PERSUASIVE MESSAGES IN NEW MEDIA CONTENT STRATEGIES IN ADVISING INDONESIAN COMMUNITIES TO DO COVID-19 VACCINATIONS

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ABSTRACT

Overcoming the Covid-19 pandemic is one solution to suppress the Covid-19 virus from spreading, one of them is through vaccination. To persuade Indonesian citizens to get their Covid-19 vaccination, the role of mass media, such as Folkative, is crucial and very much needed, especially through communication on Instagram. Hoaxes revolving Covid-19 vaccines and lack of awareness about this issue have become a challenge for media like Folkative to deliver persuasive messages surrounding Covid-19 vaccines. Therefore, this study aims to know how Folkative communicates a persuasive message to urge Indonesian citizens to get Covid-19 vaccine shots a. Later, the findings of this research were analyzed using the concepts or theories such as New Media, Public Relations, also strategy, and technique of persuasive communication, where the primary data was obtained through interviews with a qualitative approach. After analyzing the findings, the data showed that Folkative utilizes Instagram as the main medium in delivering the persuasive message which was created through four Public Relations strategies such as publications, events, messages or news, and Corporate Social Responsibility. Folkative also applied two persuasive communication strategies, psychodynamic strategy, and the meaning of construction strategy. These strategies were also supported by The Yes-Responds Technique, Putting It Up to You Technique, Say It with Flower Technique, Don't Ask If, Ask Which Technique, The Swap Technique, also Reassurance Technique. Through a series of persuasive communication strategies and techniques implemented by Folkative, the results or responses from Folkative's external public are following the expected outcome that Folkative is hoping for, which is a change of behavior like participating in the Covid-19 vaccination program from the government. Folkative's persuasive contents itself receive positive responses, such as giving encouragement and assurance for the public to be vaccinated.

Keywords: Folkative, New Media, Persuasive Communication

1. PREFACE

The number of positive cases in the world, including in Indonesia, is increasing and the total number of Covid-19 cases in Indonesia is also the largest when compared to other Southeast Asian countries, where around 47% of Covid-19 cases in Southeast Asia came from Indonesia, with details of 629,429 total cases, 93,662 positive cases, 19,111 total deaths, and a 3% mortality ratio [1]. With the increasing number of cases, of course, the pandemic will be difficult to end and the health of every individual both in Indonesia and in other countries will be continuously threatened.

Therefore, to reduce the spread of the Covid-19 virus, the Indonesian government carried out a series of programs and policies, one of which was the Covid-19 vaccination program. Until now, there are several types of Covid-19 vaccines that have been circulating in Indonesia, including the Sinovac Vaccine, AstraZeneca (AZ) Vaccine, Sinopharm Vaccine, Moderna Vaccine, Pfizer Vaccine, Novavax Vaccine, and so on [2].

The Covid-19 vaccination program is an important program for the Indonesian people to form herd immunity. So that the more the number of Indonesian people who get the vaccine, the

greater the possibility that the chain of transmission of Covid-19 will decrease. The importance of the Covid-19 vaccination program was demonstrated by the first Covid-19 vaccination in Indonesia to the President of the Republic of Indonesia, President Joko Widodo on January 13, 2021 [3]. Although initially the provision of the Covid-19 vaccine was prioritized only for health workers or certain parties, since July 2021, the Covid-19 vaccination has been opened to the public. Realizing that news regarding Covid-19 cases can change at any time and soon, both about the number of cases and government policies in tackling this pandemic.

Since the pandemic was first present in Indonesia, there has been a lot of negative news and hoaxes about the Covid-19 vaccine. During the outbreak of government programs regarding Covid-19 vaccination, various hoaxes or scary news about the Covid-19 vaccine have emerged, both in online media and other forms of media. In fact, until November 2021, the issue of hoax news about the Covid-19 vaccine became the second most hoax issues this year, with a total of 12 reports in national and regional media. Dedy Permadi, Spokesperson for the Ministry of Communication, and Information Technology also explained that there were 1,991 Covid-19 hoax issues in 5,131 social media uploads from January 23, 2020, to November 18, 2021, [5]. The development of hoaxes like this can be dangerous in terms of encouraging the Indonesian people to vaccinate against Covid-19. This issue is certainly one of the obstacles for the government to carry out Covid-19 vaccinations for all Indonesian people evenly.

