

## Government Communication in Efforts to Prevent Covid-19 in the City of Manado

Jouke J. Lasut<sup>1</sup>, Lisbeth Lesawengen<sup>1</sup>, Juliana Lumintang<sup>1</sup>, Anthonius Moses Golung<sup>1</sup>

Email: [jlaut62@gmail.com](mailto:jlaut62@gmail.com)

<sup>1</sup>Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, Sam Ratulangi University, Indonesia

### Abstract

The purpose of this research is to find out how the government communicates at the sub-district level in efforts to prevent Covid-19. The sub-district government is at the forefront of service to the community, of course it has an important role in overcoming the problem of the large number of people who have not complied with the health protocol. Communication skills in various forms and approaches will be studied in this study, to find out how the communication approach is carried out by the Manado city government. The potential for the spread of Covid-19 could occur in the city of Manado with a high potential for community activity and mobility. This research focuses more on how the government's communication approach to the community is related to the prevention of Covid-19. This study uses qualitative methods to obtain detailed data related to these problems. This research will examine the ability and expertise of the government in communicating related to the prevention of covid-19, public trust in the government, as well as obstacles in communication in efforts to prevent the covid-19.

**Keywords:** Communication Approach, Government, Prevention of Covid-19

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### Introduction

The new corona virus or Covid-19 has spread to almost every country in the world since it first appeared in China in early 2020. This disease has started attacking Europe, the United States and Southeast Asia and is starting to wreak havoc in Africa and South America. The phenomenon of the corona virus or Covid-19 certainly has a very negative impact on the whole world, including Indonesia. The latest data cited on the official page <https://covid19.go.id/> 8 September 2020, recorded 200.03 positive Indonesians, 142,958 people recovered, and 8,230 people died. This matter certainly needs to be of concern to all of us, both the people and the Indonesian government. The purpose of this study is to find out how the government's communication approach at the sub-district level is in efforts to prevent Covid-19. The sub-district government is at the forefront of service to the community, of course, has an important role in overcoming the problem of the large number of people who have not complied with the health protocol.

The government has an important role and responsibility in efforts to regulate and prevent the spread of Covid-19. Based on the explanation above, of course, optimal and comprehensive government participation is needed in dealing with the Covid-19 problem. Communication is the most appropriate way to use in conveying information from the government to the public regarding efforts to prevent Covid-19. For this reason, the ability to communicate in various ways, approaches, strategies and good channels is needed in communicating the Covid-19 prevention efforts. The problem is that until now there are no official rules that Indonesia is free from Covid-19, contrary to what is happening in society, it is clear that people are no

longer obedient to the rules for preventing Covid-19, are free to carry out activities without participating in health programs, (protocol Health), both wearing masks in public places, and also often seen not keeping distance, or washing hands. One of the parties related to the Health protocol problem is the local government, which is starting to pay less attention to this matter, which could have a negative impact on the increasing number of people exposed to Covid-19. In the study of communication science, it is most likely that the delivery or process of communication, the forms and media used in communicating the problem of preventing Covid-19 are indications that it may start to loosen or it is no longer intense, both direct communication and through the media and organizationally it may start. For this reason, this research was carried out to focus more on how the government's communication approach to the community is related to the prevention of Covid-19.

### **Literature Review**

This research certainly refers to several previous studies which are almost the same, with the subject and object studied, which are related to communication problems from the government in efforts to prevent Covid-19. Analysis of Indonesian People's Behavior in Facing the Corona Virus Pandemic (Covid-19) and Tips for Maintaining Mental Welfare.

According to Buana (2020) At the beginning of 2020, mankind around the world was shaken by the Corona Virus pandemic (Covid-19) which caused panic everywhere. Hundreds of thousands of people were infected and thousands more died. For Indonesia itself, the government has given appeals to the public in dealing with this outbreak so that it runs effectively and efficiently. But in reality there are still many Indonesian people who do not heed this appeal. Therefore this study aims to analyze why some people raise this behavior, and how to overcome it. The research method used in this research is a literature study with a descriptive analysis approach. The results show that the behavior displayed by people who do not comply with government appeals is based on cognitive biases. Apart from analyzing the behavior of Indonesian people and how to deal with it, this article also describes tips for maintaining mental well-being in a positive psychology approach.

