

SOCIAL MEDIA DUALISM DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC IN INDONESIA: RELIABLE INFORMATION IS THE KEY

David Nugraha¹ and Kevin Luke¹

¹Faculty of Medicine, Universitas Airlangga, Surabaya, Indonesia

Social media has a dualism towards COVID-19 pandemic. It is extremely important to spread fast, updated, and reliable information about COVID-19 to society. However, public health also challenged with a risk of patients' exposure to the misleading and fallacious information. Fallacious information, including misinformation and disinformation, may spread faster than virus itself, cause chaotic, public distrust, also exacerbated the situation. Therefore, this review aims to elucidate the role of social media during COVID-19 pandemic in Indonesia. Computerized data searching through several databases such as PubMed, ScienceDirect, and governmental websites was conducted, expert opinion also included as well. Popular hashtag such as #MediaLawanCOVID19 and #AmanDiRumah are being widely campaign through social media to raise awareness and educate society. Nevertheless, the discussion content and public sentiment towards COVID-19 is very dynamic. Ministry of Communication and Information reported fallacious information about COVID-19 drastically increased from 147 hoaxes in March 2020 into 1.920 hoaxes in August 2020. In addition, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube being the most frequent social media used in Indonesia. Social media is essential to disseminate fast, updated, reliable, and massive information. In conclusion, social media has dualism effects towards COVID-19 pandemic, it may worsen or useful for handling current situation. Therefore, government and society must hand in hand to critically appraises information before sharing, since reliable information is the key.

Keywords: COVID-19, social media, information



Social Media Dualism during COVID-19 Pandemic in Indonesia: *Reliable Information is The Key*

David Nugraha¹, Kevin Luke

¹Faculty of Medicine, Airlangga University

Correspondences to david.nugraha-2018@fk.unair.ac.id

INTRODUCTION

In this COVID-19 pandemic, we are not only facing COVID-19 itself, yet also exposure of its fallacious information. People are overwhelmed by the information they receive on their gadget and often share it through social media. Social media has a dualism towards COVID-19 pandemic. It is extremely important to spread fast, updated, and reliable information about COVID-19 to society.^[1] However, it also facilitates spreading of fallacious information, worsening the situation by creating public distrust towards health workers and government.^[2] Therefore, this review aims to elucidate the role of social media during COVID-19 pandemic in Indonesia. Hopefully, this review can be consideration in combating COVID-19 pandemic and 'infodemic' in Indonesia.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This literature review was conducted by computerized data searching in several databases such as PubMed, ScienceDirect, and governmental websites. We searched relevant articles using 'social media', 'information', 'COVID-19', and its synonyms as keywords. Boolean operators (AND, OR, NOT) were applied to specify the search results. The search was limited to articles published in 5 years and written in English or Bahasa Indonesia. Considering its novelty and limited sources we also include expert opinion articles to construct this review.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

- The most frequent social media used in Indonesia are Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube.^[3]
- There is dynamic changes of discussions and public sentiments towards COVID-19 in social media. (Fig. 1) Out of 23.229 mentions, Twitter and Websites dominating COVID-19 mentions with 9.886 and 8.855 mentions respectively. Public sentiments also change from negative sentiments domination into positive-neutral domination in March-April 2020. ^[3]
- Based on Ministry of Communication and Information, fallacious information about COVID-19 drastically increased from 147 hoaxes in March 2020 into 1.920 hoaxes in August 2020.^[4,5] Most of these came from Facebook (1.403 hoaxes), Twitter (478 hoaxes), followed with YouTube (20 hoaxes) and Instagram (20 hoaxes). A study of 530 participants revealed about 4.9% to 36.2% believed hoax about COVID-19 they received in social media. (Fig. 2)^[6]
- Social media is also important to disseminate fast, updated, reliable, and massive information. One example is hashtag #AmanDiRumah and #MediaLawanCovid19 in various social media platform to raise awareness and educate society. Another importance is developing social media hoax buster such as <http://www.covid19.go.id/hoax> and <https://fumbalbackhoax.id/>^[7]



Table 2. COVID-19 Management in the Indonesian Community	Yes	No	No (%)	Don't know
COVID-19 Basic Facts				
Do you know what COVID-19 is?	70 (12.2)	369 (67.8)	21 (3.9)	117 (20.9)
Is there a biological agent made by a certain agent?	150 (27.2)	510 (92.8)	228 (43.9)	312 (56.1)
COVID-19 Transmission				
Is the virus transmitted through air?	91 (17.1)	510 (92.8)	46 (8.5)	493 (91.5)
Is it spread through droplets?	29 (5.4)	520 (94.6)	179 (35.9)	341 (64.1)
Is it spread through skin contact?	10 (1.9)	500 (98.1)	3 (0.6)	500 (99.4)
Is it spread through food or drink?	10 (1.9)	500 (98.1)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
Is it spread through sexual contact?	0 (0.0)	500 (100.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
Is it spread through touch the body in a safe way?	64 (12.2)	425 (87.8)	43 (8.5)	432 (91.5)



Figure 3. Social Media Role in Society Education and Misinformation Prevention

Based on these results, social media has dualism towards COVID-19 pandemic. Misinformation in social media worsen the pandemic by masking healthy behaviors and promoting false practices, therefore increase morbidity and mortality of COVID-19.^[2] Other significant impact in Indonesia was skyrocketing prices in specific commodities, such as garlic, onion, or ginger due to misleading information of herbal medicine towards COVID-19.^[3] Previous study reported that over 40% of the most frequently shared link in social media contained fake news and forwarded thousand times.^[8] Moreover, a large study conducted in 87 countries revealed that 2,049 (89%) of the reports were classified as rumors, 182 (7.8%) were conspiracy theories, and 82 (3.5%) were stigma. Ironically, Indonesia is identified as one of the most infodemic country along with the US, China, and Spain.^[9]

Regardless of the misinformation, social media actually provides a accessible platform for citizens to advocate accountability and transparency of COVID-19 related policies.^[10] Moreover, social media is a promising platform to increase awareness and spread reliable information massively. The reliability of information is the key, hence government and society should collaborate to tackle misinformation in social media by critically read and appraise information they received, before sharing it through social media or chatting application.^[11]

CONCLUSION

Social media has dualism effects towards COVID-19 pandemic, it may worsen or useful for handling current situation. The information reliability is the key, hence critically read and appraise information is essential before sharing it. Government and society itself plays crucial role in controlling reliable information in social media.

References: