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Cultural Approach in Responding to the Crisis of Public Trust

Sleman Government's Strategy in Encouraging COVID-19 Vaccination

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Abstract

In the case of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is necessary to reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19 through the vaccination program. Along with vaccination socialization, there is a lot of hoax information and disinformation related to vaccines which unfold distrust and reluctance among people to be vaccinated. However, it is different in the Special Region of Yogyakarta, especially the Sleman area, which has the highest vaccination rate and is declared to be completing the COVID-19 Vaccination in 11 months. This condition is an example of trust from the Sleman community listening to vaccination recommendations. The application of a cultural approach in increasing public trust to vaccinate against COVID-19 is also interesting to study further. Therefore, this study examines how the efforts to build public trust utilizing a cultural approach to crisis communication by the Department of Public Relations of the Sleman Government, which builds an image and manages the COVID-19 crisis, as well as being the Spokesperson for the COVID-19 Task Force. The research method used is a case study that explicitly discusses vaccination programs between January and May 2021. Data collection was done through in-depth interviews with the Department of Public Relations of the Sleman Government and secondary data through literature studies, related documents, and internet sources. The data analysis technique applies the approach of Miles and Huberman (1998), with data validation techniques through source triangulation. The efforts of the Department of Public Relations of the Sleman Government generated a high level of trust due to the decentralization policy which strengthened their relation with the community. The analysis results prove that the application of crisis communication by the Department of Public Relations of the Sleman Government intersects and supports each other on public trust in both the selection of actors, the preparation of messages, and the use of media. The coverage of elements of public trust present in the crisis communication of the COVID-19 Vaccination program proves that there is a link between effective crisis communication which has implications for high public trust.

Introduction

The presence of the COVID-19 pandemic became a disaster that devastated all countries, including Indonesia. The massive spread of the virus is categorized as a pandemic as stated in Law No. 24/2007 that pandemics are part of non-natural disasters and following Presidential Decree No. 12 of 2021 concerning the Determination of Non-Natural Disasters Spreading COVID-19 as National Disasters. This condition then puts Indonesia in the face of a significant crisis. The state of the national crisis was then not only related to health conditions but also affected various sectors such as employment, economy, business, education and tourism.

The COVID-19 crisis was also exacerbated by the issue of public distrust of 43% (Annur, 2021), which was caused by the Government's inconsistency in handling COVID-19 (Adriyanti, 2020) and hoax information that caused uneasiness in the society (Aprilia, 2021). The Ministry of Communication and Information Technology (MoICT) found 1,670 hoaxes related to COVID-19 from January 23, 2020, to June 25, 2021 (Kunjana, 2021). Hoaxes related to COVID-19 have implications for the decrease in public trust in the Government due to the rise of false news. News discussing the virus in the mass media eventually creates panic and makes it difficult for people to believe any information (Lestiyanti & Purworini, 2022). Based on the survey conducted by Indonesian Political Indicators in April 2021, 14.2% of the public did not believe it, and 26.6% did not care about COVID-19. Meanwhile, the public who trusts in the Government was only 4.3% (Annur, 2021). In addition, as it is well known, the Government's stuttering in dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted public trust. The inconsistency factor conveyed by the Government in relation to data raises diverse public opinion and makes the situation even more uncertain (Fairuzzaman et al, 2021). Moreover, Ma'ruf Amin, vice president, even linked this pandemic with the decreasing level of public worship (Nabila, 2020). Figure 1 illustrates the public trust, which shows a decline in public trust and an increase in public distrust.

