



# Dari Penyadaran hingga Pencegahan Risiko: Konstruksi Pesan Komunikasi Krisis dalam Menghadapi Pandemi dan Infodemi

## From Awareness to Risk Prevention: Developing Messages for Crisis Communication During Pandemics and Infodemics

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**Abstract:** This study aims to describe the crisis communication messages delivered by Kawal COVID-19 via Instagram social media in the pre-crisis and early crisis stages to deal with the pandemic and infodemic in Indonesia. Qualitative content analysis was conducted on 190 posts by the Instagram account @kawalcovid19.id on March 1-May 24, 2020. The results of the study showed that the crisis and risk communication delivered were in the form of sensemaking messages (awareness/understanding), possible risks and potential crises that would occur, and education related to the COVID-19 virus. Efficacy messages (efficacy/success) were also presented. This study also found a combination of sensemaking and efficacy messages and linked them to the social and cultural context. Other messages related to identity and public relations strategies were used to build credibility and interactivity with the public.

**Abstrak:** Penelitian ini bertujuan mendeskripsikan pesan komunikasi krisis yang disampaikan oleh Kawal COVID-19 melalui media sosial Instagram pada tahap pra-krisis dan awal krisis untuk menangani pandemi dan infodemi di Indonesia. Analisis isi kualitatif dilakukan pada 190 unggahan akun Instagram @kawalcovid19.id pada 1 Maret-24 Mei 2020. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa komunikasi krisis dan risiko yang disampaikan berupa pesan sensemaking (penyadaran/pemahaman), kemungkinan risiko dan potensi krisis yang akan terjadi, dan edukasi terkait virus COVID-19. Pesan efficacy (kemanjuran/keberhasilan) juga disajikan. Penelitian ini juga menemukan adanya pesan kombinasi berupa sensemaking (pemahaman) dan efficacy (keberhasilan) dan mengaitkannya dengan konteks sosial dan kultural. Pesan lainnya terkait identitas dan strategi public relations digunakan untuk membangun kredibilitas dan interaktivitas dengan publik.

## INTRODUCTION

The global spread of the Corona Virus Disease-2019 (COVID-19) has generated the outbreak of a health disaster of COVID-19 pandemic, which brings about considerable impacts on the aspects of health, economy, and social life along with the risks in emergency crisis. Risks and impacts of health disasters have dynamically turned into critical situations along with some changes of risk factors in a number of stages, starting from the pre-crisis stage to the evaluation stage (Herovic et al., 2020; Reynolds & Seeger, 2005). This condition reflects the importance of crisis management even before the outbreak of a crisis. Some efforts to handle the health disaster caused by COVID-19 pandemic can be carried out through crisis and risk communication, as well as some policies issued by the authorities.

In an effort to curb the spread of COVID-19, the Indonesian government has imposed social restrictions or community mobility restriction and massively urged people to stay at home. These policies and appeals have an impact on the escalating rate of cyber world activities as proven by the fact that there has been an increasing rate in the number of internet users and social media users worldwide by more than 300 million over the past 12 months (Hardjanti, 2020). The soaring rate of digital activity is also illustrated by the escalating traffic of *WhatsApp* and *Instagram* users, which rose up to 40% during the pandemic (National Information and Communication Technology Council, n.d). The growing rate in digital activity can lead to a flood of information. Thus, the public is faced with various information related to the pandemic and the freedom to choose the most reliable information and sources of information about the pandemic. Such phenomenon is likely to give rise to an infodemic, an excessive state of

information related to a particular problem, including false or misleading information, in the physical and digital environment (World Health Organization, n.d.). This fact is especially true to the information circulating and developing during health emergency situations, which may interfere with efforts to find solutions to problems (Ministry of Communication and Information Technology, 2020; Winanti & Wawan Mas'udi, 2020; World Health Organization, n.d.). Infodemic is a term coined to describe the danger of the phenomenon of misinformation during disease outbreak response because it can even accelerate the epidemic process by influencing and fragmenting social responses (Cinelli et al., 2020). Within four months after WHO officially announced the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic, there has been an influx of information circulating about the pandemic, indicating the ongoing infodemic. This is particularly observable from an overflow of information, which makes it hard to prove its accuracy in the form of continued circulation of conspiracy theories, opinions without scientific evidence, and advice to ward off COVID-19 in unproven ways (Makitan & Novenanto, 2020).

Given the risky emergency conditions attributed to the infodemic during the pandemic, on March 1, 2020, several members of *Kawal Pemilu* established an independent media specifically addressing the spread of information related to COVID-19, which was named *Kawal COVID-19*. In a webinar on the Role of Civil Society in Facing COVID-19 held on March 19<sup>th</sup>, 2020, the spokesman of *Kawal COVID-19*, Miki Salman, highlighted that there was a void of information related to COVID-19 in Indonesia conveyed by the government due to confusing or perplexing information from the government to the public. This condition has led to public confusion and

panic after the first case of COVID-19 was officially confirmed in Indonesia. Departing from this, the initial objective to establish Kawal COVID-19 was to fill the information gap about COVID-19 in Indonesia by providing access to information about COVID-19 to the public.