Therefore, this study aims to know how new media communicates a persuasive message to urge Indonesian citizens to get Covid-19 vaccine. The study focusses on Folkative web page and social media.

Related Work

a. Public relations

    Public Relations is a specific management function that supports the formation of mutual understanding in communication, understanding, acceptance, and cooperation between organizations and their various publics [7]. In its activities, Public Relations has the goal of creating a positive corporate identity and image, handling complaints and crises, and holding or demonstrating community activities for the public interest. One of the media that can be used in Public Relations is broadcasting media and the internet. There are various kinds of Public Relations strategies to deal with various problems, namely publications, events, messages or news, perception images, public relations, lobbying or negotiation techniques, and Corporate Social Responsibility [9].

b. New Media

    McQuail [10] explains that New Media can be seen as a device formed through a process of digitization and composed of various new communication technologies that both have certain features so that New Media includes the expansion of increasingly diverse communication technologies. This device is a communication tool that can be used personally and is widely available. Philipsen, Agerbæk, Walther, Wildermuth, Løfgreen, Grønning, Grund, and Pilegaard [11] state that New Media is said to be new because it is a convergence of all media (including old media) that are reshaped into one media with multiple functions. New media is a mixing of communication technology with digital computers while digitization plays a fundamental aspect in the existence of information and communication technology [12]. This allows the convergence of various media that have ever existed to allow a company to use this technology in its activities. The ability of new media is not only limited to providing active participation in the media. This means that users of media convergence can build or have deeper relationships and connections in socializing than old media consumers. The reason can be found in how to upload content,

where content can be uploaded or obtained based on the wishes of consumers [13], several types of new media, such as social networks will continue to innovate through device development [4]

Instagram is a form of New Media used by Folkatives to convey persuasive messages about the Covid-19 vaccination. Some of the characteristics of New Media include digital, interactivity, hypertextual, virtual, networked, and simulated [14]. The explanation above is related to the author's research because the author wants to analyze the use of Instagram which is New Media in conveying persuasive messages to the Indonesian people in carrying out government programs, Covid-19 vaccinations.

c. Persuasive Communication

Brembeck and Howell define persuasion as a conscious effort to change thoughts and actions by manipulating the motives of people in a determined direction. From there, the persuasive communication process that is logical turns into the concept of an emotional one. Meanwhile, according to Larson, the emotional concept stimulates internal motives, namely targeting changes in persuadee attitudes and behavior [15].

There are several strategies for conducting persuasive communication. The strategy developed needs to reflect tactical operations or consider certain factors, for example, to whom the persuasion message will be delivered, what the persuasive message is, why persuasive communication needs to be carried out, where the persuasive message will be placed, and when is the right time to convey the persuasive message [6]. Soemirat and Ardianto [6] said that there are three persuasive communication strategies, namely:

  a. *Psychodynamic Strategy,* where the focus is on emotional factors and/or cognitive factors of persuasion messages. This strategy emphasizes the aspect of the strength of influence on behavioral factors, reality, or the strength of an individual that will shape behavior.

  b. *Sociocultural Persuasion Strategy,* where the main assumption of this strategy is that human behavior is influenced by forces outside the individual. The main point of confidence in this strategy is that it requires a message with a big push.

  c. *The Meaning of Construction* strategy, where this strategy moves from the concept that the relationship between knowledge and behavior can be achieved from the extent and extent of the persuasive message that is remembered by the communicant.

Regarding persuasive communication strategies, there are several techniques for this form of communication, including [6] :

  a. *The Yes-Responds Technique*
     This technique applies a way of asking interrelated questions to direct the target of persuasion (persuadee) to the formation of attitudes, opinions, or even expected behavior.

  b. *Putting It Up to You*
     A technique in which the communicator (persuader) establishes a relationship with the communicant or the target of persuasion (persuadee) psychologically. This technique is done by constantly asking for clarity, agreement, disagreement, opinion, and so on from the topic being discussed. That way, the communicator can understand the character or desire of the communicant and make modifications to the persuasive communication that needs to be done.

  c. *Simulated Interests*

This technique is applied by suppressing anxiety or anxiety so that it indirectly forces the communicant to do what the communicator wants.

