Glimpsing Indonesia's Social Media Discourse: What Goes on During the Covid-19 Infodemic

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ABSTRACT

The COVID-19 pandemic has led to an "infodemic", of false and true information circulating on social media platforms. This phenomenon has posed various challenges in implementing disaster management programs to mitigate the effects of the pandemic, both globally and specifically in Indonesia. This study seeks to investigate the public's perception of social media discourse during the COVID-19 infodemic in Indonesia. Both primary and secondary data were collected to gain a comprehensive understanding of the issue. The primary data was collected through a focused group discussion (FGD) method. Meanwhile, secondary data sources were gathered using a literature review of scholarly articles. Approximately 60 articles were selected from sources such as Google Scholar and PubMed, published between 2019 and 2022. The articles were selected based on their relevance of the topic discussion. The study used Critical Discourse Analysis by Fairclough and Wodak (1997) to analyze the data. Both of the data were then synthesized to glimpse how the infodemic has impacted various disaster management efforts across various parts of the country. The results revealed that the infodemic has worsened public perceptions of how the Indonesian government handles COVID-19 as well as disrupting various disaster management processes. The study finds that the infodemic's impact on the public's perception has resulted in misinformation hampering effective pandemic management efforts. By recognizing the severity of the infodemic and working to combat it, Indonesia can more effectively manage the COVID-19 pandemic and minimize its negative impact on the public.

1. Introduction

On March 31, 2020, Coronavirus Disease 2019, commonly called COVID-19, was declared a pandemic in Indonesia through Presidential Decree Number 11 of 2020 concerning the Establishment of a Public Health Emergency for Coronavirus Disease 2019 in Indonesia. With the COVID-19 pandemic ongoing for several years in the country, several efforts have been implemented to mitigate the disaster. These efforts include social mobility limitations, health protocols, restriction on large gatherings, and many more. While the creation of these protocols as well as other rules related to the mitigation efforts of the pandemic was based on best practices and ideal standards, the implementation has faced several obstacles in its implementation. This is evident from the fact that people do not properly understand the protocols and are inconsistent in following them (Hasma et al., 2021).

One way to mitigate the disaster is by disseminating proper information to the people. This can be achieved through various means, such as press releases, public ads on television, and social media. Social media is one of the options in which the Indonesian government has chosen to properly inform the people regarding the latest updates related to COVID-19. Although new information channels, such as social media, offer convenience, assessing the quality of their information, or distinguishing 'misinformation' from 'disinformation,' can be challenging (Palen et al., 2011). Previous research supports this finding, as COVID-19 information on digital platforms has been contaminated with a significant amount of misinformation (Ali et al., 2021). In Indonesia, many mitigation efforts such as health protocol obedience and the vaccination programs have faced difficulties in its implementation due to the situation that is defined as Infodemic. Infodemic is defined as the rapid dissemination of all

kinds of information about a problem, making it significantly difficult to find effective solutions (Admoko et al., 2021). In other words, a condition where excessive amount of information, both true and false, is often found. This makes it very difficult for people to find reliable news about the coronavirus and has increased the complexity for mitigation efforts. One of the key issues with social media discourse during the COVID-19 infodemic, is the spread of conspiracy theories and false information. Many people turned to social media for information about the pandemic but found themselves inundated with contradictory and confusing information. Some social media users spread conspiracy theories about the origin of the virus or the effectiveness of vaccines, while others shared false information about treatments or prevention methods.

As we understand it, during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Infodemic has become one of the main obstacles affecting the ongoing pandemic disaster management, leading to division and skepticism in communities across the globe. One example is how the Infodemic has created significant problems in the United States as well as many places in Europe (Cardenas, 2022). Infodemic is caused by misinformation and disinformation, which is frequently found in various forms of media, especially social media such as Twitter, Facebook, TikTok, and WhatsApp (Buchanan, 2020). Previous studies have also similarly focused on studying the response and keywords that is found on social media platforms to study Infodemics. For example, one research studied social media platforms such as YouTube, Reddit, Gab, and Twitter to understand how people use the platform to seek and spread information (Cinelli et al., 2020). In another study, a 2021 systematic review found that a great number of health-related misinformation related to smoking, drugs, and vaccines was found on Twitter (Suarez-Lledo & Alvarez-Galvez, 2021). What is more surprising is that one study found that even amongst medical professionals, such as in India, almost 50% of the respondents of the present study find it difficult to know which information is validated and correct (Datta et al., 2020). Therefore, social media platforms, which can be freely accessed and searched using keywords, enable massive and rapid data and information sharing, but come with several consequences.

Discourse in social media can be observed through keywords and public opinions, which are expressed through language. Faircough (2012) explains that Critical Discourse Analysis is a method of looking at how language expresses ideology and political related affairs through discourse. Common practices of CDA include examining keywords or sentences as a whole to understand a certain state of affairs. Therefore, this study aims to bridge the gap in understanding the dynamics of discourse and its effects on people's livelihoods during the infodemic period. This research focuses on social media platforms because they

provide insights into how the effects of the Infodemic in Indonesia can be understood through the opinions of netizens and the spread of information sources. As such, this study aims to answer the following question:

"How does the public perceive COVID-19 related information in social media in relation to how the government promotes its effort in handling COVID-19 pandemic within the context of Infodemics?"

This paper aims to understand the current public perceptions towards the Indonesian government in handling COVID-19 pandemic through analyzing the opinions of the Indonesian netizens through Critical Discourse Analysis by Fairclough and Wodak (1997). As such, keywords, discourse, speech, and topics that are discussed related to Misinformation and Infodemics, Social Media Usage, COVID-19, and the Indonesian government's efforts are examined. The study conducts a Focused Group Discussion with Indonesian participants (netizens) that are active in social media (further explained in the data collection sub-section). This is because there is a current need to further understand as well as acquiring lessons learned regarding the information and communication management done by the Indonesian government during slow-onset disaster scenarios that typically need long-term management, such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

2. Literature Review

This study also conducts a literature review to further understand the phenomenon that is happening both locally and globally. This study collected articles from various relevant sources such as Google Scholar, Pubmed, Taylor and Francis, Scopus, etc. This paper follows a literature review using the snowballing method, which means starting from a single paper article and then expanding the collection to include related articles for analysis. Each literature that was collected belongs to either of 3 themes (as deemed relevant to the study topic), namely Social Media, Information Technology and Communications as well as related Misinformation and Infodemics, and Critical Discourse Analysis.

