

The Test Of Humanity During The Covid-19 Situation In Indonesia

Elfindah Princes¹, Teddy Indira Budiwan²

*Management Department, Doctor of Research in Management, Binus Business School, Bina Nusantara University,
Jakarta, 11480, Indonesia
Email: ¹westin_school@yahoo.com*

Abstract: The history has shown that during dangerous situation, people seek for their own safety. However, the example shown from the Covid-19 quick anticipation in Wuhan, China has shown the exact opposite. The researcher tries to identify human behaviors during the pandemic situation of Covid-19 in Indonesia. The researcher argues that compared to other countries, Indonesian people have different characteristics and responses. They are more self-centered and judgmental. Using the qualitative approach, the researcher classifies the people into 4 groups during a pandemic situation with two main groups as the research priority. First, the egocentric group as the group dominating the food and medical supplies. The panic buying in Indonesia causes this group of people to pile up stocks at home and cause the retail price to rocket. The second group is the profit-seeking group who takes advantage of this situation and sells the important food and medical supply in high price. The four groups represent the chaotic society culture in Indonesia and are the main reasons for questions if the humanity still exists. This research gives an understanding to the government to face the next pandemic if it happens someday. There are two limitations. First, at the time this research is made, the Covid-19 pandemic is still ongoing. There is a high possibility that a new group might appear near or at the end of the pandemic. Second, this paper does not separate the people into groups of different income levels, age groups and gender. Future research should address these limitations.

Keywords: covid-19; pandemic; humanity; egocentric; corona virus; profit-seeking

1. INTRODUCTION

During the early outbreak of Covid-19 in Wuhan, China, all countries are left with a terrible shock and could not do anything (Bumps et al., 2020; Hampshire & Dakota, 2020; Q. Li & Feng, 2020; Xiang et al., 2020; Zhou et al., 2020). They watched China went through the devastating situation alone in fear (Chatterjee, 2020; Habibi et al., 2020; Hampshire & Dakota, 2020; Insurance et al., 2020; Leopold, 2020; Worry et al., 2020; Xiang et al., 2020). Due to the absence of knowledge or just simply ignorance, the virus quickly spread to almost all countries (Chairwoman et al., 2020; Leopold, 2020; Press, 2020; They, Prevent, & Store, 2020; York et al., 2020). Actions have been launched like using AI and data mining analysis (B. Chen, Shi, Ni, Ruan, & Jiang, n.d.; Hu, Ge, Li, Jin, & Xiong, 2020; M. Li, Chen, & Deng, 2020; Q. Li & Feng, 2020; Peng, Yang, Zhang, Zhuge, & Hong, 2020; The Lancet, 2020; Xu et al., 2020) and data from the previous SARS and H1N1 cases (Chan et al., 2020; H. Chen et al., 2020; Gostin & Cathaoir, 2018; Lu et al., 2013; Ramzy, 2020; Wu, Leung, & Leung, 2020; Wuhan, 2020) but those still failed. The search for vaccines has emerged as the most important world issue right now (Barrett & Maguire, 2020; Hester, Documents, & Stanley,

2020; Institutes & Therapeutics, 2019; Tina & Saey, 2012) with no satisfactory result. Indonesia was one of the ignorant countries with too high confidence that this virus would not enter the country, just like last time with SARS and H1N1. When all the countries surrounding Indonesia had declared positive numbers of Covid-19 patients, Indonesia did not do any anticipations, until WHO had declared a serious warning for Covid-19 threats in Indonesia, Indonesia was still on the hold position. On 2 March 2020, President Jokowi announced the first 2 cases of Covid-19 positive cases and the society has changed continuously since then (*COVID-19 developments in Indonesia*, 2020). Panic Buying, people's resistance on the shutting down of religious places, schools, companies and public places have contributed to the forming of the new social routines. If these routines go on in longer period, they will transform into social behaviors with new social norms. This paper examines the personality traits of people during the pandemic situation in Indonesia with the pre-assumption that in the same situation and condition, people act differently. It is a known fact that during dangerous situation, people show their true colors, means that people will not take too much consideration on the wellbeing of others and put themselves first. The researcher addresses this issue by classifying the people buying behavior during pandemic situation regardless of the income level, age or gender. The researcher further assumes that the people are in the same buying situation. Thus, with the same situation, how the people react define their group.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Covid19 Situation

