

## Conference

# Post-Truth and Hoaxes: Instagram's Fact Checking of Content on Vaccines in Indonesia

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**Abstract.** The interconnected world creates a post-truth society. Everyone stands for their truth, whether it has a strong basis in facts or not. The COVID-19 pandemic created uncertainty due to its novelty. Tempo is one of Indonesia's media outlets and it is affiliated with the International Fact Checking Network, which is committed to promoting media literacy. This article aimed to conduct a framing analysis about how Tempo combats hoaxes about vaccines in Indonesia through its Instagram account. Data were collected from Tempo's Instagram postings related to vaccines in Indonesia from January 2021 to September 2021 (n = 25). Gamson-Mogdialni's framing analysis was used in this study. Aspects that were analysed in this framing analysis included metaphors, examples, catchphrases, depictions, visual images, roots, and appeals to principles. According to the results, most of the hoax information referred to health workers, the government, and conspiracy theories. Moreover, the results suggested that a fact checking system could provide a reference for mass media framing, which could increase public trust about an issue, especially COVID-19 vaccine safety.

**Keywords:** infodemic, fact-checking, post-truth, framing analysis, Instagram

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Published 15 March 2022

Publishing services provided by Knowledge E

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Selection and Peer-review under the responsibility of the IAPA Conference Committee.

## 1. Introduction

Sylvie Briand, Director of Management of Dangerous Infectious Diseases at the Health Emergencies Program – WHO stated, “every outbreak of an outbreak is always accompanied by a tsunami of information. A tsunami of information is usually followed by misinformation and rumours. This is normal in a pandemic, even since the Middle Ages because of its ‘novelty’” (1). In the post-truth era, the presence of social media makes everyone compete to provide information related to COVID-19 and its handling, ranging from authorities, health workers, religious leaders, to laypeople (2).

Although the corona virus has been detected since 1937 in poultry and in 1967 it was found that it can cause fever and flu in humans. Initially, the coronavirus strain causes mild symptoms. However, the corona virus in its development also causes outbreaks of severe and acute diseases in humans such as SARS (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome), MERS (Middle East Respiratory Syndrome), and most recently COVID-19 (Corona Virus Disease of 2019) (3).

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The dangerous character of COVID-19 is its ability to spread quickly. Only three months since being discovered in Wuhan, Hube Province, China; This virus is spreading all over the world. Moreover, infected people may show “asymptomatic” symptoms. For this reason, countries in various parts of the world have taken policies to close border access, regulate mobility and business of citizens locally and internationally, promote socialization to stay at home, and various actions that can be indicators of preventing the spread of the virus (4).

The spread of COVID-19 by the World Health Organization (WHO) is considered a global threat, along with the accompanying flow of information, known as an infodemic. Infodemic refers to the excessive and inaccurate spread of pandemic information that makes it difficult for people to identify the reliability of the source (5). The impact is anxiety, public confusion regarding knowledge and preventive measures for the spread of the virus (6).

The government and health workers are experiencing a period of stress due to the infodemic, especially misinformation, disinformation and malinformation related to COVID-19. Diffuse COVID-19-related hoaxes revolve around distrust of governments and healthcare workers, conspiracy theories, death and total case statistics, and vaccine safety. The most appropriate platforms for monitoring hoaxes are Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and online news portals (7).

Tempo.co through Tempo Media Group which since August 16, 2018 has been verified by the International Fact-Checking Network (IFCN) is committed to providing public education regarding hoaxes circulating on social media and the public (8). This study discusses the framing of the @tempo.cekfakta Instagram account for the Sinovac vaccine.

The topic of Sinovac vaccine was chosen because the Indonesian government requires vaccines for its citizens. Sinovac is the most ordered vaccine brand by the Government of Indonesia. In more detail, the vaccines that will come in 2021 are Sinovac with 116 million doses, Novavax with 52 million doses, Astra-Zeneca with 50 million doses, Pfizer/BioNtech with 45 million doses, and Covax with 12 million doses (9). Therefore, the researcher wants to examine how Tempo Cekfact's news framed in straightening out hoaxes related to the COVID-19 vaccine

The purpose of the study is to explain the media framing of the issue of the Sinovac COVID-19 vaccine with a literacy approach and clarification of circulating hoaxes. Significance of research related to group research performance, to provide a reference that agenda setting through framing of the mass media can increase public trust in the government. The media relations approach with media that has been verified by IFCN

can be used as public communication in government crisis management, especially the case of COVID-19.

