The Government's Persuasive Communication Strategy in Preventing the Spread of the Covid-19 Virus in Indonesia

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
Keywords: *Persuasive Communication,* *Strategy,* *Spread of Covid-19*	Campaigning for health protocols is a very difficult thing, especially in making people aware, especially during this pandemic era. So the government as the party most responsible for handling the spread of the Covid-19 virus must determine strategic steps so that all programs and messages to be conveyed can be well received by all elements of society. Basically, communication is the most important part in dealing with the threat of a pandemic, because public trust needs to be built and maintained so that panic and excess misunderstandings do not occur. One of the instructions given by the president to the government is that the government must show its seriousness, especially in handling this situation and build an ideal communication through comprehensive and regular explanations, by explaining what the government has done and will do. The persuasive approach formed by the government is aimed at campaigning for health protocols in the community and is designed in such a way that the target can accept it consciously and without coercion, which is based on three main dimensions, namely the process of forming a response, the process of strengthening the response, the process of changing the response. On the other hand, a persuasive communication strategy will actually create two-way (reciprocal) communication by disseminating information from the organization to the public that is educational and enlightening, as well as by taking a persuasive approach, so as to create mutual understanding, respect and understanding.
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1. INTRODUCTION

Since the World Health Organization or WHO has declared that the Corona virus (Covid-19) is a global pandemic, in following up on this matter, the Indonesian government through its official statement confirms that the Corona virus problem has become a national non-natural disaster (amalliah & yunita, 2020). The President of the Republic of Indonesia and the Regional Government and their staff are expected to work hand in hand to make several tactical steps as an effort to prevent the spread of the Corona Virus in society. On the other hand, the role of the government must also be able to convince all elements of society that this corona virus really exists and it has been proven through reports in several national and international media that this virus is capable of transforming so that it finally takes the lives of even a very large number of people (Arianto et al., 2022; Ilhami et al., 2022).

For this reason, the government, as the highest authority in terms of handling Covid-19, always tries to provide appeals both directly and in writing so that the people obey and carry out health protocols consciously without any coercion from any party. According to Defilah et al, (2022) the emergence of the Covid-19 Pandemic (Coronavirus Disease 2019) has become an event that threatens public health in general and has attracted international attention, because every day it always causes many fatalities, and in the end gives a feeling of trauma high among the general public. Meanwhile, Fathia & Wijaya (2020) argues that the pandemic in Indonesia itself has in fact spread even to 34 provinces with DKI Jakarta, East Java and West Java being the highest contributing regions in terms

of the spread of this Corona virus.

The decision of the Indonesian Minister of Health to implement a social distancing system or large-scale social restrictions in almost all regions of Indonesia, in fact, has not been able to have such a significant influence on the development of the Covid-19 case as a whole, it is believed that this is because the government has the main role in handling Covid-19 , are still looking for the most ideal form and pattern of communication, especially in campaigning for the programs that have been made. So one of the steps that was finally taken by the government in establishing good connections so that the message delivery process could be consciously accepted by the public was through the development of a persuasive communication strategy that focused on efforts to change and strengthen the beliefs of the general public so that their thoughts were in line with what we expected. (Gamaputra et al., 2021).

In the journal Hutasoit & Abidin (2022) said that campaigning for health protocols is a very difficult thing, especially in making people aware, especially coupled with the condition of Indonesian citizens who are categorized as ordinary people, namely they do not know thoroughly how to deal with this pandemic condition. So it is hoped that by building a more strategic communication strategy, government messages regarding health protocols can be realized by all people in a conscious and correct manner (Juliantari & Subadra, 2022). The results of Nadelis' research (2022) state that the persuasive communication that the government is trying to implement is indeed very important to develop for a specific purpose because in simple terms this process contains invitations, appeals, persuasion and more subtle ways of inviting people to comply with policies. policies issued by the government.

Basically, communication is a basic activity that cannot be separated from humans, because in essence there are no humans who are not involved in a process of interaction with other humans (Nafilah & Muflihah, 2020). On the other hand, good communication can connect between the communicator and the communicant in conveying a message or information both verbally and non-verbally. According to Pratyaksa & Putri (2021) communication is essentially an activity that is carried out consciously, deliberately and has a purpose in accordance with the expectations or wishes of the communicator. In addition, communication is also an activity in the process of delivering messages from the communicator to the communicant through certain channel processes so as to be able to cause feedback or effects in the form of behavior or attitudes generated by the communicant.

