Research article

Community Perceptions of the COVID-19 Pandemic and Associated Health Protocols in West Java

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Abstract.
The COVID-19 pandemic is still a significant problem in the world, including in Indonesia. Its spread has not been stopped, and its incidence is increasing. The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted all aspects of life, not just health. This study aimed to explore the perceptions of people in West Java, Indonesia regarding the COVID-19 pandemic and its health protocols. This was descriptive research and data were collected through focus group discussions. The participants were adults from communities in Cianjur City, Sukabumi, Purwakarta, Karawang, Cimahi, West Bandung Regency, and Bandung City in West Java, recruited through purposive sampling. There were four groups, each consisting of 8-12 participants. The focus groups were conducted online using Zoom in May-June 2020. Data analysis was carried out in six steps according to Colaizzi, which included the stages of transcription, reading the transcript repeatedly, finding keywords, creating categories, determining themes, and then describing the findings. Six themes were found, namely the community's response to the COVID-19 pandemic, changes in behavior during the pandemic, changes in daily activities, the impact experienced during the COVID-19 pandemic, community responses to government programs related to COVID-19, and people's wishes during the pandemic. Health promotion regarding health protocols must be continuously improved.

Keywords: Indonesia, COVID-19 pandemic, public perception, health protocol

1. Introduction

The Covid-19 pandemic is still a significant problem in the world, especially in Indonesia. Since first announcement on March 2, 2020, it has reached 340,622 confirmed cases, 65,299 active cases, and 12,027 deaths. West Java has the third-highest number of Covid-19 cases, namely 28,087 cases [1]. Its spread out incidence is increasing. Specific treatments, vaccines that have not yet been found, and the nature of the highly contagious virus and very easy to mutate and make this virus difficult to break the chain. The COVID-19 virus, apart from having an impact on health, has also had an impact on psychological, economic and social life [2].
The Indonesian government made a strategy of "New Normal" conditions to run the wheels of the economy and social life. "New Normal" condition is life with a health protocol [3]. With the "new normal" strategy, the pulse of life is starting to rise, people are starting to work and the economy is starting to work. However, on the other hand, it turns out that the number of new cases of Covid 19 is increasing [1]. The increase will be very significant, especially after religious and cultural moments accompany the moment, such as Eid al-Fitr, Eid al-Adha, and so on. The strong friendship culture in Indonesia allows for crowding situations that are difficult to avoid.

The new normal life accompanied by health protocols, which should ideally be able to suppress the increase in new cases of COVID-19, has not turned out as expected. The inability of the community to adopt a new life with orderly health protocols causes the spread of Covid 19 to increase during the "new normal" period [4]. The observations made in several cities in West Java including Cianjur, Sukabumi, Purwakarta, Cimahi, West Bandung indicate that not all people can comply with health protocols, including not wearing masks, using masks not cover their mouths and nose. It found a crowd of people as well. This non-compliance is very risky for the continued spread of Covid 19. The spread to the comorbid group will increase the number of deaths caused by Covid 19 [3]. Because compliance with health protocols is the key to success in breaking the chain of Covid 19 in the new normal era, it is crucial to know the reasons that cause people's inability to adopt new behaviors with this health protocol. By knowing the cause, then the treatment will be appropriate. The right solution to increase public compliance with health protocols needs to be implemented. Giving sanctions for non-compliance with health protocols creates temporary, not permanent compliance; even discomfort arises.

The causes of community non-compliance with health protocols can be identified by conducting direct discussions with the community regarding public perceptions of health protocols. According to M Leininger, the Transcultural Nursing nursing model theory states that a person's behavior is strongly influenced by culture and lifestyle. Success in understanding culture and lifestyle will be able to change behavior and even form new habits that ultimately form a new culture that is adaptive to health. Therefore, it is necessary to multiply public perceptions of health protocols to increase public compliance with the COVID-19 protocol [5]. Previous research stated that most people are worried and afraid of contracting Covid 19, but in reality, many people do not comply with health protocols which are an effort to prevent Covid 19. The background of people's non-compliance with health protocols during this pandemic is important to identify from various aspects. Therefore, the efforts to promote health protocol discipline
can be carried out effectively. This research is very important because it will identify the background of the lack of community compliance in carrying out health protocols.

