks" digital literacy program on Instagram to mitigate the spread of misinformation and strengthen national resilience.

Study Design/Methodology/Approach: This research employs a qualitative approach, gathering data through interviews with key informants from both the governmental and private sectors. The analysis focuses on assessing the effectiveness of the "Lambe Hoaks" programme and identifying strategies for improvement.

Findings: The "Lambe Hoaks" programme, which combines contemporary appeal with accurate information dissemination, holds significant potential to serve as a primary reference for the public in verifying information. However, findings reveal a gap between the programme's objectives and its actual impact. Addressing this discrepancy requires enhancements to content quality, increased audience engagement, and the implementation of a more effective promotional strategy.

Originality/Value: This study provides a focused analysis of the "Lambe Hoaks" initiative, highlighting its potential and limitations in combating hoaxes. It offers practical recommendations for optimising digital literacy efforts to safeguard national resilience, enriching the discourse on countering misinformation in the digital age.

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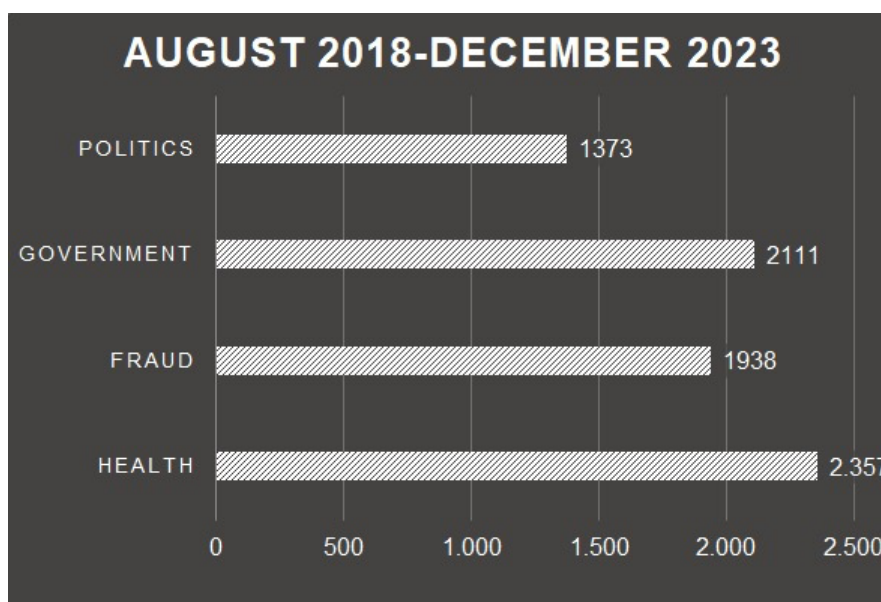
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INTRODUCTION

Hoaxes are misleading and potentially harmful pieces of information because they employ a strategy of disseminating falsehoods as though they were true. Hoaxes can damage the image and credibility of individuals or groups, with the motives behind their spread varying from serving as a form of entertainment, to defaming a competitor's reputation (e.g., black campaigns), promoting deception, or inciting people to take harmful actions (Chen and Ishak, 2014). Hoax content is typically constructed based on public opinion rather than facts (Mahsun and Mufrikhah, 2019). By using provocative headlines and exploiting low levels of literacy, hoaxes become more accessible and are easily spread through society. The increasing rate of internet penetration in Indonesia has made social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, Instagram, and others effective tools for distributing hoaxes (Arifuddin et al., 2020).

According to data from the Indonesian Ministry of Communication and Information Technology (Kominfo), from August 2018 to May 2023, the AIS Team of the Directorate General of Informatics Applications identified 11,642 hoax contents. Of these, the highest number of hoaxes was found in the health category, with 2,287 hoax items. This was followed by 2,111 hoax contents in the government category, 1,938 in the fraud category, and 1,373 in the political category. Specifically, health-related hoaxes predominantly concerned issues surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic, while government-related hoaxes involved fake accounts of central, regional, and institutional government officials, as well as government policies. Fraud-related hoaxes included recruitment scams, phishing links, fake accounts and numbers, social assistance provisions, and giveaways. Political hoaxes mainly concerned information related to political parties, candidates, and the election process (Biro Humas Kementerian Kominfo, 2023).