2.1. Social Media

Social media, as one of the digital media that is often used by Indonesian people, is a primary focus of this research. Social media is defined as a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0 and which enable the creation and exchange of user-generated content on the platform (Kaplan, 2015). Social media was chosen because it is one of the main channels through which disaster management authorities (e.g. the COVID-19 Task Force) use to communicates to the public regarding developments in the COVID-19 pandemic disaster management

(outside of conventional media such as television and newspapers). This is also because there is a high level of social media usage during the COVID-19 pandemic. On one hand, social media has become an important communication tool for governments, organizations, and universities to disseminate important information to the public (Tsao et al., 2021). However, other studies have found contradictory results, indicating different conclusions in several research papers. For example, in the context of COVID-19, increased use of social media has been seen along with an increasing amount of misinformation, which has a negative impact on public health (Ngai et al., 2022). Although useful as a tool in disaster management, several studies have also argued that social media has been found to be a problematic source of information because it often provides a highly selective and even biased view of public opinion (Humprecht et al., 2020).

Social media is very useful in managing crises, because in addition to how the public can be informed quickly and directly, disaster management organizations can also engage in dialogue with the public through social media platforms (Utz et al., 2013). In certain contexts, even social media can be a tool for educating the public as long as the information is conveyed in an interesting and easy-to-understand manner (Rochmanti et al., 2021). However, a current parallel finding also exists, where a 2021 systematic review found that large amounts of health-related misinformation such as smoking, drugs, and vaccines are frequently found on Twitter (Suarez-Lledo & Alvarez-Galvez, 2021). This creates difficulties for both the community and the government to select and filter correct information. As such, with the rise of social media, it has brought a whole new dilemma on its usage as both a tool and potential threat.

2.2. Information Technology, Communications, Misinformation, and Infodemics

Confusion of information regarding the non-transparent handling of residents who are infected or suspected of being infected causes paranoia at the public level. Suspicion and fear of residents suspected of having contracted this virus has resulted in residents rejecting funerals in several regions in Indonesia (Fakhruroji et al., 2020). This has created new challenges for public communication, especially those who are working in the health sector. Health communication as an academic discipline has been faced with challenges of stemming the flow of misinformation and correcting misinformed individual beliefs (Krishna & Thompson, 2021). Therefore, an effective crisis and risk communication strategy is essential to promote preventive action, especially during emergencies such as the global pandemic COVID-19 (Hauer & Sood, 2020). The public health news and communications environment responding to the COVID-19 crisis is often characterized by conflicting or rapidly changing information as health

workers and governments struggle to understand this new outbreak and identify how best to control its spread (Lupton & Lewis, 2021). Hence, misinformation is an important topic that needs immediate attention.

Infodemics was originally coined by Eysenbach (2002), which he described as "Information epidemiology, or infodemiology, identifies areas where there is a knowledge translation gap between best evidence (what some experts know) and practice (what most people do or believe), as well as markers for 'high-quality' information (Eysenbach, 2002). The term Infodemics is re-popularized when it was stated during the Munich Security Conference in 2020 by WHO Director General, Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus. Hence, the term 'Infodemic' was used to describe situations where there are many misinformation circulating in the public. This information has not only misled the public to the point where it caused low levels of trust, but has also changed people's behavior to a more unfavorable direction. Social media, while being one of the main channels through which disaster management authorities (e.g. the COVID-19 Task Force) uses to communicates to the public regarding developments in the COVID-19 pandemic, has also helped in spread misinformation rapidly.

2.3. Critical Discourse Analysis

Critical Discourse Analysis, or often also called as CDA is a specific field within discourse analysis, which as defined by Fairclough and Wodak (1997) as a category which designates the broadly semiotic elements (as opposed to and in relation to other, nonsemiotic, elements) of social life (language, but also visual semiosis, body language, etc. It can also be a category for designating particular ways of representing particular aspects of social life (e.g. it is common to distinguish different political discourses, which represent for example problems of inequality, disadvantage, poverty, social exclusion) in different ways. Critical Discourse Analysis, then, is a branch of Discourse analysis that is focused about making connections between social and cultural structures and processes on the one hand, and properties of text on the other (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997). CDA explores the connections between the use of language and the social and political context in which it occurs (Paltridge, 2012). Critical Discourse Analysis is often used to examine and understand various political contexts. For example, Strange (2022) conducted a study where CDA was used to analyze the publicity campaign done by the British government during the lockdown period due to the COVID-19 Pandemic (Strange, 2022). CDA can also be used to analyze information and media coverage relating to disasters, as demonstrated in a study from 2022 where the authors analyzed numerous media sources related to indigenous people and disasters (Mosurska et al., 2022). Further, Fairclough

(2023) also states that the objective of Critical Discourse Analysis, in more practical terms, is to describe linguistic processes in social terms, revealing the 'ideological' and 'political investments' of a discourse. This is also in line with other theoretical approaches that aim to define CDA. For example, Salma (2019) argues that CDA concerns itself with representations of societal issues, hidden agendas, texts that impact people's lives. CDA claims to take an ethical stance in addressing power imbalances, inequities, and social justice, leading to resistant and corrective social action. Further, in qualitative researches, CDA is often used to analyze speeches as it can be used to represent beliefs, positions, and ideas about who speaks (Armayanti, 2019).

From previous research, it can be concluded that social media has a widespread use by Indonesian people and its role as a communication tool for disaster management authorities. Social media has been found to be both useful and problematic in disaster management. It can disseminate important information quickly and directly, engage in dialogue with the public, and educate the public, but it can also provide a highly selective and even biased view of public opinion and contribute to the spread of health-related misinformation. The confusion of information and non-transparent handling of infected or suspected individuals has created challenges for public communication, particularly for health workers. Health communication faces challenges in correcting misinformed individual beliefs and stemming the flow of misinformation. Therefore, an effective crisis and risk communication strategy is essential to promote preventive action, especially during emergencies like the COVID-19 pandemic. Previous research has found that the term "infodemics" was coined to describe situations where misinformation circulates rapidly and causes low levels of trust and unfavorable behavior changes among the public. Social media has contributed significantly to the spread of infodemics during the COVID-19 pandemic. Hence, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is a useful tool for examining public perceptions and interpreting a certain status quo through community responses. CDA explores the connections between language use and the social and political contexts in which it occurs. CDA can also be used to analyze media coverage related to disasters, including disasters that relates to the livelihood of indigenous people. Its objective is to analyze language use and its social implications in a practical sense.

3. Method

This research uses qualitative approach and methods. This is because the ultimate goal of this research is to glimpse how does the public perceive COVID-19 related information in social media in relation to how the government promotes its effort in handling COVID-19 pandemic within the context of

Infodemics. According to Miles et al. (2014), qualitative data is a source of rich and reasoned descriptions and explanations of human processes. With qualitative data, researchers can maintain a chronological flow, understand cause-and-effect relationships, and gain useful explanations. Good qualitative data is also more likely to lead to unexpected findings and new integrations; it helps researchers go beyond initial conceptions and generate or revise conceptual frameworks (Miles et al., 2014). Thus, the qualitative approach was used to understand the public's perceptions and responses to the government's public communication strategies and policies, which cannot be measured quantitatively. This approach also aims to understand the judgement of the public as well as preferences for the more desirable forms of public communication in general. Thus, the qualitative approach aims to understand and evaluate the communication gap between the government and the public regarding COVID-19 information dissemination (as described in the research focus).

