

# Government Communications in the Implementation of Vaccinations and Health Protocols for Handling Covid-19

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## Abstract

The implementation of vaccination and the implementation of the Covid 19 Health protocol is a program run by the government in an effort to suppress the spread of the virus. The rejection by some people is related to the fact that vaccines are considered unsafe and not halal and Covid is just an ordinary disease. This research was conducted using a qualitative approach to explain the communication process of the Manado City Government in the implementation of vaccinations and health protocols for handling Covid 19. The research findings are that the communication carried out by the government has made the public understand the benefits of implementing vaccinations and health protocols for handling Covid 19. The government functions as chairperson. environment and cooperate with social organizations and religious organizations in helping deliver messages to the public regarding the implementation of vaccinations and health protocols for handling Covid 19. The conclusion of the study is that social organizations and religious organizations are scroll communicators as well as media that can be functioned by the government in delivering messages to the public.

**Keywords:** Government Communication, Vaccination, Health Protocol

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## Introduction

Corona Virus or also called Covid19 (Corona Virus Disease 2019) is an outbreak that has a high speed in its spread since it was first discovered at the end of December 2019 (Yunus & Rezki, 2020). Its spread was so fast that it became a pandemic that hit the world, including in Indonesia (Kresna & Ahyar, 2020). Until the beginning of 2022, the world, including Indonesia, is still faced with efforts to complete its spread. One of the steps taken by the Government of Indonesia in resolving the Covid-19 pandemic is vaccination activities.

Nalia (2021) explained that the government has designated the Corona virus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic as a non-natural disaster. The COVID-19 pandemic poses a major challenge in efforts to improve public health status in Indonesia. The COVID-19 pandemic that has hit the world has also had a visible impact in various sectors including the social sector, tourism, and education. so that urgent intervention is needed not only in terms of implementing health protocols but also other effective interventions through vaccination efforts. Provision of vaccines to the public in accordance with Presidential Regulation no. 99 of 2020 concerning the Procurement of Vaccines and the Implementation of Vaccinations in the Context of Combating the Covid-19 Pandemic.

Presidential Regulation No. 99 of 2020 mandates that the Covid-19 vaccine be given free of charge and the public is not charged at all. All levels of the cabinet, ministries, institutions, and local governments to prioritize the vaccination program in the 2021 fiscal year. Prioritize and relocate other budgets related to the availability and free vaccinations. The president will be the first to receive the Covid-19 vaccine. The goal is to provide confidence and confidence to

the public that the vaccines used are safe. asked the public to continue to practice discipline in wearing masks, maintaining distance, and washing hands. In relation to the technical implementation of the vaccine, Minister of Health Regulation No. 84 of 2020 has been issued regarding the implementation of vaccination in the context of overcoming the Covid-19 pandemic and Minister of Health Decree No. HK.01.02./MENKES/12758/2021 regarding the determination of the type of vaccine for the implementation of the Covid-19 vaccination.

In relation to the responsibility of local governments to prioritize vaccination programs as stated in Presidential Regulation no. 99 of 2020, the Manado City Government has also implemented it. However, in an effort to invite the people of Manado City to vaccinate, they are faced with various challenges. The challenges faced, among others, relate to the fear of negative effects, halal/illegal and whether or not vaccines are safe as news circulated by irresponsible parties. Likewise for the type of vaccine that is given up to problems for people who have co-morbidities, the time and place for the implementation of the vaccine as well as the administrative requirements that must be met by the community. As a result, the Manado City Vaccination target is 3762,615 in its implementation for the first vaccine dose of 195,581 and the second dose of 125,153 vaccines.

The problems faced by the Manado City Government also occur in other areas as stated by Dewi (2021), Fauzia & Hamdani (2021), Lamiri, et al (2021), Siahaan & Adriani (2021). In fact, because of the strong effect of the media reporting that the Covid-19 vaccine is dangerous for the human body, many people in Indonesia, with all their perceptions, oppose the policy of injecting the vaccine. As a result, the implementation of the existing rules has experienced problems. Even though there are still some people who agree with government policies because they already know the benefits of the corona vaccine (Siahaan & Adriani, 2021).