The Indonesian Government has conducted various efforts to stop the spread of the COVID-19 virus, including COVID-19 vaccination programs. In January 2021, the COVID-19 vaccine began to be given to the people of Indonesia. However, along with vaccination socialization from January 2021 to May 2021, many hoax information and disinformation about vaccines were being discussed. The hoaxes include vaccines that

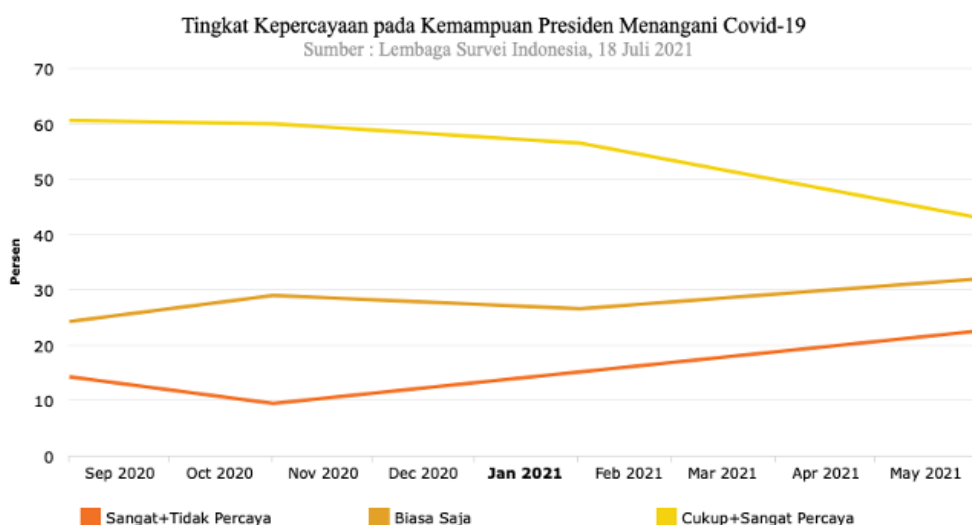


Figure 1. Public Trust Towards Government
Source: Lembaga Survei Indonesia (2021)

were just the same as being infected with the coronavirus, the process of making vaccines was too quick and may be dangerous, vaccines contain microchips, and vaccines could change human DNA (Angraini, 2021). The issue of hoaxes and disinformation related to Vaccination generates public distrust and reluctance to vaccinate.

As stated in previous studies, gaining public trust is not easy, especially in the midst of an upheaval of hoaxes and misinformation. This was conveyed by Widiantara (2020) in his research entitled *Infodemic COVID-19: Momentum to Build Public Trust in Mainstream Media* where confusion of information has implications for noisy perspectives and opinions. In addition, according to research conducted by Kairout & Ersya (2021) entitled *Analysis of the Level of Public Trust in the Implementation of the COVID-19 Handling Policy by the Kubung District Government*, stated that there is a lack of public trust in the government in implementing the policy for handling COVID-19 as the government does not have governmental units who have emotional engagement with the community. It can be seen that there is no opinion leader factor who has cultural engagement with the community.

Therefore, in conducting crisis communication management, it is necessary to consider aspects of the cultural background of the audience in implementing and planning communication strategies (Wertz & Sora, 2010). Research on culture in crisis management conducted by Oliveira (2013) proves that crises are created and resolved through communication, and cultural values influence how countries respond to crises they face. The study explains that knowledge of cultural diversity is one of the requirements to enter a society that can be used as a crisis management strategy.

The cultural approach to crisis communication management seems to have been successfully delivered by the Province of Special Region of Yogyakarta. This province was declared as the fastest region in Indonesia in completing the COVID-19 Vaccination. Sleman Regency, the area with the highest number of COVID-19 cases, is the highest vaccination rate contributor area than other regencies in Yogyakarta. Sleman Regency vaccinated 78.03% of their population compared to other districts (Wicaksono, 2021). This achievement indicates the strong desire for vaccination reflects the successful education strategy to the public on vaccination-related information. In this situation, the Department of Public Relations of the Sleman Regency Government plays a vital role in becoming a facilitator, communicator, and mediator in crisis communication to convey regulations and the benefits of vaccines.

Therefore, this research will examine the cultural approach efforts generated by the Sleman Government as their strategy in encouraging COVID-19 Vaccination from January – May 2021. This study aims to identify and contribute to any possible efforts and strategies to gain public trust utilizing a crisis communication approach by the Government. This research can contribute to the discussion on crisis communication studies aiming to build public trust. At the same time, it can also provide policy recommendations to other local governments to build public trust for accelerating COVID-19 vaccination rate through a cultural approach.