d. *Transfer*

This technique is an atmosphere or environment that feels influential on the results of persuasion.

e. *Bandwagon Technique*

A technique that uses the role of influential parties to suggest that he and others agree, use, do or work on the ideas that are persuaded.

f. *Say It with Flowers*

This technique is done by trying to win over or build an emotional attachment between the persuader and the persuadee. Efforts to take this heart can be done for example by praising the strengths, skills, abilities, and intelligence of the persuadee without being done excessively.

g. *Don't Ask If, Ask Which*

A technique in which the communicator makes various offers about a single meaning of persuasion. This offer is packaged using the right language and way so that the communicant is interested and feels he has a lot of choices about one meaning of persuasion.

h. *The Swap Technique*

Persuasion techniques are carried out by offering an advantage that can be felt or owned by the persuadee. A simple example is bartering goods or information.

i. *Reassurance*

Techniques to build a psychological relationship with the communicant. The difference with the Putting It Up To You Technique is that the Reassurance Technique is carried out by maintaining the psychological relationship that has been built so that the relationship is not broken. This technique is done by continuously or periodically communicating with the communicant. That way, the communicant feels he gets confidence or a sense of calm from the communicator and can later be persuaded slowly.

j. *Technique of Irritation*

The technique used is to persuade the persuadee to buy the product or believe the persuasion message and finally decide, where the way to do it is by direct contact and saying openly that you want to persuade. The disadvantage of this technique is that if persuasive communication fails, the persuader can be mistaken for a "coercive" by the persuadee.

Background

The mass media plays an important role in conveying information to the wider community [4]. Providing the latest credible information, educating the public, and informing the current conditions are very crucial in tackling the spread of the Covid-19 virus.

In connection with this phenomenon, the role of the media is increasingly important in educating the public about the Covid-19 vaccine and providing reliable information that can encourage Indonesians to vaccinate against Covid-19. Although the role of the mass media is very important, the function of the mass media is also closely related to the function of Public Relations, namely, to bridge an institution, in this study, namely the government program: Covid-19 vaccination, with the Indonesian people, namely as recipients of information or news.

Public Relations also play a role in building a common understanding between the government and the people of Indonesia. This is following the notion of Public Relations according to Cutlip, Center, and Broom [6], namely Public Relations is a special management function that supports the formation of mutual understanding in communication, understanding, acceptance, and cooperation between the organization and its various publics. In addition, Public Relations also functions as a communicator who can persuade audiences, for example by communicating with the public through print or electronic media [7].

In line with the explanation above, the mass media need to implement the Public Relations function to deliver information and news that can educate and encourage the Indonesian people to vaccinate against Covid-19. Of course, it also minimizes the emergence of fear or panic or confusion that can lead to people's unwillingness not to vaccinate against Covid-19.

One of the media that can be used to invite and inform the Indonesian people about the government's Covid-19 vaccination program is Instagram. Instagram is the third largest social media in the total number of users, which is 86.6% [8] . This makes Instagram an effective social media for reaching large masses, including spreading information about the Covid-19 vaccine.

Folkative is one of the online-based mass media, where Folkative empowers Instagram as the main message delivery medium. Having a communication style that is suitable for millennials, Folkative also participates in conveying information about the Covid-19 vaccine. However, in conveying information to the public, Folkative presents messages or news in a way that is quite different from other media, namely using Indonesian for visual text and using English in the caption column, as well as using a language style that is quite relaxed or casual. Knowing that Folkative is a mass media in Indonesia, using English in the caption, where this language is not the mother tongue in Indonesia, has the potential to be a challenge for Folkatives in conveying information that is easily understood by the Indonesian people. Especially in this research, namely news or persuasive messages about the Covid-19 vaccine. The purpose of this research is to answer the formulation of the research problem, namely "How does social media content persuade the public to implement government programs?", where the study case discussed is from Folkative's Instagram account.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

The research approach carried out by the author is to conduct descriptive qualitative research. Sugiyono [16] describes this method as a method that is carried out when the object is in a scientific state (the opposite is an experiment). Fraenkel and Wallen, (1990); Locke et al., (1987); Marshall and Rossman (1989), and Meriam (1988) in Creswell [17] say that the data obtained in qualitative research is generally descriptive, so the authors choose the type of descriptive research in this study. The purpose of descriptive is that the data obtained in this study are generally in the form of words, pictures, and not numbers.

