

## PAUSE AND CHECK LITERACY TO IMPROVE INFORMATION VERIFICATION AMONG THAMMISLAM SCHOOL STUDENTS

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**ABSTRACT** Disinformation spreads rapidly in the digital era, posing significant challenges for the Indonesian diaspora, particularly in overseas educational environments. This international Community Service (PKM) initiative sought to enhance awareness of the "Pause and Check" information verification technique at Thammislam School in Nonthaburi, Thailand. The program utilized an integrated outreach approach, combining online Zoom lectures with educational video screenings, and targeted junior high school students. Results demonstrated that participants significantly increased their practical understanding of information verification, hoax mitigation, and the steps of the 'Pause and Check' technique. Most participants could correctly apply these methods during post-activity exercises and discussions. The "Pause and Check" literacy guide also encouraged collaboration among students and deeper critical evaluation of out-of-school information. Indonesian academics and Thammislam School partners collaboratively reinforced media literacy and established a digital adaptation model that diaspora communities can apply internationally.

**KEYWORDS:** *Literacy Education, Digital Adaptation, Verify Information, Pause and Check*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Today, easy access to information impacts society in various ways. It fosters ignorance, subjects people to certain opinions, and triggers public unrest when the news is uncertain in its veracity. Information overload overwhelms individuals, preventing them from verifying data and fueling the post-truth crisis (Levitin, 2017; Watson, 2025). Society today relies on communication media technology. Some people critically respond to news items. Therefore, educators must provide literacy education as a form of digital adaptation, especially for students using digital media. This education equips students to recognize and avoid dangerous or inappropriate information, while encouraging

them to learn and seek positive knowledge. People should act wisely to avoid online dangers, especially on social media (Huda et al., 2024).

This community service activity aims to provide parents with knowledge to help them support their children in using new digital media. One example where this support is needed is Kampung Indonesia in Nonthaburi, Thailand. In this area, Thammislam School serves as an educational institution for children from Indonesian families and local residents. Disinformation is false or inaccurate information created and widely spread through social media and other channels (Komendantova et al., 2023). For migrants fleeing hardship, the Tech Transparency Project (2022) notes that false information on social media becomes a major obstacle as they seek a better future.

For teachers at Thammislam School, digital challenges arise as they assist students who actively use social media. The knowledge gap between the older generation (digital immigrants) and the younger generation (digital natives) creates obstacles to digital parenting. Parents often lose authority over their children's cyber behavior (Fajria et al., 2025). As internet use becomes widespread, parents strive to maximize online opportunities and minimize online risks (Livingstone et al., 2017).

Individuals often share emotionally charged information without first fact-checking. This strong relationship between emotional responses and misinformation (Liu et al., 2024) emphasizes the urgent need to master and apply the "Pause and Check" guideline. The International Community Service (PKM) activity, held on Tuesday, April 21, 2026, strengthened immunity against hoaxes. Systematic verification of information fosters local and global information resilience (Chuai et al., 2024). Information in society has various impacts. These include more misinformation, the influence of certain perspectives, and public unrest due to unverified news. Communication media technology is now a part of daily life. Some people are critical and analytical in news consumption. Digital media literacy is essential, especially for parents and teachers of children new to digital platforms. Such literacy is crucial for helping young users discern information and use it for educational purposes only.

This community service initiative aims to equip parents with the skills to support their children's navigation of digital media. Kampung Indonesia, located in Nonthaburi, represents a prominent Indonesian diaspora community in Thailand. In this locale, Thammislam School serves students from both Indonesian families and local communities. The Thammislam Foundation School, grounded in Islamic educational values, comprises a diverse, international student body, including a significant number of Indonesian students. The institution is a preferred destination for Indonesian learners seeking secondary education in conjunction with religious studies in an international context, with attendees from Indonesia, Malaysia, and other Southeast Asian countries.

The implementation team conducted systematic observations and situational analyses,

identifying several key issues among stakeholders, particularly parents and teachers. While Thailand has a high internet penetration rate, digital literacy development remains insufficient. Consequently, Sissi students are exposed to substantial amounts of information through internet-based media, often becoming embedded within unregulated or unofficial information ecosystems.

This situation worsens because many work illegally or are not officially registered in Indochinese countries such as Thailand, Cambodia, and Myanmar. Fear over legal status is exploited by hoax spreaders. They spread false information about immigration policies, raids, and fraud schemes. Teachers and parents at Thammislam School face challenges in assisting students who use social media actively. The knowledge gap between digital immigrants and digital natives makes digital parenting hard. Parents often feel powerless to control what their children consume. This can lead to moral decline, exposure to radical content, or health disinformation. Society also tends to share emotionally-triggering information without fact-checking. This highlights the need for a practical guide, "Pause and Check," to help students spot key information early.