Literature Review

Constructing public trust during a pandemic

During the pandemic, building public trust is the most important thing for the government to establish. In the chaos of the pandemic, the government has the responsibility to provide direction and safety of the people in their country. Therefore, trust is a very fundamental dimension for governing modern society. Trust is the foundation upon which all interactions within a society occur, Trust is a form of acceptance of the uncertainty of the situation by placing expectations on trusted individuals or institutions (Dugan et al., 2005; Gilson, 2003; Hall et al., 2001). There

are several experts who define public trust as an optimism in a vulnerable situation where the trustor trusts the trustee who will pay attention to the interests of the trustor in the sense that when an individual is in a difficult situation, the individual is optimistic that other individuals will pay attention to their needs and interests (Hall et al., 2001). In another sense, public trust is citizen trust in the state and government, including its institutions, policies and officials (Wahyuningsih, 2011).

Public trust is believed to be an asset for the government in obtaining public legitimacy which is used to gain support in every administration of government (Putra, 2017). In addition, public trust is also used to measure how much the government has met public expectations (Nathaniel, 2020). According to Tanny & Al-Hossienie (2019), the decline in public trust is the impact of the failure of the trustee to carry out their duties to the trustor. This failure is seen from the non-fulfilment of the factors that can build public trust. Meanwhile, according to the OECD (in Irfani & Arif, 2021) explains the steps that can increase public trust in the community as follows:

1. Defining a clear vision and mission for serving and the benefit of the public. In this case adjusting the public service mission with the need to ensure that these values satisfy public expectations even though they are in line with the changes that will occur in society.
2. Able to adapt to change but still maintain values. The current situation which makes it easier to communicate creates new demands from the public, namely transparency, so that the public know what the government is doing in this case to review and adjust mechanisms to ensure behavior that is in accordance with the norms and standards.
3. Create clear procedures and provide protection to those who report individual violations.
4. Integrate management and communication systems as an integral part of a management system whose role is to provide support in the overall management environment.
5. There is a combination of actions that are consistent and take into account the broad public service environment. Assessing the effectiveness of actions and providing feedback to policy makers on their implementation as well as laying the foundation for future policies.
6. Emphasizes the importance of prevention. There is a system to pay more attention to prevention to make people more confident about the government in making anticipatory strategies. Prevention is a cheap investment for the long term, with a more positive impact on public service culture and maintaining good relations with the community.
7. Anticipate problems. Governments might answer increasing public demands for more information about private interests influencing public decisions
8. Utilizing new technologies. Utilizing new technologies that are believed to assist governments in finding new ways to internalize integrity and inform citizens about the minimal standards of officials when they serve the public (OECD, 2000 in Irfani & Arif, 2022).

This research also refers to several previous studies which are related to the discussion of public trust in building public trust, including research by Irfani & Arif (2022) which discusses the Strategy for Building Public Trust in Handling COVID-19 di Kota Surabaya. The result of the study shows that there are six focus studies that have appropriate strategies for building public trust in handling COVID-19 in the city of Surabaya which include values and standards of behavior, violation reporting, management integrity, feedback, enforcement to prevention, problem anticipation and

technological novelty. Another relevant previous study is titled *Infodemic COVID-19: Momentum to Build Public Trust in Mainstream Media*. The results of this study explain that the confusion of information has implications for noisy perspectives and opinions. Social media as a dominant source of information during the Corona Virus produced narratives around COVID-19 which was widely circulated without filters and resulted in a polarized public phenomenon of information about COVID-19 and also a decline in public trust (Widiantara, 2020). Then, the next research is the *Analysis of the Level of Public Trust in the Implementation of the COVID-19 Handling Policy by the Kubung District Government*, which was researched by Kairoot & Ersya (2021). The result show that the people of Kubung District lack trust in the government in implementing the policy for handling COVID-19. This can be seen from the average value of the responses of all respondents related to their trust in the government, which is 3.40. In accordance with the rules of the continuum line this value is in the less trust category. From these results it is also indirectly illustrated that the government has not fully produced policies that encourage the optimal acceleration of the handling of COVID-19 (Kairoot & Ersya, 2021).