Meanwhile, the results of Siumeang's research (2020) argue that communication can be interpreted as the transfer of a message from one source to the recipient so that it can be understood. The communication process usually involves two parties, either between individuals and individuals, individuals and groups or between groups and groups that interact with mutually agreed rules. The communication function is divided into four indicators, including conveying messages (information) or disseminating information to others. That is, from the dissemination of this information it is hoped that the recipient of the information will know what he wants to know. Then the next function is to educate meaning, from the dissemination of this information it is hoped that the recipient of the information will increase knowledge about something you want to know. The third point of the communication function is to give instructions to the recipient of the message so that the intended message can influence and change the attitude of a communicant.

Persuasive communication itself that the government is trying to build is designed in such a way that the target can receive it consciously and without coercion, which is based on three main dimensions, namely the process of forming a response, the process of strengthening the response, the process of changing the response (Suryana et al., 2019; Achmad et al., 2022) . On the other hand, a persuasive communication strategy will actually create two-way (reciprocal) communication by disseminating information from the organization to the public that is educational and enlightening, as well as by taking a persuasive approach, so as to create mutual understanding, respect and understanding.

So, reflecting on the pandemic situation that is currently hitting Indonesia, communication is the most important part to maintain good relations with the wider community, because public trust needs to be built and maintained so that extraordinary panic does not occur, and the main goal

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regarding handling and prevention can be implemented quickly and responsively. One of the instructions given by the government and President Joko Widodo is to continue to work and make as much effort as possible, and to show the public that in this case all parties involved are indeed very ready and serious in tackling all possibilities caused by this pandemic. However, the perception of the readiness and seriousness of the Government needs to be conveyed to the public through comprehensive and periodic explanations, by explaining what the Government has done and will do in the future (Tanjung & Putri, 2022).

The government also in this case has a role as an Opinion Leader, where the task is indeed quite large in conveying information even with the possibility of selection or bending of information, as well as in interpreting information that will be received directly by the public (Zahrotunnimah, 2020). Because the information conveyed by opinion leaders is very dependent on how they interpret the information they get, and then it will develop into personal influence. Meanwhile, the persuasive communication strategy promoted by the government must be understood as a process of transforming messages between two parties who have an interest in one another, therefore this communication strategy must consider all parties involved in the communication process.

Of course, this communication relationship needs to be carried out continuously considering that this pandemic has not ended and the more massive it spreads, the more often people are educated, the more information will indirectly stick in people's minds, because there are several techniques that can be used in a communication strategy, one of which is repetition (Repetition), the more people accept these messages, the easier it will be for the government to carry out monitoring of the spread of Covid-19, because all of its actions have been successfully implemented and have produced a new habit in the midst of this pandemic.

Viewed from persuasive communication theory, the government's actions as a communicator really need to convey some of its messages subtly and periodically because indirectly this process will influence people's opinions, attitudes and actions by using psychological manipulation so that people act as if they wanted to. Persuasive is also often identified with a symbolic process with the communicator trying to convince others to change attitudes or behavior through transmitting messages, in an atmosphere of free choice. In an effort to persuade the public to always maintain cleanliness and comply with all health protocols, the government will make every effort to increase public awareness through efforts to build self-confidence and the notion that all programs related to this pandemic are aimed at shared obligations, not just a handful of people.

2. METHOD

In this study, researchers used a qualitative research methodology. The term qualitative research in question is a type of research whose findings are not obtained through statistical procedures or other forms of calculation. There are three main elements in qualitative research namely. The first element is data. Data can come from various sources, usually through interviews or observations. The second element is the analysis and interpretation procedures that are often used to obtain findings or theories. Both of these procedures include techniques for understanding a data. And the third element is written and oral reports. This report can be put forward in a scientific journal or conference or other sources (Strauss & Corbin, 2003: 4-7). In addition, researchers also use descriptive analysis method as a research method, as a way to summarize an ongoing situation at the time the research was conducted.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Basically persuasive communication activities have the goal of giving encouragement to the communicant so that they are able to change their attitudes, opinions and behavior on their own accord and not because of compulsion. Of course, this can apply to individuals or groups of people who are persuaded and it is hoped that their attitudes will change voluntarily and happily according to the messages they receive, both verbally and non-verbally. The persuasive communication process itself can be divided into two important stages including, the primary communication process where the process of conveying one's thoughts or feelings to others by using symbols/symbols as media and

examples such as language, signs, pictures, colors and so on which are indirectly capable of to be translated by the communicator to the communicant. Then the second is a secondary communication process in which the delivery of messages by one person to another uses a tool or means as the second medium after using the symbol as the first medium while the media includes newspapers, telephones, magazines, radio, television, films and so on.