This article uses a Qualitative Approach to collect and analyze data. Focus Group Discussion (FGD) with Purposive Sampling as a data collection method which ultimately results in 7 people participating in the discussion. In this case specifically, the participants chosen from the population of Indonesia, As the discussion welcomes anyone who were willing to participate based on a first come first serve basis.

Once the data from different sources have been collected, they are triangulated. Triangulation refers to the use of various methods or data sources in qualitative research to develop a comprehensive understanding of a particular phenomenon (Carter et al., 2014). There are four qualitative triangulations, namely method triangulation (researchers use several data collection methods), theory triangulation (comparing with relevant theoretical perspectives to avoid individual researcher bias in the findings or conclusions produced), data source triangulation (exploring the truth of certain information using various data sources) and investigator triangulation (where more than one researcher collects data) (Moon, 2019). In the context of this study, investigator triangulation could not be conducted because the study involved only one researcher.

Referring to this definition, the triangulation carried out is as follows. Triangulation of methods in this study used three data collection methods from three sources. Namely Focus group discussions/FGDs Discussion (Participants), Non-systematic observations (of reactions in social media), and literature review from online sources (e.g. Google Scholar, PubMed, Taylor and Francis, etc). There is only one analysis method, namely Critical Discourse Analysis by Fairclough and Wodak, 1997, then, further strengthened by other CDA studies that are also in line with it. Triangulation of theories in this study compares the data that has been

collected with previous studies related to public communication, the COVID-19 infodemic, and social media. Triangulation of data sources in this study comes from informants, namely informants who represent citizens who are the mainly involved parties of the infodemic.

To further understand the public perception, this study also conducts a non-systematic literature review, analyzing around 60 articles collected from various sources and deemed relevant to the study. These sources include online databases such as Google Scholar, PubMed, Taylor and Francis, to further strengthen the analysis in this article. The literature review involves examining secondary data from pertinent scientific articles and reports to contrast the viewpoints of the participants with the outcomes of prior studies.. The FGD participants are active social media users in their productive age, who actively searched for information regarding COVID-19 in multiple platforms (at least 2 social media platforms) where Indonesian officials for COVID-19 handling are available (e.g., Instagram, Twitter, Tiktok, etc.). The FGD was open to anyone and was conducted with 7 voluntary participants that is spread across Indonesia. The age of participants ranges from 15 - 64 (productive age) and are categorized based on the context they represent. These include their occupation and the socio-political context they represent. The participants are spread as follows:

Table 3.1. FGD Participants

No	Name	Information
1	MH	Post-Graduate Indonesian Student Abroad (Diaspora), Graduated from a University in Bali (Eastern and Middle Indonesia Region)
2	NP	Elementary School Teacher in Maluku (Eastern Indonesia Region)
3	SA	Youth Researcher, Engineer, and Influencer who is Active in Social Media (Western Indonesia Region)
4	FA	Academician (Lecturer and Social-Humanities Researcher at a Higher Education Institute in East Java) (Western Indonesia Region)
5	NA	Post-Graduate Student in a Higher Education Institute in East Java (Western Indonesia Region)
6	SM	Radio Host / Public Communications Practitioner (Western Indonesia Region)
7	AN	Accounting Staff at a Company (Western Indonesia Region)

The discussion that took place in the FGD was recorded. Collecting data during the last quarter of 2022 has enabled us to understand the current status of the Infodemic in Indonesia and make empirical contributions to the field of study. The data will also be able to provide an update on where Indonesia's Infodemic threat currently stand, represented by how its people communicates and shares information through social media during the COVID-19 Pandemic. Further, we have also done a non-systemic examination of reactions in social media to how other people react to disseminated information found in social media. In addition, we have also collected literature amounting to around 60 articles that is collected from various data sources such as Google Scholar, PubMed, Taylor and Francis that is selected based on relevance to the CDA that is done.

3.2 Data Analysis

The method to analyze the data in this article is a linguistic method called Critical Discourse Analysis or CDA, specifically based on Fairclough and Wodak's (1997) theory. Critical Discourse Analysis does not have a unitary theoretical framework (McGregor, 2003). However, Critical Discourse Analysis enables mapping and a deeper understanding of the conversations taking place, as well as allowing conclusions to be drawn regarding the responses given. In this research, the study examines 4 areas of concern of CDA as mentioned by Fairclough and Wodak (1997). The four areas, are (1) Socio-political context; (2) Power relations, (3) Reflection of social relations, and (4) Ideology. The CDA method involves comparing the efforts of public communication in social media (i.e., posts uploaded by the COVID-19 Task Force, responses to inquiries, etc.) with the opinions of the informants and reactions on social media. After analyzing various data and the general discourse of COVID-19 information comprehension and proliferation, the authors then formulate recommendations and steps necessary to mitigate the Infodemic threat in the country.

After analyzing the data following Fairclough and Wodak's (1997) framework, the next step is to present the findings. Previous studies that have used CDA for research analysis explained that the analyst's first goal is to explain the relationship between certain texts, communications, and social practices; the second goal is to interpret the structure of discourse systems; and the third goal is to use explanation and definition to explain why and how social practices are formed, vary, and how they are transformed (Rogers et al., 2016). The study will present the data gathered in three steps:

a) First, the study will explain the relationship between certain texts, social practices, and communications, adding a preamble of the overall summary in the beginning of the Results section.

b) Second, interpreting the discourse. This is done by thoroughly explaining the findings and summary of the FGD, as explained in the Results Sub-Sections.

c) Third, explaining how social practices are formed. This step involves further elaboration in the discussion section of the paper.

4. Result

The social practices that happened was a free-form discussion, with discourse markers and keywords that are further interpreted in the discussions section. The results of data collection and analysis have elaborated several known assumptions that, at the same time, the findings answer the research question. The result finds that the public communication that has been carried out by the government, specifically, by the COVID-19 Task Force is in line with the Indonesian government's vision or objectives in accelerating the handling of the COVID-19 pandemic disaster.

However, there are still some shortcomings in the public communication that has been carried out, so that it needs to be improved in order to achieve optimal results. Data collection proves that there is a relationship between the COVID-19 Task Force's public communication strategy and the state of the Infodemic in Indonesia. Based on the statements given by the participants, as well as various reactions on social media, this research found that the task force's public communication is still not optimal. This is because the implementation of policies and communication strategies, although it has been able to reduce the level of spread of misinformation, prevention can be optimized (both in terms of effectiveness and efficiency). The implementation of public communication protocols, as well as derivative documents developed from these public communication protocols, is still mostly top-down and does not sufficiently involve the role of the community. As a result, according to the data, there are various assumptions, misalignments, or gaps between the information conveyed by the government and the public's understanding of the information provided by the COVID-19 Task Force. This situation has found to be contributing to the public confusion of COVID-19 handling and can even worsen the Infodemic situation in Indonesia.