The Covid-19 has been detected for the first time in Wuhan, China in November 2019 before it finally spread to all over the world unstoppable. Covid-19 has been considered the most viral contagious disease in the last twenty years, compared to MERS, SARS and Ebola (Koubaa, 2020). Since then, endless efforts in technology have been done to overcome this, such as using nuclear medicine (Huang, Allie, Gnanasegaran, & Bomanji, 2020) and the early screening of Covid using COVID-ResNet (Farooq & Hafeez, 2020). The use of Hydroxychloroquine, Ribavirin and Remdesivir are by far the most promising drugs for Covid-19 treatment (Pagliano, Piazza, De Caro, Ascione, & Filipelli, 2020). World Health Organization (WHO) has proposed the most effective technique to control the spread of this Covid-19 is by conducting social distancing and tracing contacts (Farooq & Hafeez, 2020). This method was successfully adopted in China but failed in other countries. When China was under total lockdown, other countries were not aware of this dangerous situation, with the airports running as usual (Vock, 2020) followed by failure in risk communication by the health authorities (Taylor, 2019). As the worst case today, America has the most death cases of Covid-19 in the world. The country simply ignored the warnings by 7 senates in the mid of February (Bell, 2020). Indonesia experiences the same problem as America, luckily with a lower number of positive confirmed corona cases. The solution of this problem requires the compliance of the people to stay inside their home and reduce their social interactions to as minimum as possible. The study shows that unless everybody listens and acts, this situation will take longer to endure and the social distancing policy may be counterproductive (Muscillo & Pin, 2020). The longer this situation goes, the worse the effects for a country's welfare.

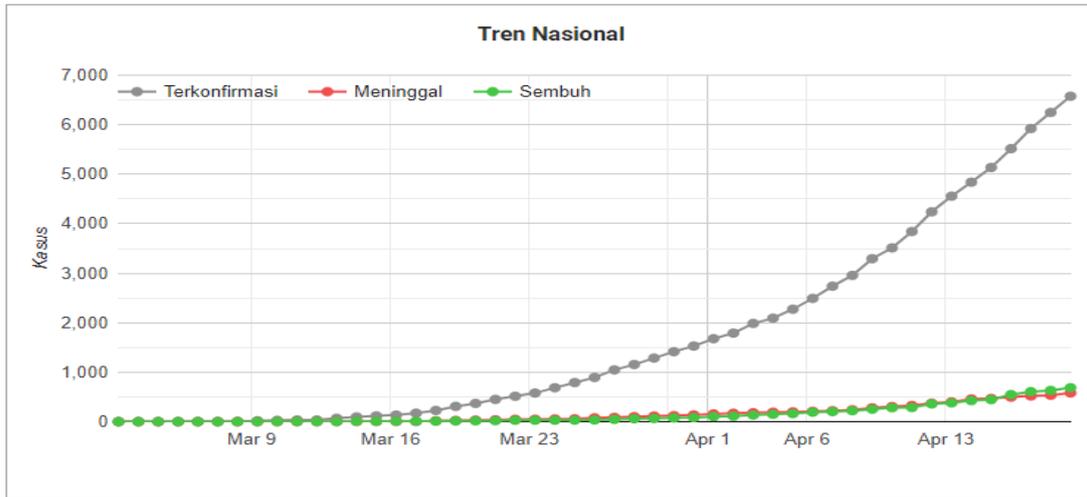


Figure 1. The Chart of Covid-19 Confirmed Cases in Indonesia. Source : <https://www.kompas.com/covid-19>

The chart shows 3 lines, with the grey line representing the confirmed cases, the red line represents the number of deaths and the green line represents the number of recovered patients. As of today, 19 April 2020, the total number of confirmed cases has reached 6575 cases (with an additional 327 cases today), under treatment 5307 (80,715% of the confirmed cases), 582 deaths (8,852% of the confirmed cases) and 686 recovered patients (10,433% of the confirmed cases). This number is not friendly compared to China which has a death rate around 2% of the confirmed cases and the rate is getting lower. China is now in the recovering process while Indonesia is projected to have the climax at the end of April.