To be able to overcome the above problems, one of the steps that must be taken by the government is to communicate well with all communities. Communication is the delivery of messages from one party to another in the hope that the message conveyed can be understood, accepted and carried out. The injection of the Covid-19 vaccine is a policy taken by the government and applied to all levels of society to prevent the spread of the corona virus in Indonesia. Therefore, the contents of this policy must be understood correctly and well by all people.

To provide an understanding to the public about the benefits of vaccines so that people can give a positive response, it is necessary to have an effective form of communication process through socialization, counseling and promotion (Siahaan & Adriani, 2021; Timah, 2021). In relation to the communication process, the delivery of messages through health education is considered important in preventing Covid 19 (Timah, 2021). Communication is an important step to convey the information that a person or community needs, especially in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic. Communication is a necessity whose importance cannot be ignored in dealing with Covid-19 (Alfreda, 2021). Dewi (2021) emphasized that the success of the Covid-19 vaccination program depends, among other things, on many factors of public communication.

Manado City is one of fifteen regions in North Sulawesi Province. Not all of the people in Manado City have the same understanding of the importance of the Covid 19 vaccine and the application of health protocols. Acceptance and rejection of the vaccination policy occurs in this area. The research conducted was related to the handling of Covid 19 in Manado City from the aspect of government communication. Rengkung et al (2021) in their research found that communication in handling Covid 19 was not specifically related to the implementation of vaccination. However, Timah (2021) explained that communication through health education

is important in preventing Covid 19. Thus, it is important for researchers to conduct research related to Covid 19 vaccination from the aspect of government communication.

Research related to the implementation of vaccinations and health protocols for handling Covid 19 which is reviewed from the government communication aspect is in line with the research strategy plan of Sam Ratulangi University in the fields of social excellence, humanities, culture and the arts through a focus on strengthening social capital, as well as in the field of health excellence in the focus of the study. health policy. Because through effective communication from the government to the community about the implementation of vaccination, it will make people have a correct understanding of vaccines. The impact that can be generated from the government's communication process to the community is the achievement of policy objectives as stated in Presidential Regulation no. 99 Year 2020.

### **Literature Review**

Communication plays a very important role in decision making, preventing negative behavior (Pentury et al (2019); Eklesia et al (2020)). The communication process through socialization of a policy needs to be carried out by a government work unit as carried out by the public relations department especially those related to with health services to the community (Pentury, 2021). Good communication in organizations can improve public services (Londa, et al. 2021). In relation to the handling of Covid 19, communication becomes a necessity that cannot be ignored. 19 (Alfreda, 2021). The success of the Covid-19 vaccination program depends on the factor of public communication (Dewi, 2021). Because one of the obstacles faced by the government in controlling Covid 19 is because communication in relation to the implementation of vaccination is not specifically conveyed (Rengkung et al, 2021). Through communication Therefore, providing an understanding to the public about the benefits of vaccines so that the community can give a positive response, it is necessary to have an effective form of communication process through socialization and promotion (Siahaan & Adriani, 2021).

In connection with the implementation of vaccines as well as efforts to resolve the Covid 19 pandemic and the application of Health protocols, many scientific studies have been carried out. However, research that is directly related to government communication in the implementation of vaccines in Manado City does not yet exist. Leonardo, et al (2019) found that the right communication will help in decision making. Eklesia et al (2020) view that the importance of communication in preventing negative behavior. Meanwhile, in relation to public and government organizations, it is important for the government through one of the work units, namely the public relations department to socialize the regulations imposed in relation to health services (Pentury, et al 2021). Because communication that goes well within the organization will bring the organization to improve public services (Londa, et al. 2021). Therefore, to provide an understanding to the public about the benefits of vaccines so that people can give a positive response, it is necessary to have an effective form of communication process through socialization and promotion (Siahaan & Adriani, 2021). Communication is an important step in conveying information to the public in relation to the Covid-19 pandemic. Communication is a necessity whose importance cannot be ignored in dealing with Covid-1 (Alfreda, 2021). By Dewi (2021) the success of the Covid-19 vaccination program depends on many factors in public communication.

### **Methods**

The location of the research is Manado City, North Sulawesi Province. The research design that will be used is a qualitative design (Creswell, 2014). The informant interviewed by the

Covid 19 task force, a leadership element in the Manado City Government who has work responsibilities related to delivering messages to the public and work units related to the implementation of vaccination. Data was collected through direct interviews with informants, tracking data on print and online mass media, searching for article references related to research topics on Google Scholar and making direct observations at locations where vaccinations and health protocols for handling Covid 19 were carried out in Manado City. All data and information collected in this study are related to the communication process carried out by the government in the implementation of vaccination. The stages of data analysis were carried out by means of data reduction, data interpretation and conclusion drawing/data verification. In addition, FGD activities were also carried out to strengthen data analysis.

## **Results and Discussion**

The COVID-19 pandemic that is still happening today requires the cooperation of all parties to resolve it. The various policies that have been carried out by the government are sometimes not well received by the community. Therefore, one of the important keys in implementing vaccinations and health protocols for handling Covid 19 is the basic attitude and appreciation for information disclosure that will lead to public participation (Sulhan, 2020). disclosure of information related to various policies set and carried out by the government is through a communication process.

Communication is something that is very important in life. Human individuals will require communication with each other in the public sphere (Dewi, 2021). Rakhmat (Awanis & Adiyanti, 2020: 136) explains that communication can be effective if the recipient of the message interprets the message he receives as intended by the sender. Collin Cherry in (Permadi et al 2018) defines communication as an attempt to create social units from individuals by using language or signs. This understanding gives the meaning that the communication process will run well when the sender and recipient of the message understand correctly and correctly the message that is delivered or received. The similarity of the message content of the giver and recipient is very important.

One of the policies carried out by the Indonesian government during the Covid-19 pandemic was to vaccinate the population. This is in line with the opinion of the World Health Organization as in Suri et al (2021) that the administration of vaccines is one way that can be taken to deal with the increasingly violent surge in the Covid-19 virus. Because the success of the vaccination strategy and health protocol for handling Covid 19 is related to many factors that influence each other, one of the main factors that have the most influence is the success of public communication carried out by the government to the community.

Giving vaccines to the public is a policy mandate as stated in Presidential Regulation no. 99 of 2020 concerning the Procurement of Vaccines and the Implementation of Vaccinations in the Context of Combating the COVID-19 Pandemic. This policy also makes local governments one of the institutions that have the obligation to prioritize vaccination programs. Because the vaccine is seen as one of the steps to ward off the Covid 19 virus and form immunity to the community. In relation to the technical implementation of the vaccine, Minister of Health Regulation No. 84 of 2020 has been issued regarding the Implementation of Vaccination in the Context of Combating the Covid-19 Pandemic and Minister of Health Decree No. HK.01.02./MENKES/12758/2021 concerning Determination of Vaccine Types for the Implementation of Covid-19 Vaccination. However, with the large amount of information received by the public regarding the safety/halal of vaccines, the risks that interfere with health to safety and technical implementation have resulted in pros and cons among the public.

Likewise, the implementation of the Health protocol is part of a government program as stated in the Decree of the Minister of Health Number HK.01.07/MENKES/382/2020.

To succeed the vaccine program, which initially received many rejections, the government issued Presidential Regulation No. 14 of 2021 concerning changes to Presidential Regulation No. 99 of 2020 which contained administrative sanctions and even threats of criminal penalties for people who refused to be vaccinated because they were considered to hinder the prevention of the spread of COVID (Jeannifer, 2021; Simon et al, 2021). To be able to make this policy successful in its implementation, it is necessary to have good communication from the government to the community. The government has an obligation to communicate the purpose of the vaccine and the benefits that can be received when the community has been vaccinated.

Manado City has a population of 453-182 spread over 11 sub-districts with 87 villages (<https://sulut.bps.go.id/>). The process of implementing the Covid 19 vaccination in Manado City has reached 22.44% for dose 3 vaccination, while for dose 1 it has reached 126.27% of the target and dose 2 is 92.19%. With a total of 865.42 thousand doses of vaccinated participants from the target of 359.25 thousand vaccine participants (<https://databoks.katadata.co.id/>). This data shows that there is success in the implementation of vaccination when compared to when the vaccination program was carried out by the government. This achievement cannot be separated from the government's role in conveying messages to the public regarding the function of the vaccine.

Government officials who are entrusted with conveying information in relation to vaccination activities and the application of health protocols to prevent Covid 19 at the village level are all village officials, Head of Environment, Community Leaders, Religious Leaders,. Government officials are able to convey messages regarding vaccination activities and the implementation of the Covid 19 prevention health protocol to the community according to their capacity. The daily attitude or behavior of government officials in conveying information related to vaccination activities and the implementation of the Covid 19 prevention health protocol looks patient, sets a good example for the community and is calm and able to interact with the community as a government duty.