Critical discourse analysis has shown changes in the form of social relations that exist in society. Fairclough and Wodak (1997) argue that discourse is not only part of social relations, but can also produce social relations that can be built and maintained. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, interactions between people often depended on face-to-face interactions conducted offline. When the pandemic occurred, mobility limitations made people interact through other mediums, such as social media, which became one of the variables that influenced the shape of the infodemic situation. On the one hand, social media platforms make unverified information easily spread, thus changing people's behavior. However, on the other hand, social media platforms provide a platform for the public to convey their aspirations to the COVID-19 Task Force through several features such as Comment or Direct Message. This allows negative and positive responses from the public to be seen by everyone, thus not only affecting the social relationship between the community and the government, but also the relationship between communities. The limited mobility of the community has led to an increase in the frequency of using social media to communicate en masse, causing misinformation to spread easily. Social media, which was originally a platform used to communicate between users, has become a significant source of information. Exacerbated by the fact that 73% of Indonesians seek information on social media (Pranata et al., 2022), the Infodemic has increased the number of hoaxes found by the public. This situation is a challenge for both the COVID-19 Task Force and the community.

4.1 Socio-Political Context

The socio-political context in this research is the state of Indonesia which was hit by the COVID-19 pandemic disaster. A lot of the people's understanding of the situation that occurred in the field (the pandemic) mostly came from digital media. Many social media platforms, which are enabled by advances in technology, had become a significant source of information during the pandemic due to the limitations in social mobility. Technology has also made information too easy to disseminate. This is because technological platforms such as social media has enabled the massive and rapid sharing of information without going through a filter. On digital platforms such as social media, information has a pattern of spreading first, then filtering later (Publish-then-filter pattern) (Jones-Jang et al., 2020). Circulation of information that goes on too fast, often times cannot be selected and verified beforehand, resulting in the rise of misinformation spread.

The results showed that at the beginning of the pandemic (2020), in general, the level of public trust in the government was quite low (Mufti et al., 2020). This is further evidenced by the finding of Critical Discourse analysis, which also shows that various assumptions and opposition to the government in the context of handling the COVID-19 pandemic in Indonesia are caused by a low level of trust. This low level of trust is caused by two main factors, namely information from the government that is different from reality, as well as the different implementation of COVID-19 handling between the central and local governments and between regions. As explained by the informants:

"Well what's more, the information that is shared is like a sign of symptoms, like coughing, a lot of things, and then after that… the (information regarding) transmission

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(of the disease) is also lacking, such as what is the name of the transmission is also confusing. The problem is that while the information from the government is like this, but what we have encountered is that even people who have received the third booster vaccine still have Covid. Those who are already vaccinated have to be vaccinated again… but those who are vaccinated have Covid. That's what I thought about why is it different ..." -(N.A., 2022).

Misinformation is often found because information circulating on social media channels such as Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, Tiktok, and other social media is often not filtered first. Misinformation on social media is dangerous for the Indonesian society, especially considering that in general, 73% of Indonesians seek information through social media (Pranata et al., 2022). In a situation where there is a lack of information regarding a certain event, especially disaster related events, can cause assumptions, satirical comments, and various other negative reactions. As a result, any information related to COVID-19, often times misinformation, spreads easily and created an Infodemic situation. The Infodemic situation has disrupted public understanding of the COVID-19 pandemic disaster and efforts to deal with it. Currently, various misinformation and various negative public reactions to this misinformation can still be found in various social media content. This spread of misinformation, which is further worsened by the different reality as explained by the informant, has possibly led to a stronger distrust in the government's handling of the disaster.

Misinformation related to COVID-19 found on various social media channels in Indonesia is a threat to the process of handling a pandemic disaster. This is because in an Infodemic situation, there are various changes in behavior, lack of cooperation, or even conflict in various disaster management efforts. For example, misinformation has disrupted the COVID-19 vaccination process, which is one of the efforts of governments in various countries to manage this pandemic disaster (Helfers & Ebersbach, 2022; Khubchandani et al., 2021; Liao, 2022; Pierri et al., 2022; Ripp & Röer, 2022) In response to this situation, various governments in the world, including the Indonesian Government, have made various efforts such as forming special teams to manage this situation. However, there are several areas in which the task force is still lacking. As mentioned by the participants:

"...what is lacking is assertiveness in the task force in some areas. So, the task force does not only involve the central task force but also requires the active involvement of all village officials and also district or provincial level officials. So, if only the central task force is good but the province or the district or the village is bad, the effect on the community is also bad. So here I will compare two districts because I happen to be on the border. My house is between Tulungagung Regency and Trenggalek Regency. Here it is very clear how different the two task forces are in these two districts. Now in Trenggalek Regency, the task force that plays a role is very fast and

very firm in its treatment. So, if there are people who don't wear masks, they will definitely be fined and then at the border between the districts there is a place where cars will be turned there and then they will be detected for body temperature and will also be sterilized, only if their body temperature is normal can they enter the Trenggalek Regency area. So that's how tight the security is for Trenggalek Regency. Now here I will compare it with my own district, namely Tulungagung Regency. Where in my district I think the Covid task force is less assertive." -(F., 2022).

"So, it is explained by them but the application (by the task force) tends to decrease. So, the enthusiasm was only at the beginning, but then more and more it is decreasing. I don't know why, perhaps there is a lack of communication between the central government and the local government or maybe the food stock in the local government itself is decreasing, there must be many factors that influence it." -(N.P., 2022).

Although the Indonesian COVID-19 Handling Task Force (*Satuan Tugas Penanganan COVID-19* or Satgas COVID-19) has made various public communication efforts to inform the public regarding correct information, in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic disaster, there has been a lot of dissemination of information that is not verified, not entirely correct, or even completely incorrect information. This is in line with various previous studies which argued that one of the most effective ways to reduce misinformation is to have effective communication. This shows that the Infodemic is still a major problem faced by Indonesia.

4.2 Power Relations

The second factor takes a look at the power relations within the discourse. Critical discourse analysis at the stage of interpreting power relations between speakers focuses on the cognitive processes of participants while also considers relationships between transitory social events at the stage of explanation (Li, 2019). As stated by previous studies, in the context of a country's government, misinformation becomes one of the important variables in making strategies and policies. The state of power relations between the government and the community shows that there is still a top-down approach to the implementation of public communication policies. It is known that the central government has given freedom of creativity for each local government to implement the general guidelines and policies that it has created (e.g. public communication using local wisdom). However, giving freedom to each implementer in the region causes multi-interpretation, or the meaning of different forms of implementation depending on the region. This causes differences between the expected ideal concept and the reality in the field. As explained by the informant:

"So, it is (Verified Information) explained here (in social media posts) but the application (of the communication quality) tends to decrease. So, the enthusiasm was only at

the beginning, but here and there it is decreasing. I don't know why, perhaps is there a lack of communication between the central government and local governments…there must be many factors that influence this." -(NP, 2022).

