PARTICIPATORY COMMUNICATION OF BEKASI CITY RESIDENTS IN COVID 19 VACCINATION ACTIVITIES

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ABSTRACT

It has been argued that the provision of suitable participatory communication can improve people’s participation especially for taking Covid 19 vaccines. The present study aims to analyze the participatory communication of Bekasi local government to reach their goal, making minimum of 30% Bekasi population receiving vaccine. The present study uses a descriptive qualitative approach through observation, interviews and documentation. Four key informants are interviewed while mass messages from the key informants are observed. The results of present study suggest that participatory communication related to the administration of Covid 19 vaccines to Bekasi residents involve Regional Work Units (SKPD) to the lowest local apparatus such as Neighborhood Association (RT) and Citizens Association (RW). Messages are spread using WhatsApp Groups of each RT. In addition, residents who have not taken the vaccine will be encouraged to take vaccines at the nearest vaccination posts.

Keywords: Covid 19 vaccination, herd immunity, participatory communication, Bekasi city
1. **Introduction**

Because the population that has received dose 3 vaccine in Bekasi is still considered low, the government has made various efforts to increase the number of people who have been vaccinated. Based on the evaluation of the implementation of the covid 19 vaccination in Bekasi City as of July 18, 2022, the achievements include: dose 1 (86.72 %), dose 2 (84.09%), dose 3 (38.01%). The data shows that the Covid 19 vaccination in Bekasi City has not yet reached the target, especially for dose 3 vaccination, which is still below 50%. Therefore, it is necessary for the participation of the wider community to be able to meet the minimum target for residents who are vaccinated against covid 19 in Bekasi City (Admin, 2022). Given the low number of residents who have received the Covid 19 vaccine, especially the third dose, the Bekasi City government made various efforts to increase the level of participation by issuing a circular requesting all policy makers such as the police and the armed forces to assist the population who received the Covid 19 vaccine (Niman, 2022). The points above show the low level of Bekasi residents who have received the Covid 19 vaccine and the Bekasi City government's efforts to increase the participation rate of the Covid 19 vaccine.

Related to the low number of population in Bekasi that have taken Covid 19 vaccines, participatory communication can be one solution to increase the number of populations receiving the Covid 19 vaccine. In this regard, the low level of participation in the Covid 19 vaccine in Bekasi could be due to the ineffectiveness of socializing the Covid 19 vaccine or social sanctions that do not function very well in an emergency (Gandrayni & Hadi, 2021). Instead of using socialization or social sanctions, participatory communication can be a solution. It is because participatory communication can unite stakeholders to collaborate and solve the problems (Kheerajit & Flor, 2013) as well as to help the stakeholders achieving social empowerment (Incio et al, 2021). Several studies have managed to examine how participatory communication can be
used to improve the participation level of Covid 19 vaccine administration. A study of Burgess et al (2021) argues the importance of participatory communication to improve Covid 19 vaccine’s uptake. In addition, a study of Badruddin & Meysyanti (2022) analyzes the effects of socialization toward community participation in vaccination uptake. However, there is still a lack of research which specifically analyzes how participatory communication can be used to improve Covid 19 vaccines’ uptake especially in an area such as Bekasi. The present study aims to examine how participatory communication is applied for increasing the numbers of people who take Covid 19 vaccines.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Participatory Communication

Tuft & Mefalopulos (2009) stated that participation can be seen from the perspective of social movements and is project-based or institutional in involving ordinary people in a development process that leads to change. Community participation in the development process can be realized in three main factors, namely willingness, ability and opportunity (Sumardjo & Saharudin 2003).

Participatory communication is a form of development program strategy that involves the community in development. The community is directed to understand the problems that occur and involve in planning to the implementation of development (Kusumadi-nata et al. 2012). The design of participatory communication strategies according to Tuft & Metalopulos (2009) is divided into two modalities, namely monologic and dialogical. Monologic is a one-way communication approach promoting and raising awareness of innovations that can benefit stakeholders. This approach concerns one or a mix of levels of change related to awareness, knowledge, attitude or behavior, and practice. The second modality is dialogue, which involves strategies that require collaboration, mediation, conflict resolution, mobilization or partnership and coalition building.