Furthermore, there is also research on Government communication through the Media Center Task Force for the Acceleration of Handling Covid-19 to the Public which was researched by Oktariani & Wuryanta (2020) explaining that the management of communication protocol practices carried out by the government during the Covid-19 period was based on success in several countries, but there are also those who show the failure of this policy. This research focuses on the communication protocol of the public media center for handling Covid-19 through digital media on the Covid-19 website in disseminating information such as packaging messages in the form of instructions, appeals to the public to prevent transmission of Covid-19 in their respective areas. Ayuningtyas (2020) explains that communication is quite basic in everyday life.

The basic role of communication is a bridge to build social interaction. Communication is used by every human being as a means of social interaction, Nitisemito, (1982) says that communication is a process of notification from one party to another which can be in the form of plans, instructions, suggestions and so on. Communication as the process of sharing meaningful symbols with meaning by two or more people with the aim of creating mutual understanding in order to achieve a certain goal. Meanwhile, according to Handoko (1995) communication is the process of transferring meaning in form or information from one person to another. Government and government have different meanings. Government in a broad sense is "all the organs, agencies, or institutions, state equipment or state apparatus that carry out

various activities or activities to achieve state goals". It is simple that the government refers to the organs and equipment, while the government refers more to the field of duties or functions.

The existence of the government is needed to guarantee a system of order in which people can lead a normal life (Rasyid, 1997). Without the presence of the government, what will happen is strong oppression of the weak, so that it will create a situation that Hobbes describes (in Rasyid, 1997) as a situation where "one human being becomes a wolf against another human being". Coronavirus or corona virus is a large family of viruses that cause mild to moderate upper respiratory infections, such as the flu. Many people are infected with this virus at least once in their life. However, several types of corona viruses can also cause more serious illnesses, such as: Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS-CoV), Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS-CoV). Pneumonia. SARS, which appeared in November 2002 in China, spread to several other countries. Starting from Hong Kong, Vietnam, Singapore, Indonesia, Malaysia, England, Italy, Sweden, Switzerland, Russia, to the United States. The SARS epidemic, which ended in mid-2003, infected 8,098 people in various countries. At least 774 people had to lose their lives due to this severe respiratory infection. It can be concluded that prevention of Covid-19 is an effort to prevent the spread of the virus, in various ways determined/recommended by the government, through the Task Force for the Acceleration of Covid-19 prevention, including: Stay at home and only go out when absolutely necessary. This is especially important for people at high risk, including the elderly and those with a history of heart, high blood pressure, diabetes, and lung disease. Anyone feeling sick should stay home and seek treatment if symptoms worsen.

To support a good communication process, it requires the ability and expertise of a communicator in delivering messages and information to the public. The government needs an element of good and qualified credibility in communicating about the prevention of Covid-19 to the public. In Winoto, (2015), one theory about explaining communicators is the theory of source credibility (source of credibility theory) from Carl I Hovland. The assumption of this theory says that people are more likely to be persuaded when the communicator or person conveys the message of the communication. This theory is very appropriate if it is used as a scientific reference in studying the problem of conveying information on village funds. the ability and credibility of a village official is needed in conveying messages about the village fund program so as to minimize misunderstandings with the community. ASAR Djumaidin (2018), trust or (trustworthiness) is very important in an act of communication process.

## Methods

This study uses a qualitative descriptive research method. According to Usman & Akbar (2004) descriptive research intends to make a systematic, factual, and accurate description of the facts and characteristics of certain populations. In other words, this study aims to describe the nature of something that was taking place at the time of study. This qualitative method is based more on phenomenological philosophy which prioritizes appreciation (*verstehen*) by trying to live up to and interpret the meaning of an interaction event of human behavior in certain situations according to the perspective of the researcher himself (Usman & Akbar 2004).