Kawal COVID-19 sought to overcome the pandemic and infodemic by communicating crises and risks. Previous research conducted by Chatterjee et al. (2020) stated that effective risk communication is an important step in controlling the infodemic, while building risk awareness is the best way to slow down and prevent the transmission of COVID-19. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has created a Crisis and Emergency Risk Communication (CERC) model for handling health disasters. The CERC model indicates that in a health emergency, such as a pandemic, it is necessary to communicate information that encourages individuals to a) understand what is happening (sensemaking); and b) respond effectively (Reynolds, 2007; Reynolds & Seeger, 2005; Vos & Buckner, 2016). Furthermore, Vos & Buckner (2016) explained that sensemaking messages and efficacy messages help people respond to crises appropriately. Therefore, understanding the types of information sent via social media during risk and crisis events is pivotal (Vos & Buckner, 2016).

During the crisis stage (pre-crisis and early stage of crisis), communicators shall share sensemaking messages to educate the public about the nature of risk and efficacy messages to encourage people to take appropriate action (Reynolds & Seeger, 2005; Vos & Buckner, 2016). According to CERC, the information conveyed in sensemaking and efficacy messages affects how crisis develops and how individuals respond to it (Veil et al., 2008). In other words, if only people recognized the crisis and the risks that arise

and responded appropriately, the crisis would have been handled or at least been minimized (Vos & Buckner, 2016).

Kawal COVID-19 communicated crises and risks to deal with pandemics and infodemics through its *Instagram* account: @kawalcovid19.id. The use of social media for handling emergency situations is nothing new. During the COVID-19 pandemic, social media has played an important role in disseminating information about the situation, risks, and personal protective measures to prevent the spread of the disease by various public health organizations and governments (Limilia & Pratamawaty, 2020; Muselli et al., 2021; Rianto et al., 2023). In the field of public health, many communication guidelines and policies in the last decade have included a general recognition of the importance of social media in crisis and risk communication (Wang et al., 2021). During the initial phase of the COVID-19 outbreak, *Instagram* became increasingly popular as a source of health information (Mello et al., 2023). However, studies of social media risk communication during emerging infectious diseases, such as COVID-19, have predominantly focused on *Twitter* and *Facebook* (MacKay et al., 2022; Mello et al., 2023). The lack of evidence-based research in crisis and risk communication on the use of *Instagram* for crisis-relevant messaging highlights the importance of studying its use in times of crisis, given its growing popularity (Day et al., 2019). In addition, as highlighted by Leaver, Highfield, & Abidin (2020), visual content has emerged as the primary form of modern digital communication, referring to Meta (2022), *Instagram's* emphasis on sharing visual content through posts, reels, live video feeds (which are saved to the user's profile), and stories (which disappear after 24 hours) (Mello et al., 2023). Furthermore, pictures are often considered the most prevalent means of disseminating information, of making an

impact, and influencing others (Becker, 2004). Given *Instagram's* emphasis on visual content and its ability to foster public engagement, conducting research on the content analysis of Kawal COVID-19 *Instagram* posts during both pre-crisis and early crisis stages is essential.

In the context of Indonesia, several studies related to pandemic management through crisis communication by the government have been conducted (Alkomari, 2020; Arifin, 2022; Nahar, 2020; Radwan & Mousa, 2020; Silviani et al., 2020; Warjiyati et al., 2022). Research on risk communication for handling the COVID-19 pandemic has also been carried out (Apriliani & Abisono, 2023; Najih, 2020; Surahmat et al., 2021; Yudarwati et al., 2022). However, research examining the handling of pandemics and infodemics through crisis and risk communication is still limited, even though crisis communication and risk communication are interconnected and complementary. Both, crisis communication and risk communication, have important objectives to limit, contain, mitigate, and reduce public harm (Reynolds & Seeger, 2005).

Moreover, research on crisis and risk communication through social media that has been conducted tends to focus on governmental institutions or relevant authorities regarding issues such as health authorities for health-related issues (Mello et al., 2023; Vos & Buckner, 2016) and disaster management units for disaster-related issues (Yudarwati et al., 2022). However, research examining the content of messages on crisis and risk communication through social media conducted by social movement agents such as Kawal COVID-19 for pandemic and infodemic management is still scarce. Based on the researcher's knowledge, there is still one study that examines the trend of risk communication and the functions of communication (information, education, and advocacy) on the account

@kawalcovid19.id (Damayanti & Yuriawan, 2020). The research focuses on risk communication but does not include crisis communication in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic and infodemic. Therefore, this study aims to analyze crisis and risk communication messages for facing pandemics and infodemics conveyed by Kawal COVID-19 through its *Instagram* account @kawalcovid19.id in the pre-crisis and early crisis (initial) stages.

## **METHOD**

This study used a qualitative content analysis method. Content analysis is a way to obtain, analyze, and present the content of a text. Researches using qualitative content analysis mainly address the characteristics of language as communication by paying attention to the content or contextual meaning of the text (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). This study adopted a qualitative content analysis technique (Mayring, 2014), which includes the following eight stages.