In the context of COVID-19, increased use of social media has been seen along with an increasing amount of misinformation, which has a negative impact on public health (Ngai et al., 2022). The ability to differentiate between correct information and incorrect (or misinformation) is no easy task, especially when information is very rapidly changing, spreading, and evolving over time. Therefore, the government plays a critical role as the verifying party of such information. This is where the power relations play into part, as any instruction given by the government should, in theory, be complied to by the people. Hence, enabling the smooth implementation of various programs due to the government's authoritative powers. However, that is not the case in reality, as several processes in disaster management programs, such as vaccination process, implementation of health protocols in Indonesia, as well as education on the Coronavirus disease itself has been significantly affected by the Infodemic.

> "The problem is that while the information from the government is like this, but what we have encountered is that even people who have received the third booster vaccine still have Covid. Already those who are vaccinated have to be vaccinated but those who are vaccinated have Covid. That's what I thought about why it's different ..." -(N.A., 2022).

> "Now of the many information that I got during the pandemic, that this (pointing at a picture of a medicine) is most often a powerful drug to cure Covid. Well that's often there. So, what is the effect? Many people buy the drug, even though it is not necessarily important to cure Covid or other things and has not been confirmed. Finally, the medicine ran out at the pharmacy, now people who really need the medicine don't even get it. That's the bad effect I've felt from misinformation during the pandemic. " -(F, 2022).

The limited mobility of society has led to an increase in the frequency of using social media to communicate and disseminate information en masse, causing misinformation to spread easily. Social media, which was originally a platform used to communicate between users, has become a significant source of information. The Ministry of Communication and Information has found thousands of hoaxes about COVID-19 circulating on social media. This is further worsened with 73% of Indonesians searching for information on social media (Pranata et al., 2022), the Infodemic situation is getting worse. The Infodemic has increased the number of hoaxes discovered by the public.

The disruption of the disaster management process due to the Infodemic situation has created an urgency to manage misinformation in the community to prevent unwanted things from happening. This misinformation management faces various challenges. One of the challenges of the current Infodemic situation is information distribution, where the information communicated by the government has not been evenly distributed. The COVID-19 Task Force (also known as Satgas COVID-19) is a task force formed by the government with the aim of accelerating the handling of the COVID-19 pandemic disaster. A Systematic Literature Review conducted by WHO in 2022 found that mass media can spread unqualified (or misleading) health information during public health emergencies such as pandemics, especially through social media (Do Nascimento et al., 2022). The more frequently people access social media, the more frequently they encounter misinformation. The frequency with which people encounter misinformation can result in a tendency to believe the circulating misinformation.

This is a danger that must be addressed, given that not only does the spread of misinformation violates the law (Law No. 11/2008 on ITE), but it also creates anxiety in the community. In response, the Government of Indonesia, both central and regional, has been actively working to tackle misinformation. This is done by issuing various regulations and working with various organizations to socialize and educate the public regarding online content. In addition, the government has also established a special institution tasked with monitoring the circulation of news on the internet and testing its veracity. This is reflected in Presidential Regulation (Perpres) Number 133 of 2017 concerning Amendments to Perpres Number 53 of 2017 concerning the State Cyber and Crypto Agency (BSSN), which is a government agency under the coordinating minister for Political, Legal and Security Affairs. However, BSSN is now directly under the President (Arwendria & Oktavia, 2019).

4.3 Social Relationships

The third factor examines the reflection and production of social relations through the use of discourse. Fairclough and Wodak (1997) argued that discourse is not only a part of social relations, but it can also produce relations that can be established and maintained. Before the pandemic, interactions between people often depended on face-to-face interactions carried out offline. When the pandemic occurred, mobility limitations make people interact through other mediums, such as social media, which is one of the variables that affect the shape of the Infodemic situation. On one hand, these social media platforms enabled unverified information to easily spread, thus changing people's behavior. However, on the other, social media platforms offer features like 'Comment' or 'Direct Message' for public engagement with the COVID-19 Task Force. This visibility of both negative and positive feedback impacts not only government-public relations but also interpersonal dynamics

Figure 4.1. Example of Citizens who convey negative responses through social media, Several Expressions that are found: COVID-19 Handling is a Business, People believing conspiracy theories, and General Disbelief on Government Competency.

(Source: KPCPEN Social Media, 2022)

Social media is used at all phases of disaster management, early warning, communication and organization during disasters and in their aftermath (Hossmann et al., 2011). For example, Twitter can be used to reach and do a situation assessment of the major population centers due to high levels of coverage (Carley et al., 2015). By 2014, Indonesia was ranked as the fifth most tweeting country, Twitter reports approximately 29 million Indonesian users, and Jakarta was responsible for 2.4% of the 10.6 billion Twitter posts made between January and March of 2014 (Carley et al., 2019). One study analyzed the public perception of COVID-19 Vaccination in Indonesia by using the keyword 'COVID-19' that was filtered by the phrase 'vaccine' in Indonesian tweets in the second and third weeks of January 2021, using Twitter's Nave Bayes sentiment classification algorithm. During that time span, the analysis revealed 39 percent positive sentiment, 56 percent negative sentiment, and 1% favorable opinion. Because the public did not believe the vaccination was safe at the time, negative opinions were formed (Hafidzi et al., 2021). This is also evidenced by the opinion of the FGD participants which stated:

> "…in reality there are still very many hoaxes circulating in the community and many people believe the hoax more than info that is more credible or more real or more accountable." –(F, 2022)

> "Regarding the inequality of information, in NTT itself, before entering one village to another, there are guard posts. Now these guard posts have different requirements, for example, when we want to go to village A, we have to bring this letter, then when we go from village A to village B, the requirements are different again. Things like this that make it difficult for people to go to certain villages even if they want to bring aid or logistics. So, they were forced to go back there, so it was like ineffective. The provisions made also return to the autonomy of the village itself and also the lack of information or the way of delivery from the center that does not reach the regions makes the hoaxes that develop also difficult to overcome or difficult to prove their validity." –(MH, 2022).

Social relationships from the analysis have been concluded to change dramatically due to the pandemic. As there are many social mobility restrictions that have been implemented, social relationships have mainly focused from direct face-to-face meetings to meetings in digital media. As such, there are several utterances and keywords indicating that the individuals in the FGD have become more individual as the pandemic went on. This has significantly worsened the Infodemic threat as more people usually indicate a higher chance of each other questioning their understanding of the disaster that happened. Hence, resulting in lower chances of misinformation spread. Instead, the results have shown vice versa.