The research focus in this study is; (1) Government Communication skills/skills in efforts to prevent Covid-19 in Manado City Manado City; (2) Public trust in the government in efforts to prevent Covid-19 in Manado City Manado City; (3) Government communication channels/media in efforts to prevent Covid-19 in Manado City Manado City; (4) Barriers to government communication in efforts to prevent Covid-19 in Manado City.

In collecting data for this research, literature study, research on documents, observation, and interviews with the Manado City Government and the community relevant to the research problem were used. The types of data collected are primary data and secondary data. Data collection is carried out through techniques, namely: (1) In-depth interview techniques and structured interviews to obtain detailed and in-depth explanations regarding the communication of village government organizations and the factors that influence them in efforts to prevent the spread of covid-19 in Manado City Manado City; (2) Observation is also an effort to obtain primary data, which is a technique of gathering information through observation while the research process is in progress. Observations in this study included data on the physical condition of village buildings, community services and work relations between the government and the community; (3) While Documentation Techniques are used to obtain secondary data, namely by examining documents and literature collected from various documents such as; archives, reports and other supporting documents containing the opinions of experts in connection with research.

Qualitative analysis in a study is used if the research data taken from the field also has qualitative characteristics. The data analysis technique in this study uses a componential analysis technique which is a qualitative data analysis technique through analysis of elements that have contrasting relationships with each other in predetermined domains to be analyzed in more detail. Analysis activities can be started by using several stages, namely; (1) Deployment of the results of observations and interviews; (2) Sorting the results of observations and interviews; (3) Finding contrasting elements.

At this stage, researchers can create certain tables that are used to find and place a selection of sub-domains that have found contrasting elements. In testing the validity of the data in this study, the researcher triangulated the initial informants and scrolling informants. Triangulation with sources means comparing by checking back the degree of trust in information obtained through different times and tools in qualitative methods." The triangulation technique that will be used is an examination technique that utilizes sources (observations, interviews, literature studies and archives).

## **Results and Discussion**

Manado City is the capital city of Indonesia's northernmost province, namely North Sulawesi, with a population potential based on 2016 data. The total population is 427,906 people consisting of 214,734 male residents and 213,172 female residents with a population density of 2,721 people/km<sup>2</sup>. The sex ratio of the population of Manado City in 2016 is 100.75%, (<http://perkotaan.bpiw.pu.go.id/>). The government is trying to be swift to overcome the covid-19 phenomenon, various ways and prevention efforts to suppress and eradicate the spread of the Corona Virus, one of which is by making various rules including PSBB, social distancing, using masks, not crowding, and so on. These prevention efforts certainly involve the government, from the top level, the president down to the lowest level, namely village, sub-district, sub-district, city and district heads. , to carry out, coordinate and disseminate the Covid 19 prevention efforts.

Of course, this method needs to be supported in the right way in carrying out the communication process to the public, so that they obey and follow these rules.

The problem of Covid 19 is still a concern for the whole world until now, even though in several countries the trend of Covid has started to be controlled. Even so, this problem still needs special attention in its handling and prevention efforts, so that the epidemic does not spread again. The problem of not being disciplined, not complying with health protocols is one

of the factors that greatly influences the potential for an increase in Covid-19. Therefore, the government still needs to monitor and continue to make efforts to prevent the Covid-19 outbreak, with various new variants, from spreading again in our society. The potential for the spread of Covid-19 is certainly very likely to occur in the City of Manado area, this can be caused by factors starting to decrease public discipline in complying with health protocols and can also be influenced by factors starting to open up all aspects of community activities. One of the prevention efforts that still needs to be done is to always maintain the consistency of government communication in efforts to prevent Covid-19. Of course, government communication needs to be carried out in a comprehensive manner with all communication approaches and using the right communication media, so that the effect of communicating the Covid-19 prevention message can be achieved and changing behavior according to public health protocols is maintained.