*First*, research question/theoretical background. At this stage, the researcher formulated clear questions, instead of some mere topics, then explained the applicable theoretical or conceptual background. This research specifically focuses on analyzing the types of crisis and risk communication message (information) disseminated by Kawal COVID-19 through its *Instagram* account, @kawalcovid19.id, to address the challenges posed by the pandemic and infodemic. Based on the research question, the theoretical basis used to find the type of crisis and risk communication message is the Crisis and Emergency Risk Communication (CERC) model.

*Second*, category definition. This study used the conceptual framework of the CERC model in the pre-crisis and early stages of the crisis, namely sensemaking and efficacy. The CERC conceptual

framework served as the basis for formulating the following categories.

**Table 1.** Category Definition

Theory/concept	Category	Definition
Crisis and Emergency Risk Communication (CERC) (Reynolds & Seeger, 2005)	Sensemaking	The message conveyed on this category includes information about the potential risks and developments of the current crisis situation to help people understand the sense of urgency and crisis.
	Efficacy	The message conveyed in this category promotes the belief that the recommended response can be successful (response efficacy) and that the individual has the ability to carry out the recommended response.
	Combination of Sensemaking and efficacy	The messages conveyed in this category describe the current crisis conditions and provide recommendations for steps to respond to the crisis and anticipate potential risks.
	The others (...)	The message in this category contains additional information. It neither describes the crisis and risk conditions, nor provides recommendations for the steps to take.

**Source:** Reynolds & Seeger, 2005

*Third*, coding the text. At this stage of text coding, the researcher observed and coded a total of 190 posts from the @kawalcovid19.id Instagram feed, spanning from March 1 to May 24, 2020, encompassing both narrative and graphic elements. The researcher focuses on this timeframe to examine how Kawal COVID-19 communicates crisis and risk, and to assess the government's response to the pandemic and infodemic during the pre-crisis and early crisis phases. This timeframe is chosen based on the onset of the early crisis, marked by the first confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Indonesia on March 2, 2020, until its declaration as a

national disaster by the government on April 13, 2020. The early crisis period extends from the declaration of COVID-19 as a national disaster until the conclusion of the first large-scale social restrictions (PSBB) in Indonesia on May 24, 2020.

*Fourth*, revision. At this stage the researcher revised or re-checked the suitability of the category with the formulated research question.

*Fifth*, final coding. At this stage, the researcher grouped contents/posts based on the predetermined operational definitions. The following table indicates the final coding on the grouping of posts based on the CERC conceptual framework.

**Table 3.** Final Coding

<b>Categorization of Phenomena</b>	<b>Operational Model</b>
Information related to the development of the COVID-19 pandemic in Indonesia (Category A)	Sensemaking
Information regarding the possibility of something bad happening in the future (risk) from the COVID-19 pandemic (Category B)	Sensemaking
Education about the COVID-19 virus (Category C)	Sensemaking
Recommendations for steps to take and things to avoid by the community for handling the pandemic (Category D)	Efficacy
An overview of the current situation along with steps to take and things to avoid (Category E)	Sensemaking and efficacy
Information that neither describes the COVID-19 pandemic crisis conditions nor provides recommendations for steps to anticipate pandemic risks (Category F)	Neither sensemaking nor efficacy

**Source:** Researcher's Process

*Sixth*, main categories. In this sixth stage, the researcher grouped the crisis and risk communication messages posted by @kawalcovid19.id Instagram account based on the pre-determined categories. The researcher looked at the captions, graphics, and videos displayed on the posts.

*Seventh*, intra-coder check. In this seventh stage, the researcher conducted an intra-coder check. Begin coding from the onset of the material and then compare the outcomes (Mayring, 2014). To assess stability, the researcher conduct intra-coder agreement by reapplying the analysis tool to the material, akin to retest reliability in test theory (this involves recoding the material from the beginning without referencing previous codes, then comparing the results to gauge the consistency of rule application during analysis; significant disparities may necessitate rule revisions and reanalysis, while minor differences should be noted as indicators of reliability) (Mayring, 2014).

*Eighth*, the results. At this stage, the researcher presented the results regarding crisis and risk communication messages for handling the pandemic and infodemic on the posts of @kawalcovid19.id Instagram account.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Kawal COVID-19 has carried out crisis and risk communication for handling pandemics and infodemics at the pre-crisis and early crisis stages by posting messages of sensemaking and efficacy. The crisis and risk communication messages displayed by Kawal COVID-19 include the updates of the COVID-19 pandemic condition in Indonesia, information regarding potential risks and crises that will occur, education about the COVID-19 virus, recommendations for steps that can be taken and should be avoided, an overview of the current situation with steps to take and to avoid, and some additional information.

The crisis and risk communication messages published through the *Instagram* account of @kawalcovid19.id from March 1 to May 24 2020 amounted to 190 posts in total. Posts that display information related to the update of the pandemic condition in Indonesia (Code A) reached 77 contents; posts that display information about potential risks and crises from a future pandemic (Code B) made up of 3 posts; posts that provide education about the COVID-19 virus (Code C) totaled 10 posts; contents that convey recommendations for steps to take and

things to avoid (Code D) amounted to 56 posts; posts that provide an overview of the current situation along with steps that can be taken and should be avoided consisted of 35 posts; and posts that provide additional information was up to 9 posts. Crisis and risk communication messages for handling pandemics and infodemics conveyed through @kawalcovid19.id consist of sensemaking messages, efficacy messages, messages combining between sensemaking and efficacy, and other (additional) messages.