Source: Public Relations Bureau, Ministry of Kominfo (2023)

Figure 1. Hoax Issues by Category

Hoax news in the post-truth era has had several social impacts on Indonesian society. The spread of hoax news has become a serious issue for national resilience and the integrity of the Republic of Indonesia, with the potential to hinder national

development. Issues related to ethnicity, religion, race, and intergroup relations (SARA), as well as hate speech, can weaken national resilience. If national resilience weakens, national disintegration may occur, potentially threatening the integrity of the Republic of Indonesia (Amilin, 2020). Digital literacy is crucial in strengthening national resilience and preserving state sovereignty in the digital age. Civil society organisations and the government have complementary roles in developing and implementing digital literacy programmes that cater to the needs of the community. These programmes should focus on the effective use of information and communication technologies, and on developing the ability to understand, analyse, and critically use information. This is vital for countering propaganda, fake news, and other threats in the digital space (Sunara Akbar et al., 2024).

In response to the growing spread of hoaxes in Indonesia, Kominfo recognises the need for a creative and innovative approach to address them. In the era of information and communication technology, hoaxes spread rapidly, primarily through social media platforms and instant messaging. To counter the negative impact of hoaxes, Kominfo developed the “Lambe Hoaks” programme. This initiative is the result of collaboration between the Public Relations Bureau of the Secretariat General, the Aptika Content Complaint Team, and GPR TV of the Directorate General of Creative Industries and Creative Economy at Kominfo. In this programme, Miss Lambe Hoaks is the central character who delivers the weekly monitoring results of the Content Complaint Team. The programme reviews the facts behind the Top 10 hoax issues circulating in the previous week (Biro Humas Kementerian Kominfo, 2020).

Several studies have been conducted on the Lambe Hoaks programme over time. First, Miss Lambe Hoaks serves as a weekly report delivered by a social media figure to combat fake news and disinformation while educating the public about their harmful effects. The programme is based on the understanding that hate speech and fake news (including disinformation) are often combined to intensify provocation. Miss Lambe Hoaks acts as a weekly report addressing fake news and disinformation identified through AduanKonten.id and the AIS system to counter negative content (Wildana, 2021). Second, the Lambe Hoaks programme is an innovation designed to meet the public’s need for information by clarifying circulating hoaxes. However, the Public Relations team of the Indonesian Ministry of Communication and Informatics must reassess and review the Lambe Hoaks programme team to ensure the effectiveness of the dissemination strategy (Multaza et al., 2021).

This study fills a gap left by previous research, which primarily focused on programmes by the Ministry of Communication and Informatics aimed at minimising negative content, such as the Lambe Hoaks and Lambe Hoaks Public Relations programmes. This research specifically focuses on optimising the Miss Lambe Hoaks programme in the context of digital literacy and mitigating the spread of negative content. However, the programme has faced challenges in terms of engagement and content development, which have hindered its ability to effectively reduce the spread of hoaxes. The effectiveness of the Lambe Hoaks programme is compromised by low interaction, limited audience reach, and a lack of engaging content, resulting in the continued widespread presence of hoaxes.

This study aims to address these gaps by analysing the limitations of the Lambe Hoaks programme and proposing strategies for its optimisation. Key areas of focus will include improving content quality, increasing public engagement, and addressing digital

literacy gaps that hinder the programme's success. By evaluating the programme's current structure and proposing actionable improvements, this research intends to strengthen national resilience against the ongoing spread of hoaxes in Indonesia's digital environment. Furthermore, this research will fill a critical gap in evaluating the impact of the Lambe Hoaks programme, which has been insufficiently analysed in previous studies. By contributing to the understanding of how to optimise digital literacy programmes, this study aims to provide practical recommendations for enhancing the programme's effectiveness and ensuring its relevance in addressing hoaxes in the digital age.

Literature Review

Communication Theories and Digital Literacy

Communication theories play a significant role beyond academia, influencing our daily interactions. By applying these concepts, we enhance our communication skills, better understand how messages are conveyed, take into account the audience, and recognise the context of communication. These theories also shed light on how messages travel across digital platforms such as social media, advertising, politics, and popular culture (Putnam and Nicotera, 2009).