There are several previous studies that will be used as a reference in this study. The study entitled *Effects of Misinformation on Covid-19 Individual Responses and Recommendations for Resilience of Disastrous Consequences of Misinformation* (10) explains that the spread of misinformation on social media platforms is faster than the spread of Corona Virus Disease (COVID-19) and can have very detrimental health consequences in the midst of disasters such as COVID-19. Using stimulus-response theory (syringe theory) and resistance theory. This multivariate, explanatory quantitative research using a self-administered online survey method examines the effect of general misinformation belief, conspiracy belief, and religious misinformation belief as a stimulus; and evaluation of credibility as a resilience strategy; and their effect on the individual response to COVID-19. A sample of 483 in Bangladesh found that the spread of misinformation on social media damaged individual perceptions of COVID-19. While the variables of religious misinformation and conspiracy beliefs have no effect on the perception of individual beliefs about COVID-19. This study provides recommendations for policy makers, the media, and the public in general, to be careful about issuing statements, especially disseminating information through social media. The research above will be used as a reference for the impact of using social media in spreading misinformation on the level of trust.

Furthermore, research related to public trust in government conducted by (11) entitled *Public Perspective on the Governmental Response, Communication and Trust in the Governmental Decisions in Mitigating COVID-19 Early in the Pandemic Across the G7 Countries*. This study examines the response and public trust in responses, public communications, and government policies in handling COVID-19 at the beginning of the pandemic period in G-7 countries. This quantitative study uses 7005 online panels as a sample with an age range above 16 years in G-7 countries: Canada, France, England, Germany, Italy, Japan, and the United States in the period 19-21 March 2020. This multivariate descriptive study found that Japan has the lowest level of acceptance of pandemic preparedness (35%), good government communication (33.6%), and government trust (38%). Followed by the United States. of (52.9%; 64.6%; and 59.9%). This study provides recommendations that timely and accurate communication is very important to increase public involvement in controlling the COVID-19 pandemic.

Another research that will be used as a reference is the research conducted by (12) entitled *Media Objectivity in the Midst of the COVID-19 Pandemic: News Content Analysis About the Implementation of the New Normal in Indonesia on Media Tirto.id*. This research using quantitative content analysis method was conducted in the period

from May 31, 2020 to June 11, 2020. The aspects studied were the factual and impractical aspects related to the development of COVID-19 in Indonesia. The researcher chose the topic of objectivity because tirtio.id is one of the online media that already has a badge from the IFCN (International Fact-Checking Network) and is the main reference source for online news readers in Indonesia. This study found that the factual aspects of tirtio.id are sociologically and psychologically balanced, complemented by 5W+1H elements. Although from the source side it is still considered low, the neutrality aspect of tirtio.id is at a high level. Likewise in the language aspect, it is not sensational. In this study, it can be seen that the media with the IFCN badge try to be objective in framing their news.

The Instagram Infodemic: Cobranding of Conspiracy Theories, Coronavirus Disease 2019 and Authority-Questioning Beliefs researched by (5) is also interesting to serve as a reference. This study explains the information overload about COVID-19 in Instagram. They chose the 10 most popular instagams every 10 days in the period 21 April 2020 to 30 April 2020 with hashtags #hoaxs, @governmentlies, #plandemic and managed to collect as many as 300 Instagram posts. Using content analysis as their research method, they grouped the unit of analysis consisting of from images and text captions. Their research results show that the issue of COVID-19 arises with frequent frequency with associations questioning government authorities in handling it. They argue that public and health policy makers need to understand how the public shares misinformation related to COVID-19 (conspiracy theories) and disbelief of authority). This is necessary to prevent and minimize the spread of health misinformation that can endanger the safety of the lives of its citizens.

The four studies above are used as references in this study due to the similarity of topics they have. The novelty offered from this research is that there is no research with a combination of topics, methods and issues similar to that carried out with this research.

## 2. Methods

Data was collected from tempo-cekfakta's Instagram posting started from January 2021 to September 2021 related vaccine topic in Indonesia (N=16). Gamson and Modigliani framing analysis used to analyse the issue of the Sinovac vaccine at the time of fact check. The frame has an internal structure, central to the organization or idea, which makes events relevant and emphasizes an issue. The frame is seen as a way of telling a story (story line) presenting the construction of the meaning of events related to a discourse. Media discourse consists of a number of packages (packages) through

which the construction of an event is formed. Packaging is a schema or structure of understanding used by a person when constructing the messages conveyed, and interpreting the messages received (13).