The purpose of this study was to explore public perceptions of the Covid 19 pandemic and its health protocols in several cities in West Java Indonesia.

2. Methods

2.1. Research Design

This Qualitative study uses an FGD (Focus Group Discussion) approach because with this method; researchers can directly explore perceptions, analyze and explain public perceptions as a description of public opinion on the Covid 19 pandemic and its health protocol. Therefore, researchers can explore public perceptions by descriptive. The health research ethics committee of STIKES general Achmad Yani has given ethical approval to this research with No. 21/KEPK/V/2020

2.2. Population, Participants and Time

The population studied was adults who had voluntarily expressed their willingness to be involved in FGDs. They were domiciled in Cianjur City, Sukabumi City, Purwakarta City, Karawang City Cimahi City, West Bandung Regency, and Bandung City in West Java Province, Indonesia. Participants were taken from the population using the purposive sampling technique. Inclusion criteria include adults aged 21-55 years who are in their productive period. The researchers divided the participants into 4 FGD groups with 8-12 participants each in this study. Data collection was carried out in May-June 2020 melalui zoom meeting. Data was collected by FGD using an interview guide consisting of one opening question and three main questions.

2.3. Data Analysis

2.3.1. Data processing

Data processing is used to document data from interviews and field notes (field notes). Documentation took by playing the recording; it is then written and combined with field notes and then printed out into a transcript. The transcript checked for accuracy by listening to the interview again while reading the transcript over and over again. The
data is organized, stored, and backed up on computers and *flash disks* (data storage devices) to avoid data loss.

The researcher organizes the data by repeatedly reading the existing data. The researcher can find data following the research and discard data that is not by the research objectives. The process is carried out by underlining keywords related to the research for each participant. The keywords were then coded, to make it easier for researchers to analyze the data because this code differentiated the keywords from one participant from another. This code is done by underlining the transcript for keywords and then numbering 1, 2, 3, and others under the underlined keywords. While the code for the participant K1 for the first group, K2 for the second participant, and others.

### 2.3.2. Process data analysis

The next stage after the data is collected data analysis with six steps according to Colaizzi. The data analysis activity was started by listening to the participants’ verbal descriptions and reading over and over the results of the verbatim transcripts or written responses. In this study, the researcher analyzed the data in the following stages: (1) Making transcripts and identifying significant statements (2) Reading transcripts repeatedly (3) Categorizing statements (4) Determining the categories of statements into meaningful and related statements. and make it a theme (5) Group similar themes and then compare them with the original description contained in the transcript (6) Description

### 2.3.3. Data validity

The validity was carried out by using *Credibility, dependability, confirmability, transferability* [6]. The researcher carried out the *Credibility* principle by returning interview transcripts to participants to validate the verbatim results made by giving a check (v) if they agreed with their quotes in the transcript. When they hesitate to say that, the researcher listens to the interview recording. In this qualitative study, the researcher tried the principle of *transferability* by describing the themes that identified in the surrounding community who were not part of whether they agreed with the existing themes [7]. Confirmability is carried out simultaneously with the *Dependability* test. Researchers did this by showing all transcripts and field notes, theme categorization tables, and theme analysis tables to supervisors and suggestions for improvement and getting approval about the themes that have been made [8].
3. Results

After being analyzed with six steps according to Colaizzi, the results of the study identified 6 themes. The complete process of data analysis, starting from determining keywords, categories and themes. The following will explain the results of the research obtained the following themes:

Community Response To The Covid-19 Pandemic

The results of the analysis of the community’s response to the COVID-19 pandemic consist of psychological responses expressed by the community with the participant’s feelings or responses to the pandemic that occurred in their area. Some say they still feel safe, always worried, troublesome, and also worrying, as follows,