A systematic review of digital literacy conducted between 2009 and 2019 defines it as the public's ability to use and critically assess content in digital media (Limilia and Aristi, 2019). Research conducted between 2017 and 2022 explored the relationship between digital literacy and various issues, including the pandemic, fake news, developments in Southeast Asia, social media platforms, and mental health. In addition, recent discussions on literacy have addressed politics, language, and policy (Ambardi et al., 2024).

The trend in digital literacy research has seen a substantial rise between 2017 and 2023, with a total of 577 publications recorded. Over the past eight years, these publications have been grouped into six distinct clusters: Cluster 1 and Cluster 2 each contain 27 items, Cluster 3 contains 17 items, Cluster 4 contains 16 items, Cluster 5 contains 15 items, and Cluster 6 contains 11 items. Globally, the United States leads in terms of productivity in digital literacy publications. In Southeast Asia, Indonesia ranks as the most productive country in this field, based on Scopus data, followed by Malaysia, Thailand, Singapore, the Philippines, Laos, and Vietnam (Arya et al., 2024).

However, digital literacy remains inadequate in the "Lambe Hoaks" programme on the Instagram account @missslambehoaks, which holds potential as a tool for digital literacy to mitigate the spread of hoaxes on social media. Drawing inspiration from countries like Estonia and Finland, which have successfully implemented digital literacy to bolster national defence strategies and safeguard information from various threats on social media, Indonesia, particularly its government, should consider adopting similar approaches to enhance digital literacy through social media platforms. The table below provides an overview of the three countries' digital literacy comparisons.

Table 1. Comparison of digital literacy in three countries

Aspect	Estonia	Finland	Indonesia
Integration in Curriculum	Digital skills such as informatics, programming, robotics, and cybersecurity are widely integrated (Lauha and Nolvak, 2019).	Coding (a simplified version of programming) was introduced in 2016 as part of the IT curriculum (Lauha and Nolvak, 2019).	ICT subjects primarily focus on foundational digital literacy but lack national consistency in integrating advanced topics.
Government Initiatives	Strong focus on IT skills and e-governance, including systems like X-Road and digital ID (Lauha and Nolvak, 2019).	Policies aim to reduce the generational digital divide, focusing largely on younger demographics (Lauha and Nolvak, 2019).	Digital transformation efforts through the "Merdeka Belajar" programme, though disparities persist between regions.
Digital Divide	Minimal generational gap; both younger and older citizens generally possess strong digital skills.	One of the largest generational divides globally; younger Finns excel, but older adults face significant challenges (Lauha and Nolvak, 2019).	Significant divide due to disparities between urban and rural areas, with limited access in remote regions. Achievements.
Achievements	A global leader in digital governance and education.	High levels of digital literacy among youth, with targeted efforts to bridge gaps in older generations (Lauha and Nolvak, 2019).	Leads Southeast Asia in digital literacy research productivity, with 577 publications recorded between 2017 and 2023 (Arya et al., 2024)

Source: processed by the Author (2024)

National Defence and National Resilience

In the digital transformation era, while there are numerous benefits, such as increased accessibility to information, challenges like misinformation, fragmented regulations, and gaps in digital infrastructure still persist. These gaps, particularly in remote areas, exacerbate information inequality. A coordinated policy approach, equitable infrastructure development, and enhanced digital literacy programmes are essential in tackling these issues. Improving digital media's role in national resilience is also vital. Although public awareness of information security has increased, low digital literacy still makes individuals vulnerable to misinformation. Therefore, digital literacy initiatives are crucial in educating individuals to critically evaluate information sources and foster a more informed society (Winarko and Avianto, 2024).

In the Indonesian context, the urgency to improve digital literacy is particularly pressing due to the low capacity of individuals to differentiate between accurate and misleading information, which impacts national resilience. The spread of hoaxes, especially during crises, highlights the need to strengthen digital literacy to create a society that is not only technologically literate but also capable of critically engaging with information on social media (Sarjito, 2024).

National defence awareness, in both physical and digital contexts, must be developed through structured programmes. Enhancing national defence education,

optimising curricula, and fostering cooperation between ministries, local governments, and families are essential strategies.