Hence, it can be concluded that the Infodemic has not only changed social relations for the worse, but has also disturbed public policy implementations in the process. In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, this disaster has become increasingly large in effect, leading to negative human behavior, which is further exacerbated by various typical behaviors of netizens in cyberspace.

4.4 Ideology

The fourth factor examines the ideology that is produced in the use of discourse. Paltridge (2012), argued that this ideology production examines the ways of representing, constructing society such as relations of power, gender, class, and ethnicity. Ideology in this research can be said to be quite broad because it does not only look from one perspective. By inviting various participants from various regions in Indonesia, this allows the ideologies present in the FGD discussions to be quite diverse and represented. The background of these informants allows the ideology expressed by the informants to be more representative of the feelings of the Indonesian people.

> "…for Eastern Indonesia in particular, the coverage of the internet is difficult. So even though in the sense that the central government has tried its best so that messages or information conveyed through social media, even though it is very good and very acceptable to the public and understood and remembered, but because of the limited access of our brothers and sisters, especially from Eastern Indonesia or other parts of Indonesia, my suggestion is that it will be more effective (to share) the form of information through newspapers, printed media, or like pamphlets or small posters that are made as attractive as possible if the internet signal does not reach. (These posters should be printed in) Not just black and white but in color and still maintaining the message conveyed. For example, not as long as a newspaper but in the (short) form (such as) jargon which is then easily remembered by the public like that. Yes, that's all the advice from me like that anyway because if I myself feel like that by living in NTT.." -(M., 2022).

> "So here I will compare two districts because I happen to be on the border. My house is between Tulungagung Regency and Trenggalek Regency. Here it is very clear how different the two task forces are in these two districts. Now in Trenggalek Regency, the task force that plays a role is very fast and very firm in its treatment. So, if there are people who don't wear masks, they will definitely be fined and then at the border between the districts there is a place where cars will be turned there and then they will be detected for body temperature and will also be sterilized, only if their body temperature is normal can they enter the Trenggalek Regency area. So that's how tight the security is for Trenggalek Regency. Now here I will compare it with my own district, namely Tulungagung Regency. Where in my district I think the Covid task force is less assertive." -(F., 2022).

The ideology section of this study found that with social media's ability to share information massively and easily, the perception of the public in each region, especially those with lacking infrastructure or having significantly higher difficulty in access to information, has shaped incorrect perception of the current pandemic condition. Data also shows that the increase

in social activity by Indonesian Netizens across regions can significantly affect how citizens see the effectivity as well as motivations of the government in implementing various policies, including determining cooperation between the government and the community. While this is largely due to the Infodemic condition, the government's shortcomings, while not intended, have also shaped public perceptions across various regions.

The informants considered that the information conveyed on social media still tends to be too long or detailed. This then becomes a problem, given that the culture of reading has not yet become a habit in Indonesia. Alternatively, the informants said that they prefer short and interesting forms of content. This is in line with previous research which states that in certain contexts, social media can even be a tool to educate the public as long as the information is presented in an interesting and easy-to-understand manner (Rochmanti et al., 2021). As explained in the public communication protocol document, the protocol is a technical guideline for Indonesia that will assist the Central Government and Local Governments in responding to and conveying information about COVID-19 to the public. The Ministry of Communication and Informatics also emphasized the importance of implementing the protocol. Thus, the public communication protocol allows the COVID-19 Task Force to be more efficient in conducting public communication. Some participants agreed that the public communication protocol already fulfills the efficiency aspect. However, some other participants disagreed with this statement, and explained that the protocol was not yet efficient.

5. Discussion

The problem of Infodemics is a problem that has been brought as a consequence from the rise of social media usage. As such, social media, as a platform which spreads information, spreads information through both audio and visual forms, especially through the usage of language. Language, as a tool for communication, is critical to be analyzed, and understood as many combinations of multiple variables and composition methods may result in differing communication methods that is intended to make someone feel a certain way, or understand a certain intention. With media social being a fast-paced platform that spreads information that mostly goes without being filtered, communication and the discourse that goes on in the media is critical to be analyzed.

Communication can be defined as the process by which information is transmitted through and between individuals and/or organizations resulting in an understandable response (Bodla & Pal, 2018). Referring to this definition, communicating science and risk to the public is essential to accelerate addressing the gap between findings in research and public understanding. Past research by public communication and risk communication experts has emphasized the importance of providing timely information in the context of risk to aid decision-making. Public communication becomes important when there is considerable uncertainty about the most effective course of action in a given situation (Kim et al., 2020).

Although, the COVID-19 Task Force has made various efforts to carry out public communication, especially through social media, these efforts and strategies cannot be said to be optimal. This is because there are still several findings in public communication efforts that can be improved, namely the lack of synergy between fields; the need for updates to existing public communication protocols; the lack of a defined role of educational Influencers or Content Creators; the need for a common message, hashtag, and multi-disaster context; the need to increase the number of followers; the need for verified account marks; the lack of socialization of digital products that can be used by the community; and the need for changes to the uploaded content and the way it is delivered.

Previous research found that synergy is very important, especially regarding the implementation of regulations (Visseren-Hamakers, 2015). The lack of synergy between fields is one of the obstacles in optimizing the public communication of the COVID-19 Task Force. This is evidenced by the creation of separate accounts between fields (i.e. each division of the task force, e.g. Public Communications Division and the Behavioral Change Division have separate social media accounts and not using a single, integrated account) and the lack of unification of hashtags or keywords and jargon or messages conveyed to the public. As explained by the interview informants in previous quotations.

Therefore, synergy is needed, both in the unification of social media accounts, as well as messages disseminated to the public. Over time, the COVID-19 Task Force has succeeded in equalizing messages and improving efficiency through better coordination between fields. However, the public still thinks that the public communication carried out by the Central COVID-19 Task Force is different and not yet harmonized, as explained by informants. However, informants understand that there are different contexts where it is necessary to adapt the messages disseminated. This synergy must be continuously monitored and maintained to prevent the spread of misinformation.

The limited mobility of society has led to an increase in the frequency of using social media to communicate en masse, causing misinformation to spread easily. Social media, which was originally a platform used to communicate between users, has become a significant source of information. As of April 17, 2022, the Ministry of Communication and Information Technology had found 5,829 hoaxes about

COVID-19 circulating on social media (Rizkinaswara, 2022). Exacerbated by the fact that 73% of Indonesians seek information on social media (Pranata et al., 2022), the Infodemic has increased the number of hoaxes found by the public. This situation is a challenge for both the COVID-19 Task Force and the community.

