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Content Strategy in Pandemic Communication: A Quantitative Content Analysis on the Ministry of Health Indonesia's Instagram

[1]Riski Damastuti, [2]Kartika Sari Yudaninggar, [3]Yulinda Erlistyarini

[1,3]Universitas Amikom Yogyakarta, [2]Universitas Gadjah Mada

Correspondence Author: riskidamastuti@amikom.ac.id

Abstract

Indonesia is among the countries that successfully managed the COVID-19 pandemic. This study aims to examine the content strategies employed by the Indonesian Ministry of Health through its official Instagram account @kemenkes_ri. Using a quantitative research design with content analysis as the method, a total of 202 posts were analyzed, selected from periods with the highest reported COVID-19 cases in Indonesia. The posts were examined using the Content Marketing Matrix framework and Situational Crisis Communications Theory (SCCT). Two coders were involved to ensure data reliability. The findings reveal that the Ministry of Health did not exclusively upload COVID-19 related content during the observed periods. In addition, educational content particularly posts promoting health protocol dominated the Ministry's Instagram feed.

Keywords: Quantitative Content Analysis, Content Marketing Matrix, Situational Crisis Communications Theory, Pandemic Communication

INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic significantly impacted public health and instigated profound challenges in public communication. Amidst pervasive uncertainty, the public required clear, accurate, and accessible information to make informed decisions regarding personal and environmental health. Ineffective communication often leads to heightened confusion, panic, and the proliferation of hoaxes. Consequently, the COVID-19 pandemic is fundamentally characterized as a communication crisis, as the success of pandemic management relies heavily on how health messages are disseminated, received, and understood by the public (Situmeang, 2020). From the initial phase to the "new normal" adaptation period, the public demanded rapid, consistent, and comprehensible information concerning daily protocols, symptoms, vaccinations, and referral services. Simultaneously, the pandemic triggered an "infodemic"—an overwhelming surge of information blending facts, rumors, and misinformation—which

destabilized public trust and hindered compliance with health recommendations (Safdar, 2021). Thus, risk communication guidelines emphasize the necessity of timely, credible, and action-oriented communication that fosters trust through transparency and empathy.

In the Indonesian context, the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Indonesia (Kemenkes RI) serves as a strategic cornerstone for official government information during health crises. The Ministry is mandated to communicate policies, data, and health advisories accurately and consistently (Putri, 2020). Social media, particularly Instagram, has emerged as a vital channel due to its visual nature, rapid dissemination capabilities, and its capacity to deliver health messages via infographics, short videos, and concise educational content. Research on government communication during the pandemic suggests that Instagram functions as a public communication tool that facilitates access to verified updates from official accounts. (Tulung, 2020)

However, the core issue extends beyond the mere dissemination of information. The primary challenge lies in the content strategy employed during a crisis. This involves identifying dominant content types, variations in formats and themes during specific periods, and the extent to which content is aligned with crisis communication objectives—such as reducing uncertainty, guiding preventive behavior, mitigating panic, or debunking misinformation (Susan, 2023). At this juncture, a significant research gap emerges. Many studies on pandemic communication focus on qualitative aspects, such as narratives, discourse, or the social construction of risk. While valuable for understanding meaning-making, these approaches often fail to provide a "measurable" overview of message production patterns, including the proportion of data-driven information, behavioral education, hoax clarifications, calls to action, appreciation for healthcare workers, and policy updates.

Furthermore, while content analysis research has begun to map Instagram-based risk communication at the regional level (e.g., provincial health departments), there is a persistent need for quantitative content analysis to examine communication trends objectively and reliably. Analyzing a central national entity such as the Kemenkes RI Instagram account @kemenkes_ri remains highly relevant, given its extensive audience reach and its status as a primary reference for both the media and the general public (Shellanabilla, 2022).

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Content Marketing Matrix

Planning social media posts can be executed by determining content pillars that are aligned with the intended objectives of the information. The content pillars utilized in social media planning are widely adapted from the Content Marketing Matrix as conceptualized by Neal Schaffer (Schaffer, 2020).

Picture 1

Content Marketing Matrix

Source: (Schaffer, 2020)

According to the Content Marketing Matrix conceptualized by Neal Schaffer, there are four distinct types of content utilized in strategic post planning:

1. Entertain
   The primary objective of entertaining content is to build public awareness. This type of content typically leverages emotional appeals to engage the audience. In practice, entertainment content is often implemented through interactive posts, such as games or quizzes.
2. Inspire
   Inspirational content aims to drive behavioral change among the public. Similar to entertainment, it focuses on emotional aspects; however, it is typically manifested through product reviews or the strategic use of celebrities and influencers as endorsers.
3. Educate
   The educational category is designed to build public awareness by prioritizing rational appeals over emotional ones. This content type is generally implemented through the presentation of statistical data, reports, and infographics.
4. Convince
   The objective of convincing content is to facilitate behavioral change by highlighting rational considerations. This is put into practice through the publication of case studies, testimonials, or media coverage.