The obstacles faced at the beginning of the implementation of vaccination activities and the implementation of the Covid 19 prevention health protocol were the lack of people who care about health, the lack of public trust in the government. This happened because of the lack of socialization from the Health Office. Likewise, there are limited supporting facilities for prevention such as masks and medical personnel. Efforts have been made by the government in relation to overcoming government obstacles in delivering information on vaccination activities and implementing health protocols for the prevention of Covid 19, such as socializing the dangers of Covid-19, implementing Community Mobility Restrictions, delivering through loudspeakers, billboards, and stickers. restrictions on buying and selling activities at night, restrictions on crowd activities such as birthdays, thanksgiving and condolences, restrictions on religious activities (worship) and environmental patrols in crowded places.

The content of the message conveyed is also related to the location of vaccination activities, types of vaccinations served, procedures and timing of vaccination services as well as procedures for implementing health protocols. Message delivery is carried out at every opportunity and must be obeyed. The letter issued by the government was repeatedly read by the head of the neighborhood. In addition to sending messages through loudspeakers, there are also other delivery methods such as through social media, billboards and stickers. Billboards or banners that are made are installed in public places and can be read by the public.



Through the communication process carried out, information about vaccination activities and the implementation of the Covid 19 prevention health protocol is conveyed to all members of the community. The impact that occurs from the communication process is that the public understands very well about vaccination activities and the implementation of the Covid 19 prevention health protocol that has been conveyed by the government.

The delivery of messages carried out by the Manado City Government occurs in two ways. The first method is carried out directly through a hierarchical process of bureaucratic structure from the leadership of the city government to all work units to jointly socialize the implementation of the Covid 19 vaccination. The second method is carried out in the form of collaborating with social organizations and religious organizations in Manado City to forward messages related to by vaccinating the community against Covid 19. The two methods used by the Manado City government show that there is a scroll of communicators. Communicators who, when viewed from the duties and functions of the regional work units, namely the task force (Satgas) and the Health Office were changed by the leadership into all work units. The role played by all work units is to disseminate information related to vaccination (functions/benefits, halal status for all beliefs, requirements, implementation locations and impacts related to program implementation). This message is disseminated to the community through billboards, letters and verbally in the form of announcements in each kelurahan by the neighborhood head.

Through the delivery of this message, the people of Manado City get information quickly, clearly and precisely related to vaccination. Understanding this message is the basis for the community to be willing to be vaccinated and comply with health protocols. So that it can quickly experience an increase in the number of people who have been vaccinated and the Health protocol is implemented. The communication pattern carried out by the Manado City Government can be said to be effective. Because it makes Manado City the highest vaccination area in North Sulawesi Province.

Regarding the refusal because there is no clear information about the halal status and safety of vaccines for the community, the Manado City government has carried out the functioning of social organizations and religious organizations. The government makes social organizations and religious organizations as scroll communicators to provide understanding to the public regarding halal and safe vaccines. In this position, social organizations and religious organizations become an extension of the government's hand in the communication process. The selection of scroll communicators can create a correct understanding of the Covid 19 vaccine. So that problems related to the name and halal vaccines can be accepted by the public.

## **Conclusion**

The Manado City Government is considered successful in implementing vaccinations and health protocols related to the handling of Covid 19. This success is due to being able to implement appropriate communication. Communication is carried out by the Manado City Government by utilizing the bureaucratic structure of regional work units and the functioning of social and religious organizations. Government communication through the use of bureaucratic structures requires all work units to disseminate information related to the implementation of vaccinations and health protocols. Billboards, stickers, official letters, web sites, employee social media and the use of loudspeakers in each environment are used as media for delivering messages to the public. Government communications that function as social organizations and religious organizations as scroll communicators make the public know that the Covid 19 vaccine is halal and natural to use. The conclusion of this study found the concept that social organizations and religious organizations can function as scroll communicators but can also be media to forward messages from the government to the community. Therefore,

further research is needed related to the development of the scroll communicator concept as well as conducting scientific studies on the function of the bureaucratic structure in the communication process.

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