Although the COVID-19 Task Force has made various public communication efforts to inform the public about correct information, in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic disaster, there is a lot of information that cannot be verified, is not entirely true, or even not true at all. This event is referred to as Infodemics or Infodemic. Infodemics is defined as a situation where the amount of information available (especially misinformation) is too much, making it difficult for people to find appropriate sources and guidance when needed (Datta et al., 2020b). Infodemics in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic have occurred in various countries/regions in the world, such as the United States, Europe, and Southeast Asia (Cardenas, 2022; Khubchandani et al., 2021; Dang, 2021). In handling it, the Indonesian government is working with various institutions and governments of various other countries in the world to deal with this Infodemic situation.

Based on these findings, it can be concluded that the Infodemic is still ongoing in Indonesia and is a challenge for the community and disaster management institutions. The Infodemic situation is generated by the accessibility of social media that facilitates the dissemination of information. These platforms have then become one of the biggest sources for people to find information. As a result, people often receive misinformation. This situation causes a change in behavior and creates a situation that disrupts the disaster management process. Therefore, there is an urgency to manage misinformation circulating in the community. However, this information management effort faces several challenges. One of the challenges faced today is the distribution of information, namely information conveyed by the government to the community has not been evenly distributed, thus worsening the Infodemic situation.

The public communication protocol that can be downloaded by the public on the official website of the COVID-19 Task Force (https://covid19.go.id/) is still an old protocol created in 2020 and has not been updated. This protocol needs to be updated in accordance with the dynamics of the development of the COVID-19 pandemic disaster. The need to update the public communication protocol is also stated in the preamble of the protocol. The updates include, as explained by informants, strategies for using specific content, categories of hoaxes and how to counter them, and less detailed infographics. While there have been some updates to the strategy over time, they have never been integrated into the public communication protocol.

In conducting public communication on social media, there is generally a well-known figure (Familiar Face, i.e., Influencer) who becomes symbolic and facilitates the acceptance of the content being disseminated. This is due to research that found that content presented by influencers is preferred over regular advertisements (Nandagiri & Philip, 2018). In its implementation, the COVID-19 Task Force has collaborated with several Influencers to help spread messages and information. However, collaboration with these Influencers has not proven effective. This is evidenced by the responses of FGD participants as the public who did not seem to know or recognize the Influencers who collaborated with the COVID-19 Task Force. Therefore, because collaborations with Influencers are still necessary, as explained by the informants, therefore it would be necessary to choose high-profile influencers to collaborate and disseminate messages to the public.

The COVID-19 Task Force conducts public communication with the aim of conveying various accurate information related to COVID-19 to the public and reducing the spread of misinformation. This is in line with previous studies which argue that one of the most effective ways to reduce misinformation is through effective communication (Cook et al., 2017; Lovari, 2020; Moya-Salazar et al., 2021; Vraga & Bode, 2017). Although the COVID-19 Task Force has conducted various public communications, misinformation is still often found, especially on social media. This shows that the Infodemic is still a major problem facing Indonesia. With the determination of Monkeypox as a PHEIC, as well as the same before with COVID-19, there is a need to evaluate the public communication protocol that has been made by the COVID-19 Task Force, the strategy in implementing the protocol, and the efforts that have been made by the Task Force in conducting disaster communication to the public. It is hoped that this evaluation can be an input/consideration for future public communication in the context of handling pandemic disasters or infectious disease outbreaks.

The public communication protocol on the official website of the COVID-19 Task Force needs to be adjusted to the dynamics of the disaster situation, especially regarding messages or Hashtags. Research found that hashtags are very important for the successful dissemination of information on social media. The findings in this study also show that the effectiveness of using hashtags does not come from the number of hashtags used, but rather from the keywords/types of hashtags used (Saxton et al., 2015). In addition, public communication protocols also need to be updated to adapt to multi-disaster situations. This alignment is needed to make it easier for the public to remember the messages conveyed, and to facilitate the COVID-19 Task Force in communicating with the public in a multi-disaster context.

People are wary of following unverified accounts. The establishment of verified accounts (generally having a certain mark, e.g. blue tick) is intended so that users can easily distinguish between authentic accounts for the public interest and accounts belonging to parody accounts or fraudsters (Vaidya et al., 2019). This verification mark is proof that the social media account is an official account, so that the information disseminated can be accounted for. This verification mark has various forms and can be found on various social media platforms such as Instagram, Tiktok, Twitter, and others. The verification mark on a social media account can also reassure the followers of the account that the information they receive from the account can be accounted for. In addition to verification, the number of followers of a social media account is an important consideration for the public communication of the COVID-19 Task Force. A high number of followers implies that many people are interested in a particular account (De Veirman et al., 2017).

In its efforts, the COVID-19 Task Force has created various useful digital products to help counter the spread of misinformation. The COVID-19 Task Force also actively socializes digital products that can help the community on their official social media accounts. However, there are still many people who are unaware of the existence of these products. This is reflected in the answers from FGD participants who recommended several facilities that have previously been provided or already exist and can be accessed by the public (e.g. Whatsapp Chatbot).

Although the content and messages conveyed by the government have been considered good, the community also considers that there still needs to be a change in the content uploaded by the COVID-19 Task Force on social media. Uploaded content (such as infographics) is often useful for informing the public regarding the spread of COVID-19 cases. But on the other hand, these infographics also indirectly create unrest in the community. In addition, messages on social media that are delivered in a long and uninteresting manner also make people not want to find out more. Therefore, it is necessary to change the content and form of delivery to create a sense of security, educate the public in a short time, and tackle misinformation.

Therefore, a change in the content is needed. In addition to posts in the form of health posters and/or infographic data, simple and popular content (e.g. memes, animations, instant messaging stickers and/or short videos under 60 seconds) can also be an alternative. Popular content such as 'memes' and instant messaging stickers are also something that some governments and other international institutions have adopted (Moya-Salazar et al., 2021). The results of data collection and analysis from FGDs and interviews show that the Public Communication Protocol and the strategies and efforts currently implemented are quite good. However, there are still some things that can be improved to be more optimal. The findings are reflected in similar opinions between interview informants (government representatives and disaster management practitioners) and FGD informants (general public). Both stated that there is a need to update the current policies and strategies. Although the existing public communication protocols have been well implemented, the dynamics in the pandemic situation have led to the need for continuous updates. Especially updates in various aspects such as the use of new hashtags (e.g. #ayovaksin), educational messages related to policy terms (e.g. PSBB and PPKM), the form of uploaded content, and the alignment of messages according to the dynamics of the situation.

It can be observed that social media has the potential to facilitate or undermine public health efforts, yet there are no widely accepted conceptual model available to examine the roles that social media can play with respect to population (Schillinger et al., 2020). On one hand, social media is an effective and tool in conveying official guidelines and recommending outbreak prevention practices, as well as for connecting people to one another and supporting the most vulnerable in society. However, on the other hand, it is also the most dangerous instrument in spreading false information and conspiracy theories wrapped in hatred and propaganda (Gustomy, 2020). Infodemic has been globally recognized as one of the main problems in public health affairs. This is because information that is available in the public can determine the direction in which projects, programs, events, policies are implemented. The results of the FGD has proven that while social media is helpful for netizens to seek information, if not careful, they may be deceived by the misinformation that is commonly found.