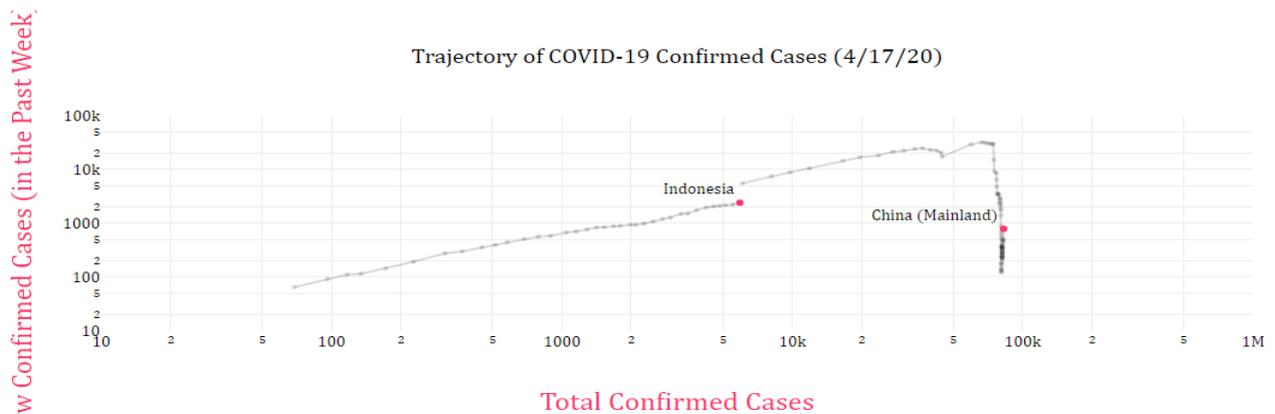


Figure 2. Total Confirmed Cases and New Cases in Indonesia and China. Source: <https://aatishb.com/covidtrends/>

The Psychology Traits behind Pandemic Situation

In order to understand more about the human psychological behavior during a pandemic, the researcher examines the previous literatures on psychological reactions during the earlier pandemics, such as Spanish flu, SARS, MERS or even AIDS. There are many psychological factors that are involved during a pandemic situation that will trigger our curiosity about humanity, where people would act out of their usual characteristics. The previous studies from the past pandemic show the following facts. First, fears during a pandemic generate the epidemiologist as a culture hero. Humans can only survive the next pandemic if they are willing to sacrifice their freedom and self-limit themselves (Lynteris, 2016). Second, the

uncertainty, confusion and urgency on when the pandemic will be over (Taylor, 2019). Third, psychological stress on self – health and loved ones, disruptions of routines, separation from relatives and friends, food and medicine shortage and personal financial hardship (Taylor, 2019). Fourth, poor people are more vulnerable to this disease due to overcrowding and poor life conditions while people with higher economic resources have better opportunities to seek medical care and avoid infection (Taylor, 2019). Fifth, emotional reactions due to desperate pursuit of cure might occur, lead people to engage in superstitious behaviors (Taylor, 2019). Sixth, mass panic and antisocial behavior, such as panic buying (Lambert, 2008; Thomas, 2002). The six facts represent some of the actual facts that are happening during the past pandemics and recent covid-19 pandemic.

Different people have different reactions when they are facing the actual pandemics and threatened situations. Some will be indifferent while some will become fearful or anxious, others will develop emotional disorders. The study shows that people recover from these emotional problems when the pandemic is over (Taylor, 2019). As explained by (Taylor, 2019), personality traits are vulnerable factors during pandemic situations. There are negative emotions that are easily influenced by stimuli of trait anxiety and harm avoidance, creating anxiety disorders, mood disorders, obsessive-compulsive disorder, health anxiety, overestimation of “bad” events and also over-optimism that leads to ignorance and underestimate what is being recommended or ordered by the health authorities. The rumors are one important aspect of these emotions, that during the digital era spread widely and continuously in social media. People who are easily distracted by rumors tend to have impulsive behavior, either reactively negative or positive. Thus, the results are usually leading to misbehaviors such as hostility and suspicion, widespread fear, and social disruption.

Cribb, (2017) described that in the 21st century, there are ten great challenges in humanity, i.e.: the self-worshiper, the terminator, the degrader, the butcher, the baker, the poisoner, the devourer, the urbanite, the self-deceiver and the getter of wisdom. These ten challenges represent the people that we are having right now during the Covid-19 situation and might describe why it is hard for this disease to cease. Social distancing refers to the intervention from the health authorities to reduce social contacts with other people, resulting in the closing of public places and school closure (Faherty et al., 2019). Depending on the outbreak severity, social distancing can include quarantine, closures, cancellation of mass gathering events, physical isolations and travel restrictions (Taylor, 2019). A country needs to understand past pandemics to prepare health measures for future pandemics. The pandemics will reveal the country’s flaws in finance, economy, legal and political institutions (Condon & Sinha, 2008). Economic costs were reported could cost over US\$6 trillion (Taylor, 2019) which is proven more than that number right now with Covid-19. Face masks and sanitizers have become two – most wanted items during the pandemic situation where to minimize infection, hygiene practices are highly recommended. In fears of not having the protection needed for them and their family, people were panicking and piled up medical supplies and food stocks. This has caused the price of some specific items to even ten-times the usual price as the demand is too high and there is not enough supply. Take an instance from what is happening in European countries where people are hysterical over toilet papers (Callan, 2020). Several interventions have been done by the Indonesian government to anticipate the worsening effects of the Covid-19, such as the Minister of Finance Regulation No. 31/PMK.04/2020 on Additional Incentives for Bonded Zone (KB) Companies and/or Companies with Import Facility for Export Purpose (KITE) to handle the Corona Virus (Covid-19) disaster, the declaration of the COVID-19 as pandemic by President Jokowi

