



Government Policy Analysis in Health Crisis Conditions: COVID-19 Pandemic Management



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Abstract

This study aims to examine and analyze (1) The government's response and efforts in responding to the health crisis that occurred in Indonesia during the COVID-19 pandemic (2) The direction of government policy in tackling the health crisis during the COVID-19 pandemic and post-COVID-19 pandemic in Indonesia. This research is a qualitative descriptive study that describes the conditions and challenges, as well as the factors that influence government policies in overcoming the health crisis that occurred in Indonesia. The writing of this article uses secondary legal materials, namely books, journals, articles, and other written works from print and internet media, as well as phenomena that occur in the field related to the issues raised. The results of the study show that (1) The handling of the COVID-19 pandemic attempted by the government is considered slow in responding to the health crisis; (2) The government's policy direction is focused on the formation of policies related to breaking the chain of the spread of the Corona Virus, but the policies formed have not been able to fully accommodate the state of the health crisis. There are still gaps in the procurement of qualified health facilities and a lack of attention to health workers.

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1 Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic has increasingly exposed the weak points of the health system, and many other systems in the country (Spoorthy et al., 2020). Shocks to the health system affect fiscal allocation priorities. The shift of attention to the health sector has implications for the reduction of priorities in the non-health sectors, which results in a change in development direction. COVID-19 has demonstrated that action is needed to address the rapidly spreading nature of the pandemic as well as pre-existing health inequities (Ilczak et al., 2021). This action must be supported and encouraged by the right policies to be able to solve the existing problems. Public health emergencies can affect the health, safety and welfare of both individuals (causing, for example, insecurity, confusion, emotional isolation, and stigma) and communities (due to economic losses, closure of jobs and schools, inadequate resources for medical and less distribution of needs (Gautam & Hens, 2020).

The Corona virus that is present in the midst of society in 2020 really grabs attention. The increase in the number of positive cases of COVID-19 in Indonesia brings serious problems in all aspects. Massive transmission of this deadly virus has drained a lot of state energy, in this case the government is required to immediately issue various policies in all fields and for all levels of society to deal with the COVID-19 outbreak. In Indonesia, it is based on epidemiological, resource, economic, social and cultural considerations, security, and the magnitude of the threat to effectiveness (Spoorthy et al., 2020). President Joko Widodo has started to establish Large-Scale Social Restrictions (PSBB) through Government Regulation (PP) Number 21 of 2020, which is based on Article 60 of Law Number 6 of 2018 concerning Health Quarantine since March 9, 2020. PSBB is a restriction on certain activities for the population in an area suspected of being infected with a disease and/or contaminated in such a way as to prevent the possible spread of internal diseases (Modjo, 2020).

The PSBB policies implemented include carrying out learning/schooling activities from home, restrictions on religious activities and restrictions on other activities in public places. Such as closing malls and children's playgrounds to prevent crowds (Susilawati et al., 2020). This policy certainly has side effects that directly impact various sectors in Indonesia. One of them is in the economic sector, especially for business actors and other communities, which has caused a number of industries to die, and livelihoods have stalled for people who work in the informal sector (Anggraini & Mulyani, 2022).

Even though there was a narrative about Lockdown, this policy was not one of the policies implemented by the Indonesian Government. Because of the many economic impacts that are considered to be detrimental in the long term. From a health perspective, social distancing and avoiding crowds can be accepted as a right way to avoid the transmission of COVID-19 (Purwaningtyas, 2021). When viewed from the economic side, the government seems gradual to avoid drastic economic impacts, therefore Large-Scale Social Restrictions (hereinafter referred to as PSBB) is the policy selected by the Government to be implemented. The logic of this health emergency can be rationally accepted by the community. However, there was a different response from the lower middle class (Mangku & Yuliartini, 2021). Then what is the policy direction taken by the Indonesian government in an effort to overcome the health crisis during the COVID-19 pandemic?

2 Materials and Methods

COVID-19 came to the world's attention in January 2020. The rapid spread of the virus and the increasing number of confirmed cases sparked a swift reaction from the Chinese government. Governments in developed countries have responded to the COVID-19 Pandemic with dramatic and unprecedented policy responses. Large parts of the economy have been ordered to shut down and millions of workers have had to stay home indefinitely (Susilawati et al., 2020). As COVID-19 spread to less developed countries, policymakers there largely followed suit with similar policies. But it quickly became clear that policy responses in developing countries cannot simply imitate the actions of western countries (Suastika et al., 2020).