As social creatures, humans use language to communicate with one another. With language as a medium, many ideas as well as information are sent and received from one party to the other. By examining the discourse that is used during the FGD, we can interpret the current conditions of the Infodemic in Indonesia. The implementation of various policies that follow the dynamics in handling the COVID-19 pandemic and the diversity of Indonesian society with varying levels of education as well as socio-cultural contexts have produced various community responses, both positive and negative. Negative responses often arise when there is low public trust in the government. There are notably various reasons why a low trust in the government can happen. However, results from socio-political context policy has proven that the major factor of this is caused by the difference between the information that is stated and the reality of the situation. This may have likely continued into the next years as negative response as a result of the low trust in government is also seen in Figure 4.1, where it took place in 2022.

Studies show that various disaster management, such as vaccination process or logistics of medicine in Indonesia, has been facing significant problems. One study found that there is a significant correlation between vaccine acceptance with conspiracy beliefs, trusts in conventional media, authoritative sources (Wirawan et al., 2021). Other research, such as in the context of Europe and United States, has also found a correlation between low public trust towards the government as a result of the circulating misinformation (Cardenas, 2022). This in line with the findings of previous studies where there has been found to be a significant correlation between misinformation and public trust, which resulted in a disruption to the available power relations (Agley & Xiao, 2021; Bromme et al., 2022; Ladiqi, 2020; Ledford et al., 2022; Mihelj et al., 2022; Wirawan et al., 2021). In another study which talks about the context of COVID-19 medicine, there are currently no conclusive proof that herbal medicine can eliminate the cause of infection. Continuous research that uses herbal medicine as an alternative approach to COVID-19 treatment are still ongoing (Ang et al., 2020). However, this has largely gone unknown or ignored by the public as evidenced from the result of the analysis from the power relations principle.

Nevertheless, this current condition plays into how Indonesia is trapping itself in a vicious cycle that is destructive to itself. Unless there is a change in the way Indonesians use social media platforms, the threat of Infodemic will likely continue. On one hand, Indonesia is very much well known for its high social media usage. As mentioned in previous literature studies, there is a high level of social media usage in Indonesia. The ideology principle even goes as to prove even though there are several high difficulties in accessing information in several parts of the country, the region that are able to properly access information were able to compare the differences between the ideal situation illustrated by the central government to the reality that takes place in each region. The results of the Social Relations principle also support this, as the participants have also mentioned about the differences in each region's experience in handling the pandemic has made it difficult for them to tell which information is valid.

The vicious cycle that Indonesia has trapped itself in is this: the more it uses social media platforms (e.g. Twitter, Instagram, Tiktok, etc.), the bigger the Infodemic threat in the country will become. This prediction is drawn from the public perceptions that view social media as a source of information, while experiencing something different in reality. This, in addition to several unavoidable shortcomings of the government, can potentially serve to increasingly pose a bigger threat as it goes on. Considering its high social media usage, the Infodemic threat can be argued as a colossal threat that grows each day as Indonesia continues to grow in its frequency of social media usage. The Infodemic creates a complex situation where almost every information has to be verified before it can be trusted. Not only does this take time to do so, but it can also use up resources, such as time and energy to name a few. If able to be avoided, this would be possible to be allocated elsewhere instead, as in a disaster situation, time and energy are very precious. In addition to that, this situation can also then undermine future public health efforts, disrupt disaster management processes, and overall create a high level of distrust within the public.

However, the lack of community involvement creates a gap between the form of public communication conducted by the government and disaster management agencies and the community's preferences. Based on FGD answers, the community considers that the current public communication still has several shortcomings (as mentioned in the results sub-chapter). The changes and dynamics of the COVID-19 situation have made people slowly lose interest in the development of pandemic disaster management. When people have lost interest, it is easy for other information to enter and change their views. The COVID-19 Task Force responded to this problem by educating the public through posts by the COVID-19 Task Force on social media. Although the COVID-19 Task Force also actively helps manage the spread of misinformation by uploading content on social media to help clarify information, this is considered not optimal by informants, both FGD informants and interview informants. Some findings, such as those mentioned by interview informants related to the creation of separate accounts between fields, show that the COVID-19 Task Force has not synergized optimally, so the public communication carried out has not been optimal.

Public communication carried out by the government is considered quite interesting, but not yet harmonized. In addition, this communication is different from reality. The responses from informants indicate that there are dissatisfactions or parts of public communication that could be improved. This is particularly important to do immediately, given that the state of the Infodemic could worsen an already misinformation-prone society. As mentioned earlier, when people have lost interest in the disaster management process, it is easy for other information to enter and change their views, especially misinformation that is often found on social media. Previous research found that social media algorithms usually highlight the popularity of content, which is usually a characteristic of misinformation (in the form of clickbait) (Lee et al., 2020). Given the high level of social media usage by Indonesians, this could worsen the state of the Infodemic and produce undesirable outcomes.

Therefore, it is important for decision-makers to listen to the aspirations of the community more comprehensively before setting policies and strategies for implementation, so as to achieve optimal results.

One way to optimize public communication is to increase the number of open discussion forums that provide opportunities for the community to express their opinions freely without hesitation. Not only with the community, but also with the regional COVID-19 Task Force who may still have a lack of knowledge or understanding of the implementation of national policies in their respective regions. Some studies show that there is a concern that information intermediaries, in this context, community leaders and/or local government at the local level such as RT/RW, may interpret or translate information incorrectly (Seale et al., 2022). Therefore, it is important to also educate these practitioners and local governments in terms of implementing protocols, such as good public communication to provide comprehensive information by the community.

6. Conclusion

The study concludes that the COVID-19 pandemic disaster management process in Indonesia was significantly obstructed by the ongoing Infodemic, which hindered the management process and caused distrust and skepticism among the public due to misinformation and hoaxes circulating in the community. As a result, disaster management processes (in this case specifically, the COVID-19 pandemic) has been disrupted. As also stated in the findings section after analyzing the discourse, several things that can be done to improve public communications include Improving synergy, accelerate coordination, and increase double-checking so that the information conveyed is not contradictory, both within the COVID-19 Task Force, as well as between the Central Government and local governments; Update existing public communication protocols; Increase the role of educational influencers or content creators; Equalize messages and hashtags, both from the Central Government and local governments; Increase the number of followers on the social media platforms used; Strive for verified account marks on social media accounts (e. g. blue tick on Instagram); Increase socialization of digital products that can be used by the public; Develop popular content communication models that are popular with the public (e.g. using "memes"), using "memes"). However, the study has limitations, and future research is recommended to focus on specific age groups and people with disabilities.

Acknowledgement

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