Packaging can be seen from the existence of a central idea which is then supported by discourse devices such as words, sentences, the use of certain images or graphics, propositions and so on. Core frames basically contain core elements to provide a relevant understanding of events and direct the meaning of issues that are constructed by condensing symbols (symbols that are 'compressed'). Condensing symbol is the result of observing the interaction of symbolic devices. There are two sets of how this central idea is translated into text, namely through framing devices and reasoning devices.

A framing device structure that includes metaphors, examples, caches, depictions, and visual images emphasizes how to view issues. The structure of reasoning devices emphasizes aspects of justification for the way of looking at 'issues', namely roots (casual analysis) and to principle (moral claims) and consequences (14).

In line with Sobur's idea, (13) states that framing devices are related and directly related to the central idea or frame that is emphasized in a text. The framing device is characterized by the use of certain words, sentences, graphics/pictures and metaphors. All elements can be found and marked, referring to a particular central idea or idea. While the second device, namely the reasoning device, relates to the cohesion and coherence of the text referring to certain ideas. An idea does not only contain words or sentences, the idea is also always marked with a certain basis of justification, certain reasons and so on. The basis of justification and reasoning does not only confirm an idea or view, but further makes the opinion or idea appear true, valid and so. Through this aspect of reasoning, the audience accepts the message as true, natural, and natural.

Gamson-Modigliani framing technique parts:

1. Metaphors: make meaning by connecting 2 facts through analogy or using figures of speech by using words such as like, as, for example, like. (15) assesses metaphor as a common sense, a daily life experience that is accustomed to in everyday life in society. Common sense seems natural and slowly becomes the dominant class ideological force in extending and defending ideas for the whole class.
2. Exemplars: package certain facts in depth so that they have more meaning to be used as references/lessons, perspectives.
3. Catchphrases: formations of words or phrases that are typical reflections of facts that refer to certain thoughts or passions. For example, jargon, slogans or slogans.

4. Depictions: depiction of facts using words, terms, connotative sentences so that the audience is directed to a certain image. The assumption is that the use of special words is intended to arouse prejudice, mislead thoughts and actions, effectively as a form of political action. Depictions can take the form of stigmatization, euphemism, and acronyms.
5. Visual images: photos, diagrams, graphics, tables, cartoons and the like to express impressions, such as attention or rejection, enlarged or reduced, bolded and italicized and the use of colour. Ideologically, Van Dijk said, the function of visual image is to manipulate facts to have a legitimate meaning because according to Stuart Allan, visuals are more powerful in shifting reality in discourse than text (polysemy) (16).
6. Roots (causal analysis): justification of issues by connecting one or more objects considered to be the cause of the emergence or occurrence of other things. The goal is to justify the inference of facts based on cause-and-effect relationships.
7. Appeal to Principle: thoughts, principles, moral claims as justification arguments to build news in the form of proverbs, folklore, myths, doctrines, and teachings. The focus is on manipulating emotions to lead to a certain nature of time, place, way, and making it hard to close from other forms of reasoning.

### 3. Results and Discussion

#### 3.1. Results

The @tempo.cekfakta Instagram account is owned by Tempo Media Group and is integrated with the tempo.co news web portal. In line with the credible and critical character of the media under Tempo Media Group, @tempo.cekfakta invites the public to think critically when receiving information from the media and the surrounding environment by questioning the truth. The @tempo.cekfakta account presents information that has been verified to be true for encounters with doubtful news. The credibility of @tempo.cekfakta can also be accounted for because Tempo Media Group is a member of the International Fact-Checking Network (IFCN).

The appearance of the @tempo.cekfakta account in each post is quite neat and easy to understand. The order for posting to the @tempo.cekfakta account is in the form of a slide containing several pages. In accordance with the purpose of this research, which is to explain the framing of the @tempo.cekfakta account on vaccine safety issues in Indonesia, especially the Sinovac vaccine as the vaccine with the largest number ordered by the Government of the Republic of Indonesia. In a period of six months





Figure 1: Vaccine Safetiness Posts on Instagram Account @tempo.cekfakta.




