

STRATEGIC APPROACHES FOR ETHNIC HEALTH EDUCATION DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC: A PRELIMINARY STUDY

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ABSTRACT

The wicked problem of the Covid-19 pandemic is a challenge for every government worldwide. Handling the Covid-19 pandemic requires an effective, coordinated communication strategy, and integrated policies to encourage the public to comply with health protocols and prevent virus transmission. This study examines the interplay between policy integration, communication strategies, and cognitive dissonance during COVID-19 pandemic. Utilizing causal mechanism test and cross-tabulation analysis, it compares existing strategic communication through Covid-19 guidelines from 100 ethnic groups in Indonesia with actual virus transmission to identify the effectiveness of integrated policies and communication efforts in handling the Covid-19 pandemic. We also examine the role of policy integration, which refers to the degree of alignment and coordination among the policies and actions of different levels and sectors of government in response to Covid-19. The findings suggest that cohesive policies correlate with behavioral changes during the COVID-19 pandemic when communicated effectively. The result highlights the importance of synchronizing public health directives with clear, consistent messaging to mitigate the spread of the virus. Furthermore, future study should focus on doing a thorough examination of strategic communication techniques and their efficacy among many demographics and cultural contexts.

KEYWORDS: policy integration; institutional capacity; strategic communication; cognitive dissonance; local language

1. INTRODUCTION

The Covid-19 pandemic, a wicked problem, has posed an unprecedented challenge to governments worldwide (Han et al., 2020; Mei, 2020; Miftah et al., 2023b). The complexity and uncertainty surrounding the virus has necessitated an effective, coordinated communication strategy and integrated policies (Miftah et al., 2024; Sharifi & Khavarian-Garmsir, 2020). These measures aim to encourage public compliance with health protocols, thereby preventing virus transmission (Maggetti & Trein, 2022; Wirawan et al., 2023). Nevertheless, governments that have effectively handled the COVID-19 epidemic demonstrate positive indications of good governance (Kusumasari et al., 2022).

The challenges of integrated policies, requiring governments to apply inclusive strategies to improve policy coherence by bringing together multiple actors to reach an agreement on actions (Howlett and Saguin 2018). Thus, governance-oriented studies have shown how various

institutional arrangements might facilitate policy integration through political coordination mechanisms, networked governance, or administrative coordination capacities (Domorenok, Graziano, and Polverari 2021). Contemporary attempts to integrate policy integration and capacity into a more comprehensive conceptual framework have taken a policy design perspective, suggesting that effective integrated policy designs require analytical, operational, and political capacities (Wu, Howlett, and Ramesh 2018).

Overcoming the Covid-19 pandemic has posed a multifaceted difficulty, especially when addressing issues related to language and behavior. These obstacles have had substantial effects on the dissemination of information regarding public health, the ability to obtain medical care, and compliance with safety protocols. This was further complicated by the emotional reactions on social media sites, where collective sentiments varied from endorsement to complete refusal of the imposed restrictions (Miftah et al. 2023). Therefore, the Covid-19 task force issued the 3M Behavior Change Guidelines (Wearing Masks, Maintaining Distance, Washing Hands), which were translated into 107 languages and dialects from 100 large ethnic groups in Indonesia to change people's behavior and curb the rate of virus transmission (Kompas 2020; MCIT 2020).

The pandemic has emphasized the significance of transparent, precise, and widespread communication to control the transmission of the disease. Therefore, effective forms of strategic communication are essential in dealing with crises (Li and Lee 2024; Macagno and Trevisan 2024). Furthermore, the COVID-19 epidemic has accelerated the process of digital transformation, enabling individuals to access diverse educational resources across multiple media platforms (Fang et al. 2022; Nanda, Widianingsih, and Miftah 2023; Widianingsih et al. 2023). This study examines the impact of communication strategies through behavioral change guidelines translated into 107 languages and dialects from 100 large ethnic groups on virus transmission during the Covid-19 pandemic crisis in Indonesia.

II. METHODOLOGY

This study employed ethnography (Bartl, Kannan, and Stockinger 2016; Nascimento, Suarez, and Campos 2022; Sharma, Ahuja, and Alavi 2018) follow by causal mechanism test (Beach 2016) and descriptive retrospective analysis (Hess 2004; Hess and Faarc 2004; Khairani et al. 2018) which includes artifacts from policy integration with policy instruments and policy frame indicators, strategic communications indicators, and cognitive dissonance with the following dataset.

