

## The Role of Therapeutic Communication in Government Policy and Covid-19 Coverage in the Media

AZIZAH DES DERIVANTI

### ABSTRACT

Health communication perspective which is commonly called therapeutic communication, has a principle that is contrary to the principle of the media "bad news is good news". Therapeutic communication views the Covid-19 pandemic, there are three systems, namely the personalistic system, the naturalistic system and the biomedical system. In dealing with Covid-19, the Government referred to at least two regulations, namely Law No. 4 of 1984 and PP No.40 of 1991 discuss the Prevention of Outbreaks of Infectious Diseases in this paper is the Covid-19 virus. The media reports the Covid-19 case in detail as a symbol to make it easier to describe the chronology and development of the Covid-19 virus case. On the other hand, the patient's personal data is not displayed. The research method in this paper by the author is descriptive analysis with a qualitative approach.

**Keywords :** *Therapeutic communications, media, Covid-19*

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Azizah Des Derivanti is a researcher and lecture in Department of Communication, Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, Universitas Nasional, Indonesia. Email : [azizahdeshaha@civitas.unas.ac.id](mailto:azizahdeshaha@civitas.unas.ac.id)

@2020 Departement Sociology, Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, Universitas Nasional. Website : <http://sosiologi.fisip.unas.ac.id/>

## INTRODUCTION

Since December 2019, the whole world has been shocked by the corona virus pandemic, Wuhan, China has become the first country to be hit by the corona virus. The spread is so fast, hundreds, thousands, even millions of people have become victims. The corona virus, now known as Covid-19, is a very deadly virus. Although it is still possible to recover from before, there are still many victims who have died. Indonesia is one of the countries that is considered late in dealing with Covid-19. Jokowi had claimed that the corona virus had not entered Indonesia. However, recently, Joko Widodo announced that there were two Indonesian citizens who tested positive for Covid-19.

All information in the media starts to discuss about corona which is starting to confuse, both conventional media to new media. However, this news tends to be heralded so that it has an impact on excessive public anxiety. This proves that the principle of the media "bad news is good news" is correct. News in the media that confuses the public is considered as news that has a negative impact (bad news). The communication media carried out by the government during the Covid-19 pandemic received a negative assessment from the community, from various government agencies there were two non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that gave negative assessments from the community, namely: Institute for Research, Education, and Economic and Social Information (LP3ES) )) and the Institute for Economic and Financial Development (INDEF). LP3ES is considered a negative institution because it has issued 37 blunder statements during the Covid-19 pandemic (Mawardi, 2020). Meanwhile, the negative assessment from the community is focused on INDEF, which states that 66.28% of the public give negative responses to communications made by the government, especially those conducted by President Joko Widodo and Minister of Health Terawan (Indraini, 2020).

Meanwhile, from the perspective of health communication, what is commonly called therapeutic communication has a principle that is contrary to the principle of the media "bad news is good news". Therapeutic communication is a collaborative relationship between the patient and the media characterized by changes in behavior, feelings, thoughts and experiences in fostering therapeutic collaborative relationships (Stuart and Sundeen, 1998, p. 103). Therefore, this paper discusses the role of therapeutic communication in government policy and Covid-19 reporting in the media.

The therapeutic communication perspective views the Covid-19 pandemic, there are three systems, namely the personalistic system, the naturalistic system and the biomedical system. From this perspective, physicians usually adopt biomedical systems while patients adopt personalistic and biomedical systems. The personalistic system is an assumption of disease because there are other disorders outside the medical, the naturalistic system is an assumption that disease is caused by an imbalance, while the biomedical system is caused by causes and effects so that the nature of the disease can be inherited. predicted like Covid-19. However, with conflicting reports about Covid-19, many people are confused by

the signs of Covid-19, such as coughs, colds and fever, which are not necessarily Covid-19.