Nevertheless, in conducting crisis communication management, it is necessary to consider aspects of audience culture in implementing and planning communication strategies (Wertz & Sora, 2010). Values and norms are used as an efficient strategy and can respond to the needs of the local population (Adahl, 2009). Melasuo (2003) also reiterates that culture is an essential element that cannot be ignored and is very helpful for understanding the environment in which the crisis occurs. Therefore, the use of a cultural approach needs to be considered in gaining public trust and resolving crises.

Cultural approach to crisis communication

Based on the definition of public trust, it can be interpreted that the government is responsible for managing public trust through mutual understanding. Therefore, the existence of public trust will encourage the public to comply with the regulations submitted by the government. According to Tanny & Al-Hossieni (2019), one of the efforts that can be done is by using a model of community approach to government or government to society. In this case, the appropriate way to do this is to delegate local governments through decentralization which involves the transfer of political, administrative and fiscal authority from the central government to local governments and their authorities. Therefore, Research on culture in crisis management conducted by Oliveira (2013) proves that crises are created and resolved through communication, and cultural values influence how countries respond to crises they face. The study explains that knowledge of cultural diversity is one of the requirements to enter a society that can be used as a crisis management strategy. This is in line with research entitled *Local Wisdom Overcoming the Covid-19 Pandemic*, Urug and Cipatat, Bogor, Indonesia. The results of the research are expressed in a cultural approach that has local wisdom related to life principles, behavior, and outlook on life so that in the face of COVID-19 the Urug people do what is conveyed by community leaders, who state that the role of community leaders is very influential in providing directions in decision making (Bahagia et al, 2020).

The situation with the noise of information and the instability caused by the COVID-19 pandemic requires crisis communication to cope with the COVID-19 crisis and reduce uncertainty. Communication in the face of COVID-19 affects the process of interaction and determines behavioral decisions (Gentari & Purworini). A crisis, according to Fearn-Banks (2011), is a significant event that has the potential to have a negative impact and affect organizations, corporations, industry and the public. Coombs and Holladay (2014) add that a crisis is the perception of an unexpected event

that threatens the crucial expectations of stakeholders regarding health, safety, environmental and economic issues that seriously have a negative impact. COVID-19 was a health crisis that broadly impacted various sectors of life and created uncertainty for a region or country. The government acts as the organization responsible for overcoming the crisis and communicating to the public regarding the crisis.

COVID-19, when analyzed according to crisis communication theory according to Fitch (2004), means that the crisis currently faced by the Government of Indonesia is at the systemic and reputation levels. Systemic crises are often beyond the control of governments. For example, it is difficult to predict when governments experience constraints over vaccination availability. In contrast, reputation crises can raise doubts about an organization's ethics, judgment, or credibility, often including its leaders. Some experts consider this situation a public perception crisis (Seeger, Sellnow, & Ulmer, 2003). A public perception, image, or reputation crisis focuses negative attention on an organization and can arise from negative media stories, blog posts, or even malicious rumors. Whether these rumors or stories are true, false, or somewhere in between, they can have debilitating consequences for governments and their leaders. This position is what happened to the Central Government in Indonesia in handling COVID-19 because of inconsistencies in the words, regulations, and actions of the Central Government. Such issues arise as a result of the complexity of crises which have implications for each other (Liu & Levenshus, 2011).

As already stated, to deal with the crisis and increase public confidence, the central government can delegate its authority to local governments. However, in this context, it is not only local governments that must work on solving this crisis. A cultural approach through the head of the village is needed to build public trust, which will assist in communicating the crisis to the public. According to the approach, communication is inherently and culturally situated and also embedded within the contexts in which it is enacted. The culture is conceptualized as dynamic and local, continuously negotiated and co-created through communicative acts.