“still safe, in the village, do not panic too much” (group 1)
“always worried when leaving the house” (group 2)
troublesome the point is not accessible (group 3)
the development of covid is getting more and more worrying (group 4)

3.1. Behavior Change During The Pandemic

The pattern of daily life is an activity that participants usually carry out before and after the pandemic. Themes are generated from the categories of behavior before the pandemic and behavior changes before and after the pandemic. The behavior category before the pandemic was stated by participants that they were comfortable being able to interact directly, no need to wear masks, wash their hands as stated below,

"Before the pandemic, all conditions were good; we could interact directly." Group 1
"There are so many differences from the first house that I did not wear a mask, it is just normal...." Group 3
"now have to wash hands ..” Group 2

The behavior category after the pandemic was stated by participants that they were comfortable not being able to interact directly (maintaining a distance), required to wear masks, wash their hands as stated below,

"You can still walk but still wear a mask..." (group 3)
"So often wear a mask, bring a hand sanitizer to replace washing hands everywhere and also keep your distance" Group 4
3.2. Change In daily Activities

The theme of daily activities is obtained from the expressions of participants who experience changes in activities, including changes in the work system, worship, recreation, shopping, and socialization activities. As stated by the FGD group below,

"You cannot go anywhere, you cannot play, you cannot go to school for long" (group 1)

"Prayers in the mosque are limited.." Group 1

"Worship is lacking, not solemn, going to the mosque is also difficult" group 2

"Completely limited and always following the health protocol” Group 2

"My husband, who works, at the beginning of the pandemic likes to go home early because his working hours are reduced” group 4

"You can only say hello, shaking hands is not recommended, friendship is limited” group 4

" Shopping using online..” group 2

3.3. Impacts Experienced During The Covid Pandemic

The impacts experienced by participants after the covid pandemic were negative and positive. Negative impacts are generated from negative impacts on psychological, educational, social, and economic impacts. The categories of negative impacts on the economy are stated as follows,

"It is clear that I am disturbed when I usually teach while selling snacks, which adds to my income. Expenditure, a lot of income, is reduced"

Group 1

"It is very impactful, now it is going down, and even then it does not match the income and expenses” Group 3

" My husband got laid off, so the economy went down” Group 2

" There is a difference, before and after this pandemic, maybe for those whose livelihood is trading or selling, I felt” group 1

"It is very time-consuming because every day you have to accompany children to learn online” Group 4

Take the holidays and go online” group 2

The categories of psychological impacts such as anxiety appear as stated below,
'Always worried when leaving the house” Group 2

"I like to be suspicious of people coughing, afraid of covid and getting infected” Group 1

The category of impact on social arises because participants feel less socializing and more at home, which is stated as follows,

"Before the close, now keep your distance” group 3

"cannot gather with other people and family and we keep our distance” group 2

"It is difficult to get out of the house, which originally often gathers so you cannot” group 1

"You can only say hello, shaking hands is not recommended, friendship is limited” group 4

The category of positive impact resulted from the participants’ expressions stating that they are closer to their families, worship is not disturbed, and they know more about technology, such as the following,

"Closer to family and more worship” group 2

"So, more proficient in digital technology” group 3

3.4. Community response To Government Programs Related to Covid

The results of this study describe the participant’s response to the Covid-19 program into 2 categories: the lack of support for government programs on health protocols so that it impacts increasing the incidence. This category arises from the expression that they do not heed the use of masks, still, often gather and do not heed the prohibition on entering and leaving the city, as stated below,

"Many are exposed because many outsiders enter the area” group 1

"There are still many crowds even though the regent has emphasized health protocols” group 4

“Most of the children and their health protocols are rarely applied” Kelp 3

"It is hard to be told to wear a mask” group 3

In addition, the impact of ignoring the Health protocol is by increasing the number of incidents in the area, as stated below,

"Covid developments are increasingly worrying” group 4
“Now instead of decreasing, it is increasing, the people themselves are aware of wearing masks and washing their hands, maybe a little less” group 3

