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## **NETIZENS PERCEPTIONS OF THE ANNOUNCEMENT ABOUT THE NEW NORMAL POLICY: CONTENT ANALYSIS OF WHO INDONESIA INSTAGRAM ACCOUNT**

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### **Abstract**

Covid 19 virus still exists. However, social distancing has begun to be less stringent in several countries, including Indonesia. One of the reasons is to revive the economy that is starting to weaken. It brings the Indonesian Government to followed the WHO direction to implement New Normal. Various information about New Normal is starting to spread through many media channels, one of them is the Instagram account of @whoindonesia. Many comments from the account followers filled the comment box and not all of them were positive. This study aims to map various responses through the content analysis method. The purpose is to find out the netizens' perception of the New Normal. If the netizens understanding is different or not in accordance with the objective of The New Normal policy, then this policy might have a risk in increasing the covid-19. The result of this study is to provide an overview to policymakers about the characteristics of the audience they face in order to be able to determine the right communication strategy in reaching and providing understanding to them.

**Keywords:** content analysis; Instagram; WHO Indonesia; comment; new normal

Received 20 October 2021, Revised 9 November 2021, Accepted 10 November 2021

### **INTRODUCTION**

Coexist with coronavirus, is an exclamation to persuade people to stay productive amid the Covid-19 pandemic. Although the Covid-19 epidemic is still ongoing, social distancing has begun to be less stringent in several countries, including Indonesia. During the society's saturation due to lockdown policy and the sign of economic recession, the idea to coexist with coronavirus emerged. At the end of April 2020, WHO initiated the idea of New Normal. This idea emerged as a form of transition to return to the normal post-pandemic life (WHO Media Briefing, April 22nd, 2020). One of the reasons to implement this idea is to revive the economy that began to decline. In Indonesia, the new normal start to be

implemented in mid-June 2020. This policy started with President Jokowi's statement to prepare to coexist with Covid-19. (Ihsanuddin, 2020).

The need to normalize life through functioning social and economic activities stems from fears of recession due to that pandemic has almost completely stopped economic activities. The world is stuck in two currents of attraction that attract each other: economy versus health (Mas'udi 2013). The tug of war between economic interests and health has been going on since the Covid-19 outbreaks. The choices occur to be zero-sum, involving two conflicting interests and mutually trying to get rid of each other (Lin & Meissner, 2020). It is undeniable that this

epidemic has made various changes in many life sectors.

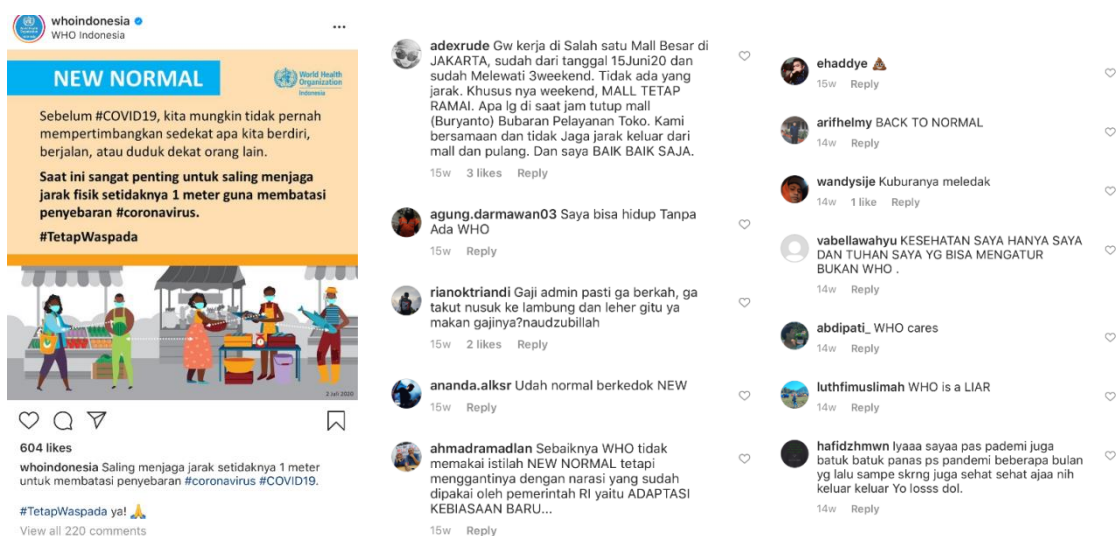
There are changes in the life of the society that occurs due to Covid-19. This change is an attempt to survive and to adapt during the pandemic. These efforts include the lockdown implementation, social distancing, work from home mechanisms, distance learning, and other adjustments that later on will become new habits. This new habit leads to a new normal way of life.