### **Sensemaking Messages**

Sensemaking messages provide information that frames the scope of the crisis, which includes information about the possibility of something bad happening in the future (risk) and the development of the current crisis situation (Vos & Buckner, 2016). Sensemaking message conveyed by the @kawalcovid19.id *Instagram* account aims to display information related to the development of the COVID-19 pandemic condition in Indonesia, information about potential risks and crises that will occur, as well as education about the COVID-19 virus. A total of 77 Kawal COVID-19 uploads that provide information about the evolution of the COVID-19 pandemic condition in Indonesia. Kawal COVID-19 disseminates information about the COVID-19 pandemic in Indonesia in the form of daily case counts. Kawal COVID-19 displays the daily number of cases in the form of increasing the number of cases, active cases, and recovering cases.

Since March 1 to May 24, 2020, Kawal COVID-19 has uploaded information on the daily number of cases, with up to 75 uploads showing the progression of COVID-19 pandemic conditions in Indonesia. In addition to reports on the number of daily cases, Kawal COVID-19 uploaded information about the condition of the pandemic in Indonesia by citing Central Statistics Agency (BPS)

survey results, as shown in the caption below.

BPS: Social Demographic Survey Impact of COVID-19. Since its announcement in March 2020, the spread of COVID-19 in Indonesia has continued to widen. How are people coping with this situation and what are the resulting impacts? ... (On April 13, 2020, the caption *Instagram* Account @kawalcovid19.id)

Based on previous studies regarding crisis and risk communication message content on the social media platform *Twitter* (now *X*), *Tweets* contained information that would allow individuals to comprehend what was happening by reporting on the number cases and the spread of the virus (Vos & Buckner, 2016). These sensemaking messages are also conveyed by Kawal COVID-19 through *Instagram*. Kawal COVID-19 provides information on the evolution of the pandemic caused by the spread of COVID-19 in Indonesia, which continues to spread. Furthermore, Kawal COVID-19 depicts the evolution of the pandemic condition in Indonesia by uploading information about the death of a public figure, such as the Mayor of Tanjungpinang, via the following caption.

Verily we belong to Allah, and verily to Him we shall return. The Mayor of Tanjungpinang has passed away on Tuesday, April 28<sup>th</sup>, 2020, around 16.45 WIB. May his soul find a noble place with Allah SWT. Amen.” (On April 28, 2020, the caption *Instagram* Account @kawalcovid19.id)

During the initial stage, when the crisis actually occurs period, the CERC model recommends that spokespersons communicate empathetically to crisis victims and their loved ones (Herovic et al., 2020). This is shown through posts related

to expressions of condolences for crisis victims.

Messages that encourage sensemaking provide information that frames the scope of the crisis (Vos & Buckner, 2016). Kawal COVID-19 disseminates information about potential risks and crises from the COVID-19 pandemic in the future via Instagram TV videos and posters. During the research period, the Instagram account @kawalcovid19.id uploaded three posts containing information on potential risks and future crises related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Kawal COVID-19 invites the public and the Indonesian government to learn from other countries that have already experienced a COVID-19 outbreak, as well as scientists' predictions of what might happen. This can be seen in the following post.

Let's Learn from Italy. An Indonesian Ph.D. student shares his experiences and observations while living in Trieste, Italy, amidst the COVID-19 pandemic (...) Stage 3: the number of cases increases rapidly, doubling in a single day. The death rate also rises. By March 7<sup>th</sup>, there were over 5000+ positive cases of COVID-19, and red zones were enforced in Italy. Nearly 25% of Italy's territory was under quarantine. Schools and universities were closed (...) What is actually happening in Italy? What

can we take as an example to prevent it from happening in Indonesia? (...) As an illustration, Italy's area is roughly twice the size of Java Island, with a population of 60 million people. So, what should we learn from Italy? Let's start from ourselves, let's start from staying at home... (On March 25, 2020, IG TV @kawalcovid19.id)

In the IG-TV upload, Kawal COVID-19 explained how the COVID-19 outbreak occurred in Italy, as well as the Italian community's and government's reaction to the outbreak. In this content, Kawal COVID-19 reminds the public and the Indonesian government to be more serious in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic so that Indonesia does not experience the same severe conditions as Italy, despite the fact that Indonesia faces the same potential crisis.

Kawal COVID-19 also invites the general public and the government to learn from Singapore, which experienced the COVID-19 outbreak before Indonesia. Singapore is thought to be capable of suppressing virus spread, reducing the possibility of a COVID-19 pandemic crisis. Indonesia is expected to learn from Singapore in order to reduce the possibility of a COVID-19 pandemic crisis. This is demonstrated by uploading a poster with the caption in figure 1.