(January-June), researchers found 16 texts related to the safety of the COVID-19 vaccine in Indonesia. The author should explain the results of research in detail and discussion section contain results of the research finding and their ensuing discussions

After sorting the text, the researchers coded the text using the Gamson-Modigliani framing technique. Through framing analysis, researchers examined how Tempo Cekfact’s news is framed in straightening out hoaxes related to the COVID-19 vaccine which will later be linked between mass media social responsibility and the potential use of media relations to overcome the government crisis in handling COVID-19 in Indonesia. The following is sampling of coding result for the COVID-19 vaccine safety news framing on the @tempo.cekfakta Instagram account:



Figure 2: @tempo.cekfakta’s post about WHO Claims Comparing Effectiveness of 10 Covid-19 Vaccines and Names Sinovac Vaccine the Lowest.

TABLE 1

Metaphors	None
Exemplars	Tracking Data WHO Statement on Sinovac vaccines Based on a search on the official WHO website: Tempo found 39 articles related to the Covid vaccine, but none of these articles stated that WHO called the Sinovac vaccine the weakest among the 9 other candidates. The article published by WHO on December 21, 2020 only describes 10 vaccine candidates involving the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI) investment. Of the 10 vaccine candidates, nine of them are still in development, of which seven of the nine vaccines are in the clinical trial stage. Based on a Google search with the keyword "Covid-19 Vaccine" Did not find news stating that the WHO called the Sinovac vaccine the weakest. News in Al Jazeera on November 18, 2020, WHO official, Swaminathan stated that he could not draw conclusions about the long-term protection and side effects of all vaccines being tested. Based on an interview with the Covid-19 Vaccine Spokesperson from BPOM Indonesia There are no official documents and information from WHO comparing the immune response of the 10 candidates or the statement that the Sinovac vaccine is loe
Catchphrases	None
Depictions	Claims that the WHO called the Sinovac vaccine the weakest COVID-19 vaccine.
Visual Images	<p>Photo of the Screenshot of Search Articles on the WHO site</p>  <p>This screenshot of the news on the Al Jazeera news site shows a news headline from Al Jazeera and is used to support the fact that WHO does not say the Sinovac vaccine is the weakest.</p>  
Roots	WHO called the Sinovac vaccine the weakest COVID-19 vaccine circulating on Facebook. The conclusion was taken after the WHO was said to have compared the effectiveness of 10 Covid-19 vaccines that were ready to be circulated.
Appeal Principles to	Verification through an article published on the WHO's official website on December 21, 2020, WHO only explained about 10 vaccine candidates involving the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI). Of the 10 vaccine candidates, nine of them are still in development, of which seven of the nine vaccines are in the clinical trial stage.
Consequences	a. A summary of the developmental status of the 10 COVID-19 vaccine candidates presented in the article on the WHO's official website. b. Summary of news about the efficacy of the COVID-19 vaccine being tested in a number of countries



## 4. Discussion

### 4.1. Framing: Public Opinion and Public Communication

Framing theory aims to identify how individuals perceive world. The root of framing theory is the interpretive design of Erving Goffman. He argues that framing is our everyday way of perceiving reality. Frame helps us to interpret and reconstruct reality. Framing theory appears in 1970s on the development of mass media. Media research at that time was trying explain how the mass media in shaping political issues in the national public. Audience continuously exposed to the flow of information so as to form the perception and reality of political discourse. Benjamin Cohen in Ingrid Volkher argues that the media do not specifically effective at telling us to think. But the media tells us to think about which topic to think about (17) This is called forming public opinion through mass media framing.

News Framing makes a character, issue, policy worth discussing rather than an issue others that are worth ignoring and not. Framing is an interpretive (qualitative) scheme that adopted to cover political news by simplifying issues accordingly interests of media owners and advertisers. Frame (frame) refers to simplification, and narrowing the point of view, and invites attention to certain problems. Creating a causal connection with the solutions they have directed, providing assessment (value judgments). However, framing can have a positive effect if it provides education about various aspects of issues and policies, criticizing the simplification of issues by

authorities and politicians, present arguments and facts to an audience that can they consider (18).