Within the context of this study, the Content Marketing Matrix serves as the primary analytical framework to evaluate the strategic composition of content pillars utilized by the government. This model is instrumental in

identifying how various communication clusters were deployed to enhance public awareness regarding COVID-19 and, ultimately, to facilitate essential behavioral changes throughout the pandemic.

To provide a rigorous analysis of these communication patterns, the content is categorized into four distinct quadrants as conceptualized by Neal Schaffer. Each quadrant serves a specific strategic function, navigating the spectrum between emotional engagement and rational persuasion. These four pillars: Entertain, Inspire, Educate, and Convince are elaborated below to demonstrate their respective contributions to building public trust and guiding community response during a health crisis:

1. Entertain
   This pillar focuses on building public awareness through high-engagement, emotional appeals. In the context of @kemenkes_ri, this is often implemented through interactive formats such as games or quizzes to maintain community interest amidst crisis fatigue.
2. Inspire
   Aimed at driving behavioral change, this category leverages emotional resonance, typically manifested through the strategic use of influencers, celebrities, or community reviews to endorse healthy behaviors and vaccination programs.
3. Educate
   This quadrant is designed to strengthen public awareness by prioritizing rational appeals. It provides the audience with empirical clarity through the dissemination of statistical data, infographics, and factual health reports.
4. Convince
   The final pillar facilitates behavioral change by emphasizing rational considerations. It utilizes evidence-based content, such as case studies, testimonials, or official media coverage, to reinforce the credibility of government health protocols.

By utilizing these four pillars as research indicators, this study aims to determine how these pillars were strategically deployed to enhance public awareness regarding COVID-19 and, ultimately, to facilitate behavioral changes throughout the pandemic.

Situational Crisis Communications Theory

Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT) is widely employed to understand crisis management within an institution. In the context of this study, the COVID-19 pandemic represents a global crisis that, if not managed effectively, triggers a "domino effect" across economic, political, social, and security sectors (Nahar, 2020). The success of managing such a crisis is intrinsically linked to the reputation and image of the Indonesian government, specifically the Ministry of Health (Kemenkes RI).

Developed by Timothy W. Coombs, SCCT is used in this research to analyze the crisis response strategies implemented by the Indonesian government through content uploaded to the @kemenkes_ri Instagram account. SCCT categorizes crises into three clusters based on the level of organizational responsibility and the resulting threat to reputation (Coombs, 2007):

1. Victim Cluster
   The organization is perceived as a victim of the crisis. Consequently, there is a weak attribution of crisis responsibility, posing only a mild reputational threat.
2. Accidental Cluster
   The crisis results from unintentional actions or factors beyond the organization's direct control. This cluster carries a minimal attribution of responsibility, presenting a moderate reputational threat.
3. Preventable / Intentional Cluster
   Here is a strong attribution of responsibility, as the organization is perceived to have intentionally placed people at risk or violated laws. This poses a severe reputational threat.

The crisis cluster is used to determine the response strategy utilized to manage a crisis. The following table summarizes the recommended response strategies applicable to each specific type of crisis (Coombs, 2010):

Tabel 1. Crisis Cluster and Response Strategy Recommendation

Crisis Cluster	Crisis Subtype	History of Organizational Crisis	Recommendations Strategy
Victim Cluster (low responsibility)		Similar Crisis and Bad Reputation	Diminish Strategy
	Rumor		Denial Strategy
Accident Cluster (moderate responsibility)		No similar crisis and no bad reputation	Diminish Strategy
		Similar crisis and bad reputation	Rebuild Strategy
	Challenge	Inaporiate challenge	Denial Strategy
		Organization deserves a challenge	Rebuild Strategy then Corrective Action
Preventable Cluster (high responsibility)			Rebuild Strategy

Source: adopted from Coombs(2010)