Policy ideas serve as the integrative “glue” that holds policy action together around a plan of action. Political commitment for sound reasons ensures that those in charge are aligned on a common goal and the means necessary to achieve it (Mangku et al., 2020). The right policy and based on a balance between a prosperous country and a healthy country. If the government, in this case the Government of the State of Indonesia, makes the wrong decision, it will have a long lasting negative impact on the country (Gede Sudika Mangku et al., 2020).

In solving the problem formulation raised, the research method used is classified as normative or doctrinal legal research with a juridical-normative approach (Sumardjono, 1989). The normative legal research method uses a method of researching existing library materials (Cumming, 2007; Ihrig & Moe, 2004). In collecting research data, the researcher used secondary legal materials in the form of books, journals, articles, and other written works, which originating from both printed and internet media that have a correlation with this research (Abdurrahman, 2009). Because this research is a normative research, the data collection technique used was the study of documents or library materials and the analysis techniques of legal materials used were deduction techniques (from general to specific) and interpretation in analyzing existing legal materials (Soekanto, 2007). The data analysis in this study used qualitative analysis techniques, namely to answer health crisis problems related to pandemic scale disaster management caused by the COVID-19 pandemic in Indonesia. In addition, normatively to examine the implementation of the government's policy (Sulaiman, 2018).

3 Results and Discussions

Response to the Health Crisis: Efforts to Overcome the COVID-19 Pandemic in Indonesia

The COVID-19 virus has become a worldwide crisis, because to prevent the transmission of the virus, many countries in the world are implementing regional quarantine or lockdowns, where all citizens must be in their respective homes, not allowed to leave the house, schools are closed, offices are closed, places of worship are closed, almost all community activities are closed except for a few things that are very vital for the community that are allowed to operate (Purwaningtyas, 2021).

The health crisis caused by the COVID-19 Virus will be able to develop into an economic crisis, because many companies do not operate thus they do not earn income and then have to lay off their employees, as a result, employees do not have income to support themselves and their families (Cadogan & Hughes, 2021; Schell et al., 2020; Ebbeling et al., 2002). It does not stop there, the economic crisis if prolonged can become a social and security crisis, as a result of people having no income can make them commit crimes and other socially bad things (Smereka & Szarpak, 2020).

After the health crisis, economic crisis, social and security crisis, it has the potential to trigger an even bigger political crisis. Therefore, the COVID-19 pandemic crisis must be handled seriously by any country, including Indonesia, because the consequences can be multiplied in all aspects of people's lives (Magnavita et al., 2020). Crisis is the perception of an event that threatens the expectations of stakeholders and can have an impact on organizational performance. Crisis is largely a perception (Nasution et al., 2020).

If the stakeholders believe there is a crisis, then the organization is in a crisis unless the organization's management succeeds in convincing the stakeholders that the crisis did not happen (Gupta et al., 2020). The state can be categorized as a large organization where the government is the organizer of the organization and the people are one of the stakeholders (Mangku, 2021). The crisis that occurs can cause great losses to the organization not only in terms of finance but can also result in health, safety, and even human life (Organization, 2020a).

A crisis that is not handled properly will lead to new crises that will make crisis management more difficult. Therefore, a crisis must be followed up by stakeholders immediately (Arifin & Lestari, 2019). In this regard, the Indonesian government has taken several steps in dealing with the health crisis, including (Agustino, 2020):

- 1) Forming a crisis management team and appointing a spokesperson;
- 2) Analyzing the occurrence of crises;
- 3) Developing a crisis management plan;
- 4) Taking steps to overcome the crisis; and
- 5) Evaluating the steps that have been taken.

There are three stages in crisis management, namely the first pre-crisis stage where the crisis has not yet occurred but there are already signs of a crisis imminent thus preventive and preparation steps can be taken if a crisis does occur (Fahrika & Roy, 2020). The second stage is the stage where the crisis occurs thus steps need to be taken to resolve the crisis. And the third is the post-crisis stage (after the crisis is over) where the situation has returned to normal and the organization can learn from the crisis that has occurred so that it can be repaired in the future (Verguet et al., 2021).