Table 1 Dataset

Research Stage	Research Design	Research Methods
Phase 1: Data Collection	Qualitative	Interviews, Focus Groups, Document Analysis
Phase 2: Data Analysis	Quantitative	Statistical Analysis, Regression Analysis
Phase 3: Policy Development	Mixed Methods	Policy Analysis, Stakeholder Consultation

The stages of this study involve gathering data on the policy integration framework, strategic communication, and cognitive dissonance. This includes collecting information on policy instruments, policy frames (Maggetti and Trein 2022; Trein, Meyer, and Maggetti 2019), levels of compliance with social distancing, virus transmission, population size and density. The artifacts found from the policy integration framework, strategic communication framework, and cognitive dissonance were then categorized into causal mechanism tests consisting of a straw in the wind test, hoop test, smoking gun test, and doubly decisive test (Beach 2016).

Table 2 Causal Mechanism Test

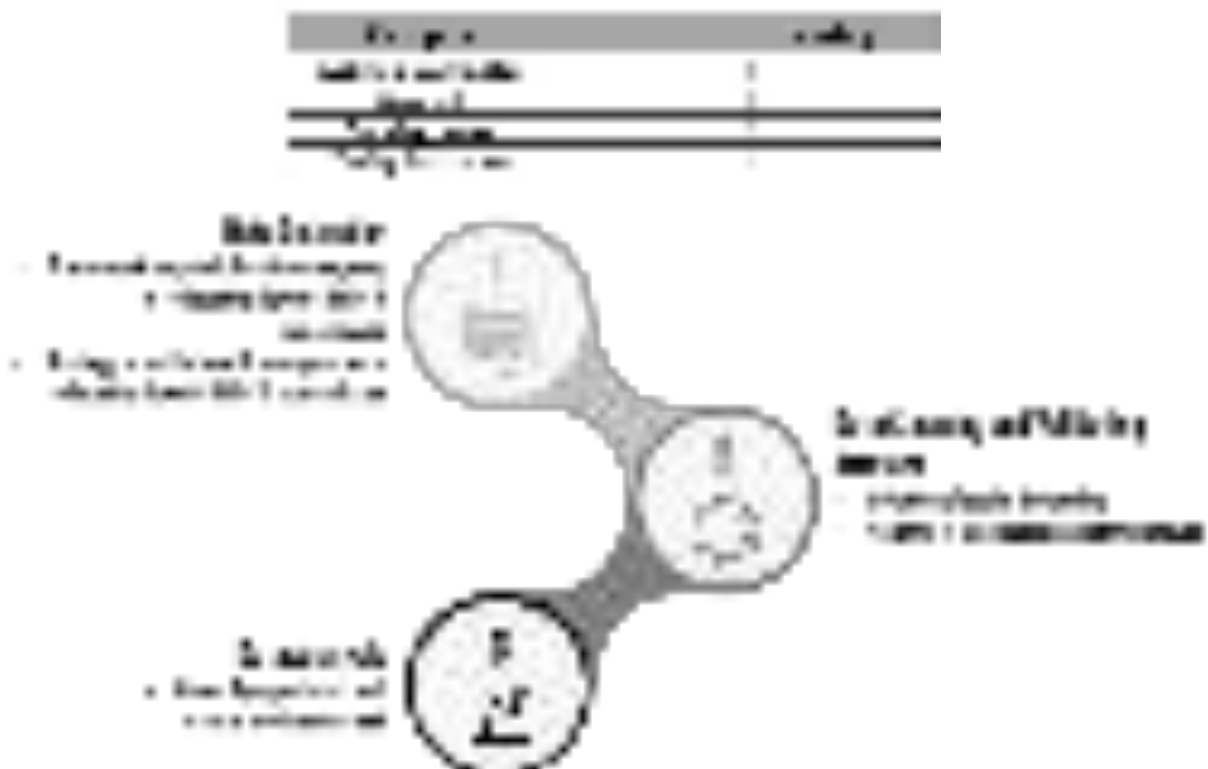


Figure 1 Research Stages

III. RESULT

During the Covid-19 pandemic, the transmission of the virus in Indonesia escalated quickly in urban areas, particularly in cities like Bandung, which possess distinctive features impacted by factors such as city planning, population density, and high levels of urban mobility (Miftah et al. 2019, 2021; Sutriadi and Miftah 2020). The island of Java had the most significant virus transmission, specifically in DKI Jakarta, West Java Province, Central Java, East Java, and Banten Province. Nevertheless, the level of linguistic and ethnic variety in this province was comparatively lower than in other provinces. On the island of Java, it is an island inhabited by seven major ethnicities with various languages and dialects such as Javanese Banten dialect, Sundanese Banten dialect, Betawi, Javanese Krama, Javanese Cirebon-Indramayu, Sundanese, Javanese Tegal dialect, Madura, Javanese Surabaya dialect, and using from Banyuwangi.