Culture influences communication, as well as, culture is influenced by communication. Therefore, a cultural approach is vital to effective crisis management (Yeo et al., 2017). The significance of the cultural approach lies in the cultural competency of involved stakeholders and the ability to understand diverse cultures. Moreover, adopting methods for emerging responses is needed during disasters and crises. A cultural approach helps communities understand their cultural vulnerabilities, develop specific intervention plans, and utilize appropriate coping methods (Yeo et al., 2017). Moreover, cultural competency builds resilient communities by encouraging constant learning, communication, and coordination among diverse stakeholders. Therefore, cultural approaches must be incorporated in all emergency and crisis management phases. Culture greatly affects communication and vice versa, so every act of communication carried out by a person will be greatly influenced by the culture that is the basis of life or the special characteristics of certain people, depending on their respective regions (Anwar, 2018). Based on previous research, there is no current study that has discussed the relationship between cultural approaches in building public trust. Therefore, this research will provide a novel approach on how a cultural approach can build public trust, especially during the crisis of public trust in vaccination of COVID-19.

Research Methodology

The method used in this research is a case study with a single case related to vaccination during the socialization period from January 2021 to May 2021, where there was a significant increase in COVID-19 vaccinations. The data was obtained by conducting in-depth interviews with the Department of Public Relations of the District

Government. Sleman, Dra. Shavitri Nurmala Dewi, M.A who is also the Spokesperson for the COVID-19 Task Force in Sleman as well as being a responsible agency of building public trust and being a facilitator, communicator, and mediator in crisis communication. In addition to the need for data triangulation, interviews were also carried out with the Sleman Community to obtain valid information and data suitability. Secondary data was obtained through the internet and related documents. The test data validation used source triangulation. The data analysis technique used the Miles & Huberman (1992) model, where the analysis process is carried out simultaneously when collecting data.

Results

The government's active role in managing the Covid-19 pandemic was demonstrated by forming a Task Force for the Acceleration of Handling Covid-19 down to the city or district level (Prasetyo et al, 2021). Based on the results of data collection with the Department of Public Relations of the Sleman Regency Government, as well as the Spokesperson for the COVID-19 SATGAS Sleman Regency Government and the Sleman community, an important factor in communicating to the public regarding COVID-19 and vaccination is through a cultural approach. The role of community leaders and messages using local languages gives more value to the public's trust in the government, especially in the COVID-19 Vaccination policy.

Public Communication Actors in Building Public Trust

The results of research with the Department of Public Relations of the District Government of Sleman found that communicators are the initial foundation to build public trust in crisis communication. This is because the communicator is the person who receives the most attention from society and the media.

"In the communication of the crisis handling COVID-19 delivered by myself as the COVID-19 Task Force, the selection of communicators must be carried out one doorway with the same core message or meaning so that the community gets certainty." (Shavitri Nurmala Dewi, M.A, Government Public Relations & Spokesperson Sleman District COVID-19 Task Force, Interview on August 30, 2021).

The Election of District Government Public Relations of Sleman to become spokesperson for the COVID-19 Task Force based on credibility, ability, and expertise in responding to media crews and the public in dealing with COVID-19 and vaccinations programs. The role of the Department of Public Relations in crisis communication aims to provide the best service regarding information as well as mobilizing community participation and enhancing awareness to the public regarding the dangers of COVID-19 so that they continue to encourage vaccination. The Department of Public Relations of the Sleman Regency Government in the context of the crisis has the role of being a source of information, providing services, managing information, and encouraging community participation.

In addition, the Department of the Public Relations of the Sleman Regency Government explained that the crisis communication strategy in responding to COVID-19 must also involve community and religious leaders. Considering that not a few cases of COVID-19 are influenced by religious values, such as faith and holiness should be enough to keep believers free from COVID-19. Following up on the case in the community, the government emphasized that community and religious leaders were indispensable. This is supported by the statement of the Head of the District Health Office Sleman:

"To invite the public to be vaccinated as an effort to prevent the spread of COVID-19, the involvement of community leaders and religious leaders for all religions must also be carried out." (Joko Hastaryo, Head of the Sleman Health Service in an interview with Detik.news, Wednesday 7 April 2021).

