

**SUPPORTING AND OBSTACLING FACTORS OF COMMUNICATION
PLANNING IN MANAGEMENT OF COVID-19 IN BIMA TOWN****Eko Nurfahmi*, Hafied Cangara, Jeanny Maria Fatimah**

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Abstract

Covid-19 is a disease outbreak that is contagious throughout the world. Everyone feels the bad impact of this pandemic, both developing countries and Indonesia are no exception. Covid-19 has spread to all regions in Indonesia, including Bima Town. Bima Town is the east gate to enter the NTB area. Bima Town was able to handle this pandemic well, as evidenced by being the only area in NTB that is included in the Green Zone. This disease outbreak that has spread widely has greatly affected the life of creatures on this earth, such as the social, religious, economic, political and so on. Prevention efforts continue to be carried out by the Bima Town government as a form of government responsibility for the impacts and dangers of this pandemic on people's lives. This study aims to determine the factors that hinder and support the government's efforts in preventing and overcoming the dangers of Covid-19 in Bima Town by using a qualitative approach research method where the method used is a case study that departs from the handling of the Covid-19 pandemic carried out by the government. This is in accordance with the aim of the researcher to describe, analyze and explain the communication planning of a local government in the Town of Bima, West Nusa Tenggara. The research technique used is purposive sampling, which is a technique to find and determine informants by means of researchers selecting certain people who are considered to be able to provide the data needed then based on data or information obtained from informants. The results of the research that hampered the performance of the task force in preventing Covid-19 in the Town of Bima were social media that discussed issues about the untruth of Covid-19 so that people became paranoid. But in reality the public is able to accept when the government tries to educate and socialize so that it can minimize all what is stigmatized such as preparing vaccines, supporting infrastructure, budgets, public spaces that are able to be well maintained and education both through social media and other media.

Keywords: communication planning; preventing COVID-19; government; public

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INTRODUCTION

The wave of Covid-19 pandemic has brought a major change in human life. We had witnessed several changes in governments, global economy, and healthcare systems due to the attack of this pandemic. Various efforts continue to be made by health experts and the public to end the increase in the Covid-19 virus. In several countries, including Indonesia, people were required to implement health protocols as a

new habit (Aisyah et al., 2021; Christian, 2021). The World Health Organization (WHO) and other international public health authorities recommend implementing health protocols to prevent the transmission of Covid-19 between individuals by implementing physical distancing, wearing masks, and washing hands with soap (Ernawaty et al., 2022).

To achieve the goals of the government's communication strategy, good

communication planning in dealing with disasters or pandemics cannot be separated from the communication patterns of internal leaders. Speaking of communication planning, there are two different basic concepts that need to be discussed further. The two concepts are "Planning" and "Communication". Planning refers to the management aspect, while communication is seen as a process of disseminating and exchanging information. Although these two concepts are different, they can be combined into a special study in communication studies which in recent times has been increasingly implemented in the fields of information dissemination, public awareness and marketing (Cangara, 2013).

Leaders are required to be able to use their communication skills so that the message conveyed is received and communication is effective. The leadership style of each leader is different, depending on the background, education, culture, and so on. The higher the level of education of a person, the higher the performance (Abid, 2022).

Through well-planned communication, the wider community can be given an understanding of the government's readiness, alertness and ability to deal with the current health crisis (Prayoga, 2020). This will certainly have a good impact on the community, business actors, and others in carrying out community life. Health campaigns promoted by the government also contributed to tackling and preventing the spread of Covid-19 in Indonesia.

Covid-19 has spread to all regions in Indonesia, including Bima Town, West Nusa Tenggara (Najamuddin & Suparto, 2021). The Town of Bima, which is the east gate to enter the West Nusa Tenggara region, will certainly be very vulnerable to the spread of the Covid-19 virus amidst the hustle and bustle of people's activities in and out. However, there is something interesting and deserves our appreciation, namely the Bima Town government is able to handle this pandemic

well, which is proven by being the only area in NTB that is included in the Green Zone.