**Figure 1.** On April 29, 2020, images and captions about Singapore lessons  
**Source:** Instagram Account @kawalcovid19.id (2020)

In addition to inviting Indonesia to learn from other countries that have already faced COVID-19, Kawal COVID-19 also conveyed information from scientists about future COVID-19 pandemic possibilities. This was communicated through an IG TV upload lasting 2 minutes and 19 seconds. The COVID-19 pandemic has given rise to speculation about future events, such as The Hammer and The Dance, a concept of the world after the Corona outbreak. The concept depicts how the world will not return to normalcy immediately following the lockdown until a vaccine is discovered. This upload also invites everyone to prepare to coexist with the Corona Virus. The sensemaking message includes information on potential risks and crises associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, packaged in the form of posters and videos, as well as the narrative pieces below.

The Hammer and The Dance. Repost @edwardsuhadi. Even though it may sound unpleasant, the reality is, after the

PSBB/lockdown is lifted, the world will not immediately return to normal. It takes time, and that time will likely be when a safe vaccine is found for all of us. Before that happens, whether we like it or not, we will have to live together, dance with the coronavirus among us. We must learn to accept it, and we must prepare ourselves. (On May 7, 2020, IG TV @kawalcovid19.id)

The COVID-19 pandemic that has swept the globe raises many questions about the virus, so information about COVID-19 circulates quickly and widely. The Corona Virus's knowledge is expanding in tandem with the findings of research conducted by practitioners and health scientists. Kawal COVID-19 educates the public by sharing information about the virus and various related terms, such as the posts that explain the term Superspreader, which refers to people who infect many others. The information is presented through simple infographics that are easy to understand (see figure 2).

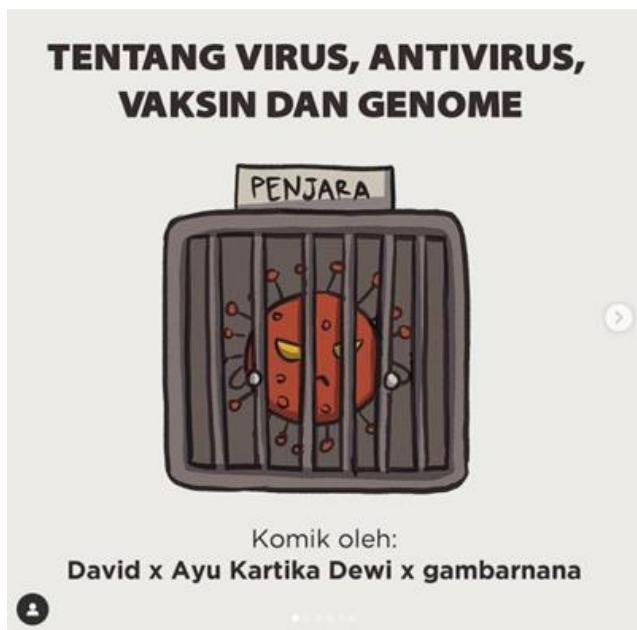


**Figure 2** On March 10, 2020, images and captions explaining the term Superspreader  
**Source:** Instagram Account @kawalcovid19.id (2020)

Furthermore, educational posts are shared through COVID-19 Q&A (*Tanya Jawab COVID-19*) content by answering various COVID-19 questions. The posts are presented as an infographic with a caption, “COVID-19 Q&A. What is the Corona virus?” (On March 12, 2020, the caption of Instagram Account @kawalcovid19.id), and “COVID-19 Q&A [Part 3] Hi friends, in this post we will discuss several things related to the coronavirus and COVID-19...” (On March 14, 2020, the caption of Instagram Account @kawalcovid19.id)

To address the pandemic and infodemic, Kawal COVID-19 utilizes comics to convey crisis and risk communication messages, including sensemaking messages. Through comic-

style presentations, Kawal COVID-19 educates the public about COVID-19 in an engaging and straightforward manner, providing sensemaking messages to inform them about potential risks and crises. An example of such a message, is a comic-style post explaining the virus, antivirus, vaccine, and genome. This post demonstrates Kawal COVID-19’s collaboration with experts, such as a PhD candidate in Molecular Virology at Osaka University, to create and deliver sensemaking content. The post shown that Kawal COVID-19 collaborate with some experts such as PhD candidate in Molecular Virology in Osaka University to create and deliver sensemaking content.



**Figure 3.** On May 15, 2020, COVID-19 education messages through comic-style  
**Source:** Instagram Account @kawalcovid19.id (2020)

Based on the data described previously, Kawal COVID-19 is disseminating risk and crisis communication messages in three categories, namely information related to the development of the COVID-19 pandemic situation in Indonesia, information about potential risks and crises that will occur, and education about the COVID-19 virus. These three points

were delivered by Kawal COVID-19 to build public understanding of the crisis due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Public education and understanding on the kinds of problems that might be faced are the best way to minimize the effects of the hazards and alleviate potential problems (Yudarwati et al., 2022). Kawal COVID-19 provided information related to the Corona virus along with the terms used during the

pandemic to ensure the public understanding of the crisis and risks of COVID-19. The three types of contents were posted to create public awareness of the urgency of the COVID-19 pandemic crisis and its accompanying risks. Individuals seek plausibility as they incorporate more information into their understanding of an event (Vos & Buckner, 2016). Pre-crisis messages should provide information about the potential for a crisis event to occur and possible impacts on the community if it does (Herovic et al., 2020). In the initial phase, as indicated, people sought information regarding the details of the crisis (Jin & Spence, 2021). Without such basic information, both the general public and affected groups may not be able to make sense of the event and may engage in activities that actually increase the relative level of harm (Reynolds & Seeger, 2005). Therefore, sensemaking messages play a crucial role in meeting the public's need for information about the crisis.