allows the government to allocate funds to fight this disaster, the implementation of PSBB (Large Scale Social Restriction) by Minister of Transportation Luhut B. Pandjaitan to restrict travel and transportation of people and goods in general to prevent further spreading of covid-19 infection, the imports of used and refurbished medical devices are allowed, and On April 7, 2020, the Central Bank of Indonesia (BI) has penned a US\$60 billion repo facility deal with the Fed to boost dollar liquidity supply (*COVID-19 developments in Indonesia, 2020*). These interventions are expected to suppress the effects and spreading of Covid-19 faster.

3. METHODOLOGY

The method of this research is by conducting a qualitative approach with 196 people. Two pictures on a donation activity were posted. The first picture showed a positive statement of donation activity. The second picture showed a negative statement with three facts, the people receiving donation during the covid-19, the argument that donation activity should not be posted online, and the covid-19 situation in Indonesia. The researcher took the responses from Facebook. The answers were coded and divided into 6 categories. Table 1 explains the coding process on the answers.

Table 1. Coding on responses.

No	Codes	Examples of answers
1	Sympathetic	I feel sorry, I feel sad, hopefully they can get through this, etc.
2	Informative	Based on the information, the government has informed, let me explain, etc.
3	Followers	That is true, I will share, permission to share, I agree, etc.
4	Cynical	should be ashamed, only look for fame and popularity, etc.
5	Positive	think of the positive sides, don't judge first, don't think negatively, etc.
6	Advisor	It is better if, I think they should, in my opinion, they should not, they must, etc.

The researcher uses this method to note the responses of the people during the pandemic situation. When a person does a charity, the normal respond should be positive statements, not negative statements. To increase the intensity of the argument, the researcher used two statements, a positive statement and a negative statement to invite true reactions of the viewers. People tend to be more reactive to negative things (Fetscherin, 2019; Perloff, 2014). The data collection was conducted in approximately 45 days period (1 March – 15 April). A total of 40 answers for the positive statement and 267 answers for the negative statement were received and 196 answers are considered valid.

4. FINDINGS AND RESULT

From the methodology section, the researcher can quantify the answers of the respondents into six types of responses. This is needed to examine the first argument that Indonesian people are more self-centered and judgmental. The social media has become the most powerful tool in forming people's mindset right now. The recent society likes to show their existence through postings, they post almost everything they do and expect people to read them. Covid-19 situation with the social distancing recommendation requires people to stay at home and stay away from public places, which increases the social media interaction by multiple times. From the first positive statement, the result shows that there are no variation on the answers, with 90 percent supporting answers, 5 percent giving advice on what the

person should do better for the next charity, 2 percent tries to sell products and the remaining less than 1 percent wants to join the next charity.

The second negative statement on donation activity was posted on Facebook to invite people’s reactions. The answers were classified into 6 types and the result is given in table 2. With the number of answers taken from both statements, the theory that people tend to be more reactive on negative things are confirmed.

Table 2. Summary of Qualitative Findings on the Society Responses

No	Respond	Number of Respondents	Percentage
1	Sympathetic	8	4%
2	Informative	2	1%
3	Followers/Share	25	13%
4	Cynical	32	16%
5	Positive	72	37%
6	Advisor	57	29%
	Total	196	100%

Table 2 shows that the total percentage of positive supports on negative donation post is 42%, by adding the sympathetic 4%, informative 1% and positive 37% while the total percentage of negative supports on negative donation post is 58%, by adding the followers/share 13%, cynical 16% and advisor 29%. The result reveals that when the people see a negative post on a good act of charity, the majority either give comments on how a good charity should be done, shares the negative post to their own newsfeed or even being cynical by adding more negative comments on the situation. The positive responses range from giving sympathy, explanation about the negative post and telling the people to have more positive thoughts. The most interesting part from the second statement is that none of the responses state that they are donating or are going to donate.