In the effort to establish this collaboration, the Department of Public Relations of the Sleman Regency Government and all stakeholders who are involved in COVID-19 crisis management has a WhatsApp Group with community leaders in every Kapanewon (district). The collaboration strategy with the leaders of Kapanewon is considered effective in making the public believe in the COVID-19 Vaccination compared to news reports from mainstream media. The reason is that the news in the media is considered by the public to have a high level of hoax which causes confusion of information in the community regarding COVID-19 policies.

"The method of delivering the message is that after I convey it to the media, we also convey the release and direct appeal to the leadership of each Kapanewon (district). It is this Kapanewon representative who will later convey to the head of the village and religious leaders who already have a high value of trust from the surrounding community." (Shavitri Nurmala Dewi, M.A, Government Public Relations & Spokesperson for the COVID-19 Task Force for Sleman Regency, Interview on August 30, 2021).

According to the people of Sleman, the role of community leaders produces more sense of trust because they are also a member within the same community. Community leaders who have shown action by receiving vaccination develop a sense of confidence for others to participate in the COVID-19 vaccination program.

"Seeing that some people who have been vaccinated are safe, and even better when they get vaccinated, so we just believe that the government wants to give the best." (Kurniawan, Sleman Community, 25 Years Old, Interview, 26 August 2021).

The vaccination program is effective because persuasive communication is carried out not only by the government, but also by the community leaders so that public concerns, interests and needs from the pandemic situation can be communicated to each other, not only between other communities but also the government.

Cultural messages of crisis communication related to COVID-19

Sleman Regency has developed a slogan called Cita Mas Jajar (Washing Hands with Masks Keep Your Distance) which is expected to be a message to promote a healthier lifestyle among people. The Department of Public Relations of the Sleman Regency Government continues to ask the public to always perform Cita Mas Jajar as their daily habit, without having to be reminded again.

"Every citizen in Sleman Regency must be committed to Cita Mas Jajar so that it becomes a culture and habit during the COVID-19 pandemic." (Shavitri Nurmala Dewi, M.A, Government Public Relations & Spokesperson for the Sleman Regency COVID-19 Task Force, Interview on 30 August 2021).

In addition, according to her, the culture of "pekwuh", awkward, or feeling bad needs to be presented if someone refuse to be vaccinated. This is because vaccinations programs are essential element in ensuring public health are improved and protected. Based on the results of the documentation in the Sleman Tangguh book by the Department of Public Relations of the Sleman Regency Government, Sri Mulsimatun, the Deputy Regent of Sleman 2016-2021, said that culture indeed begins with coercion. After being forced, a person then just becomes used to it, and after that it becomes a culture. Nothing less and nothing more, during a pandemic this needs to be

implemented to raise awareness of the importance of complying with health protocols (Dewi, 2020).

The Department of Public Relations of the Sleman Regency Government conveyed that the preparation of messages to gain public trust must always be consistent, consistent, and convey elements of Javanese culture in its delivery.

"That message is the key to what we want to convey, so to build public trust in this crisis communication, we must provide an up-to-date description of the development of COVID-19 to provide an understanding of the situation to the public, and be open to not creating barriers with the community. So that this can increase public trust in the Sleman Regional Government." (Shavitri Nurmala Dewi, M.A, Government Public Relations & Spokesperson for the Sleman Regency COVID-19 Task Force, Interview on August 30, 2021).

If the delivery of messages is insufficient, people are tempted to seek out more information in other ways from various other sources such as social media. Meanwhile, social media is likely to be a source of hoaxes during a pandemic. Therefore, the Department of District Government Public Relations. Sleman took the initiative to always deliver messages quickly and as complete as they could.