The WHO's New Normal refers to the need in designing institutionalize new protocols. This protocol is based on the health standards needed during the transition period before economic and social activities can function once again. Protocols related to lifestyles that can prevent Covid-19 are the requirements that need to be implemented by every individual. This new normal emerged as a topic that is often discussed by the public, either directly or through digital media.

The terminologi of New Normal itself has been mushrooming as a topic discussed in social media. This kind of information began to spread through various media channels, one of which is the @whoindonesia Instagram account. WHO or World Health Organization is one of the United Nations agencies that act as the international public

health coordinator. This prestigious international organization is avowed by Indonesian society. It is because WHO is a trusted organization that has helped the world in solving health problems, including in Indonesia.

WHO Indonesia uses many kinds of social media to convey information, one of which is Instagram. Reporting from databoks.katadata.co.id, 40% of the total Indonesian population (266.91 million people at the beginning of 2020) are internet literate, and they were also active in accessing the internet. Furthermore, based on infographic data, the number of Instagram application users in Indonesia reaches up to 80% of the total Indonesian population. This makes Instagram the fourth most used social media following Youtube, WhatsApp, and Facebook. Instagram @whoindonesia is used as a channel to post the new normal policy. This post received various responses that appeared in the comment box of this Instagram account. Although WHO is a world prestigious organization, they still face negative comments from the information they have posted. Such as information about the new normal that they posted received many negative comments.



**Picture 1 Information and Comments about New Normal On @whoindonesia Instagram Account**

Information about the new normal uploaded on the @whoindonesia account page in July 2020. It received hundreds of comments from its followers. It can be seen that the comments continued to grow over the weeks, and also almost all of the comments were negative. @whoindonesia Instagram followers no longer see WHO Indonesia as a reliable organization. These negatives comment keeping popping up even though the information content posted by @whoindonesia was informative and has a good intention, which is to alert the public.

It can be seen that there is a difference in understanding between the @whoindonesia purpose and the netizens' perception. If the audiences' perception is different from the @whoindonesia intention about the new normal, it may bring the risk of increasing the spread of the coronavirus. Providing understanding conveyed through media can be an interesting discourse. Social media as a medium of contemporary communication has the power to influence opinion and to give understanding about the current viral issue (Ardianto, 2011). The audience can construct new meaning according to the content of the text message conveyed.

This study aims to gain various perceptions from audience responses through the content analysis method. The purpose of this study is to find out the understanding of the new normal. The result of this study is to provide an overview to policymakers about the characteristics of their audience, to then be able to determine the right communication strategy to reach and give them a better understanding. Based on the introduction above, the researchers examine the perception of @whoindonesia followers toward the New Normal that is analyzed by mapping various responses through content analysis methods.

## METHOD

This study uses a constructivist interpretive paradigm. In the context of social

research, this paradigm is used to interpret the way audiences construct life and the meanings they give (Ardianto, 2011). It follows the purpose of this study, which is to find out how the audience interprets the term New Normal, through their responses on social media. The research approach used is qualitative because the researcher aims to gain an understanding of the meaning that emerges as a response from @whoindonesia's IG followers. The type of research that will be conducted is descriptive research. According to (Sugiyono, 2010), descriptive research is research conducted to determine the value of independent variables, both one variable without making comparisons, or connecting with other variables.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Audience Reception Theory or Reception theory emphasizes the role of the message recipient and not the message sender. Meaning is not attached to the text, but it is formed by the relationship between the text and the text reader. In this theory, the audiences are positioned as parties who have the power to create text meaning, and also act following with the meaning they create upon the text message itself (Aryani, 2006). Reception Theory by Stuart Hall highlights the communication process that includes complex encoding and decoding. It is not a linear process. This theory suggest that recipients are not passive but active in reproducing new definitions from the text conveyed by the text sender. Text recipients act as producers of means. This situation makes the message is not always the same between the message sender and recipient. The meaning of the message can be interpreted differently by the recipient during the meaning reproduction process.