The government itself, as the party most responsible for handling Covid-19, has implemented a number of very good and systematic approaches so that people are interested in the invitations that are being made continuously. It can be seen that the government and its staff take an approach through regular events or activities carried out in the surrounding community so that it is easy to reach by all groups. In fact, the correct approach process must be carried out through a gentle method, non-judgmental and capable of being translated precisely, especially in order to comply with health protocols. So that good communication is the key in applying persuasive communication in inviting the public to remain vigilant against the Covid-19 virus and comply with government regulations.

The government also participated in discussions with all elements of society, where this activity had the aim of exchanging thoughts, ideas, ideas and opinions which would later be applied to form new programs in the framework of dealing with this pandemic. This discussion must of course proceed in a directed manner, to reach an agreement to produce a mutual agreement, because indirectly by discussing it makes a person closer and is able to influence the mindset of other people.

On the other hand, mindset is a way of assessing and providing conclusions about something based on a certain point of view. The number of perspectives a person has for thinking is usually heavily influenced by emotion (mentally), education and experience. As we know, people's mindset varies according to psychological, family and social conditions. Mindset is a way of thinking that influences attitude, so a person's attitude is the result of his own mindset. It is known that to influence someone we must first understand his mindset. After knowing the people's mindset, of course, it will make it easier for the government to implement a persuasive communication strategy, especially campaigning for health protocol movements, because they already know the character, desires and things needed by a communicant.

In addition, the government also empowers cadres in each region, where their job is to provide oversight regarding health protocols, and it is hoped that from forming cadres, the community will be more alert and aware of the importance of maintaining cleanliness and most importantly not underestimating this Covid-19 outbreak. From the research results it is known that the performance of the cadres in providing direction through training and counseling is indeed felt to be very effective because indirectly this activity is able to encourage the community to care even more and build a very high sense of concern among the government and other elements of society (Putri, 2020; Sjuchro et al., 2022).

From the research results it was found that the Health Service and the government held discussions in order to broaden understanding and exchange ideas, so as to solve existing problems, namely related to the constraints and reasons why people are still reluctant to comply with health protocols. The discussion method is one way to improve health to avoid the Covid-19 virus. This discussion was held to find out what things the community wanted, what reasons made the community not want to implement the health protocol and it was hoped that from this discussion a solution to this problem would be found.

The presence of new media also has a significant role in providing education and invitation to the public, because the emergence of several social media can be used as a vehicle for fun and can be used by the government to help campaign for movements to always maintain health protocols, because of the nature of social media indeed very practical, widely spread and not hindered by distance and time. This indicates that persuasive communication can also be combined with the presence of social media because the messages that have been conveyed can be received quickly by the public. The media as a tool for conveying messages plays an important role, in disseminating and conveying messages to the communicants who are the target.

The use of mass media is used in establishing communication between team members of the task force unit, as well as with other elements of society. The presence of several social media such as

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Facebook, WhatsApp, YouTube, Instaram, and so on can be enabled if there are things to be followed up which can be resolved as soon as possible by each member of each government agency (Achmad, 2022). On the other hand, social media is also used as a tool to provide direction, knowledge and information to the public which is always updated every day so that the information conveyed is always kept up to date. The phenomenon of the presence of social media as a result of the development of information and communication technology is extraordinary. With a variety of services that can be used, social media has changed the way people communicate in society to be very limitless.

However, the government also does not forget to always socialize directly to greet people both in cities and in villages. This activity is of course very important apart from campaigning for health protocol movements, this action can also attract public sympathy through humane approaches such as distributing masks for free, provide medicines, to convey persuasive messages that can lead to change, because in essence by conveying messages directly the feedback that is obtained will also occur at that time, so that the government can evaluate and find out what responses given by society.

Apart from involving internal government parties in campaigning for health protocol programs, the government is also taking an approach by preparing Ambassadors of Change, where in the future these ambassadors of change are formed so that people are enticed to follow what is suggested by the Health Service, while this step is taken on the basis of agreement from various parties, because by bringing in ideal figures/figures in the millennial era, of course it will be easy to attract public interest, especially in appealing to remain vigilant against the spread of the Covid-19 virus. In essence, this change ambassador functions as the government's third media in inviting the public to work hand in hand in implementing health protocols.