Therapeutic communication approaches tend to be personal, meaning that they must be able to build relationships, empathy, ethics (doing good and right) and multilingualism. In reporting, therapeutic communication chooses vocabulary that is straightforward, honest and easily understood by the audience. This is classified as low context communication. Effective media communication according to Matthew Seeger who has also been stated by The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) shows: the origin of information is credible, honest and open to information, intends to persuade someone to take actions that minimize the danger of being infected (Seeger, 2020).

The credibility of the origin of the message is related to the origin of the message that can be trusted and is able to prove its truth (valid). Meanwhile, honesty and openness of information can reduce the emergence of news that is uncertain or confusing information, unnecessary anxiety and panic. The phenomenon of Covid-19 ensures a lot of confusing news about Covid-19, not necessarily valid and true. This is reinforced by the statement of the Ministry of Communication and Information Technology regarding the existence of 554 hoaxes related to the corona virus, all hoax news spread across 1,209 digital platforms, including: Facebook as many as 834 cases, Instagram 10 cases, Twitter 350 cases, Youtube 6 cases and there are still 1,209 cases. other. which is currently being followed up by Kominfo. Various forms, images, colors, writings on social media hit the community. Information confusion has an impact on people who don't know which information is reliable or not. The existence of hoax news spread on various digital platforms causes the public to be "fierce" in seeing something, panic and paranoia occur. The community's negative stigma against Covid-19 results in anxiety, panic buying, etc. In fact, most of the food purchased is fast food, while fast food itself has a bad impact if we continue to consume it.

Honesty in conveying information is very necessary in presenting what is known and is not known regarding hazards or impacts in the future. In addition, honesty in presenting information must be transparent to avoid panic (Seeger, 2020). With the openness of information, it is hoped that it can minimize the panic that occurs in the general public.

Based on observation, the media communication carried out by the government during the Covid-19 pandemic is still considered inefficient. The reason is, many government statements are often considered excessive and underestimate the Covid-19 virus, as evidenced by the Minister of Health's statement challenging Harvard researchers to prove the corona virus exists in Indonesia, further the Minister's statement states that only diphtheria sufferers are in Indonesia. not afraid, let alone various statements disparaging the Covid-19 virus from other similar government officials. Media communication by the government regarding the consistency of messages is also considered ineffective, for example the statement of prohibitions from the central government regarding the provisions for going home. This will create a gap in opinion from the public regarding efforts to prevent the spread of the Covid-19 virus. At that time the

government prohibited going home, then in a short time the government allowed going home.

Apart from the disclosure of information and the correctness of message content, another obstacle to effective communication with the media during the Covid-19 pandemic is the debate on patient privacy and public interest in efforts to prevent the Covid-19 virus. In this case the media must wisely select and sort information based on the segments of the target audience.

The debate about patient privacy (patient identity) has even been answered at the level of regulation in legislation. Based on Article 57 paragraph (1) of Law Number 36 Year 2009 concerning Health, everyone has the right to confidential personal health conditions that are disclosed to health service providers. However, paragraph (2) states that the right to confidentiality of the patient's condition does not apply in terms of: legal order, court order, the license concerned, the public interest, or the interest of the person. On the other hand, based on Article 26 paragraph (1) of Law Number 11 of 2008 concerning Electronic Transaction Information (ITE), all information regarding a person's personal data must be made with the consent of the person concerned. This means that the patient's privacy regarding the patient's identity and condition can be disclosed by the media for the public interest.

## METHOD

The research method used by the author is descriptive analysis with a qualitative approach. It is a research method used to describe current or ongoing problems, in this paper the focus of the problem is therapeutic communication on Covid-19 news. This paper intends to describe what happened at the time the research was conducted.

Judging from the types of therapeutic communication cases on Covid-19 reporting, the techniques and tools used in writing, as well as the place and time of research, the author focuses on descriptive case studies of Covid-19 reporting. Research subjects can be individuals, groups, institutions, or communities. Researchers want to study intensively the background and environmental interactions of the social unit being the subject. The subject of this research is media coverage about the Covid-19 case.