The focus in this theory lies in the decoding process that includes interpretation and meaning reproduction. In this theory message and meaning is the main object of attention at every stage of the process. Hall

introduced the term encoding-decoding to show that meanings constructed by the

media are not always interpreted the same way by the audience.

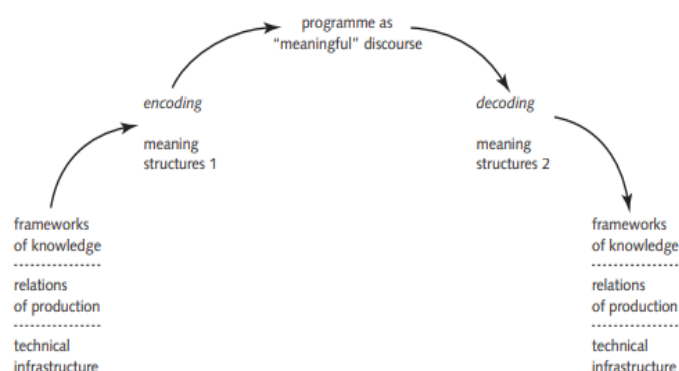


Figure 2.1 Stuart Hall Meaning Circulation Diagram

Hall developed a linear communication process (sender – message – receiver). Hall states propose four stages in the communication process which are “production, circulation, use (which here he call distribution or consumption), and reproduction (Sapuvelda, 2021). Interpreting Hall’s concept, During adds that every stage affect the next, and in the end, the message meaning will be implicit until the last production stage. Each step is independent because it can be analyzed separately.

The process of encoding includes a message or information developing process that is expected by the sender. In communicating, word choice significantly affects the effectiveness of conveying meaning. Communication will run smoothly if there are similarities in the meaning between the sender and the recipient. The delivery of meaning depends on the ability of the message senders to understand their recipients. If the message recipient is unable to understand the meaning conveyed by the message sender, there will be different perceptions that cause ineffective communication. Furthermore, the choice of media, word, tone, time, and many other choices determine the effectiveness of the encoding process (DuBrin, 2011).

Even though the message sender tries to get their message meaning conveyed, the

message recipient undergoes a decoding process that can make different meanings among them. This difference is affected by many factors like perceptions, thoughts, and past experiences. Thus, Hall states that encoding and decoding have an asymmetrical structure. The symmetrical degree shows a level of understanding and misunderstanding in the message exchange process (Ott & Mack, 2020).

### WHO’s New Normal as a joke

The comments are seen in the WHO New Normal's post mostly contain jokes. These jokes were of many types which are humor, satire, and sarcasm. Few jokes that are seen in the comment on WHO’s New Normal posts are:

“what a funny jokes”,

“makes me wanna laugh, imagining how an online motorcycle transportation put the passenger in a distance of 1 meter?”

“Why don’t the regulation makes it 10-meter distance instead of only 1 meter, so people on the market will shout at each other”.

“I was eating meatballs wih a lot chilli sauce. So my nose are running, am I infected with the Corona virus?”

“shopping in the market with 1-meter social distancing? What a joke!”

“Yesterday I trip over and my foot got hurt, am I corona positive?”

The post by WHO Indonesia regarding the New Normal urges us to maintain a minimum distance of one meter and stay alert to the early symptoms of the corona. Netizen makes a joke about it. The netizens find the act of keeping a one-meter distance funny because it reflects everyday life. Like when shopping in a busy market or when using a motorcycle taxi transportation service, this is impossible to do with a distance of 1 meter.

Furthermore, there were jokes on the alerts about corona symptoms. The main symptoms of corona are coughing and shortness of breath used as a joke if other triggers cause symptoms such as corona like eating spicy food or crying in pain. These kinds of jokes show that netizens do not take the WHO Indonesia's New Normal recommendation seriously. There is a difference in meaning between the sender of the message and the recipient of the message. The message sender is serious and urges the audience to start life with the provisions of the new normal, but the message recipient interprets the message as something that is not serious gives rise to a new meaning, namely a joke.