### **Efficacy Messages**

In addition to providing sensemaking messages that inform the current situation regarding the pandemic and potential risks that may be encountered, Kawal COVID-19 also regularly adds efficacy messages containing recommendations for steps that can be taken or things that must be avoided in order to reduce the spread of the COVID-19 virus. Efficacy messages contribute to an effective response by instructing people

how to respond to the situation appropriately (Vos & Buckner, 2016). These messages promote the belief that the recommended response will be successful (response efficacy) and that the individual has the ability to carry out the recommended response (Veil et al., 2008; Vos & Buckner, 2016). In the case of the COVID-19 pandemic, these recommendations are regarded as an appropriate and effective response. This recommendation message was sent by Kawal COVID-19 via 56 posts during the research period. An announcement like "do not go back to hometown" is an example of a message about behavioral recommendation. This message was conveyed by including an explanation of the risks if the community remained in the midst of a pandemic. The message is shown through the following post.

For those #workfromhome and for those who are on holiday from school/college. Please, please, please #JanganPulangKampung #JanganMudik Do not take the risk of bringing the virus to your elderly parents and other relatives ... (On March 14, 2020, the caption of *Instagram* Account @kawalcovid19.id)

In addition, the *Instagram* account @kawalcovid19.id posted other recommendations for handling the COVID-19 pandemic through illustrations about social distancing (figure 4).



**Figure 4.** On March 17, 2020, images and captions about social distancing  
**Source:** Instagram Account @kawalcovid19.id (2020)

Kawal COVID-19 also uploaded a message regarding efficacy in the form of recommended steps and actions to be avoided by the public in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. For example, Kawal COVID-19 uses comics to promote behavioral recommendations aimed at

reducing virus spread in everyday activities, such as staying at home and practicing social distancing, while discouraging behaviors like going to the cinema and mall, hanging out with friends, and traveling.



**Figure 5.** On March 25, 2020, comics and captions about behavioral recommendation to stay at home and social distancing  
**Source:** Instagram Account @kawalcovid19.id (2020)

The efficacy message also conveyed by Kawal COVID-19 is a recommendation to perform all daily activities, such as work, study, and worship, at home, as depicted in the following post.

Work, Study, Worship from Home. I still see many people who are actually able to work from home, still engaging in activities outside the home. Therefore, I emphasize several things (...) Let us save the lives of the Indonesian people by working from home, studying from home, and worshipping from home. (On March 16, 2020, IG TV @kawalcovid19.id)

Furthermore, recommendation messages regarding guidelines for house cleaning and the significance of alcohol swabs also communicate efficacy messages such as “Hello friends, here is a guide for cleaning the house ... this guide is taken from the Singapore government website ...” (On March 17, 2020, Infographic of *Instagram* Account @kawalcovid19.id) or “Apart from staying at home, this is also something to pay attention to!! ... Alcohol swabs are important & highly needed at hospitals ... There are many things we can do to help alleviate the burden on healthcare workers during the epidemic ...” (On March 21, 2020, video of *Instagram* Account @kawalcovid19.id)

In addition to conveying information about the potential for a crisis event and its possible impacts, pre-crisis messages should offer specific instructions on preparation, as well as educational training programs and campaigns concerning suitable self-protection measures in the event of the risk escalating into a crisis (Herovic et al., 2020). Thus, efficacy messages demonstrating behavioral recommendations to effectively respond to the situation become relevant during the pre-crisis and initial crisis phases. The content that creates efficacy depends on the type of crisis (Vos &

Buckner, 2016). In this type of COVID-19 crisis, emphasized efficacy messages include social distancing, limiting mobility, staying at home, and maintaining cleanliness (health protocols). The CERC framework suggests that certain messages, such as promoting handwashing, covering coughs, and maintaining social distance (e.g., staying home from work, avoiding travel) when experiencing symptoms, would be appropriate (Vos & Buckner, 2016).

### **Combining Sensemaking and Efficacy Messages**

Kawal COVID-19, via the *Instagram* account @kawalcovid19.id, also shared content that featured a message combining sensemaking and efficacy. This message provides an overview of the current situation and includes actionable steps to take and avoid. This can be seen in the following excerpt, “Unbeknownst, the virus can spread around us through everyday activities (...) We can prevent the spread of the virus. Cover your nose and mouth (...)” (On March 7, 2020, Video Quotation on the *Instagram* Account @kawalcovid19.id)

The quote above is an excerpt from a video uploaded by Kawal COVID-19. In the post, the spread of the COVID-19 virus through daily activities is depicted, along with ways to prevent its spread. Kawal COVID-19 illustrates the virus spread in a simple and understandable manner. The virus transmission process is depicted during daily activities involving physical contact such as shopping, returning from school, and using public transportation. Messages of this type are intended to provide understanding to the public regarding the crisis, enabling them to reduce perceived uncertainty. The immediate communication needs are to reduce the uncertainty, allowing audiences to create a basic understanding of what

happened so that they may act appropriately (Reynolds & Seeger, 2005).