The purpose of the case studies is to provide a clear picture of the background, in this paper it aims to present a therapeutic or health communication perspective in reporting about Covid-19 patients. Because exposure in the media from the perspective of therapeutic communication is straightforward, honest and easily understood by the public. This means that news from a therapeutic communication perspective must be able to build relationships, empathy, ethics (doing good and right) and multilingual. In addition, therapeutic communication chooses vocabulary that is straightforward, honest, and easy for the audience to understand. This is classified as low context communication.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### The Role of Therapeutic Communication in Government Policy and Covid-19 Coverage in the Media

It was explained that in efficient media communication during the Covid-19 pandemic there was a debate about patient privacy and the interests of the community in an effort to prevent the spread of the Covid-19 virus that is increasingly widespread. While the debate related to patient privacy has even been regulated in a regulatory level, namely Article 57 paragraph (1) of Law Number 36 Year 2009 concerning Health, everyone has the right to the secret of their personal health conditions. has been disclosed to health care providers. However, in paragraph (2) it is emphasized that this right does not apply in terms of: statutory regulations, court orders, permits concerned, public interest, or interests of that person. Effective communication media has also been regulated in Article 26 paragraph (1) of Law Number 11 of 2008 concerning Electronic Transaction Information (ITE), all information regarding a person's personal data must be made with the consent of the person concerned.

In fact, the DKI Jakarta Provincial Government has chosen a policy of displaying selected cases as symbols or icons to make it easier to describe the chronology and development of the Covid-19 case. Meanwhile, personal or personal data related to patient identity is not displayed ([corona.jakarta.go.id](http://corona.jakarta.go.id), April 8, 2020). As has been done by the Municipal Government Public Relations, which has always carried out socialization about the prevention of Covid-19, starting from inviting hand washing, socializing the positive impact of work from home government policies and social distancing, etc.

The media are supposed to be government agents and "tools for disseminating information", but in fact there is a lot of confusing news about Covid-19, not necessarily valid and true. Convincing information from health workers and the influence of health workers is needed and must be disseminated to the public. The role of the Ministry of Communication and Informatics apart from collecting and displaying a list of hoaxes that have spread in society, then the Ministry of Information also routinely releases them in documents about hoax news data. This is an input so that the public gets valid information so that it does not cause anxiety. Individually, in the face of a lot of information and confusing truth is to train us to always be critical of the information received. Learn to reduce confirmation bias, find out news sources including authors and creators, ensure cross-check of information by prioritizing information from credible organizations and mass media. Look for balanced information by getting it from several sources, more importantly how to combat infodemics and convey the right message.

The World Health Organization (WHO) suggests four strategies for dealing with the corona virus infodemic so that we are calmer in receiving information: being able to identify hoax news, denying messages that are packaged easily and attractively, spreading accurate messages through social media and going to viral, and evaluate the impact periodically.

## CONCLUSION

In dealing with Covid-19, the Government referred to two regulations, namely Law no. 4 of 1984 and Government Regulation no. 40 of 1991 concerning Prevention of Communicable Disease Outbreaks. News coverage in the media is the result of a case chosen as a symbol of the Covid-19 case to facilitate chronological depiction and development of the Covid-19 case. But in fact, there are 554 hoaxes related to the corona virus, all hoaxes are spread across 1,209 digital platforms, including: 10 Instagram cases, 834 Facebook cases, 350 Twitter cases, 6 Youtube cases and 1,209 others. cases that are still being followed up by Kominfo. (<https://katadata.co.id/berita/2020/04/18/kominfo-temukan-554-hoaks-soal-corona-di-berbagai-platform-digital>).

Meanwhile, in terms of therapeutic communication, the problem in effective media communication during the Covid-19 pandemic is the controversy over patient privacy related to identity and public interest in efforts to prevent Covid-19 transmission. Efforts to contain the Covid-19 virus require disclosure of information, especially regarding patients who have tested positive for Covid-19. In order to minimize news confusion and reduce public anxiety, the Jakarta Provincial Government displays selected cases as symbols to make it easier to describe the chronology and development of the Covid-19 case. Meanwhile, patient personal data or personal data are not displayed in the media

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