In addition, jokes about 1-meter social distancing and being aware of the symptoms of the coronavirus, netizens also filled in funny satire comments. This satire is addressed to WHO Indonesia since they ask the people to be alert regarding coronavirus. Comments containing satire humor include:

"What is the point of using a mask if we can avoid the virus by social distancing?"

"I want to go to the minimarket, do you guys need something? Since we are not allowed to go out so let me bought it for you and get corona positive myself"/

"looks like it is a fake account, how stupid you are, WHO!"

"Corona does not infect the poor right? Since they can not afford to pay for the expensive corona test.

"Today we get a penalty for a hundred thousand rupiahs if we don't wear a mask, tomorrow if we don't put a chip on our forehead, will they prisoner us?"

The innuendo by netizens refers to the previous WHO's Instagram post, the post about using masks, and the penalty for those who do not wear masks. It makes the public sneer at WHO because the post conveyed seems far-fetched and tends to scare and not help. It causes a lack of public trust in the official WHO Indonesia account, so the credibility of this account is questioned. In addition, as a form of vigilance against the corona in the New Normal upload, WHO urges you to stay alert to corona symptoms and limit yourself to minimize the spread of the coronavirus. The audience interpreted this information differently. They interpreted it as a form of limiting daily activities such as shopping at the supermarket. That's why there is a satire at WHO Indonesia. If you want to go shopping, it's better to have someone else do it for you so are safe from the coronavirus.

Another way to stay alert from the coronavirus is by taking a medical check directly through a polymerase chain reaction test whenever you experience the symptom to make it early detected. However, this kind of test requires a large sum of money, so this facility is difficult to obtain for people with middle to lower economic status. It triggers insinuations that the poor will not get the coronavirus, because they can't afford the test. This satire leads to the effect of the corona on the community's economy, that all forms of policy that is applied in the community do not only look at the health side but also need to look at the existing economic situation.

Furthermore, other comments contain satire against WHO because they see WHO regulate the lives of others with all the policies given. WHO Indonesia previously issue put a mask on policy, and following that policies, there are sanctions if they do not

follow them, such as fines. It gives another meaning to the WHO's appeal, namely WHO regulates how we live, including living in a new normal way. Although WHO appealed in a positive tone to start life in a new normal way, the public interpreted it in a negative tone that WHO Indonesia was trying to regulate people's way of life. This meaning can be seen from the satire comments of netizens who have a sense of humor.

Other forms of humor or jokes that appear in comments on the WHO Indonesia website contain skeptical views conveyed in a joking tone. The skeptical views expressed by netizens arise because the credibility of WHO Indonesia is not good in the eyes of netizens. Comments containing skeptical humor include "All day long I put on a mask, out of breath, flu, does that mean I infected coronavirus? Btw Tedros doesn't even wear a mask, so why the hell you told people to wear it? #truenormal  
"Ooo really"

"I work at one of the large shopping mall in Jakarta, since June 15, 2021 there were no social distancing. Especially on weekend, THE MALL IS STILL CROWDED. At closing time is the most crowded. We run this mall together, no social distancing. AND I'AM FINE.

"Corona without mainstream media is just a virus, it is not as dangerous. Another thing, I went to crowded places and I never wear a mask, until now I'm fine. Wearing a mask too long will make you run out of breathe, uncomfortable! True normal not new normal"

Comments with a skeptical view of the appeal from WHO Indonesia arise because the audience sees the conditions in which they live are far different from the picture of life presented by WHO Indonesia. It makes WHO Indonesia seem excessive and tend to scare. There is a comment that intends to compare WHO Indonesia with WHO International by carrying the name of the Director-General of WHO Tedros. This skeptical comment compares the real-life that

netizens live by not following the advice of WHO Indonesia. One of the netizen comments said that until now when the WHO recommendations for Indonesia are getting more and more (use masks, keep your distance, be aware of corona symptoms, etc.) in this case, he said that his condition is fine and he can still live well without following WHO regulations in Indonesia.

Skeptical comments by comparing real-life experiences sparked other comments also stated that the corona is not a dangerous virus but the mainstream media that continues to report on the coronavirus making the virus a deadly virus. This comparison is expressed clearly by the expression 'true normal' as opposed to the expression 'new normal'. Through the news of New Normal, the WHO Indonesia Instagram account is seen as one of the mainstream media that has contributed to making this coronavirus seem more dangerous than it is.