As on March 13, 2020 the Government has issued Presidential Decree number 7 of 2020 regarding the formation of a task force for the acceleration of handling COVID-19 led by the chairman of the National Disaster Management Agency (BNPb) (Mangku & Firdaus, 2022). In carrying out its duties this task force is under the president and reports directly to the president. In accordance with Article 3 of Presidential Decree No. 7 of 2020, the establishment of a task force for the Acceleration of Handling COVID-19 aims to (Ozili & Arun, 2020):

- 1) Improving national resilience in the health sector;
- 2) Accelerating the handling of COVID-19 through synergies between ministries/agencies and local governments;
- 3) Increasing anticipation of the development of the escalation of the spread of COVID-19;
- 4) Increasing the synergy of operational policy making; and
- 5) Increasing readiness and ability to prevent, detect and respond to COVID-19.

Simultaneously the formation of a task force for the acceleration of handling COVID-19 nationally was followed by the formation of a task force for the acceleration of handling COVID-19 at the regional level. The regional task force is led by a governor/regional head and takes detailed steps in accelerating the handling of COVID-19 by coordinating with the national task force (Inkster et al., 2020).

In accordance with Presidential Decree Number 9 of 2020, the organizational structure of the COVID-19 task force consists of the Coordinating Minister for Human Development and Culture as the Chief Steering Officer, the Coordinating Minister for Politics, Law and Security and the Minister of Health as Deputy Chief Steering Officer, the Minister of Finance as Secretary, and most of the Ministers of the Advanced Indonesia Cabinet, several Heads of Agency and Governors throughout Indonesia as steering members (Vindrola-Padros et al., 2020). Meanwhile, the Chief Executive of the COVID-19 Task Force is the Head of the Disaster Management Agency (BNPb) (Mosolov, 2020).

A few days after its establishment on March 18, 2020, the Task Force for the Acceleration of Handling COVID-19 launched the www.Covid19.go.id portal as the official source of information on the prevention of the COVID-19 virus (Greenberg et al., 2020). This site is expected to become an official reference for one-stop information about the corona virus and how to control it. This site aims to ensure that the public has access to official and accurate information regarding the handling of the COVID-19 outbreak in Indonesia (Sisdiyantoro & Minarni, 2021). Chairman of the Task Force for the Acceleration of Handling COVID-19, Doni Monardo, emphasized that the global emergency situation due to the COVID-19 pandemic made a lot of information circulating in the community which those are not all accurate (Santoso, 2021). The www.Covid19.go.id website contains messages about 3 important steps for the community to take, namely how to reduce the risk of transmission, find the right information and what to do if you are sick. Statistical data regarding the number of positive cases of COVID-19 is updated in real-time and is expected to be a reference for various parties, especially the media in their reporting (Song & Zhou, 2020).

The website is also equipped with a hoax buster that can be used as a reference to determine whether information about COVID-19 is true or a hoax (*Law No. 19 of 2016 on Electronic Information and Transactions*, n.d.). The educational materials contained various public education materials. The launch of the website www.Covid19.go.id was then followed by the launch of social media accounts belonging to the Covid task force on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram platforms (Trisilya et al., 2022). Coupled with social media accounts from other relevant agencies such as the Ministry of Health, the National Disaster Management Agency (BNPB) (Mangku & Firdaus, 2022). The website and social media accounts are always updated with the latest news regarding developments in handling COVID-19 and updated news of decisions taken include social campaigns related to handling COVID-19, campaigning for things that need to be carried out by the community in participating in reducing the spread of the virus (Mangku & Yuliartini, 2021).

In carrying out communication with the community, the task force often uses influencers from community leaders, artists, scholars and well-known figures to help campaign and communicate programs and appeals to the task force and the government. Even President Jokowi's social media accounts are always updated about daily news on the development of the COVID-19 response (Verguet et al., 2021).

Government policy direction in handling health crisis during the COVID-19 pandemic and post-COVID-19 pandemic

The government, in this case, determines the direction of national-scale policies that become the captain for certain purposes (Alexander, 1971). Of course, the Government of the State of Indonesia cannot focus on any point in determining policies, all policies are definitely based on the principle of a welfare state which means a safe, just and prosperous country (Verguet et al., 2021). This can be seen in several policies or laws and regulations drawn up by the government during the COVID-19 pandemic in Indonesia.