From the data on the distribution of Covid-19 transmission, Bima Town is one of the areas that can suppress the rate of the spread of Covid-19 by implementing strict social restrictions in Bima Town. The transmission rate is also considered very low. Data as of June 30, 2020 shows that in Bima Town there are 156 People Under Monitoring (ODP), only 9 Patients Under Supervision (PDP), and only 4 people who have tested positive for Covid-19. The 4 people have been declared cured, quoted from (Kumparan.com accessed on July 7, 2020). However, after the stipulation of the Green Zone, several months later Bima Town entered the Orange Zone and even the Red Zone and was perched as the only area in NTB that was still in the Red Zone. Data compiled from the same site recorded that 354 were positive, 188 recovered and 10 people died from Covid-19.

Prevention efforts continue to be carried out by the Bima Town government as a form of government responsibility for the impacts and dangers of this pandemic on people's lives. Government policies in dealing with Covid-19 greatly affect the situation (Roziqin et al., 2021). Based on the description above, the researchers are interested in conducting a study entitled Communication Planning in Supporting and Inhibiting Covid-19 Response in Bima Town which aims to determine the factors that hinder and support the government's efforts in preventing and overcoming the dangers of Covid-19 in Bima Town.

METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach where the method used is a case study that departs from the handling of the Covid-19 pandemic carried out by the government. This is included in the qualitative research (paradigm) that can describe, explain, and explore the phenomena that occur (Creswell, 2017). This is in accordance with the aim of the researcher to describe, analyze and

explain the communication planning of a local government in the Town of Bima, West Nusa Tenggara. The role of the researcher in this qualitative research is the planner, data collector, analyzer, and finally as the originator of the research. Researchers do not only act as data takers, data processors, and inventors of research data. The sampling technique used is a purposive sampling which is a technique to find and determine informants by selecting certain people who are considered to be able to provide the necessary data.

The stages that researchers use in data collection techniques in this study are in-depth interviews, library methods, and documentation methods. The data analysis technique is carried out in the crisis communication management process which runs concurrently with data collection (Sugiyono, 2017). The data analysis stage is an attempt to change an unorganized collection of data into a collection of short sentences that can be understood by others. This stage consists of efforts to summarize the data, select the data, translate, and organize the data. The research was conducted from June 2021 to November 2021 and took place in Bima Town, West Nusa Tenggara. The selected informants are key informants, namely policymakers, policy implementers, and the general public. Informants are people who are selected to be asked for information related to research.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This research was conducted to determine the efforts of the Bima Town government in preventing and overcoming the dangers of Covid-19 in Bima Town from the perspective of Communication Planning, knowing the Covid-19 prevention and mitigation model used by the Government in Bima Town from the perspective of Communication Planning. Researchers gathered information from the Bima Town Covid-19 Task Force, namely the Mayor of Bima, Regional Secretary of Bima Town,

Secretary of the Bima Town Health Service, Head of the Health Promotion Section of the Bima Town Health Service, Head of the Surveillance Section of the Bima Town Health Service, the Head of BPBD of Bima Town and Secretary of the Department of Communications and Information Technology Bima Town. Furthermore, the informants were taken from journalists, general practitioners from the Healthcare Task Force Team and the community consisting of dentists, leaders of state-owned banks, nurses, teachers and traders. The technique of collecting data from informants was carried out by the interview method (in-depth interview) which is the process of obtaining information by means of question and answer while face to face between the interviewer and the respondent or the person being interviewed. In the interview process, the interviewees will ask questions about the core of the problem to be researched as well as things that are not yet known about the Bima Town government's integrated communication plan regarding Covid-19. These informants were chosen because they have the capability and authority to provide information in accordance with the research objectives.

The Covid-19 pandemic has had an impact on various sectors of life, including the government, economy, business, education, tourism, health, and other sectors. The central government and regional governments are making various efforts to deal with the Covid-19 pandemic situation (Donthu & Gustafsson, 2020). In addition, the community also made various efforts to support the government's efforts, including conducting social campaigns, research with Covid-19 as the main issue, as well as raising funds for certain groups affected by Covid-19. The handling of Covid-19 can be carried out based on systematic and planned steps. Quoted from (fisip.ui.ac.id accessed on September 13). Improper handling causes overlapping and even the results obtained are not optimal. Communication in a disaster is

not only needed in a disaster emergency but is also important during a pre-disaster. One of the mitigation efforts that can be carried out in the presence of the Regional Disaster Management Agency (BPBD) both regarding disaster management and prevention to reduce disaster risk, because BPBD is a non-ministerial institution whose main function is disaster management. This institution is also a field coordinator who is responsible for carrying out state duties in disaster prevention and management efforts (Qalbi, 2020).