Thammislam School hosted the International Community Service program for students on Tuesday, April 21, 2026. The program integrates educational, research, and community service activities internationally. Indonesian universities and Thai partners participate in the program. The main objective is to apply scientific and technological approaches to resist misinformation using the "Pause and Check" method.

## **2. METHOD**

The community service program implemented an integrated outreach approach, combining interactive lectures with educational video presentations. This methodology facilitated a more comprehensive understanding of media literacy and digital security. To address geographic constraints, activities were delivered in a hybrid format, encompassing both in-person and Zoom sessions. This enabled presenters and participants to interact synchronously, thereby fostering bidirectional communication.

The outreach method encompassed more than a simple one-way dissemination of material. It established a learning ecosystem characterized by interactive dialogue, simulations, and technology demonstrations. This approach enhances participants' emotional and cognitive engagement. A team of academics from various Indonesian universities collaborated to deliver the material. Their expertise included media psychology, information technology, and pedagogy in child education.

### **2.1. Pre-Activity**

During the pre-activity stage, the team prepared and collected data on the most frequently circulated hoaxes among students in Thailand. This process ensured that presenters could make the material relevant to participants' daily lives.

## **2.2. Hybrid Education Session**

The Implementation Team delivered the material through lectures. The hybrid platform made the knowledge accessible beyond the event site and reached the academic community across Indonesia through digital documentation.

## **2.3. Cognitive Achievement**

Video functions as a primary medium for the transfer of technical knowledge. Such videos deliver information in concise, information-dense formats. They employ accessible language and incorporate animations to elucidate complex processes.

# **3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

## **3.1. Pre-Activity**

The pre-activity involved preparing initial data on the types of hoaxes most frequently circulated among students in Thailand. This data collection was conducted to ensure that the material presented was relevant to the participants' daily lives.

## **3.2. Results**

The implementation of the 8th International Student Creativity Program (PKM) at Thammimislam School in Nonthaburi provided a comprehensive overview of the digital literacy status of the Indonesian diaspora in Thailand and the effectiveness of the interventions. The results demonstrated a positive correlation between the provision of structured materials and improvements in participants' critical thinking skills in processing digital information.

This presentation session simulated provocative messages familiar to teenagers, such as fake announcements about sudden exam cancellations, leaked fictitious exam questions, and sensational rumors about K-Pop idols or famous influencers. Through interactive slides, students were taught that these "clickbait" messages are intentionally designed to provoke extreme curiosity or the fear of missing out (FOMO).

### **"Step One: Pause"**

The "Step One: PAUSE" strategy is the first line of defense against the flood of information in digital media. This material dissects the technical fact that disinformation works by "hijacking" teenagers' emotions, leading them to immediately press the share button in their class group without

thinking. By applying the "10-Second Rule," students are encouraged to pause for a moment when they see news that is too good or too bad to be true to re-engage their logic. The emphasis in this session is on changing reactive habits to proactive ones, with the ten-second pause as the main defense against becoming hoax spreaders in the school environment.



Figure 1. Material slide "Step One: Pause."

### “Step Two: CHECK (The Digital Detective)”

Students are motivated to explore every piece of information they obtain. Using interactive slide presentations, they learn source verification skills by determining whether the news originates from an official school account, a reliable media source, or a mere unverified chain message. The material also provides visual guidance for recognizing the characteristics of hoaxes, such as bombastic titles, low-quality images, and suspicious links that request personal data.

Students are then encouraged to simulate a "cross-reference" search using a search engine to determine whether other major media outlets have also reported the same incident or whether it has already been added to the list of fake news. The session concludes with an emphasis on not only reading the content but also critically examining the publication date and the author's credibility to ensure the information remains relevant and accurate.