With the start of the new normal phase in Indonesia, a plan for various socio-economic aspects of the community began to be designed (Organization, 2020a). Various government institutions such as *Bappenas* have also prepared a Safe Productive Protocol as a protocol for the community in carrying out various socio-economic activities during the Pandemic, which refers to the criteria of the World Health Organization (WHO) (Organization, 2020b). However, these protocols alone are not enough. Because it is intended to be limited to implementing preventive measures for the spread of the COVID-19 virus, which ultimately aims to save people's lives and livelihoods, by regulating the pattern of socio-economic activities carried out (Hall, 2020). These protocols are similar to policies issued by the government, which should be coordinated across agencies as well as between central, provincial and regional governments (Hanssmann, 2020; Zhu et al., 2016; Mendelsohn, 2014). This is to prevent overlapping of policies horizontally and vertically, which in turn will lead to public confusion and ineffectiveness in their implementation (Hall, 2020).

Prioritization must be prepared in a complete manner and capable of functioning as a roadmap towards not only recovery but also improvement and strengthening of the national economy (Greenberg et al., 2020). Because behind the existing crisis, the COVID-19 pandemic also actually provides opportunities for improvement and strengthening of the national economy (Spoorthy et al., 2020). Ideals about the national economy going forward, such as the necessity of having a strong and complete social safety net, good public health facilities, adequate digital infrastructure and awareness of the importance of low carbon along with more attention to the environment must be included in this roadmap of strengthening (Abdi, 2020). There are several policies that have been formed related to the health crisis in Indonesia (Karno & Sulaiman, 2021):

- 1) Law Number 6 of 2018 concerning Health Quarantine;
- 2) Government Regulation Number 21 of 2020 concerning *PSBB* in the Context of Accelerating Handling of COVID-19;
- 3) Presidential Decree Number 7 of 2020 concerning the Task Force for the Acceleration of Handling COVID-19;
- 4) Presidential Decree Number 9 of 2020 concerning Amendments to Presidential Decree Number 7 of 2020 concerning the Task Force for the Acceleration of Handling COVID-19;
- 5) Presidential Decree Number 11 of 2020 concerning the Determination of the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency;
- 6) Regulation of the Minister of Trade Number 23 of 2020 concerning the Temporary Prohibition of Exports of Antiseptic, Mask Raw Materials, Personal Protective Equipment and Masks;

- 7) Regulation of the Minister of Law and Human Rights Number 11 of 2020 concerning the Temporary Prohibition of Foreigners from Entering the Territory of the Republic of Indonesia;
- 8) Regulation of Minister of Health Number 9 of 2020 concerning *PSBB* Guidelines in the Context of Handling COVID-19;
- 9) Decree of the Chairperson of the Task Force for the Acceleration of Handling COVID-19 Number 16 of 2020 concerning Job Descriptions, Organizational Structure, Secretariat and Work Procedures for the Implementing Task Force for the Acceleration of Handling COVID-19;
- 10) Decree of the Minister of Health Number 612/MENKES/SK/V/2010 concerning Guidelines for Health Quarantine Operators in Handling Public Health Emergencies that Troubled the World;
- 11) Decree of the Minister of Health Number HK.01.07/Menkes/169/2020 concerning Designation of Certain Emerging Infection Hospitals;
- 12) Decree of the Head of BNPB Number 9A of 2020 concerning the Determination of the Status of Certain Emergency Disasters due to Corona Virus Disease in Indonesia;
- 13) Decree of the Head of BNPB Number 13A of 2020 concerning the Extension of the Status of Certain Emergency Situations for Outbreaks of Diseases Due to the Corona Virus in Indonesia;
- 14) Circular of the Head of BNPB Number SE1/BNPB/03/2020 concerning the Establishment of a Task Force for the Acceleration of Handling COVID-19 at Provincial and District/City Levels;
- 15) Circular of the Minister of Health Number HK.02.02/III/375/2020 concerning the Use of Disinfection Booths in the Context of Preventing the Transmission of COVID-19;
- 16) Circular of the Minister of Empowerment of State Civil Apparatus Bureaucratic Reform Number 19 of 2020 concerning Adjustment of the Work System of State Civil Apparatus in Efforts to Prevent the Spread of COVID-19 in Government Agencies;
- 17) Circular of the Minister for Empowerment of State Civil Apparatus Bureaucratic Reform Number 36 of 2020 concerning Restrictions on Traveling Activities Outside the Region and/or Homecoming Activities for State Civil Apparatus in Efforts to Prevent the Spread of Covid19;
- 18) Circular of the Minister of the Education and Culture Number 3 of 2020 concerning Prevention of the Spread of COVID-19 in Education Units;
- 19) Circular of the Head of the State Civil Service Agency Number 10/SE/IV/2020 concerning the Inauguration and Taking of Oaths/Promises of Civil Servants or Oaths/Promises of Position through Media Conferences during the Status of Certain Emergency Situations of the COVID-19 Outbreak;
- 20) Circular of the Minister of Home Affairs Number 440/2622/SJ concerning the Establishment of a Task Force for the Acceleration of the Handling of Regional Covid, as well as other follow-up policies.