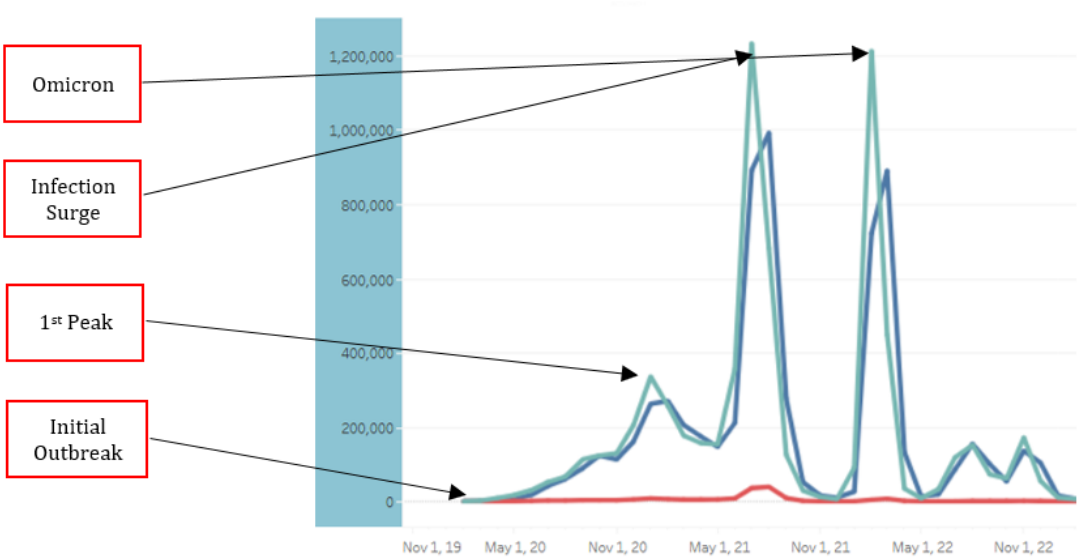
METHODOLOGY

This study is characterized as instrumental research, emphasizing a process centered on data collection through specific research instruments and data analysis derived from those instruments. Instrumental research is rooted

in the positivist paradigm, which is based on empirical observation and prioritizes objectivity, validity, and data reliability (Salim, 2006) . The approach employed in this study is quantitative content analysis, which is utilized to generalize findings from a population by examining representative samples. In quantitative content analysis, the breadth and scope of the sample are highly emphasized (Kriyantono, 2014).

This study establishes specific limitations; the data collection process is restricted to posts from the @kemenkes_ri Instagram account uploaded during periods of surging COVID-19 cases between 2020 and 2022.

Picture 2
COVID – 19 Infections During 2019-2022



Source: (Kemenkes, 2025)

Based on Figure 2, the designated timeframes for the Instagram posts analyzed in this study are established as follows:

1. Initial Outbreak Period: Posts during the first appearance of COVID-19 in Indonesia (March 1–31, 2020; 31 days).
2. First Peak Period: Posts from January 1 to February 15, 2021 (45 days).
3. Infection Surge Period: Posts from July 1 to August 15, 2021 (45 days).
4. Omicron Peak Period: Posts from February 1 to March 20, 2022 (50 days).

Throughout these designated periods, a total of 202 posts were identified on the @kemenkes_ri Instagram account. These posts were subsequently coded based on information classification and content pillar.

The data collection process were recorded using a research instrument in the form of a coding sheet. The data entered into the coding sheet consist of numerical values representing specific codes based on predetermined categories of the unit of analysis. The Content Marketing Matrix concept and

Instagram features served as the foundational frameworks for developing the coding sheet for data collection.

During the data collection process, the researcher was assisted by two coders. The criteria for selecting the coders included:

1. Possessing an active Instagram account
2. Being an active user of the platform
3. Demonstrating a comprehensive understanding of Instagram's various features

Once the coding sheets were completed, inter-coder reliability was measured by comparing the responses of both coders across each unit of analysis. The inter-coder reliability test was calculated using the Holsti formula (Eriyanto, 2025). The formula used to test inter-coder reliability is as follows:

$$\text{Inter Coder Realibility} = \frac{2M}{N1+N2}$$

Where:
2M = The total number of agreements between the two coders
N1 = The total number of items evaluated by Coder 1
N2 = The total number of items evaluated by Coder 2

In the context of the Holsti formula, a reliability coefficient closer to 1.00 indicates a higher level of agreement between coders. In communication research, a coefficient of 0.70 or higher is generally considered acceptable, while a score above 0.80 reflects high reliability (Eriyanto, 2011). The inter – coder reliability coefficients for each variable are summarized in Table 1 below:

Table 2.Inter – Coder Reliability

Unit of Analysis		Reliability
Informations Classification	Non COVID Information	0.98
	Virus Information	0.95
	Health Protocol	0.90
	Regulations	0.92
	Other COVID Information	1
Content Pillar	Entertain	0.96
	Inspire	0.98
	Educate	0.95
	Convice	0.97

Source: Researcher Data, 2025

By establishing this rigorous reliability check, the study ensures that all unit of analysis are objective and consistent, minimizing individual subjectivity during the coding process.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Categorizing the COVID-19 pandemic as a Victim Cluster is based on its nature as an external crisis beyond the control of any single organization (Coombs, 2010). According to the Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT), a "Victim Cluster" occurs when an institution is perceived as a casualty of the circumstances, resulting in minimal attribution of responsibility from the public and a relatively low threat to the institution's reputation (Coombs, 2007). In this context, the government acts as a "steward" rather than the cause of the crisis, aligning with the "natural disaster" subtype where blame is deflected toward the biological threat itself (Reynolds, 2005).