Table 3 Province and Guidelines in Local Language

To comprehend adherence to each province's code of conduct, the number of infractions and level of compliance must be analyzed. Through monitoring violation data and measuring community compliance, we can assess the extent to which the code has been successfully internalized and implemented in daily practice. This information is important to describe effectiveness of strategic communication is in encouraging compliance with the code, as well as to identify areas that require further attention in efforts to increase. Based on figure below are data of violation based on province in Indonesia.



Figure 2 Violation Based on Province in Indonesia

Based on the availability of policy instruments owned by each province to support the handling of the Covid-19 pandemic, the causal mechanism test weighting is obtained as shown in the following table.

Table 4 Policy Instruments and Causal Mechanism Test

No.	Province	Policy Instrument	Code	Category
1	Aceh	3	BL.PI3	Smoking gun
2	Bali	3	DK.PI3	Doubly decisive
3	Bangka Belitung	3	A.PI3	Doubly decisive
4	Banten	4	BD.PI4	Doubly decisive
5	Bengkulu	4	AB.PI4	Doubly decisive
6	Central Java	4	DM.PI4	Smoking gun
7	Central Kalimantan	3	BH.PI3	Doubly decisive
8	Central Sulawesi	4	D.PI4	Doubly decisive
9	D.I. Yogyakarta	4	H.PI4	Doubly decisive
10	East Java	4	L.PI4	Doubly decisive
11	East Kalimantan	4	KB.PI4	Doubly decisive
12	East Nusa Tenggara	3	DA.PI3	Smoking gun
13	Gorontalo	4	KH.PI4	Smoking gun
14	Jambi	4	KT.PI4	Doubly decisive
15	Lampung	3	BN.PI3	Doubly decisive
16	Maluku	4	BM.PI4	Smoking gun
17	North Maluku	3	BE.PI3	Smoking gun
18	North Sulawesi	4	DE.PI4	Smoking gun
19	North Sumatera	3	DG.PI3	Smoking gun
20	Papua	3	DR.PI3	Doubly decisive

No.	Province	Policy Instrument	Code	Category
21	Riau	4	EB.PI4	Doubly decisive
22	Riau Islands	3	PA.PI3	Smoking gun
23	South Kalimantan	4	BM.PI4	Doubly decisive
24	South Sulawesi	3	DC.PI3	Smoking gun
25	South Sumatera	4	DD.PI4	Smoking gun
26	Southeast Sulawesi	4	DN.PI4	Doubly decisive
27	West Java	4	DT.PI4	Smoking gun
28	West Kalimantan	3	DB.PI3	Smoking gun
29	West Nusa Tenggara	4	BA.PI4	Doubly decisive
30	West Sulawesi	4	BG.PI4	Smoking gun
31	West Sumatera	4	BB.PI4	Smoking gun

Most policy instruments that support institutional capacity, including communication strategies, have been accommodated by the government. However, despite various efforts that have been made, violations continue to occur. This is due to various other variables that influence people's behavior, such as habits that have been formed over the years, beliefs held firmly by individuals or groups, and strong religious factors. For example, despite the ban on homecoming, many people still try to return to their hometowns because of traditions and religious beliefs that consider homecoming a moral and social obligation.

IV. DISCUSSION

Based on the results of this study, it shows that there are other variables that influence violations during Covid-19. For example, habits that have been formed over the years, strong religious beliefs, and certain cultural beliefs and norms that are difficult to change in a short time. Studies have shown that habit strength predicts adherence to preventive measures like physical distancing and hand washing, with habit formation more evident in physical distancing behaviors (Zhang et al. 2022). The interaction between habit and behavioral intention can strengthen behavior-intention consistency for preventive actions. Recognizing the habitual nature of health behaviors has implications for intervention strategies, potentially focusing on modifying environmental stimuli rather than promoting consciously mediated change (Gardner, Rebar, and Lally 2019). Habits such as gathering with extended family or close friends at various social events are one of the causes of violations, even though there is a ban on gathering.

Other factors, such as economic pressures forcing people to work outside the home, social pressure from communities, inaccurate or misleading information about the virus, and social restrictions, also contributed to violations. Studies from Thailand reveal that these workers experienced dramatic income reductions, job losses, and increased debt (Komin et al. 2021). The informal sector's vulnerability to COVID-19 is further exacerbated by crowded working conditions and limited access to healthcare (Nguimkeu and Okou 2020). Government measures to contain the virus, such as lockdowns and curfews, disproportionately affected informal workers who lack social protection and rely on daily earnings (Sene 2023).

V. CONCLUSIONS

Based on the research, the availability of policy instruments has not been able to suppress the level of violations completely. There are other variables that were not analyzed in this study. With that, for further research, it can analyze other variables such as community habits, culture that is practiced, beliefs that are held, and others. In addition, because this study focuses on Indonesia, further research can be conducted in other countries, such as in the form of comparative studies on handling the Covid-19 pandemic.

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