The skeptical comments shades of dark humor show that there is a change in meaning between the sender of the message and the recipient of the message. In this case, the message recipients play an active role as producers of meaning. They interpret that WHO Indonesia is excessive in conveying its policies. This meaning arises because the public does not take for granted the message delivered by WHO Indonesia, but they find that there are differences from the actual reality.

There are various kinds of jokes or funny comments submitted by netizens, ranging from subtle jokes to dark humor. Often in these jokes, there is a curse directed at WHO Indonesia. The words that often appear in these comments are pretentious, stupid, idiot, and deceptive.

### **WHO's New Normal as a life controller**

The audience interpreted the call for New Normal as a way that WHO takes control of the people's way of life. The audience felt that the WHO should not regulate human life

in such away. The policy is interpreted as something that people must do, and if we don't do as were told in that policy there will be sanctions. Various kinds of comments regarding this situation can be seen, among others:

"Too much control, WHO.. you don't even put food in our mouth!!!"

"Only God and myself can control my health, and not WHO"

"My health is only me and God can control not WHO"

"As long as corona exist in indonesia, i never wear a mask until now dan everyday i hangout at night, work until afternoon, the fact is i'am fine, and you know why? because i have my mind, my thought that i'am not you dog"

The comments above show that people feel that WHO Indonesia is too controlling their lives. Unlike the previous one, the comments on this matter are brief and sharp. It is seen from the use of capital letters and netizens do not hesitate to swear by mentioning the word 'dog' in their comments. This comment shows that the position of WHO is valued higher than the community, not as a community institution. This negative view arises because WHO Indonesia tends to rule rather than advise.

In another comment, seeing the position of WHO Indonesia is rated higher than the community, netizens compare it with God. God has the right to regulate the lives of his servants because the life that humans live is a gift from God. This is compared to WHO Indonesia, which seems to over-regulate human life without the right to public life. WHO's an inability to regulate the lives of others is also evident from the comments that WHO does not take people's lives. Viewers feel they are living their own lives as well as supporting their own lives, and therefore other people have no right to control the lives they live.

The comments as a response toward the WHO New Normal policy post shows that there is a different meaning between the

sender and the recipient of the message. WHO Indonesia advises people to start living life in a new way because the impact of the coronavirus has not ended, but people interpret the message as an order. The audience saw that WHO Indonesia ordered and did not recommend it because they judged that WHO Indonesia's position was higher than the community. Although this is not the true intention of WHO Indonesia, various factors cause the message recipient to produce a new meaning that is much different from the message sender.

### **WHO's New Normal as WHO's Business**

Uploads about the New Normal life are also interpreted as a continuation of WHO's business, this is due to the suspicion that WHO received a lot of funds due to the covid 19 pandemic. Various negative prejudices emerged from netizens who were conveyed through the comments feature of WHO Indonesia's New Normal uploads. These comments include;

"@whoindonesia,what kind of institution is this? No wonder USA leaves this institution.

Because you operate vaccine business #fckwho #Humanslivesmatters"

"Let me help you promote or sell rapidtest @whoindonesia , but share the profit equally, ok!"

"Are there any jod vacancy in WHO?? I'm asking seriously"

"I want to ask, did you gain big salary in spreading covad-covid news over and over again? Layoffs and significant income decrease does not exist in WHO institution, right?"

"Criminal wrapped in government organization. Hope that people who work in WHO or those behind this will be forgiven by God Almighty. Or just go to hell!"

The Covid-19 virus which it's origin is undiscovered has given rise to various negative prejudices. One of them is the prejudice that WHO Indonesia has greatly benefited from this virus. In the comments

above, it appears that this pandemic has become a business field for WHO Indonesia. Many people's economies are getting worse due to this pandemic, including pay cuts and layoffs however WHO Indonesia looks stable and is benefiting. It triggered satirical comments asking for job vacancies at WHO Indonesia. In addition, WHO Indonesia's New Normal post is seen as a business, not as a selfless appeal.

