

Infodemic Threat As an Obstacle in The Covid-19 Pandemic Handling in Indonesia

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Abstract

The large wave of information that occurred during the Covid-19 pandemic was caused by limited knowledge regarding this spreading disease. Information that is abundant and confusing and spreads quickly by WHO is called an infodemic. The infodemic resulted in the handling of the Covid-19 pandemic not being resolved easily because it changed people's perceptions and people's compliance with government policies. This study aims to discuss the infodemic that occurred in Indonesia during the 2020-2021 Covid-19 pandemic using a case study approach. According to research by Rahmawati et al (2021), there are 359 hoaxes. This research found that during the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020-2021, infodemic in Indonesia occurred in the form of hoaxes that affected the wider community so that there was confusion of information that affected the handling of the pandemic.

Keywords: Infodemic, Covid-19 pandemic, Indonesia

INTRODUCTION

On March 2, 2020, the first instance of Covid-19 in Indonesia was discovered in two individuals who had been positively identified as having acquired it from a Japanese national. Then, by April 9, 2020, Covid-19 had spread to 34 provinces, with DKI Jakarta, West Java, and Central Java being the three most susceptible provinces (Direktorat Jenderal Pencegahan dan Pengendalian Penyakit Kementerian Kesehatan RI, 2021). There were 156,745 fatalities and 6,092,303 confirmed cases in Indonesia as of July 2, 2022. (Satuan Tugas Penanganan COVID-19, 2022b).

The Covid-19 pandemic, which has affected Indonesia for more than two years, has had a big impact on a lot of different aspects of society, including politics, economics, socioculture, and Indonesia's defense and security. From a sociological perspective, Covid-19 directly threatens public health. To support patient care as confirmed by Covid-19 and health workers' and society's overall self-protection, social assistance is urgently needed, particularly in the provision of medical equipment like PPE, masks, hand sanitizers, disinfectants, and hospitals with isolation rooms and health workers (Harsono, 2020). (Kementerian Komunikasi dan Informatika RI, 2020; Kementerian Koordinator Bidang Perekonomian RI, 2021).

The economy is also impacted. The Covid-19 pandemic has crippled the economy, forcing many businesses to close their doors or lay off workers in order to avoid going out of business or going bankrupt. Because of this, there are now more unemployed people in Indonesia (Kementerian Ketenagakerjaan RI, 2020). The unemployment rate has increased by 1.79% over the prior year according to data from the Central Bureau of Statistics for 2019-2020. If the unemployment issue persists, it may lead to poor social welfare and social disorder, including rising crime rates and political unrest (Universitas Islam Indonesia, 2020). The economic wheel's paralysis also resulted in a state budget deficit of IDR 947.6 trillion, which was used to deal with the people's conditions and the country's economy's shock-related speed. Moreover, the state lost money by 15.9% compared to 2019 before Covid-19 in Indonesia (Kementerian Keuangan RI,

2021). This Covid-19 pandemic effects on many economic sectors including transportation, tourism, trade, health and the household sector (Susilawati et al., 2020).

Moreover, Indonesian politics and ideologies may be at risk from the Covid-19 pandemic. A political crisis may result from issues brought on by the Covid-19 pandemic, which affects every area of people's lives. The political crisis is a snowball effect of the public's displeasure with the performance of the government, and it can be utilized by reckless parties to incite hatred against the legitimate administration (Ananda, 2020). The Covid-19 pandemic not only can bring about a political catastrophe, but it can also change state ideology. The ideology of Pancasila, which serves as the foundation for the Indonesian nation's way of life, is becoming increasingly vulnerable to the infiltration of other ideologies, including radicalism and extremism, according to Bambang Soesatyo, the chairman of the Indonesian People's Consultative Assembly (in Anam, 2021). The Covid-19 pandemic has been political opportunity to polarize people in Indonesia towards government policies and reduce the role of Pancasila as the ideology of Indonesia (Abdurrahman & Pradita, 2022; Jati, 2022; Sarnoto & Hayatina, 2021).