Based on the research results obtained, there are several obstacles to the health service with the government in influencing the community to improve health protocols during the Covid 19 pandemic, including the character of the community, and the lack of public awareness in adhering to a healthy lifestyle. As we know, Indonesian society consists of various ethnic groups, customs, races and religions, which makes their character traits different, so that communication strategies must also be adapted to their respective regions. On the other hand, if we talk about the true character of each individual, of course, they will have different thoughts in responding to this pandemic. For this reason, not all people can be invited to discuss and work together, especially in complying with health protocols. In other words, character is a real and distinct trait shown by an individual, while society is a unit of human life that interacts, so the choice of communication here is very important so that the messages to be conveyed can be well received (Sari & Soegiarto, 2021).

Community character is the most important obstacle in increasing public awareness about health protocols, this is what causes the health service together with the government to be very clever in fostering communication, especially in aspects of influencing the community. In addition, the community considers that health standards lie in what has been implemented at this time and there are still people who do not comply with health protocols. This is due to the lack of public awareness about health. Actually they know the dangers of the existence of this covid 19, but they still do it or even break the rules.

So in responding to the process of delivering persuasive messages to the public, the government is required to attract attention and strengthen the attitudes or beliefs of the target of persuasion, in certain ways. There are three concepts that need to be considered in developing the first communication strategy, namely (1) attitude is a set of consistent responses towards social objects and tends to be associated with certain behaviors. Through persuasive communication, a receiver (message recipient) can change attitudes because of exposure to information from a message sender, either pleasantly, unpleasantly or not reacting at all. Furthermore, the target of changing this attitude includes the basic aspects of human attitudes, namely affective aspects (likes or feelings towards an object), cognitive (belief in an object), and motor (actions towards an object).

With the descriptions above, the target cognitive aspect in persuasive communication related to the attitude object is conveyed to the individual, so that he is willing to agree with the ideas contained in the message. The cognitive process runs when the persuasive process occurs, until finally the

individual or a group decides to agree or disagree with the attitude object (Yasa, 2021). The target affective aspect in persuasive communication in this section will be the subject of discussion, when the persuasion message is conveyed, so that the process will touch and influence the emotional aspects of the individual who is used as the target of persuasion. Basically a person will have a positive attitude towards objects that are often presented together with a positive stimulus, and vice versa, someone will have a negative attitude towards objects that are presented together with a negative stimulus and this principle is related to one's affective process when receiving a message.

One theory that can discuss how the government disseminates health protocols to the public is the theory of attitude change, where this theory is a theory that studies how a person's attitude is formed and can change through the communication process and about how a person's attitude can affect a person's behavior. In this case, the government must be able to learn the theory of attitude change, in order to change the public's attitude towards an organization or a company in a better direction. The theory of attitude change states that a person will feel uncomfortable in himself when faced with new information or information that is contrary to his beliefs. Such a situation is called a state of dissonance which comes from the word dissonance, which means it is not suitable or inappropriate (Negoro, 2016).

Someone will try consciously or not to limit and reduce this discomfort through three interconnected selective processes, this process will help someone find what information they will remember and what they will consume, which will be interpreted according to what is considered important. The three types of selective processes include (1) Selective information recipients, namely the process of people who will only receive information that is in accordance with attitudes and beliefs towards that person. According to this theory, a person will be more inclined to read news that he believes in. Then selective memory, that is, humans will not easily forget and humans will really remember the attitudes they had before, and finally, selective view, namely someone who will give his views on every message received in accordance with previous beliefs.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the research described above, it can be seen that persuasive communication was carried out by the government and its staff in an effort to campaign for health protocols during the Covid-19 pandemic through the delivery of persuasive communication by taking an individual approach or a group approach. Then establish a good communication relationship, in this case the government invites the public to comply with health protocols in order to create health and avoid an outbreak of Covid 19. The next stage the government invites the public to discuss together in determining the best ideas, ideas, and solutions a pandemic situation that is increasingly endangering the state of society. In this case, the government first understands the mindset of its people so that it can maximize results in campaigning for health protocols. Persuasive communication carried out by the government and its staff is indeed very important to achieve certain goals, both in government and for the benefit of society. This persuasive effort focuses on steps to change and strengthen the attitudes and beliefs of the audience, or in other words, in an effort to persuade people to act in a certain way.

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