In the digital era, the government has a responsibility to protect citizens from the dangers of radicalism, propaganda, and misinformation. Increasing digital literacy is key to helping individuals filter digital content and avoid being easily deceived, thereby maintaining unity and contributing to national security (Dynggi et al., 2022). National defence in the modern era must integrate digital literacy to counteract online propaganda, fake news, and other digital threats. This includes strengthening citizens' ability to assess information, interact responsibly in digital spaces, and contribute to information security. Integrating digital literacy into school curricula and lifelong learning programmes will ensure that all members of society have the skills necessary to contribute to national security (Sunara Akbar et al., 2024). Research has highlighted the integration of digital literacy into national strategies, and comparative studies from countries such as Estonia and Finland, which emphasise digital literacy in education and national security policies, could provide valuable frameworks for Indonesia (Milojevic and Cabello, 2018). However, there remains a lack of empirical studies linking digital literacy directly to national resilience in Indonesia, particularly in programmes that aim to mitigate hoaxes and misinformation.

Table 2. Summary of Research Connecting Communication Theory, Digital Literacy, and National Resilience

Topic	Theory and Concepts	Results	Similarities	Differences
Communication Theories and Digital Literacy	Communication theories in everyday life (Putnam and Nicotera, 2009)	Communication theories are relevant in digital media, influencing how messages are conveyed and received through platforms like social media, politics, and advertising.	The application of communication theories to digital media is a shared theme across global studies.	Limited empirical evidence on the direct impact of communication theories on national resilience, especially in Indonesia.
Digital Literacy and National Resilience	Digital literacy as the ability to critically assess content in digital media (Limilia and Aristi, 2019)	Digital literacy helps individuals differentiate between accurate and misleading information, which is crucial for strengthening national resilience in the digital age (Winarko and Avianto, 2024).	Both digital literacy and the spread of misinformation are key factors in discussions about national resilience.	The challenge of misinformation in Indonesia is more urgent, particularly with the rise of hoaxes during crises.
National Defence and Digital Literacy	National defence is integrated with digital literacy to counteract digital threats (Dynggi et al., 2022; Sunara Akbar et al., 2024)	Digital literacy is essential to counter online propaganda, fake news, and threats to national unity. Educating citizens helps in identifying fake information and contributing to national security (Fauzi and Marhamah, 2021).	The role of digital literacy in national defence is a growing global trend.	Indonesia faces unique challenges such as radicalism and hoax-driven political instability that are specific to its context.

Source: processed by the Author (2024)

In an increasingly complex digital era, digital literacy is one of the keys to maintaining national resilience. By improving digital literacy, we can create a society that is more intelligent, critical, and better equipped to face various challenges in the digital era. The table above shows that digital literacy is an important component for improving national resilience, as it helps individuals identify accurate information and overcome disinformation. However, despite the important role digital literacy plays, research on its direct impact on national resilience in Indonesia is limited, especially in the face of the unique challenges the country faces.

METHODS

This research follows a qualitative research design based on postpositivist philosophical thinking, focusing on inductive reasoning with descriptive data results. Qualitative data analysis encompasses various models, including the Philipp Mayring model for qualitative content analysis, the use of the NVivo application for qualitative data analysis, ethnography, and models such as those by Bogdan and Biklen, Miles and Huberman, and Strauss and Corbin (Wijaya, 2018).

The technique for selecting informants uses purposive sampling, which is a method for selecting research subjects based on specific criteria determined by the researcher. The subjects in this study were not selected randomly, but were chosen by the researcher based on particular characteristics (Sugiyono., 2019). The criteria for selection in this study include individuals who are experts in their respective fields and can provide answers to the research questions, such as officials and technical implementers at the Ministry of Communication and Information, as well as cybersecurity experts.