"We know that social media is faster than ever, but it is a challenge for PR to be faster and provide accurate and responsive information when there are confusing messages circulating." (Shavitri Nurmala Dewi, M.A, Government Public Relations & Spokesperson for the Sleman Regency COVID-19 Task Force, Interview on August 30, 2021).

This effort signifies that the Department of Public Relations of the District Government of Sleman always wants to maintain public trust by prioritizing the principle of credibility. This indicates that the public will not be exposed to the infodemic which will increase the reputational crisis for the government.

In addition, in communicating crisis messages for vaccination policies during January 2021 – May 2022, the Head of the Public Relations and Protocol Section of the District Government of Sleman as well as Spokesperson for the COVID-19 Task Force explained that the policy rules related to COVID-19 were also conveyed to community leaders. This is done so as not to cause confusion to the public if there are differences in policies or the content of the messages conveyed. In other words, the message is conveyed with one voice. As a result, the Regional Government and the Central Government up to the Kapanewon level coordinate with each other on a regular basis because it is part of the communication strategy for the COVID-19 crisis response.

Messages for the prevention of COVID-19 and vaccinations conveyed by community leaders and religious leaders follow the "srawung" aspect of culture. The message conveyed is dominantly delivered in the mother tongue, the Javanese language which consequently it is easily understood by the community.

"As the head of a village, I usually convey messages about preventing COVID and the importance of vaccines according to the directions from the government through RT RW (neighborhood unit) meetings. Community leaders usually deliver such messages on the occasion of the Friday prayers because at this moment the messages can be conveyed directly and I can convey them in a more flexible Javanese language," (Subagyo, Head of Dukuh Pangukrejo, Interview on September 1, 2021).

The results of interviews with the Department of Public Relations of the Sleman Regency Government and the Community indicated that messages with a cultural approach, both in Javanese and other local languages, lead to the formation of new healthy habits of the people of Sleman regarding the value of maintaining health

protocols and vaccination.

Discussion

In order to ensure the success of the COVID-19 vaccination program, the proper cultural approach is significant to emphasize the social and cultural values that are inherent and embedded within a society. Therefore, through this approach, the similarities in mindsets, perceptions, and beliefs can ultimately affect the level of public trust (Fauzia & Hamdani, 2021). Not to mention the underlying assumption that rural communities are said to still practice the faith in ancestral traditions, customs and rules than in the sophistication of social media (Prasasati, 2020). In this case, public relations as a mediator and facilitator in the communication process between the Government and the community play a critical role in designing effective persuasive communication. In the context of preventive communication against COVID-19 by vaccinating, the Department of Public Relations should build a credible and competent reputation in conveying messages and collaborate with other local communities. The Department of Public Relations fundamental roles includes building a good reputation for being trustworthy and maintaining that reputation to get support, provide information and services, understand, and influence public opinion and behavior for public participation. These tasks are possible to achieve by the Department of Public Relations through planning and building effective strategies and approaches to maintain values and trustworthiness to the public. Furthermore, in the theory of risk management and crisis communication, Matthew Seeger (2003) builds on the basic theory of best practices for managing large-scale crisis publicity. Seeger designs at least ten crisis communication strategies (Littlejohn & Foss, 2017). One of them is that communicators need to play a role in developing policies in times of crisis response. In this case, the spokesperson appointed by the COVID-19 Task Force has performed her roles and responsibilities well, as can be seen from the consistency of daily press conferences to update the latest developments in handling COVID-19 cases.

The Department of Public Relations of the Sleman Regency Government also said that not only formal communicators played a pivotal role in supporting the effectiveness of crisis communication in the appeal for higher rate of vaccination, but also the department and the COVID-19 Task Force Team invited communicators from both community and religious leaders to influence and raise public enthusiasm and awareness regarding COVID-19 Vaccination. Initiating communicators from the community sector is also part of the District Health Office program to multiply the rate of increased vaccination in Sleman Regency as a promotive and preventive effort of public health.