Participatory communication can increase social accountability and transparency in the good governance
sector by encouraging the formation of a common space, where various stakeholders meet to make a common agreement in finding solutions to a problem. Furthermore, Muchtar (2016) argues that participatory communication is one approach to realizing development goals through active community participation. This communication seeks to generate community participation by being embraced through grass-roots communication that is spiced up by government policies and interventions. The community is approached to be able to participate in thinking about the real needs, so that it can give birth to an agreement between the government in the various programs being held. The important thing that needs to be emphasized in participatory communication is the existence of community activities that are supported by the government.

3. Methodology

The present research uses a descriptive qualitative approach. In this regard, the present study uses interviews with four key informants, observation and documentation as research instruments. Interviews are administered to four key informants. They are four heads of RT in Bekasi. Observations are made by observing the communication messages made by the key informants to their residents to take part in the Covid 19 vaccination program.

4. Results and Discussion

Information regarding the implementation of the COVID-19 vaccination in Bekasi City was also intensified through various media platforms, both mass media and social media. One of the information regarding the implementation of vaccination is as presented in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1. Information about Covid 19 Vaccination in Bekasi

Based on Figure 1, information on the COVID-19 vaccination is presented at the Patriot Chandrabaga Stadium. The public can choose type 1 or type 2 vaccination. The information is
circulated on the official website of the Bekasi City Government, and on social media, so that it can reach all levels of society. Covid 19 vaccination is also administered in some shopping centers in Bekasi City to increase the recipients of the Covid 19 vaccination in Bekasi City. Information about this is as presented in Figure 2 below.

The present study analyzes the real conditions of the vaccination program from a participatory perspective or direct community involvement. Researchers made observations by identifying the contents of conversations with residents about vaccination activities, as well as conducting interviews with key informants. The results of the observations found that participatory communication in the vaccination program went well. This is found in communication activities carried out by the Head of the RT who always provides updated information to his citizens regarding the implementation of vaccination in the environment. The head of the RT in area A did not only invite, but also involved the community as a committee for vaccination activities so that citizen participation was quite good.

Although there are some residents who have vaccinated in other places, these residents still report to the head of the RT so that later they will not be registered for re-vaccination. This proves that the communication that occurs to residents and key informants is very good so that the data collected will be relevant to the actual situation. With good communication between the residents and the head of the RT, the implementation of vaccination in the key informant area has run smoothly and until now almost all residents of housing have received vaccinations.

The communication between the head of the RT and residents builds public awareness regarding vaccinations, which received a positive re-
sponse, making the area protected from the spread of the Covid-19 virus. The practice of participatory communication will result in mutual success to build a healthy area and build a positive change. From this fact, the researcher concludes that information from participatory communication activities is the key to the success of the vaccination program. The head of the RT in area A provides information to residents regarding vaccination and the residents respond well so that communication can run smoothly and the message to be conveyed can be understood and obeyed by residents.

Meanwhile, the results of observations at area B, the key informant actively provides information on Vaccination Activities for residents, even though they only use the WhatsApp as a social media channel. For vaccination activities, the head of the RT succeeded in bringing the vaccine from the capital city of Jakarta. Residents who want to get the vaccine first register via WhatsApp group, then take turns visiting the vaccine location. This method calms the residents, because vaccination activities do not cause crowds. Residents come in turns to the vaccination location according to the registration number on the WhatsApp group.

The results of observations in Area B showed that the Head of the RT stated that he was actively providing information on Vaccination Activities to his residents. As in December 2021, village officials conducted house-to-house checks to ensure that residents had received vaccinations. Each resident was given a piece of paper to fill out in order to obtain the vaccination database. From this activity, officers from the village obtained positive data that almost all of its residents had received vaccinations.

The success of vaccination with participatory communication methods also occurred in Area C. Key informants said that every time they carried out vaccinations they always involved residents as committees. The duties of the residents include, among others, conducting socialization by announcing at the mosque, visiting people's homes, and involving community leaders. The involvement of community leaders is quite effective because it
becomes a reference in increasing community participation. Because the figures involved have earned the public's trust, the public's acceptance of the vaccination program is also very good.

5. **Conclusion**

The results of this study concluded that vaccination activities in Bekasi City were successful because of participatory communication activities carried out by stakeholders. Vaccination, which was originally mandatory and tends to be forced, becomes voluntary. On the other hand, people are actively looking for vaccination locations to complete the vaccine dose in their bodies. Participatory communication has succeeded in forming a message to citizens that vaccination is a necessity, not an obligation. So with this perspective, the government's task in preventing the spread of the COVID-19 virus becomes easier.

**Referensi**