This research utilises two types of data sources: primary data, obtained through in-depth interviews with three key informants holding strategic roles in public communication and information security, and secondary data, derived from books, scientific articles, news, and other relevant sources. The first informant (Informant 1) is responsible for compiling public information materials at the Ministry of Communication and Informatics; the second informant (Informant 2) is the chairman of a research centre focusing on cybersecurity expertise; and the third informant (Informant 3) serves as the Director-General of Public Communication at the Ministry of Communication and Informatics. Interviews with Informant 1 and Informant 3 were conducted virtually, while Informant 2 was interviewed in person. The interview with Informant 1 took place on 24 November 2023, with Informant 2 on 29 October 2023, and with Informant 3 on 6 November 2023.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Kominfo Instagram Account @misslambehoaks

The Kominfo Instagram account @misslambehoaks is one of the initiatives by the Indonesian Ministry of Communication and Information Technology (Kominfo) to reduce the spread of hoaxes. As part of the “Lambe Hoaks” programme, this account serves as a communication channel to provide clarification and the facts behind disturbing hoax issues circulating on social media (Rizkinaswara, 2019). This programme supports the findings of previous studies on the Lambe Hoaks programme in general, while also complementing the Indonesian government’s efforts to combat fake news, particularly

through the Ministry of Communication and Information (Nurlatifah, 2019). The account provides accurate information about false news to prevent the public from being misled. With this account, the aim is for the public to become more discerning in evaluating information and not to blindly trust unverified news. In other words, the “Lambe Hoaks” account functions like a detective—uncovering the truth behind fake news and revealing what actually happened.

According to Informant 3, the Instagram account @misslambehoaks plays a crucial role in supporting Kominfo's Lambe Hoaks programme by acting as one of the tools used to clean up the digital space from harmful content, particularly hoaxes. The primary goal of this account is to inform and educate the public about hoaxes that have been identified, with the hope that the public will not believe or spread them. Informant 3 emphasised that although the @misslambehoaks Instagram account is just one of many tools used by Kominfo, it has been effective in disseminating information related to hoaxes. In addressing the spread of hoaxes, Instagram is seen as an effective tool for restraining and inhibiting the dissemination of false information.

In other words, the Instagram account @misslambehoaks plays a significant role in supporting Kominfo's Lambe Hoaks programme. This account is viewed as a tool that helps clean up the digital space from harmful content, particularly hoaxes, with the primary objective of informing and educating the public about the hoaxes that have been identified. Kominfo hopes that by sharing hoax-related information through Instagram, the public will become more vigilant and refrain from spreading false information. Instagram is considered an effective tool for curbing the spread of false information, although it is acknowledged that other tools are also employed to combat the spread of hoaxes.

The statement from Informant 3 regarding the role of the @misslambehoaks Instagram account in Kominfo's Lambe Hoaks programme provides valuable insight into how the Indonesian government seeks to leverage digital technology to strengthen national resilience, particularly in combating disinformation and hoaxes. The @misslambehoaks account exemplifies how digital literacy can be a powerful tool in enhancing national resilience. However, this effort requires continuous improvement and support from various stakeholders to achieve optimal results. By improving digital literacy, a society that is smarter, more critical, and more resilient to information manipulation can be cultivated.

According to Informant 2, the effectiveness of the Lambe Hoaks programme, particularly through Instagram @misslambehoaks, is considered unsatisfactory. Despite the availability of tools to verify information, this account, with only 9,000 followers, is not reaching a sufficiently broad audience, especially millennials—the primary target. Given the relatively small number of followers compared to the large number of internet and Instagram users in Indonesia, this programme is viewed as ineffective. The low engagement, evidenced by few likes and comments, suggests a lack of interest and interaction from the public with the content presented.

When referring to communication, according to Putnam and Nicotera (2009), the perspectives offered by the sources highlight differing views on the role of the @misslambehoaks Instagram account in reducing the spread of hoaxes. The findings from these varying perspectives show that the @misslambehoaks Instagram account plays a vital role in supporting Kominfo's Lambe Hoaks programme to reduce the spread of hoaxes. The account serves as an instrument to help clean up the digital space from

harmful content, with the primary objective of informing and educating the public about identified hoaxes. However, in terms of understanding the audience and the context of communication, as well as how messages are conveyed through social media, Informant 2's statement highlights that the effectiveness of this Instagram account still requires improvement, particularly in content development and engagement.