WHO Indonesia received negative prejudice from netizens when they encourage the public to live the New Normal way through social media posts. The audience saw that WHO Indonesia had another purpose in this action. The netizen suspected that WHO Indonesia runs a business and takes advantage of the policies issued. WHO Indonesia encourages people to start living the New Normal way by implementing vaccines and warning to use masks. These activities were seen as WHO Indonesia's efforts to sell vaccines and masks. So that the public sees that the necessary action is solely for the benefit of WHO Indonesia and not in the interest of maintaining public health. Another innuendo also appeared in the comments, where netizens expressed their desire to cooperate with WHO Indonesia to sell masks.

Furthermore, some comments declare WHO Indonesia as a criminal. This comment was for WHO as an organizational unit and for everyone who works at WHO Indonesia. Besides such comments, other comments appear in the form of insults. WHO Indonesia was sworn to hell because of his actions that took advantage of the suffering of the people.

Comments about prejudice in the comments box toward The New Normal WHO Indonesia post carry a new meaning. WHO Indonesia has good intentions in uploading a post for the New Normal way of life, but this good intention is interpreted differently by the public. The audience interprets this message by stating that WHO Indonesia has hidden intentions in calling for a New Normal life. Through the same information, the

message recipient generates a new meaning that contrasts with the original meaning intended by the message sender. The New Normal post is interpreted by the community as an effort to make a profit from the vaccine and mask business for WHO Indonesia.

## CONCLUSION

From the analysis, the researchers found different meanings between WHO Indonesia as the message sender and the netizens as the message recipient toward the same message. WHO Indonesia has uploaded a post to start living in the New Normal (living side by side with the Covid-19 virus by maintaining distance and using masks) to reduce the number of covid cases in Indonesia. It applied as a step for people to be able to return to their daily activities during the covid 19 pandemic. Meanwhile, viewers who see the New Normal post by WHO Indonesia reproduce a new meaning that is very different from the message sender's meaning. The message recipient interprets this New Normal post by reproducing various new meanings.

Researchers mapped new meanings that appear as a response toward the new normal's post. These new meanings are; as a joke (light humor, satire, and skepticism), as a life controller, and as a WHO Indonesia's business. This new meaning is analyzed through the contents of netizen comments on WHO Indonesia's New Normal post. Humorous comments are the type of comments that appear the most in the comments column. In this case, the serious tone conveyed by WHO Indonesia is interpreted as a joke. The audience compares it to reality and thinks WHO Indonesia is too dramatic with the actual situation. Therefore, netizens came up with the phrase 'real normal' as opposed to 'new normal'. The New Normal post raises the meaning of WHO Indonesia as a regulator of people's lives. WHO urges the public to start living the New Normal way, but the public interprets this encouragement as an order. If the



recommendation was unimplemented, certain sanctions will be imposed. If you don't follow their encouragement of wearing a mask, you have to pay a fine. The last meaning that emerges is WHO Indonesia's business. This meaning can be seen from the comments that contain various negative prejudices against WHO Indonesia's motives for implementing the New Normal. WHO Indonesia has good intentions in uploading the New Normal appeal, but this good intention is interpreted as a hidden intention by netizens. Netizens interpret WHO Indonesia's New Normal upload as an action to increase their business profits. The business is allegedly the result of their policies and appeals, such as selling masks or vaccines. The new meaning that appears is very contrary to the original meaning conveyed by the message sender.

This study shows that netizens actively being a meaning reproducer who reproduces the message delivered by the message sender. It makes the meaning of a message is not always the same between the sender and recipient of the message. In communicating, the choice of words greatly affects the effectiveness of conveying meaning. Although the message sender has tried to create the same meaning between the message sender and recipient message, the recipient undergoes a decoding process that make difference in meaning interpreting. This difference is influenced by various factors such as perceptions, thoughts, and past experiences.

Based on the research, the authors provide the following suggestions:

1. There is a need for further research on the factors that influence netizens in reproducing new meanings that are very different from the meanings expressed by the message sender. There is also a need for further research about netizen comments content on other social media accounts that discuss the same theme, New Normal. It is important to

understand various comments and new meanings concretely.

2. It is necessary to find an effective way to overcome the problem of changing meaning which is very different from the initial meaning so that the delivery of policies for the common interest can have maximum impact. The researcher suggests exploring the factors that might cause the delivery of a policy to be ineffective. There may be parties who feel aggrieved and fearful of the policies presented, so WHO Indonesia needs to consider ways to convey recommendations more effectively, such as using a more positive tone (positive tone – not fear or orders, rewards, and no sanctions).

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