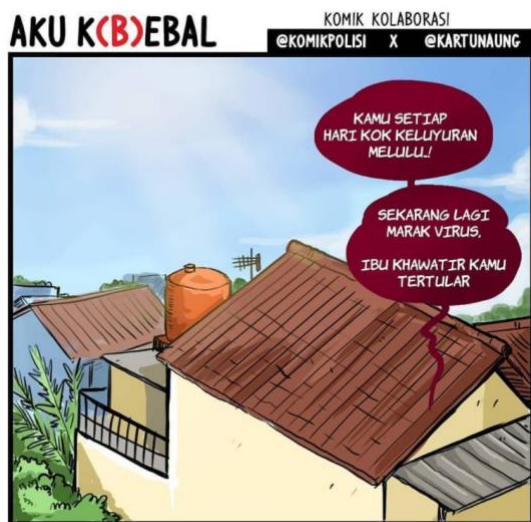
In addition, Kawal COVID-19 also shares video uploads on the IG TV platform depicting the crisis situation resulting from the pandemic. The IG TV video depicts the COVID-19 pandemic crisis in Indonesia, narrated through an interview by Najwa Shihab with Mr. Syam, who is involved in handling COVID-19 bodies. Mr. Syam discusses the rising number of COVID-19 cases, which has led to him burying dozens of bodies every day. In this video, Mr. Syam also urges the public to follow the government's instructions and stay at home.

Messages combining sensemaking and efficacy are needed during the pre-crisis and initial crisis periods. Without a clear understanding of why certain actions are recommended, stakeholders may misinterpret the message or unintended meanings may arise (Seeger, 2006). Therefore, efficacy messages should be delivered with explanations and/or

underlying rationales that are part of the sensemaking message. Messages promoting self-efficacy should be carefully crafted to ensure clarity regarding the reason behind the action, so that the recommended action is meaningful (Seeger, 2006).

As a combination of sensemaking and efficacy messages, Kawal COVID-19 provides current updates, along with recommendations for actions and precautions, using comics, as depicted in the following post.

“If you love your parents, it's better for you to #StayAtHome. No need to go out and socialize, staying at home right now is much cooler. The COVID-19 virus can attack anyone, but the elderly and those with underlying conditions are more susceptible. Don't you want to stay healthy yourself while the people you love get sick?” (On April 13, 2020, the caption of Instagram Account @kawalcovid19.id)





**Figure 6.** On March 13, 2020, comics and captions about behavioral recommendation to stay at home

**Source:** Instagram Account @kawalcovid19.id (2020)

Through comic posts (figure 6), Kawal COVID-19 communicates the pandemic situation in Indonesia, highlighting the public's negligence in adhering to health protocols and advocating for staying at home. These comics also provide information about the pandemic situation and essential steps to be taken. This is evident in the content, which depicts the critical conditions resulting from the widespread COVID-19 pandemic and offers guidance on actions to be taken and precautions to be observed by the public. If people recognize an emerging crisis and respond appropriately, the crisis may be contained or, at least, reduced in scope (Vos & Buckner, 2016).

In conducting crisis and risk communication to address pandemics and infodemics, Kawal COVID-19 also conveys sensemaking and efficacy messages, taking into account social and cultural contexts. This includes linking messages to religious topics, with Islamic religious figures or leaders, including scholars such as Quraish Shihab, delivering these messages. This practice was applied based on the ongoing social context at the time of crises, for example the call to worship from home. For example, on March 20, 2020, there was a post titled "Coronavirus Outbreak, Is It

Mandatory to Attend Friday Prayers and Mosque Prayers?" In the video post, Quraish Shihab provided information about the religious views regarding praying at home during an outbreak. The recommendation to worship from home extends not only to Muslims but also to other religious communities such as Christians. Kawal COVID-19 endeavors to provide information to the public, including links facilitating worship activities from home, such as a list of churches conducting online worship services. These messages demonstrate the urgency of delivering combined sensemaking and efficacy messages, where sensemaking provides current information that emphasizes the potential risks of continuing communal worship in places of worship, accompanied by efficacy messages recommending worshipping at home as the appropriate response to the situation.