Government communication is very important in an effort to provide information to the public regarding Covid-19, wrong or inaccurate government communication can cause problems for the community when getting wrong information, especially prevention of Covid-19. Ineffective government communications have resulted in a great deal of public confusion and misunderstanding, as well as serious misrepresentation of the growing health threats in the world today (Kim & Kreps, 2020). In “Bernadette Hyland-Wood, John Gardner et al (2021), Several other countries have succeeded in reducing the infection rate of COVID-19 while other countries are still experiencing problems. The communication capability and response of the government depends on the speed and scale of government intervention and how the public receives, understands, and acts on the information provided by the government and other institutions.

This of course requires the ability to use a good communication approach for each country in which the government is responsible for continuing to provide information to the public. In this study, it will be explained, based on the results of research related to government communication in efforts to prevent Covid, with research locations in Manado City. Forms of interpersonal communication, forms of group communication and also forms of organizational communication, as well as forms of mass communication and new media are the approaches used by the Manado City government in following up on the problem of preventing the Covid-19. The interpersonal communication that is carried out is that the government is always patient and responsive in providing information on the prevention of Covid-19 to the public when in the field. Interpersonal communication is done with more humane reasons and directly to the community. Interpersonal communication is carried out in various situations, on the street, at home, in the market and both formal and non-formal.

Group communication is also carried out by the sub-district government, by going directly to social groups in the city of Manado, both groups of RT mothers, Pangkalan motorcycle taxi groups, drivers, market traders, elementary, middle and high schools, even up to at university level. This is done intensely so that the group remembers the dangers of the Covid-19 outbreak. Meanwhile, the mass communication approach, of course, is still being carried out, in the form of reporting in newspapers, even though the government is no longer intense considering that newspapers are no longer the main media for the public to obtain information, while for the use of new media, social media, the government the city of Manado always provides information through the social media Facebook which is owned by the Manado City government.

In connection with the quiet discussion of the focus of this research from reference to the theory of source credibility in providing information on preventing Covid-19, it can be explained that

the Government's Communication Skills/ability in efforts to prevent Covid-19 in Manado City is quite good, where they before going to the field and conveying information the community has been provided with directions from the leadership and has also attended assistance from related agencies, to convey how to comply with the health protocol. Community trust in the government in efforts to prevent Covid-19 in Manado City Manado City has also started well, seen from the community's response to comply with health protocols in daily life, while government communication channels/media in efforts to prevent Covid-19 in Manado City.

Of course, more use of direct communication approaches, groups as well as mass media and new media. The direct communication approach is carried out by appealing to the public when the government gets the opportunity to speak at social events, be it celebrations, parties and so on. While the use of social media seems to have been carried out but the delivery of the message is still not intense enough. Then the element of attractiveness of the message is still not emphasized enough in conveying the message of efforts to prevent Covid-19 through social media. Obstacles to government communication in efforts to prevent Covid-19 in Manado City, one of which is a large area, so it requires time and excellent physical condition when conducting patrols in efforts to prevent Covid-19.

## Conclusion

Government Communication skills or skills in efforts to prevent covid-19 in Manado City Manado City is quite good, overall their ability and expertise in communication, supported by an understanding of the rules and ways of conveying information on prevention of covid-19 who have mastered the material, as well as the way to approach the communication. Public trust in the government in efforts to prevent Covid-19 has started to improve, by complying with regulations related to efforts to prevent Covid-19, although there are still some people who have begun to be less obedient to these rules. Government communication channels/media in an effort to prevent Covid-19 in Manado City Manado City. Of course, more use of direct communication approaches, groups as well as mass media and new media. Obstacles to government communication in efforts to prevent Covid-19 in the City of Manado, are more related to the problem of the area that is difficult to monitor directly, as well as the large number of people, so that it influences when providing information and monitoring related to the prevention of Covid-19. The government needs to always be ready and alert in communicating with the public, in an effort to continue to prevent Covid-19. As a suggestion and input from the results of this research, the government needs to build better relations with community leaders (opinion leaders), in the city of Manado, to assist in communicating with the public, regarding the prevention of Covid-19. The government needs to be more optimal in utilizing communication media with internet platforms, such as social media, Facebook, the Manado City government's official Instagram, to support efforts to prevent the Covid-19.

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