A genuine synergy with local community leaders provides a sense of security to rural communities because individuals respect the position of community leaders because of their knowledge, wisdom, character, and success in their own society. The wisdom and knowledge of community leaders eventually become role models for other members of the society. As the result of their activities, skills and characteristics, community leaders are respected and honored (Porawow, 2016). In addition, religious leaders are also considered to be able to play a role as social agents in preventing COVID-19 through religious activities (Muchmamadun, et al., 2020).

Regarding socio-cultural relations, a community leader has a dominant influence in policy-making, especially in rural areas. Therefore, communication in dealing with the COVID-19 crisis with this cultural approach is crucial. The reason is that in essence, community leaders develop such long-standing trust values in the community and significantly influence other people and larger groups (Budiarjo, 2008). Therefore, the message conveyed by community leaders, in this case, is the head of the village or

dukuh. Duku is a figure who is believed to be a leader, and the community tend to voluntarily accept the directions and orders from them

In this context, the Department of Public Relations of the Sleman Regency Government, community leaders, and religious leaders establish a successful and valuable framework in conveying messages that promote a new aspect of healthier culture for public health as exemplified by. Cita Mas Jajar and the importance of Vaccination against COVID-19. Based on previous research, culture indeed begins with coercion. After being forced, we would become familiar with that particular set of habits as therefore those sets of habits eventually constitute a new healthier culture. This approach needs to be applied during a pandemic to raise public awareness by complying with health protocols (Dewi, 2020). Hence, Cita Mas Jajar has become a new culture which is culturally embedded in the Sleman people to prevent the transmission of COVID-19. Where the slogan is easy to remember and the language is commonly used, the message is more effective in changing the behavior of the people (Mahsun, 2001). The results of the analysis with the perspective of public trust according to Kim (Apriliani, 2021), the role of the Department of Public Relations of the Sleman Regency Government and community leaders is to provide a sense of trust to the public as they are credible, competent, and consistent. It can be concluded that they are credible and competent as the Department of Public Relations of the District Government of Sleman in conveying the message of the COVID-19 crisis seeks to respond quickly and convey messages with clear and precise data. Furthermore, the role of community leaders also depicts their commitment and responsibility because of the positions and proximities they are engaged in (Apriliani, 2021). The consistency of the Department of District Government Public Relations of Sleman conveys every word and action that corresponds with the regulations as well as the content of information and policies are of similarity with what was conveyed by community leaders so that confusion of information is successfully avoided.

Conclusion

A cultural approach is indeed a vital element in assisting government programs in the implementation of COVID-19 vaccination. Rural communities believe and practice their ancestral customary traditions and rules than in the sophistication and advancement of social media which tend to suffer from the spread of hoaxes. The Department of Public Relations operates as a mediator and facilitator in communication between the government and the community, effectively designing a persuasive communication framework. In the context of preventive communication against COVID-19 by vaccinating, The Department of Public Relations must be able to build a credible and competent reputation in conveying messages and collaborate with other communities to convey messages. The Department of Public Relations of the Sleman Regency Government stated that it was not only formal communicators who crucially played a role in supporting the effectiveness of crisis communication in the appeal for vaccination, but also the Department of Public Relations of the Regency Government of Sleman and the COVID-19 Task Force Team also invited communicators from community and religious leaders to improve public enthusiasm and raise awareness regarding COVID-19 vaccination. A genuine synergy with community leaders is able to provide a sense of security to rural communities. In this context, the Department of Public Relations of the Sleman Regency Government, community, and religious leaders develop a concerted framework in conveying messages which promote healthier lifestyle among people utilizing Cita Mas Jajar slogan and the importance of COVID-19 Vaccination. Cita Mas Jajar's message has successfully embedded into a new culture of the Sleman people to prevent the transmission of COVID-19. The messages conveyed by the Department of Public Relations of the Sleman Government as well as community and religious leaders are

proved to be more effective by using the Javanese language and delivered during "srawung" or gatherings in RT RW (neighborhood units) and Friday prayers. The Department of Public Relations of the Sleman Regency Government and community leaders generate a sense of trust to the public because they are credible, competent, and consistent in conveying messages related to COVID-19 vaccination.

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