The second category is supporting government programs. This category exists because of participants’ statements supporting government programs on health protocols such as always maintaining distance, wearing masks, and encouraging people to follow health protocols. Like the statement below,

“Rarely gather and always keep a distance from others” group 3

“Washing hands after going out” group 3

“I always remind you to wear a mask, wash your hands and keep your distance” group 4

3.5. People’s Desire During the Covid Pandemic

This theme is reflected in the participants’ statements about health services, expectations for society, expectations for themselves, and expectations for families. categories of expectations for the government such as necessities that must always be available, as the following expression,

“Hopefully, there will always be food assistance from the government and it will be beneficial for basic needs” group 1

Another category for the public is to be aware of and willing to comply with the health protocol, which is stated in the following expression,

“The majority of people still have to comply with Health protocols” group 4

“Self-awareness must be increased” group 4

Other categories want the pandemic to end soon,

“He wants it to end soon, wants it to be like before” group 4

“Hopefully this Corona will be over soon so that we can carry out activities as usual so that the children’s school is not disturbed anymore, the children’s lectures are as usual again.” group 1

The last category is participants’ expectations of health workers, namely to continue to carry out health promotion, where participants want health workers to inform the public about the corona disease as stated below,

“Officers must often educate the public because many do not know” group 4.
4. Discussion

4.1. Community Response to the Covid-19 Pandemic

The results of the analysis of the community’s response to the COVID-19 pandemic consist of psychological responses expressed by the community with the participant’s feelings or responses to the pandemic that occurred in their area. Some say they still feel safe, always worried, troublesome and also worrying. Data on the incidence of COVID-19 as of March 4, 2020, recorded 95,070 million people suffering from COVID-19 from 83 countries affected by this coronavirus outbreak. Of the 40,389 thousand people, 83% are still being treated, in good condition, and 17% in critical condition. Meanwhile, from 54,681 thousand people, 94% recovered, and 6% of them died [9].

However, the community responded differently to this condition. Some people still think that this pandemic is safe. Also, this is related to conditions in the area where there have not been many cases of Covid-19, so they feel safe. In addition, some people feel safe because they think that the coronavirus is a conspiracy. Alexanda explains the human tendency to seek information based on what they believe, which makes them feel safe and calmer. Some people know about this pandemic situation and then seek security and calm by looking for information on what can be done to protect themselves. However, some others choose not to believe, so they prefer to believe in alleged conspiracies [10].

However, it is different from participants’ response in their area that there has been a coronavirus, so their response is to feel afraid and worried. This response is supported by Sudiro and Watimena (2020) research results showing the emotional response of respondents who are sad as much as 45.5% because they are worried, and respondents who feel afraid as much 39.4% [11]. The public response to the COVID-19 virus outbreak still tends to be afraid and worried. It is 69.6% of respondents linked the coronavirus from several survey results in Indonesia because this virus is dangerous, contagious, emergency, deadly, scary, worrying, epidemic, and disease [12]. The emotional response of the Indonesian people to the issue of the spread of the coronavirus is still high, even though corona is a new disease. However, maybe the public has often seen news/media about the corona disease lead to people think this disease is bothersome.

The two media most chosen by the public as sources of information related to COVID-19 are online news media as much as 45.5% and social media as much as 36.4% [11]. This result is supported by [13] shows that the media, especially social media, are a reference for the public to get information about the Corona virus [13]. It is a very
significant effect that can change knowledge and even shape public perceptions about
the influence of the Corona Virus on individuals. The media that is widely seen by
the public can be used for policy makers/government as a media for health promotion
(Promkes) and health education (Penkes) to the community continuously. Therefore, it
can increase public understanding of this disease to raise concerns and fears due to
public misunderstanding; wrong responses and wrong knowledge will cause people to
misbehave.