RESEARCH METHODS

Researchers in this study employed a case study approach along with a qualitative research methodology. Research subjects are people or groups who have qualities or connections to the subject of the study. The State Cyber and Code Agency (BSSN) and the Covid-19 Task Force were supporting topics in the study, which included the Indonesian Ministry of Communication and Informatics as the primary information handling sector. The infodemic threat that exists in Indonesia is the subject of this study. Primary data were collected using semi-structured or open-ended interviews utilizing interview guide tools. Researchers also gathered secondary data by performing document analyses and literature reviews. Source triangulation and technique triangulation are used in data processing to verify the accuracy of the data that has been retrieved. The Malterud STC (2012) data condensation tool was utilized for data analysis together with the Miles et al Model (2014).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The infodemic is anticipated to make its initial appearance in Indonesia around the end of 2019, gain media attention beginning in early to mid-2020, and then spread widely starting in May 2020. Misinformation, deception, conspiracy theories, and stigma towards Covid-19 sufferers are some of the infodemic types that first surfaced. There were many factors that led to the infodemic's rise. As there is now no official channel, an infodemic has emerged. The level of public awareness is still low, it's simple to access the internet as a tool for exchanging information, a lot of information enters without being filtered so as to create post-truth, and there are government regulations that are not ideal. In addition, there is leftover residue from the presidential election that intentionally modifies information for certain interests. There are various ways to find infodemic spreaders. The IP address used, complaints from the public, and the tracking of digital traces can all be used to find the perpetrators.

Facebook and WhatsApp are the platforms with the most infodemics. Facebook, which has the most users, has a high potential for or risk of spreading an infodemic. Also, a captivating and instructive Facebook display can seduce people into taking in false information. Because WhatsApp is used personally to personally, spreading infodemics is relatively simple, especially

in WhatsApp groups where information is shared without hesitation. Instant messaging platforms like WhatsApp play a significant part in the spread of infodemics. Because it leads everyone to feel uneasy or negatively, such as fear, restlessness, or anxiety, and because it makes people doubt the accuracy of information, the spread of infodemic in the community can be seen as detrimental to people's attitudes and behavior. In other words, this infodemic may impede or inhibit Indonesia's ability to respond to the Covid-19 outbreak. An infodemic is now a non-military threat as a result of this.

According to the findings of this investigation, the representatives of the three institutions who were contacted had various opinions about infodemic but all agreed that it was related to hoaxes. It is supported by research conducted by Rahmawati et al. (2021) that there are 359 hoaxes with five categories and 30 sub-categories. Infodemics can be viewed as a threat to society because of the negative perception that surrounds hoaxes and them. A new hazard called an infodemic has emerged as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic that has been affecting Indonesia since 2020. Infodemics can hinder the management of the Covid-19 pandemic and worsen its conditions even though they do not directly have the same impact as the Covid-19 pandemic. Because a human being is the target of this attack, it is extremely risky. Infodemics, like the Covid-19 pandemic, can also jeopardize human life due to new ideas or beliefs connected to the Covid-19 pandemic that are brought on by false information being repeated until it becomes post-truth.

The infodemic strikes psychologically and behaviorally, much like the Covid-19 epidemic does physically. The beliefs, perceptions, and attitudes of individuals or communities concerning the Covid-19 pandemic, appeals, and the government's efforts to combat this Covid-19 pandemic can be influenced via infodemics that target the mind. The infodemic-attacked mindset then manifests itself in behavior, such as when people disregard requests to follow health protocols and are more focused on themselves since they do not believe that Covid-19 exists. The wearing of masks that are thought to have no impact and are avoided in public areas. People's resistance to vaccinations since they are thought to be hazardous and may be fatal.