To confirm this result, the researcher examines the theory on morality. Duska & Whelan (1975) states that a judgement that something may be considered good is correct when it is formed by morally mature reasons. The quote from Piaget on moral development posits that all morality is in the respect of one’s rule. Kohlberg’s research shows when a person looks at others’ moral judgements or actions, the clear distinction in people’s moral outlook is apparent. The significant distinction in the mature reasoning process and the given reasons becomes obvious. As social human beings, people are expected to help each other, to put egocentrism aside and to view themselves as a part of the whole group. This pandemic situation requires people to be more helpful, aware of others’ suffering and miseries. The health officers and government officials recommend people to stop the spreading of further infection by staying at home which is still not working as expected until today. The implementation of PSBB (Large Scale Social Restriction) also fails as the number of outdoor activities is still high, especially in Jakarta. This attitude is reflected as stage two of Kohlberg’s research where a person wants to prioritize himself first and would not give up his own pleasures for the sake of other people. This is the basis of the question of this research, to test if the humanity still exists today during the pandemic situation. Both the social distancing and PSBB approaches have failed to work, leaving big questions on when this pandemic can be over. Glaucon’s account argues that people can only come out of their self-interests when they want to protect themselves. Men are basically selfish, and what can keep them in place is fear and timidity. Altruism and care for others are considered as stupid actions. This explains why the positive statement on donation action is not receiving expected

responses while the negative statement on donation action attracts a lot of comments, with the majority giving negative responses. This fact strengthens the earlier argument by the researcher that the Indonesians are more self-centered and judgmental. Earlier study by Gibbs (2014) stated that it is biologically and evolutionary based to be either egoistic/selfish tendencies or loyalty to one's in-group so there is a need for us to expand our social understanding especially in a more complex situation as today's pandemic.

5. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings and results, the researcher concludes that the first argument is significantly correct based on the research qualitative result and the theoretical research. The Indonesians are more self-centered and judgmental which cause the process of solving this pandemic becomes longer and uncertainties emerge stronger. The people are focused on giving advices on what they think better, sharing negative information and criticizing what other people do instead of being positive and joining the donation activities.

This research divides the people into four quadrants based on their buying orientation preferences, as explained in figure 3 below. These four quadrants represent the groups of consumer's buying behavior during pandemic situation.

Virtue – value driven	Egocentric I	Profit – Seeking II
	Follower IV	Good Samaritans III
	Self – others orientation	

Figure 3. A four-quadrant consumer buying behavior orientation during pandemic situation

The four quadrants divide the consumers into four groups with two respective orientations, two groups toward self – others orientation and two groups toward value or virtue orientation. The first quadrant represents the egocentric consumers who do massive buying on food and medical supplies for self-usage, causing the market price to rocket. This group does not think about the needs of other people and the effects of their massive buying to other people. They act on the belief that their safety and needs must come first before others. The second quadrant represents the profit-seeking consumers who take advantage of pandemic situation to buy and sell the products in higher price. The profit-seeking group views others as means of profit and creates a much more complex situation because they pile up stocks, empty the products in the market and sell in high price, some in very high price. The third quadrant represents the Good-Samaritans, the consumers who buy stocks from the market to be donated to other people. These people put others before themselves, some with certain motives of strengthening self-image, while others are just being sincere and helpful. The fourth quadrant represents the follower, the group of consumers who just watch and see what others do. They buy what they need, they share news, information and give advices. This

group is not apparent in the society, they usually just follow what the health officers recommend. They follow the health and safety measures. Thus, they do not make the situations worse by buying too much or selling overpriced things. This quadrant seems to visualize the consideration of behavior and what motivates the behavior. There could be a more cynical argument claiming that even though the base of the behavior was unselfish, the underlying cause was actually to strengthen the self-image of being a competent person (Thøgersen, 2011).

Finally, this pandemic situation can go on longer or it can cease immediately. Both depends on how the people respond to the situation. Though the first argument is proven correct, there is a hope that the number of Good-Samaritans and Followers will increase, which will make the situation better. The theory confirms that people let go of their self-interests out of fears and dangers, which what the people are experiencing right now. The government, health officers and firms need to communicate the risks of having this condition for longer time and prepare their future planning based on these four groups of people.

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