4.2. Behavior change during the pandemic

The pattern of daily life is an activity that participants usually carry out before and after
the covid 19 pandemic. Themes are generated from the categories of behavior before
the pandemic and changes in behavior after the pandemic. The behavior category
before the pandemic was stated by participants that they were comfortable being able
to interact directly, no need to wear masks, wash their hands. Behavior is a series of
actions made by individuals, organisms, systems, or artificial entities with themselves
or their environment and can also be referred to as a computed response of a system
or organism to various stimuli or inputs, either internal or external [14]. External lead to
conscious or under conscious and voluntary or involuntary.

Some people say that the coronavirus is dangerous, scary, and worried about the
current condition [12]. Fear of something, if used correctly, can lead to better behavior.
Many factors cause a person to respond to a stimulus, such as the Corona outbreak,
one of which is knowledge. If someone has good knowledge of a disease, he will try
to do/change behavior in a direction that can reduce the disease’s risk [15].

In many cases, the coronavirus can cause mild respiratory infections, such as flu-like
symptoms. But it can also cause severe respiratory infections, such as lung infections
(pneumonia), which can cause death [15,16]. Covid-19 disease is caused by a virus that
may exist anywhere without being known. It certainly affects the mindset and behavior
in people who previously lacked attention to cleanliness and body health, such as
rarely washing hands with soap before and after eating or not paying attention to the
daily diet. Moreover, whether it is nutritious or not, never using a mask when leaving
the house, now realizing the importance of implementing behavior in preventing the
coronavirus.

Virus Corona can spread and spread quickly on the other. Transmission can occur
through splashes that come out of the mouth and nose of people infected with this virus,
for example, when the person coughs or when he exhales. The spark that comes out and
is inhaled directly by other people close to the person affected by the disease will be at risk of being infected. Because the prevention protocol is needed, for example, always wash hands and wear masks [1,3]. Also, there was a significant relationship between the practice of using masks (0.016) and the practice of washing hands with soap (0.016) with the incidence of being infected with COVID-19 at PT X West Jakarta [9].

4.3. Changes in daily activities

The theme of daily activities was obtained from the expressions of participants who experienced changes in activities including changes in the work system, worship, recreation, shopping, and socialization activities. Activity of daily living (ADL) is a daily activity carried out by a person in his livelihood related to meeting his daily needs (routine activities) which include, among others: going to the toilet, eating, dressing (dressing up), bathing, worshiping, and change places. The emergence of Covid-19 of course, also impacts changes in daily activities in people’s lives. Before the pandemic, people were not paying attention to hygiene and body health, not keeping their distance, shopping at traditional markets and crowding to meet their daily needs.

To prevent the spread of Covid-19 widely, the government enforces rules for people to keep their distance when they are doing activities outside, such as shopping at the market, praying, riding a motorbike, or going to work. Also, it is better to get used to preventing crowds or implementing social and physical distancing. If before the Covid-19 pandemic, people often shopped in shopping centers crowded with many people, working from the office, but during the pandemic, some people switched to an online shopping system and worked from home because this is quite effective in maximizing the rules of Social Distancing [15,16]. To do this, the government establishes a rule called PSBB (large-scale social restrictions) regulated through Government Regulation (PP) No. 21 of 2020. In addition, the rules regarding PSBB are also regulated in Presidential Decree (Keppres) No. 11 of 2020 concerning the Stipulation of Public Health Emergency [3].

The purpose of the PSBB regulation is to urge the public to limit all activities related to crowds to prevent the broader spread of Covid-19. So with this program, school activities, work, worship are implemented at home (work from home). Keeping the distance has been proved to reduce the probability of transmission of COVID-19. It is a health protocol recommended by the WHO and the Government of Indonesia. Since then, the practice of keeping the distance should remain held by the public, either in a public place, the environment office or in the environment outside the office [3]. The results of the study
also showed that less than a month to an increase in cases of covid-19, which is caused by large movements when the spring festival in Wuhan for not keeping a distance is tight [17]. Social distancing is one way to This is done to reduce the rate of increase in the spread of COVID-19.