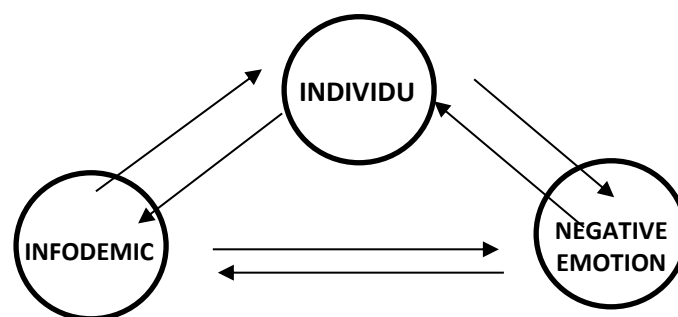


Figure 1. Reciprocal Effect between Individu, Infodemic, and Negative Emotion

Moreover, infodemics have a reciprocal impact on people's or society's bad feelings. Individuals who are fearful, anxious, or anxious about the current Covid-19 pandemic are at risk because they tend to take in as much Covid-19 information as they can, whether or not it is accurate. This just serves to prolong their fear, anxiety, or anxiety. Conversely, people who learn too much about Covid-19 may experience dread, anxiety, and anxiety, which will lead them to search for more information about Covid-19, the veracity of which cannot be determined. Even though it doesn't seem to have a direct noticeable effect, this combination is extremely hazardous for the treatment and recovery of conditions in Indonesia and can therefore be regarded as a real

concern. If it is not dealt with right now, the infodemic could have a significant negative effect on Indonesia's socioeconomic situation and public health, making it a threat that needs to be tackled.

Between non-military threats and hybrid threats, the classification of the threat associated with an infodemic is still up for debate. This is inextricably linked to how each institution views the infodemic in general. To develop a plan comprehensively and build up power to tackle the threat, it is necessary to identify the sort of threat. The formulation of the strategy that will be used may be impacted and may result in the operational or technical implementation of the strategy in the field if the kind of threat is not determined in accordance with the description of the danger that actually exists. In the end, the plan developed failed because the threat was not precisely characterized by identifying the threat type.

**Table 1. The Difference Perspective Towards Infodemic as A Threat
Is Infodemic Non-Military or Hybrid Threat?**

The Indonesian Ministry of Communication and Informatics (Kominfo)	Non-military threat
The State Cyber and Code Agency (BSSN)	Hybrid threat
The Covid-19 Task Force	Non-military threat but needs to be studied further

Threats that have surfaced in Indonesia include infodemics, or what the Indonesian people refer to as Covid-19 hoaxes. The infodemic complies with the definition of threats set forth in RI Law Number 17 of 2011 concerning State Intelligence Article 1, which is any enterprise, activity, or decision that is believed or established to endanger the Republic of Indonesia's national safety, security, sovereignty, or territorial integrity. The infodemic's perpetrators can be identified as proof that attempts, activities, or actions are being taken to propagate material whose veracity is in doubt (Pool et al., 2021). The people spreading this infodemic have a variety of reasons for doing so, including: (1) hatred of the current political system; (2) a desire to simply share information without verification or evaluation; and (3) a desire to create a stir, particularly among those who are not adept at using social media. Infodemic spreaders may also be regarded as cybercriminals under Law Number 19 of 2016 Concerning Changes to Law Number 11 of 2008 About Information and Electronic Transactions Article 45A paragraph (1).

The safety of the country, security, sovereignty, or territorial integrity of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia may then be threatened by something if it is believed or demonstrated to be capable of doing so. Although it has not been determined that the infodemic poses a threat to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia, it has in fact put public safety and security at risk, particularly in the cyberspace. People now have different perspectives on the Covid-19 pandemic as a result of the infodemic, which has led them to favor other options over following government recommendations for protection. This is extremely risky because if a person is exposed to Covid-19, doesn't follow the health routine, and shows resistance to testing or treatment, their life won't be spared, ultimately leading to fatalities. The infodemic poses a threat to people's online security in particular because the Internet of Things (IoT) is currently pervasive in society and the majority of societal activities take place online. By disseminating material including malware, phishing, or ransomware that might affect users when interacting online, infodemics turn into a form of cybercrime.