Public communication is the delivery of information to certain publics. Even though often is one-way or one-way, audience analysis is needed so that the message can be received accordingly with the character, needs and desires of the audience (19). PR level government, otherwise known as Government Public Relations; the government needs to do cooperation with press institutions to disseminate information on government programs to society. Public perception of government performance is determined by information media (20). Based on Presidential Instruction Number 9 of 2015 concerning the Management of Public Communication (21), Government Public Relations is tasked with managing continuous information and communication in order to gain public support for government programs and policies. The work program of GPR is:

1. Government as agenda setting issue in society in developing public trust in the government as a source of accurate and reliable information trusted
2. Establish a communication network institution

3. Develop and monitor the implementation of regulations on GPR
4. Provide and disseminate public information content throughout Indonesia

The existence of fact-checking certified media by International Fact Checking Networks, such as tempo.co, should be looked at by the government to gain trust public. This is because this media tries to maintain its neutrality and is acceptable by an increasingly critical society. Media relations in the form of press releases and press

conferences are obsolete because they are rigid, very formal, and ceremonial for contemporary society today. The community is now active and can tell which news that is organic and not. On the other hand, by establishing a good relationship government can get organic media coverage on earned media by provide the resources and access the media need. Like for example in this study regarding the COVID-19 vaccine.

#### **4.2. Fact-Checking: Diffusion of Innovation, Post-Truth and Hoax**

Fact-checking is the process of seeking information to verify with the purpose of promoting truth and accuracy in reporting (22). Fact-checking can be done before (ante hoc) and after (post hoc). Internal fact-checking usually done by in-house such as the publishing department. While the analysed text by a third party is called external fact-checking. Ante hoc fact-checking aims to identify errors that can be corrected before being disseminated, or even rejected for distribution. Post-hoc fact-checking often followed by a written report with a report of inaccuracies, and sometimes accompanied by visual metrics from fact-checking organizations (23). Some the organization has been fully committed as a post hoc fact-checking organization, such as factcheck.org, PolitFact in the United States, Full Fact in the UK, and checkfact.com in Indonesia. External post hoc fact-checking organizations were first popularized in the early 2000s, and this concept became more and more relevant in the 2010s. At that time, the United States became the market biggest for fact-checking because of the frequent political battles in it spreading false or misleading claims.

Indonesia itself formed a data fact check team in 2019 because of the high the spread of hoaxes every time the general election takes place for each period (24). Hoaxes arise due to the ease of access to information in the community. Digital culture makes hoaxes are growing. Hoax can be interpreted as information or news that contains uncertain, or not the real fact (25). Hoax consists of three types, they are malinformation, disinformation and misinformation. Malinformation is information that has the truth, but is presented to the detriment of certain parties or conditions. Disinformation has the meaning of false information that is deliberately disseminated to deceive.

Disinformation is a part of misinformation, and can be spread unintentionally. While misinformation itself is information that is intentionally made wrong and aims to mislead the other party.

Online media journalists are aware of the high saturation of hoaxes on social media and the ease of sharing features in it, making them the initiation of the Fact Check Team during election season. Consists of a combination of organizations ranging from the Indonesian Cyber Media Association (AMSI), the Alliance of Independent Journalists (AJI), the Indonesian Anti-Defamation Society (MAFINDO), and Google Initiatives. How this Fact Check works consists of several stages (1) determining: public interest in the information, (2) verify the origin and source of the information by primary data, (3) the final status of the information: true or false, misguided, no conclusion, and incomplete (24).

Although in some countries the fact-checking system has been in place since the beginning of the year 2000s, and was only initiated in 2019 in Indonesia. However, the work system of journalism This fact-checking data base can still be regarded as an innovation. Innovation in theory the diffusion of innovations developed by (26) means an idea that considered new by the adoption unit. So, although it has been done in other populations for a long time, However, in the population that has just been implemented, it can still be said to be innovation. Besides, fact-checking work sooner or later will change the landscape of the way media work, especially online media in the post-truth era. Post-truth is a philosophical concept and politics about the loss of shared objective standards and the overlapping of pure facts, knowledge, opinion, belief, and truth. Here truth is considered as a form

subjective thing that everyone has a version of the 'truth'. However, this has implications on untruths, lies, deception, and willful intent (27). This post-truth era creates confusion in society about the truth objective in the end. So a fact-checking system is needed to balance it out

## 5. Conclusion

After all, the significance of this research is to provide a reference that agenda setting through framing of the mass media can increase public trust in the government. The media relations approach with media that has been verified by IFCN can be used for public communication by the government in crisis management, especially the case of COVID-19

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