The author uses a descriptive qualitative approach with case studies because the content of this research is a form of exploration of real life based on cases, where data collection is obtained in detail through interviews to get original answers from relevant sources [18]. The case chosen is intending to be able to learn how to use the right persuasive communication strategy and how to package content that is appropriate to help persuade audiences on Instagram.

This study uses interview techniques in collecting primary data because the author wants to get

in-depth information about the object of the research. Creswell [17] also says that qualitative data can be collected through observation, interviews, documentation, and audio-visual materials. The interview was conducted by a semi-structured interview because the author already knows what information he wants to get from the interview process. While the secondary data in this study was obtained through pre-existing data, books, journals, or other relevant documents available on the internet.

The data analysis technique is the process of compiling the results of data collection obtained from interviews, library studies, or internet research systematically so that it is easy to understand [17]. In this study, the findings of the data will be processed and analyzed using coding techniques. Coding itself is a process of analyzing and testing existing raw data by labeling (labeling) in the form of words, phrases, or sentences [19].

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Social Media Instagram @Folkative
Instagram is one of the most widely used parts of New Media today. This is evidenced by Instagram which occupies the third position in the largest total number of users in Indonesia, which is 86.6% of the total social media users [8]. All informantss in this study, Joshua Greenspan Banjarnahor, Juni Noviani, Marcelino Christian, and Yehezkial Dimas are also Instagram users. Folkative, as the object of research in this study, uses Instagram as the main medium to convey news and information.

Instagram is considered a New Media because it is digitized and is composed of various new communication technologies that have various features. Instagram also offers a personal and widely available communication experience. Due to the convergence of all media, including old media, which is undergoing a re-formation into a multi-functional media, where one of its functions is to offer real-world experiences in cyberspace, Instagram is also hereinafter referred to as a form of New Media.

Furthermore, Instagram social media is also a form of communication media that is currently widely used by Public Relations practitioners to convey persuasive messages such as urging the Indonesian people to carry out government programs, where an example is the Covid-19 vaccine [7]. The importance of conveying or promoting the government's Covid-19 vaccination program, Folkative feels that it is also its duty as a medium to assist the government [20]. This can be done due to the Public Relations management function implemented by Foklative, where Public Relations functions as a communicator, builds relationships between the government and the Indonesian people, and becomes management support for the government in disseminating its programs [7]. Supporting the previous statement, Public Relations management is also appropriate to be applied because its activities and targets lead to dealing with complaints and crises, where the crisis that occurred was the Covid-19 pandemic, as well as holding and demonstrating community activities or social campaigns for the public interest, where community activities What is meant is the Covid-19 vaccine as a solution to reduce the spread of the Covid-19 virus.

Based on the explanation above, Folkative as a media has its role and obligation to support the government, to reach as many Indonesians as possible to help the government deliver messages such as government programs to maintain public safety. In this case, what is meant by the government program is the Covid-19 vaccine to reduce the spread of the Covid-19 virus.

Another thing that supports the Folkative to promote this government program is the lack of public awareness of the importance of getting the Covid-19 vaccination to deal with the pandemic. Folkatives have so far helped promote the Covid-19 vaccination program to invite or persuade the Indonesian people to carry out this
government program regularly. In addition, the main medium used by Folkatives to support this government program is Instagram which is included in New Media because Instagram is currently widely used by the masses. Supporting the delivery of persuasive messages to promote government programs, Folkative implements several Public Relations strategies in the mass media, one of which is publications, events, and messages or news in the form of video documentation of the Folkative team carrying out Covid-19 vaccinations and other interactive content.

Folkative uses a video containing Covid-19 vaccination activities as a form of event strategy from Public Relations carried out by the Folkative team, where the video content is uploaded to their Instagram social media to educate the Indonesian people about the safety and convenience of the Covid-19 vaccine. Aiming to persuade the Indonesian people to vaccinate against Covid-19, Folkative created a digitalized video as a form of delivering messages uploaded via Instagram to show the Indonesian people that the Covid-19 vaccine is safe and easy. This activity is closely related to the characteristics of New Media, namely digital, simulated, and virtual characteristics. Following this discussion, the presentation of video content is not only limited to showing the benefits or advantages of vaccinating Covid-19 but also as a form of interaction with the Folkative audience who are closely related as a form of interactivity characteristic of Instagram as a New Media, where publishing this content on Instagram is expected. able to reach large masses and the response from the Folkative audience to persuade them to vaccinate against Covid-19 as New Media with a wide network (networked).