Infodemics may or may not fall under the category of non-military or hybrid threats, according to the Indonesian Defense White Paper (2015). Infodemic has been shown to have a political component when viewed from the perspective of those who spread it and who have

political motivations and alter information for particular purposes. It also has an economic component when viewed from the perspective of cyber security, which can jeopardize the information and financial security of users of social media and instant messaging. Although the military was involved in the Covid-19 pandemic response and played a role in accelerating and supporting the pandemic's recovery, this has not been observed in practice when dealing with infodemics. The idea that infodemics cannot be categorized as hybrid threats is further supported by the development and spread of infodemics that are carried out lone wolf, not systemically, or sponsored by certain parties.

Infodemic cannot yet be categorized as a hybrid threat under the Minister of Defense Regulation Number 19 of 2015 regarding the National Defense Implementation Policy for 2015–2019, which defines a hybrid threat as a combined threat from a combination of military and non-military threats with the integration of conventional, asymmetric, and terrorist threats, as well as cyberwarfare and all dynamic criminals. The employment of CBRNE and information warfare can potentially be combined to create hybrid threats. Only asymmetry, cyberwarfare, and information war are satisfied by infodemic. Infodemics employ potentially hazardous but uncommonly employed instruments in terms of asymmetry. Due to the instability of information and communication in cyberspace, infodemic also falls within the definition of cyberwarfare. Since infodemic is information in and of itself, but also has a dangerous level that can result in casualties, infodemic also includes information war.

The treatment of the Covid-19 pandemic in Indonesia has been severely hampered by the infodemic that took place. This is due to information whose veracity cannot be verified sabotaging information relating to the government's handling of Covid-19 that is communicated through multiple media, causing public health communication to become chaotic (Gallotti et al., 2020; Naeem & Bhatti, 2020). People now prefer to experiment with options provided by knowledge being spread than than following official orders that have unquestionably worked. This alternative information was successful in getting the public's attention because they want treatments that could be done quickly, easily, and appeared to work (Gallotti et al., 2020).

Infodemic is made up of three components from a communication standpoint: information components, pronunciation components, and understanding components (Ngadzimah & Fajarlie, 2020). It can be challenging for people to discover the truth or even a new "truth" because of the infodemic, which is a wave of information that is extremely huge in number. This is due to the fact that information that is spread widely enough will eventually turn into a post-truth and become a reality construct in society. When information is provided in this manner, the public who receives it may perceive it differently. The public will believe that Covid-19 is nothing to worry about and that the government's advise is exaggerated if information about it is presented in a derogatory way. People will believe that Covid-19 is a plague that spreads fear and disturbance in society if information about it is given in an overly dramatic manner. The public's comprehension of the material in circulation is also essential to the attitude and actions the neighborhood will take in response to the Covid-19 outbreak.

Even though infodemics are only on a small scale and do not significantly affect the lives of Indonesian people in general, infodemics should be watched out for as a threat that can spread widely and quickly and has the potential to endanger safety for the Indonesian nation as a whole. Infodemics are currently enlivening the public discourse of the Indonesian people. As a result, the threat of an infodemic during the Covid-19 pandemic in Indonesia in 2020–2021 took the shape of hoaxes that had an impact on the larger population and caused informational misunderstanding regarding the pandemic's management. The infodemic that took place in Indonesia needs special attention even though it hasn't yet spread widely or reached the level of an information warfare.

CONCLUSION

During the Covid-19 pandemic in Indonesia in 2020–2021, the infodemic danger took the form of hoaxes that harmed the larger community and caused informational misunderstanding regarding how to handle the pandemic. This infodemic could lead to catastrophe that allow Indonesia to face many obstacles in handling the Covid-19 pandemic. It is necessary to overcome the infodemic as soon as handling the pandemic itself because infodemic can affect minds of people and people are the main point of the reason to handle the pandemic. Although the infodemic that occurred in Indonesia has not occurred on a vast scale or reached the magnitude of conflict non-military, according to the BSSN, Kominfo, and the Covid-19 Task Force, but it should be considered to be a dangerous threat to the nation

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