### **Additional Messages: Establishing Kawal COVID-19's Identity to Build Credibility**

In addition to uploading crisis and risk communication messages to build sensemaking and efficacy, Kawal COVID-



19 also uploads additional messages that does not encompass sensemaking and efficacy messages. This additional information includes organizational identity, webinar activity information, as well as religious holiday greetings. The additional information does not depict the current situation of the pandemic, does not provide recommendations on steps that can be taken and should be avoided, and does not contain information about the COVID-19 virus. For example, in the following excerpt, “KawalCOVID19.id is a website dedicated to providing accurate information to the public regarding the development of the #COVID19 epidemic in #Indonesia and the world.” (On March 6, 2020, the caption of *Instagram* Account @kawalCOVID19.id). In this type of additional message, Kawal COVID-19 introduces itself to the public. Kawal COVID-19 does not provide information depicting the crisis situation caused by the pandemic or ways to handle it. In the first post on its @kawalCOVID19.id *Instagram* account, Kawal COVID-19 introduced itself as a media dedicated to providing accurate information to the public regarding the development of the COVID-19 outbreak in Indonesia and the world. This highlights the attempt of Kawal COVID-19 to build and form an identity as a mainstream media or reliable source of information for the public. Through additional messages, Kawal COVID-19 reinforces its identity and confirms that @kawalCOVID19.id is the only official *Instagram* account for Kawal COVID-19.

The IG account kawalCOVID19.id is only one, which is this account, verified by *Instagram* (blue checkmark). It turns out there is another account (see image) that uses our logo and name without permission 😡😞. Please help report the fake @kawalCOVID19

account. Thank you 🙏🙏 (On April 5, 2020, the caption of *Instagram* Account @kawalCOVID19.id)

Through this post, Kawal COVID-19 shown their identity as a reliable media through emphasize on a blue check mark as evidence that @kawalCOVID19.id has been verified by *Instagram*. Being a trusted information provider is key in the midst of the infodemic. Messages of identity uploaded by Kawal COVID-19 can be used to build credibility. Trust and credibility of information sources have emerged as key concerns when utilizing social media during times of disasters (Lovari & Bowen, 2020; Yudarwati et al., 2022). During initial or early crisis phase, it is important to establish the credibility of the communicator (Jin & Spence, 2021). In addition, they have been attempting to build their credibility as a reliable source of information by uploading messages related to the public relations strategy. These messages include the organizations’ programs and activities, such information on event promotion, such as webinars with the theme of COVID-19, information about the organization’s identity, and greetings on religious holidays. Major organizations generally use social media to disseminate information, including facts about the organization and its activities, services, and policies (Jiang & Beaudoin, 2016). Public organizations and non-profit organizations can use the media primarily to promote organizational activities and raise awareness of the issues they advocate (Park et al., 2016). Some other posts on the *Instagram* account @kawalCOVID19.id were related to efforts to build relationships and interact with the public, such as educational game content and sharing greetings for religious holidays. These messages are shown in the following post.

“Hello! The Public Communication Division of the Task Force for the Acceleration of COVID-19 Handling has compiled a game sheet as a simple and enjoyable educational media to be played with family. Let's try playing it by downloading it from the following page: (...)” (On May 6, 2020, the caption of *Instagram* Account @kawalcovid19.id)

“The large family of volunteers from kawalcovid19.id wishes you a blessed Vesak Day. Peace and healing for all 🙏” (On May 7, 2020, the caption of *Instagram* Account @kawalcovid19.id)

Kent & Taylor (Jiang & Beaudoin, 2016) explained that dialogic communication theory in public relations provides a framework for the process, emphasizing the role of information sharing in building and maintaining stable relations between organizations and the public.

## CONCLUSION

The crisis and risk communication messages conveyed by Kawal COVID-19 through its *Instagram* account in the pre-crisis and early stages of the crisis to address the pandemic and infodemic have identified messages of sensemaking, efficacy, a combination of sensemaking and efficacy, as well as additional messages related to identity and public relations strategies. Sensemaking messages include information about the development of the COVID-19 pandemic situation in Indonesia, information regarding the possibility of something bad happening in the future (risk) from the COVID-19 pandemic, and education about the COVID-19 virus. Efficacy messages provide recommendations for actions to be taken and behaviors to be avoided in response to the pandemic. The combination of sensemaking and efficacy messages offers an overview of the current situation, along

with guidance on actions and behaviors, considering social and cultural contexts by linking messages to religious topics. Additional messages related to Kawal COVID-19's identity aim to establish trust and credibility as a reliable source of information, while messages concerning public relations strategies involve disseminating information, promoting events (such as webinars on COVID-19), and sharing greetings for religious holidays and educational games.

This study offers theoretical implications for the development of crisis and risk communication research for handling health disasters, especially related to pandemics and infodemics through visual-based social media platforms. The research indicates that during the pre-crisis and early crisis periods, crisis and risk communication is delivered in the form of sensemaking messages, efficacy messages, a combination of sensemaking and efficacy, as well as other messages related to identity and public relations strategies to build credibility as a reliable source of information amidst the pandemic and infodemic. Therefore, crisis and risk communication practitioners can use the CERC framework to design crisis and risk communication messages and incorporate other messages related to identity and interactive content to build relationships and interactions with the public, as well as credibility and trust among the public.

This research focuses on crisis and risk communication messages disseminated through *Instagram* during the pre-crisis and early crisis period, allowing for further studies to examine crisis and risk communication messages during the crisis and post-crisis phases (maintenance, resolution, and evaluation). This study is limited to analyzing messages displayed on social media and does not further investigate the impact of messages on changes in knowledge, attitudes, and

behaviors, thus future research can explore the effects of crisis and risk communication messages displayed on social media.

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