If analyzed quantitatively, the number of rules or policies issued by the state is indeed more focused on a healthy state in the future, but this cannot be seen in quantity alone (Purwendah & Mangku, 2021). If you look at it from the perspective of the quality of the rules made for a prosperous country during the pandemic, it is considered fair, broad and effective. However, it is undeniable that if people are still infected with covid COVID-19, it means that the cogs of the nation will be fragile, which will still cause Indonesia to fall into poverty (Itasari, 2015).

These policies were taken because the Government of Indonesia is aware that the COVID-19 outbreak is a national-scale disaster that must be resolved in an extraordinary way (Smereka & Szarpak, 2020). Therefore, it is not surprising that the President of Indonesia issued Presidential Decree (*Keppres*) Number 12 of 2020 concerning the Designation of Non-Natural Disasters that Cause Corona Virus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) as National Disasters on April 13, 2020, although at a very late date due to the number of infected people has reached 6.760 people and 590 others have died (Deliana et al., 2021).

In addition to the problem of slow decision-making and policy-making which has implications for the delay in implementing the handling of COVID-19, weak coordination between stakeholders is also a problem in controlling the spread of the corona virus in Indonesia (Smereka & Szarpak, 2020). This happens because the unitary state system places the central government as the main stakeholder in terms of disasters, both natural and non-natural disasters, including health (Wasonga, 2015). In addition to the form of a unitary state, in the Indonesian political system, Indonesia also recognizes the concept of regional autonomy which mandates that all affairs can be carried out by local governments except foreign policy, defense, security, judiciary, monetary & fiscal, and religion (Verguet et al., 2021). And for local governments, health matters are matters that can be handled by them; although conceptually health affairs are concurrent affairs that can be managed jointly

between the central, provincial and district/city governments (Ernawati et al., 2022). However, when several local governments took proactive steps to convey information and socialization about COVID-19 (at the beginning of the spread of the Corona virus), the central government criticized those proactive steps of the regional government (Ilczak et al., 2021).

One other problem that has made Indonesia less successful in controlling the spread of the corona virus is the indifference (not to say indifference) of citizens to government advice or instructions (Inkster et al., 2020). This problem can be seen from the crowds of people gathering in coffee shops, cafes, malls, cinemas, or places that have been banned by the government. Even though since the beginning the government has given directions to residents to do physical/social distancing to keep their distance from other people (Mosolov, 2020). This is because the spread of the corona virus, one of which is, through saliva saliva droplets. If people do not keep their distance, and it is known that the person they are talking to is infected or a carrier of the virus, then this has the potential to infect other people and spread it again to third, fourth, and so on. Therefore, physical or social distancing is one way out to inhibit the spread of COVID-19 (Bryson, 2021). The government's directives are only directions when most of the people are still huddled together in terminals, stations, shelters, markets, and others (Joob & Wiwanitkit, 2020).

4 Conclusion

The government policies issued when the COVID-19 pandemic hit Indonesia were considered quite effective, but a number of these policies could not be fully felt directly. In terms the positive impact, it will be felt gradually in the future. The government formulates all policies aimed at making people feel welfare, prosperity, health and justice. As citizens, we can help the government by following all existing policies to meet the welfare state. Several critical things that occurred in the early stages of crisis management, such as the scarcity of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for health workers, shortage of rapid test equipment, shortage of laboratories for sample testing, shortage of referral hospitals, shortage of ventilators can be addressed properly with coordination and communication between the COVID-19 task force and the central government; regional government and other relevant agencies. This can reduce a little fear and panic in the community while facing the crisis that occurs. In addition, President Jokowi's active social media accounts, which always update information and contain his appeals to the Indonesian people, are something meaningful for people who are in a state of stress and confusion

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