Obstacles in handling Covid-19 in Bima Town are the culture of the people who are difficult to accept, the government's work programs are sometimes effective or not and the role of each sector must be large. This is caused by many factors, one of which is the low level of education in the community and the employment rate. Based on data from the Central Bureau of Statistics of Bima Town, the number of Bima Town's workforce in 2021 is 103,498, of which 99,881 are working and 3,687 are unemployed. It can be seen in the following data:

Pendidikan Tertinggi yang Ditempuhkan ¹ Educational Attainment ¹	Angkatan Kerja/Economically Active			Persentase Angkatan Kerja terhadap Angkatan Kerja Percentage of Working to Economically Active
	Bekerja/Working	Pengangguran ² Unemployment ²	Jumlah Angkatan Kerja Total of Economically Active	
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
0	18.417	98	18.515	99,47
1	10.300	105	10.405	98,99
2	42.571	2.185	44.756	95,12
3	28.523	1.299	29.822	95,64
Jumlah/Total	99.811	3.687	103.498	96,44

Figure 1. Workforce Data In 2021

In handling Covid-19 in Bima Town, there are 7 Community Health Centers and 1 Hospital which are used as references in handling Covid-19. In the beginning, in 2020, the Health Service signed a contract with the Mataram Health Sciences College Hospital.

Private institutions and community leaders play a very important role in socializing and changing public stigma related to Covid-19. So, people can follow health protocols which can ultimately reduce the number of Covid-19 cases. The government provides a manual report to the Province and then the Province will recap the Covid-19 data nationally according to the application. At the beginning of the emergence of Covid-19, namely on July 1-7, Bima Town was included in the green zone. After the easing of Covid-19 cases immediately rose. This is due to the lack of public awareness. The steps taken in handling Covid-19 are vaccination which is preceded by health workers, social distancing, and the construction of guard posts at Town entrances. Even though the government has been optimal in handling Covid-19, religious leaders and community leaders must set a good example and conduct coordination meetings about maximizing the main tasks of human resources and the efforts made. For example, a community health center that functions as a service can provide direct education through integrated service post activities that contain outreach to the community. The Health Office will provide daily reports to the Town and Provincial Task Forces every day. All reports are centered on

Kegiatan Utama Main Activity	Jenis Kelamin/Sex		
	Laki-Laki Male	Perempuan Female	Jumlah Total
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
I. Angkatan Kerja/Economically Active	57.671	45.827	103.498
1. Bekerja/Working	55.025	44.786	99.811
2. Pengangguran Terbuka/Unemployment	2.646	1.041	3.687
II. Bukan Angkatan Kerja/Economically Inactive	10.243	23.408	33.651
1. Sekolah/Attending School	3.056	4.222	7.278
2. Mengurus Rumah Tangga/Housekeeping	4.765	17.090	21.855
3. Lainnya/Others	2.422	2.096	4.518
Jumlah/Total	67.914	69.235	137.149

Catatan/Note: Sumber/Sources: BPS, Survei Angkatan Kerja Nasional (Sakernas) Agustus/BPS-Statistics Indonesia, August National Labor Force Survey

Pendidikan Tertinggi yang Ditempuhkan ¹ Educational Attainment ¹	Bukan Angkatan Kerja Not Economically Active		Persentase Angkatan Kerja terhadap Penduduk Usia Kerja Percentage of Economically Active to Working Age Population
	Jumlah Total	Persentase	
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
0	8.835	27.350	67,70
1	9.130	19.535	53,26
2	11.559	56.315	79,47
3	4.127	33.949	87,84
Jumlah/Total	33.651	137.149	75,46