Persuasive Communication Strategy
Implementing a Public Relations strategy to support the government in promoting the Covid-19 vaccine program is not enough if it is not carried out in conjunction with a persuasive communication strategy.

The psychodynamic persuasive communication strategy applied by Folkative is an emotional approach. Regarding the sociocultural persuasive communication strategy, the main assumption of the strategy states that human behavior is influenced by forces outside of the individual. The main point of confidence in this strategy is that it requires a message with a big push. So, persuasive messages must be shown, delivered, and supported by community groups that are relevant to the persuasion message [6]. Andrew Wildigar who is a Producer or Content Creator Folkative stated that he did not apply this strategy. In other words, Folkative does not involve the role of influential figures, commonly called Key Opinion Leaders to convey persuasive messages about the Covid-19 vaccine. However, in one of its contents, Folkative conveyed the news that President Joko Widodo, one of the most influential figures in Indonesia, carried out the Covid-19 vaccination and was the first person in Indonesia to implement this government program.

Regarding the last strategy of persuasive communication, namely the meaning of construction strategy, where this strategy moves from the concept that the relationship between knowledge and behavior can be achieved from the extent and extent of the persuasive message that is remembered by the communicant. The memory of the persuasive message regarding Covid-19 is obtained from the understanding and understanding that the communicant has of the persuasion message that is continuously communicated [6]. In response to the explanation of this strategy,

Folkative's frequency in uploading Covid-19 vaccine content is quite high, even saving content about the Covid-19 vaccine in a highlight story that will be displayed on the Folkative's Instagram profile, this aims to remind and encourage Indonesian people to take the vaccine, that was available from the government [21].

Not apart from persuasive communication strategies, several persuasive communication techniques to support these strategies can also be done. Of the several existing persuasive communication techniques, Folkative only applies a few, including The Yes-Responds, Putting It Up to You, Say It with Flowers, Don't Ask If, Ask Which, The Swap Technique, and Reassurance. For The Yes-Responds Technique, Folkative directs the audience toward the intended persuasion message by asking a series of questions related to the message to be conveyed.

As for the Putting It Up To You technique, Folkative uses the Instagram feature as New Media to build relationships through interaction with the audience, where the result to be obtained is to increase the awareness of the Indonesian people about the existence of the Covid-19 vaccine in Indonesia. This interactive content is done by Folkative through the features in Instagram Stories constantly asking for clarity, agreement, disagreement, opinion, and so on from the topic being discussed. That way, the communicator can understand the character or desire of the communicant and make necessary modifications to persuasive communication [6]. In this case, what we are trying to achieve is to spread awareness of the importance and existence of the Covid-19 vaccine in Indonesia.

The persuasive communication techniques of Say It with Flowers, Don't Ask If, Ask Which, and The Swap Technique applied by Folkative are carried out simultaneously. The Say It with Flower technique is done by trying to win over or build an emotional attachment between the persuader and the persuadee. Regarding this technique, what was informed by the Folkative were the advantages of vaccinating Covid-19, namely reducing the possibility of being exposed to the Covid-19 virus or in other words for health purposes, as well as the benefits of enjoying public facilities such as visiting malls or places and participating in certain activities. By providing an advantage that the persuadee can get, the Indonesian people, the Folkative also applies The Swap technique, where this advantage can be felt or obtained by the communicant if the persuasion message is conveyed, namely carrying out the Covid-19 vaccination. This information is notified with the support of information about various types of Covid-19 vaccines in Indonesia that can be obtained by the Indonesian people, this is included in the Don't Ask If, Ask Which technique. The Folkative wants to invite the Indonesian people to vaccinate against Covid-19, but in conveying this main persuasive message, the Folkative also provides information that there are several types of Covid-19 vaccines that can be taken by the Indonesian people. That way, the Indonesian people have many choices but lead to one goal or a message of persuasion, namely that the Indonesian people participate in the Covid-19 vaccination. By providing information about the benefits of the Covid-19 vaccine and providing opportunities for the Indonesian people to choose the type of Covid-19 vaccine that can be taken, the Folkative hopes to be able to invite or persuade the Indonesian people to carry out the Covid-19 vaccine.