The insights from Informant 2 provide an intriguing perspective on the challenges involved in improving digital literacy, particularly in the context of national resilience. The programme aims to combat hoaxes and disinformation, but it faces significant hurdles in reaching a broad audience. Enhancing digital literacy is crucial for strengthening national resilience. Programmes like Lambe Hoaks have considerable potential, but they need to be improved and innovated to achieve greater effectiveness. With the right strategy and robust collaboration between the government, the community, and the private sector, we can create a more informed and critical society capable of addressing the challenges of the digital age.

Efforts to Prevent the Spread of Hoaxes via the Instagram Account @misslambehoaks

Kominfo's use of the @misslambehoaks Instagram account can be understood as an attempt to capitalise on the popularity and appeal of social media to reach a broader audience, especially among the millennial generation. By choosing the Instagram platform, Kominfo can access user groups that are active on social media and tend to gather information from the platform. Through engaging and visually appealing content, Kominfo hopes to make information about hoax clarifications easier for the public to digest and remember (Rizkinaswara, 2019).

According to Informant 1, Kominfo uses the Lambe Hoaks programme, primarily through the Instagram account @misslambehoaks, as part of its strategy to combat the spread of hoaxes in cyberspace. The programme focuses on digital literacy, aiming to raise citizens' awareness of false information. Through a creative and educational approach, Lambe Hoaks informs the public about the dangers of hoaxes and how to handle them. Informant 1 also mentioned that the direct impact of Miss Lambe Hoaks cannot be measured with certainty. However, Kominfo continues to carry out socialisation and education through this programme to increase public understanding of hoax news and foster digital literacy.

In contrast, Informant 2 stated that the @misslambehoaks Instagram account has a relatively small number of followers and lacks significant interaction from its audience. According to Informant 2, this suggests that the account does not have engaging and relevant content for its target audience. The low interaction with @misslambehoaks' posts contrasts with the programme's objective of focusing on digital literacy through a creative and educational approach to reduce the spread of hoaxes.

The Lambe Hoaks programme initiated by Kominfo is a strategic step in addressing the challenges of disinformation and hoaxes, which are becoming increasingly prevalent in the digital era. In the context of national resilience, this effort holds significant implications. Popular social media platforms, such as Instagram, combined with a creative and educational approach, make Lambe Hoaks more accessible and understandable to the public, particularly the younger generation. Through engaging and

interactive content, Lambe Hoaks transforms a serious issue like hoaxes into a lighter and more digestible topic.

On one hand, the programme is seen as a valuable tool for informing and educating the public about hoaxes. By providing accurate information, Kominfo hopes to reduce the credibility of false news. On the other hand, critics argue that the programme's reach and engagement are limited. The low number of followers and lack of interaction suggest that the account may not be effectively reaching its target audience, especially younger generations. To improve the effectiveness of the Lambe Hoaks programme, it is crucial to enhance digital literacy among the public and refine the programme's strategies. By addressing these issues, Indonesia can strengthen its national resilience against the negative impacts of disinformation.

CONCLUSION

The Instagram account @misslambehoaks is an innovative initiative by Kominfo to enhance digital literacy and counter the spread of hoaxes. The concept of "Lambe Hoaks," which combines contemporary elements with accurate information dissemination, has the potential to serve as a primary reference for the public in verifying information. However, this study reveals a gap between the programme's objectives and its actual outcomes. Despite its role as a critical tool in clarifying and debunking hoaxes, the account's limited content development and low engagement, evidenced by approximately 9,000 followers, minimal likes, and a lack of comments, have hindered its effectiveness in reducing the spread of hoaxes. This disparity highlights the need to bridge the gap between the Lambe Hoaks programme's aim of fostering creative and educational digital literacy and the public's lack of interest in its content.

To address these challenges, several steps can be taken. The government should prioritise improving the quality of content on platforms like @misslambehoaks, increasing audience interaction, and adopting more effective promotional strategies to attract public interest. Social media users are encouraged to actively engage with educational content to enhance their digital literacy and help combat hoaxes. Society at large should cultivate a culture of critical thinking and responsibly consume and share information. For future researchers, there is a need for more comprehensive studies exploring other platforms under the Lambe Hoaks programme, such as the Kemkominfo TV YouTube channel, particularly its Miss Lambe Hoaks episodes. Such research could provide a broader understanding of the programme's overall impact and potential areas for improvement in strengthening national resilience against disinformation.

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