4.4. Impacts experienced during the Covid 19 Pandemic

The results of this study identify the emergence of categories of negative impacts on the family/individual economy. The results of this study are in line with the results of research before, that large-scale activity restrictions and social restrictions carried out by the government to prevent the spread of Covid 19 [18]. However, it has caused economic losses nationally, sectorally, corporately, and individually. Economic losses experienced by individuals and companies are the implementation of national losses which are implemented/charged to individuals and companies. State losses were caused by a decrease in income, mainly from taxes. Spending increased a lot because they had to deal with emergency conditions, provide social safety nets, deal with sick people, mobilize health workers and officers, pay interest on new debts and many other expenses. This state loss will be compensated in the following income. The state will break even or not lose. Then the national loss will be transmitted into the loss of citizens. The forms of loss felt by individuals include loss of salary or benefits during a crisis, or loss of income for informal business actors, extra expenses for family members in an emergency. Also, interest on new debt when using bailout funds, loss of work (layoffs of employees because the company cannot survive and go bankrupt). Dealing with losses is mandatory so that individuals can survive during the Covid-19 pandemic, one of which is saving efforts by reducing spending as much as possible and trying to survive as long as possible. If individuals can survive, they will hope to improve the economy and gain profits after COVID-19 [18].

Another category stated in the results of this study is the category of negative impact on psychology, namely the emergence of anxiety in respondents. Zendrato et al, 2021 stated the same thing: some 38.8% of the community experienced anxiety during the Covid 19 pandemic, while [19] stated that most of the 70% of respondents experienced anxiety during the Covid 19 pandemic [19,20]. The anxiety experienced by respondents in this study was the anxiety of contracting Covid 19, as stated below,

"Always worried when leaving the house" group 2

"I like to be suspicious of people coughing, afraid of covid and getting infected" group 1
Freud distinguishes anxiety into three types: realistic anxiety, namely feelings of fear or anxiety about threats or dangers that come from the environment / outside themselves. Another type of anxiety is neurotic anxiety, namely feelings of fear or anxiety about instinctive impulses out of control, and moral anxiety, namely feelings of anxiety about conscience [21].

Another category identified in this study is the impact on social that arises because participants feel less socialized and more at home. The consequence of this category gave rise to another category, namely the category of positive impact resulting from the participants’ expressions stating that they are closer to their families, worship is not disturbed, and they know more about technology.

**Social distancing** and **PSBB** rules enforced by the government to prevent the spread of Covid 19 had made changes in the process of social interaction, including changes in social institutions. The regulations in interacting with other individuals have changed, which initially interacted directly turned into interactions using various media, which continued to overgrow. The high need for interaction with other individuals has motivated people to learn information technology to interact with media. **Social distancing** rules and PSBB also make changes in social groups. The community physically forms the relatively most minor social group, namely the nuclear family group [22].

### 4.5. Community response to government programs related to covid

The results of this study describe the participant’s response to the Covid-19 program into 2 categories, namely the lack of support for government programs on health protocols. It has an impact on increasing the incidence and categories of supporting government programs. The results of this study are in line with the prior research, which states that the level of community compliance with the Covid 19 health protocol is still not compliant, namely 10.4%. However, most of the community, namely 89.6%, have complied with health protocols during the pandemic [23]. The level of compliance is influenced by age, education level, level of knowledge, attitudes, and community motivation.

### 4.6. People's Desire During the Covid Pandemic

The theme of people's desires is the last theme identified in this study. The article is illustrated by participants’ statements about health services, expectations for society, expectations for themselves, and expectations for families. The emergence of hope for
health services is in line with prior research, which states the emergence of hope during the pandemic [24]. The hopes of this community show the desire for a better life in the future.

5. Conclusions

This study resulted in 6 themes, namely the community’s response to the Covid 19 pandemic, changes in behavior during the pandemic, changes in daily activities, impacts experienced during the Covid 19 pandemic, community responses to government programs related to Covid 19, community wishes during the Covid 19 pandemic.

Health promotion regarding health protocols must continue to be improved so that public compliance with health protocols can increase to prevent contracting Covid 19, health, work productivity increases, sick costs decrease. Therefore, it will increase efficiency and economic effectiveness.

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References