Catatan/Note: 0. Sekolah Dasar (SD)/Primary School
1. Sekolah Menengah Pertama/Junior High School
2. Sekolah Menengah Atas/Senior High School
3. Perguruan Tinggi/College
4. Mencari pekerjaan/looking for work
5. Mempertajakan usaha/Establishing a new business/firm
6. Menawa tidak mungkin mendapat pekerjaan/expectation of job
7. Sudah punya pekerjaan tetapi belum mulai bekerja/Have a job in future start
Sumber/Sources: BPS, Survei Angkatan Kerja Nasional (Sakernas) Agustus/BPS-Statistics Indonesia, August National Labor Force Survey

the Department of Communications and Information Technology. The health office through the health promotion sector provides health information related to Covid-19 through several online and print media. Information conveyed through print media is such as banners, billboards, banners as well as individual and group counselling. Socialization is done directly and indirectly. Direct socialization is carried out by going to the field for socialization such as markets and schools until now. The information conveyed is a health campaign. The information target is all people in Bima Town who refer to the Mayor's Regulation on handling Covid-19 and other instructions. The direct approach to the community is seen from the cultural structure and by using the local language. Each region has different styles and characteristics but the essence is the same, namely working together in handling Covid-19. In addition, the government also carries out a vaccination program that aims to increase the body's immune system. The Task Force encountered obstacles that could hinder the handling of Covid-19, namely economic factors and a lack of public awareness.

The above statement is a step taken by the government in handling Covid-19. The government must work together with the community so that the spread of Covid-19 is quickly resolved. In handling disease outbreaks in the world, [Anthony de Mello \(1997\)](#) once warned that the number of victims could be five times if there was fear during a disease outbreak. One thousand people became victims because of illness, while four thousand people became victims because of panic ([Anthony De Mello, 1997](#)). Communication is the most important part in dealing with the threat of a pandemic. Public trust needs to be built and maintained so that there is no panic in the community and so that the handling can run smoothly. One of the instructions given by President Joko Widodo is that the Government must show that the Government is serious, ready, and able to handle the Covid-19 pandemic

(Quoted from [ksp.go.id](#) and accessed on September 13, 2021).

According to the Ministry of National Development Planning/ Bappenas (2021) in a book entitled Learning Study for Handling Covid-19 in Indonesia, there are four problems in handling Covid-19 faced by the government in Indonesia, namely the lack of accurate data and information, the lack of information dissemination related to several issues, low public trust, and less effective communication of government organizations.

The mayor as the highest leader in the Bima Town government took action and formed a task force unit team that had roles and functions in accordance with their respective institutions that would coordinate with each other in handling Covid-19. The community's response was initially less effective but so far it has started to have a good impact, judging by the declining number of Covid-19 incidents. However, there are also those that are not effective, such as many people who are afraid of vaccines even though the goals are good. There are still some community groups who convey wrong information, such as those who think that the impact of Covid-19 is not that heavy and is just a government game.

Communication planning under review. Determining the audience from the community's point of view is of course very much needed in the form of awareness and a role in breaking the chain of spread of Covid-19 by implementing the health protocols that have been set. The health protocols are always wearing masks, maintaining distance (social distancing and physical distancing), self-isolation, diligently washing hands with soap and running water, always carrying hand sanitizer and staying at home. As emphasized by [Onong Uchyana Effendy \(2007\)](#) that a communicator is required to have the ability and means to get feedback from the communicant so that the purpose of the message can be fulfilled properly and run effectively. The system that runs is also standard, where communication always goes

both ways: From the sender to the recipient and the recipient to the sender (West, & Tuner, 2010). The involvement above refers to the type of audience exposed to the Covid-19 virus. People who are not disciplined in following the health protocol rules require special policies from the government to find innovative solutions to reduce the spread of the Covid-19 virus in Bima Town (Qalbi, 2020).

CONCLUSION

The factor that hinders the performance of the task force in preventing Covid-19 in Bima Town is the existence of social media that discusses issues about the untruth of Covid-19 so that people become paranoid. However, in reality the community is able to accept when the government tries to educate and socialize so that it can minimize stigma. The supporting factor in handling this pandemic is that the government has prepared vaccines, supporting infrastructure, and the existing budget so that public spaces can be well maintained. Basically, it is necessary to educate the public that being vaccinated does not mean that they will not be re-exposed to Covid-19, but rather that they are able to increase immunity along with a clean and healthy lifestyle. This kind of education is carried out by the government through social media and other media.

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