One of the last persuasive communication techniques applied by the Folkative is the Reassurance technique, which is a technique for building a psychological relationship with the communicant. The difference with the Putting It Up To You technique is that the Reassurance technique is carried out by maintaining the psychological relationship that has been built so that the relationship is not broken. This technique is done by continuously or periodically communicating

with the communicant. That way, the communicant feels he gets confidence or a sense of calm from the communicator and later can be slowly persuaded [6]. The Folkative continuously creates and publishes interactive content regarding the Covid-19 vaccine and includes sources of this information to increase the trust and awareness of the Indonesian people towards the Covid-19 vaccination program.

Persuasive Messages

The main persuasive message that Folkative wants to convey is to urge, invite, and persuade the Indonesian people to vaccinate against Covid-19. This is achieved by applying persuasive communication strategies and techniques with clear objectives. When publishing content or persuasive messages regarding the Covid-19 vaccine, Folkative not only applies persuasive communication strategies and persuasive communication techniques but also applies Public Relations strategies, namely Corporate Social Responsibility or CSR, where the purpose of the persuasive messages conveyed by the Folkative is related to with the Covid-19 vaccine is to urge or invite the Indonesian people to vaccinate to quickly recover from the pandemic.

Furthermore, from the purpose of the persuasive message that the Folkative wants to convey, the Folkative hopes to get a positive response and behavior changes that are in line with the message, namely participating in the Covid-19 vaccination.

4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

To answer the first objective of this research, which is to find out how Folkative packs a persuasive message that encourages Indonesians to vaccinate against Covid-19, Folkative implements several strategies such as:

a. Folkative admins believe that it is their duty as media to assist the government and can be done with the role of the public relations management function implemented by the Folkative, where public relations functions as a communicator, and builds relations between the government and the Indonesian people and becomes management support for the government. in disseminating the program. Folkatives use Instagram as the main medium for delivering messages because Instagram is currently widely used by the masses. In addition, Folkative implements several public relations strategies in the mass media, one of which is publications, events, and messages or news in the form of video documentation of the Folkative team carrying out Covid-19 vaccinations and other interactive content.

b. The first persuasive communication strategy applied by Folkative is a psychodynamic strategy through an emotional approach. Furthermore, regarding the sociocultural persuasive communication strategy or the second strategy of persuasive communication, Folkative did not apply this strategy. In other words, Folkative does not involve the role of influential figures, commonly called Key Opinion Leaders to convey persuasive messages about the Covid-19 vaccine. Regarding the last strategy of persuasive communication, namely the meaning of construction strategy, the frequency of Folkatives in uploading Covid-19 vaccine content is quite high, even saving content about the Covid-19 vaccine in a highlight story that will be displayed on the Folkative Instagram profile. Several persuasive communication techniques to support the persuasive communication strategy implemented by Folkative include The Yes-Responds, Putting It Up To You, Say It With Flowers, Don't Ask If, Ask Which, The Swap Technique, and Reassurance. The second objective of this study is to determine the response of Folkative followers to content with persuasive messages advocating vaccination in Indonesia.

On average, the responses received by Folkative are positive and the interactions obtained by Folkative with Covid-19 vaccine content are also quite high. Folkative followers are very interested, feel educated, excited, and convinced when they see or read content about the Covid-19 vaccine that they publish. In addition, Folkative followers also feel it is important that content like this needs to be published. Furthermore, for behavioral changes to the persuasive messages conveyed by the Folkative about the Covid-19 vaccine, there are behavioral changes that arise from the persuasive messages given by the Folkative through their Instagram. Even so, Folkative followers feel that there are still several things that can be improved by Folkative to further promote the Covid-19 vaccination program in Indonesia. For example, Folkative is more focused on information about the Covid-19 vaccine which is presented through animated videos so that it is easier to understand, understand, and attracts the attention of the Indonesian people.

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