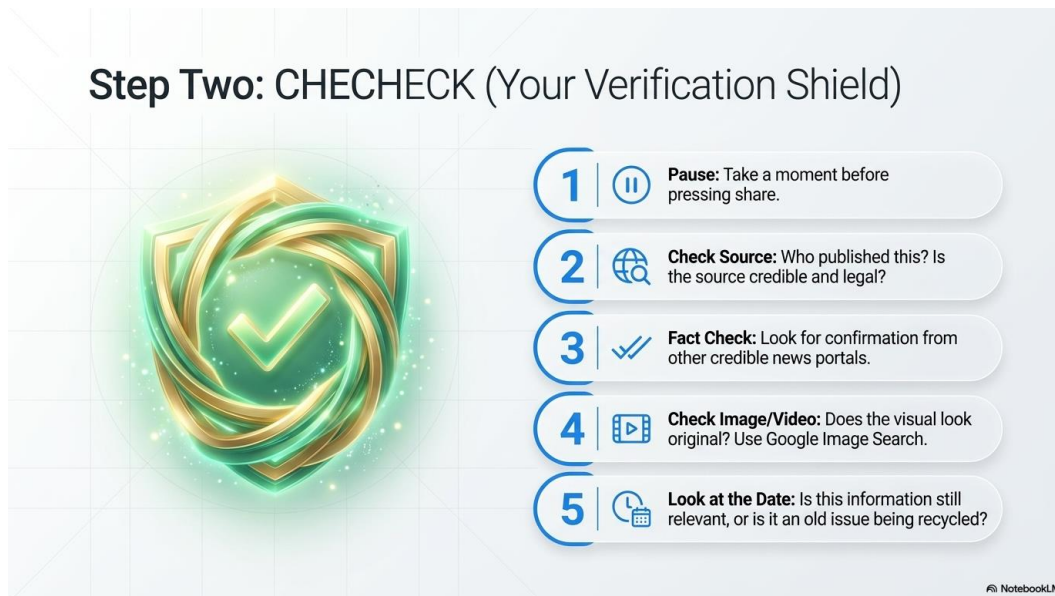


Figure 2. Slide of CHECK (The Digital Detective) material

### Cognitive achievement through changes in perception of media

Before the activity began, students perceived information received through family or community WhatsApp groups as trustworthy because it was sent by someone they knew. This phenomenon is known as trust-by-proxy, where the credibility of information is judged not by its content but by the closeness of the relationship with the sender. After participating in the counseling, there was a significant paradigm shift, 1) Awareness of media characteristics. As a result, students now understand that social media operates on algorithms that prioritize engagement over accuracy. They realize that 'viral' information does not necessarily equate to 'true' information; and 2) Building on this understanding, case discussions revealed to students that hoaxes are often professionally designed to trigger public unrest or steer opinion in a certain direction for the political or economic interests of certain parties.

Furthermore, this newfound media literacy extended to parents and teachers, who demonstrated a deeper understanding of the risks of internet exposure for students. They recognized that without guidance, the internet could become a gateway to negative content that could harm children's focus on learning and mental health.

### 3.3 Discussion

The results of the activity showed that participants understood the characteristics of media, the positive and negative impacts of the internet on student learning, and the importance of early warning against the spread of fake news or hoaxes. On the one hand, easy access to information accelerates the democratization of knowledge; on the other hand, this phenomenon opens the door to the systematic spread of misinformation, disinformation, and malinformation (Wardle & Derakhshan,

2017). This typology of information disruption is important to understand, as each has distinct motivations and varying levels of threat to public opinion stability.

Contemporary society today is immersed in a torrent of data that often exceeds its cognitive capacity to process and validate the veracity of each piece of information received. This phenomenon of information overload makes it easier for individuals to fall into confirmation bias and flawed mental heuristics (Levitin, 2017). The resulting impacts are diverse, ranging from structural ignorance to biased public opinion manipulation to outbreaks of social unrest due to provocative narratives whose validity has not been tested.

Modern human life is inextricably linked to the pervasiveness of communication media technology, which permeates private spaces, including childcare and formal education. In the face of these dynamics, digital media literacy is no longer merely an additional skill, but rather an essential competency that every individual, especially parents and educators, must possess (Buckingham, 2019). This competency encompasses the ability to access, analyze, evaluate, and create content across various forms of communication.

Children and students are new users of digital media and are highly vulnerable to exposure to negative content. Without knowledge-based guidance, children's use of devices and the internet often deviates from the intended purpose of learning and seeking positive information, which then risks digital addiction or exposure to dangerous ideologies (Livingstone & Third, 2017). Therefore, a concrete and applicable protection mechanism is needed in the form of fact-checking standard operating procedures (SOPs), such as the "Pause and Check" method, to equip the public with critical and analytical thinking skills in filtering information before redistributing it.

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

Activities at the Thammislam Foundation School have had a positive impact on students and teachers. Students demonstrated higher learning motivation, a better understanding of the value of education, and more effective information management.

These activities increased knowledge, awareness, and skills among the community, students, and teachers. Key improvements were seen in health, learning motivation, and self-development. The program also enhanced educators' competency through innovative, interactive teaching training. These activities demonstrate how knowledge-based mentoring transforms devices into learning tools. Continued international collaboration should systematically and sustainably strengthen the information security of Indonesian citizens abroad.

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