As a global health emergency caused by a biological agent, government bodies and health ministries were essentially positioned as victims of a non-natural disaster (Nahar 2020). Since the virus originated from factors outside domestic administrative control, the public's initial perception did not hold the institution directly accountable for the crisis's onset, a phenomenon often referred to as "external attribution" in crisis psychology (Weiner, 2006). This situational positioning granted the government the strategic leverage to employ a Diminish Strategy to counteract rumors or the "infodemic" that threatened social stability (Coombs 2010).

Information Classifications

Tabel 3. Information Classification

INFORMATIONS CLASSIFICATION		Freq	%
NON COVID		38	21,5%
COVID	Virus Info	26	14,7%
	Health Protocol	65	36,7%
	Regulations	37	20,9%
	Others Info	11	6,2%

Source: Researcher Data, 2025

Based on Tabel 3, content related to health protocols was the most dominant category (36.7%), followed by regulations (20.9%) and virus information (14.7%). Interestingly, non-COVID content continued to appear in a significant proportion (21.5%). The dominance of health protocol content indicates that the Ministry of Health considers preventative behavior change a primary focus of communication during the crisis phase. This aligns with the risk communication paradigm, which emphasizes that at the beginning of a

health crisis, critical, life-saving information should be prioritized (WHO, 2020).

In the SCCT approach, the early phase of a crisis is a time when the public experiences high uncertainty and needs clear guidance on how to protect themselves. Therefore, an instructive information strategy is the basis of effective crisis communication (Coombs, 2014). Giving clear instructions as a way to respond helps people understand how to keep themselves safe during a crisis, whether it's from physical danger or financial issues. It's especially important during health emergencies, product recalls, natural disasters, and other situations that put public safety and well-being at risk. Keeping people safe is key to avoiding harm, and it's important that those affected believe there is a real danger and that the suggested steps are effective ways to stay protected (Kim, Avery, & Lariscy, 2011).

Furthermore, the focus on health protocols demonstrates that the Ministry of Health is positioning itself not merely as a source of information, but as a behavioral authority, aiming to shape new social norms related to health. Recent research emphasizes that communication of health protocols on social media plays a crucial role in fostering public compliance with pandemic policies (Chen, 2022). Thus, the dominance of this content is not merely statistical, but a deliberate crisis mitigation strategy.

Content Pillar

Tabel 4. Content Pillar

CONTENT PILLAR	Freq	%
Entertain	9	4,8%
Inspire	5	2,7%
Educate	108	57,4%
Convince	66	35,1%

Source: Researcher Data, 2025

Tabel 4 reveals that the Ministry of Health primarily focused on an educational pillar (57.4%), followed convince (35.1%), while emotional or recreational content remained negligible. This specific distribution indicates that throughout the pandemic, Instagram was utilized less for institutional branding or emotional outreach and more as a robust, knowledge-driven health campaign platform.

In the field of digital communication, prioritizing educational material during a health emergency is proven to heighten risk awareness and drive behavioral change, particularly when disseminated through streamlined visual aids (Malecki, Keating, & Safdar, 2021). Such an approach is deemed

highly effective because, during periods of extreme uncertainty, audiences exhibit intense information-seeking behaviors and require clear, evidence-based explanations to navigate the crisis.

Furthermore, the significant volume of advocacy and convincing content demonstrates that the Ministry's objectives extended beyond mere data sharing; they actively sought to persuade the public to adhere to health protocols, embrace vaccination, and follow official mandates. This aligns with the concept of adjusting information, a strategy aimed at helping the community process the crisis, stabilize emotional responses, and foster institutional trust (Coombs, 2014).

The minimal presence of entertaining (4.8%) or inspirational (2.7%) content suggests a deliberate "low affective – high cognitive" strategic shift. By avoiding lighter formats, the Ministry likely sought to preserve its professional credibility and avoid the risk of appearing trivial during a sensitive national emergency.

CONCLUSION

The data suggests that the @kemenkes_ri Instagram account primarily utilized a rational-educational approach. The heavy concentration on Health Protocols and Regulations (totaling over 57%) indicates that the Ministry prioritized action-oriented communication to drive behavioral change, successfully integrating marketing-style content pillars into a robust crisis communication framework.

The presence of Non-COVID (21.5%) and Others Info (6.2%) indicates that the Ministry attempted to maintain its role as a general health authority, not just a pandemic-response unit. This diverse information mix, structured primarily through the Educate and Convince pillars, created a robust defense against misinformation. By saturating the digital space with rational, evidence-based pillars, Kemenkes RI successfully implemented a Diminish strategy that working to reduce the perceived crisis impact by providing controlled, authoritative updates.

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