

Too Early or Too Lazy: How Citizens Engage Through Instagram in Discourse about Issuance of the EUA COVID-19 Vaccine by the Indonesian FDA

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INTRODUCTION

COVID-19 is the first pandemic in the social media era. Social media became a medium for disseminating information abundantly, whether valid or not, creating confusion in the community and being referred to by the WHO as infodemic. In this pandemic, infodemiology that has existed since the creation of the World Wide Web is moving to a different level that has never been predicted before. Because of the growing infodemic on social media, the government must also be present on the same medium to be an essential source of information for the public. In Government 2.0 Utilization theory, Khan (2013) mentions two main elements: social media and citizen engagement. In the context of the development of the COVID-19 vaccine in Indonesia as a vast country with the complexity of an archipelagic nation and social media activity from the government institution responsible for issuing Emergency Use Authorisation (EUA) of the COVID-19 vaccine, namely the Indonesian FDA, this study aims to analyse the formation of citizen engagement on government social media posts on the topic of the COVID-19 vaccine development. The social media platform used is Instagram.

METHODOLOGY

Following criticism by Medaglia and Zheng (2017) that research related to the fact that government social media use tends to focus on the government instead of users, this study focuses on the engagement provided by citizens through the like and comments feature on Instagram posts by the Indonesian FDA from August 6, 2020, to February 18, 2021, specifically regarding COVID-19 vaccine development content. This research used a positivism approach with explanatory sequential mixed methods and three stages of analysis. First, regression analysis between media richness predictor variables of the Instagram content with dependent variables in the form of quantification of likes and comments. The first step is followed by sentiment analysis of comments using InSet Semantic Lexicon and Emoji Sentiment Ranking v1.0. Third, qualitative analysis through interviews with three sides: government social media administrators, the community, and influencers. Finally, the results of the interviews are processed with Computer-Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis (CAQDA).

RESULTS

Based on an analysis of 2,168 posts in the specified duration, 75 853 likes and 517 comments were received. Infographics and photos became the most dominant posts with percentages of 33.6 % and 31.8 %. In an analysis using negative binomial regression, media richness significantly influenced the formation of citizen engagement with the photos, videos, photos and texts, infographics, semi-videos, and texts. On confirmation using Welch's ANOVA, media richness also significantly influenced the formation of citizen engagement with a significance of 0.000. The word 'vaksin' or 'vaccine' became the most mentioned by citizens in the comments area. Of the 85 posts commented on by Instagram users, 50 posts (58.82 %) gained positive sentiment, 9 posts (10.59 %) neutral, and 26 posts (30.59 %) negative sentiment. The research sources emphasise user behaviour, user characteristics, and citizen engagement, shown in the Kamada-Kawai model.

DISCUSSION

In contrast to several studies that mention that infographics enhance citizen engagement, infographics are on different levels in this research. There is a repost factor that reduces the engagement obtained. Citizens who have already engaged, via likes or comments, with a post are less likely to engage in similar photos uploaded by other accounts. The photo part is leading in line with the originality of posts, and the proximity factor between the activities carried out by the Indonesian FDA and citizens' interests. In terms of issuing EUA, the Indonesian FDA was thought of in two distinct ways. On one hand, they were considered to have acted too quickly and neglected public safety. On the other hand, they were thought to be too reluctant to release EUA for COVID-19 vaccine development. Therefore, in managing its social media, the government needs to analyse the content of engagement by the public, primarily through their comments, to obtain information about public acceptance of information and education submitted at the same time to better recognise the discourse taking place in the community so that the government can establish a more optimal communication strategy.