Urban Community's Perceptions and Experiences about Social Distancing During the Covid-19 Pandemic

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Article Info

Abstract

Social distancing is a policy taken as a form of minimizing and suppressing the spread of Covid-19 which increases from time to time. The purpose of this study was to describe people's perceptions and experiences about social distancing during the Covid-19 pandemic. This research is qualitative research with a phenomenological approach which is presented in a descriptive form. The location of this research is in Central Java Province. The method of data collection was carried out by in-depth interviews. The results showed that the respondents knew about social distancing well. Some respondents have applied social distancing in their daily lives. Information obtained on the behavior of sorting and choosing social distancing when in certain conditions and situations. Social distancing is applied when in public places and when meeting with strangers while when meeting with the closest people, social distancing is rarely applied. There was an attitude that appears when respondents meet perpetrators of social distancing policy violators, including letting them know, reprimanding, advising, and setting a good example. Most of the respondents have good knowledge about social distancing. The implementation of social distancing has been carried out in their daily lives, although it has not been comprehensive.

Introduction

Covid-19 is one of the health problems with global coverage. This case began with a report from the World Health Organization (WHO) on December 31, 2019, which stated that there were cluster cases of pneumonia with unclear etiology in Wuhan City, Hubei Province, China (Wu Z, 2020). The case continued to grow, and it was finally discovered that the cause of this pneumonia cluster was the novel coronavirus. This case continues to grow outside of China (Wang, 2020). On March 11, 2020, WHO finally declared Covid-19 a pandemic.

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses that cause disease in humans and animals (Wilder Smith, 2005; Venkatesh, 2020).

In humans, it usually causes respiratory tract infections, ranging from the common cold to serious diseases such as *Middle East Respiratory Syndrome* (MERS) and *severe acute respiratory syndrome (*SARS). The increase in Covid-19 cases in the community is supported by the rapid spread of the virus, either from animals to humans or between humans. Transmission of the SARS-CoV-2 virus from animals to humans is generally caused by the consumption of animals infected with the virus as a human food source, especially in bats.

This disease can spread through small droplets from the nose or mouth when coughing or sneezing (Baloch, 2020). Droplets in the air can then be inhaled by other nearby humans who are not infected with COVID-19

through the nose or mouth. The droplets then enter through the lungs and the infection process in healthy humans continues (Shereen, Khan, Kazmi, Bashir, & Siddique, 2020; Wei et al., 2020). Clinically, the representation of SARS-CoV-2 virus infection in humans ranges from asymptomatic to very severe pneumonia, with acute respiratory distress syndrome, septic shock, and multiorgan failure, leading to death (Guan et al., 2020). About 80% of cases recover without the need for special treatment. About 1 in every 6 people may develop severe illness, such as pneumonia or difficulty breathing, which usually develops gradually. Although the mortality rate for this disease is still low (around 3%), older people and people with pre-existing medical conditions (such as diabetes, high blood pressure, and heart disease) are usually more susceptible to becoming ill. critical. Looking at developments to date, more than 50% of confirmed cases have been declared to be improving, and the cure rate will continue to increase.

Seeing the impact that has arisen from the dangerous Covid-19, almost every country in the world, including Indonesia, is taking preventive steps such as social distancing (Abel, 2020; Newbold, 2020). This policy is taken as a form of minimizing and suppressing the number of Covid-19 spreads that are increasing from time to time (Dalise, 2020; Lunn, 2020). Social distancing or what can be interpreted as social distancing restrictions, when referring to the article in the Public Health Department (Yusup et al., 2020), it is explained that social distancing means creating distance between oneself and others to prevent the transmission of certain diseases. Physical distancing behavior is expected to reduce the transmission rate of COVID-19 due to minimal contact (Syadidurrahmah et al., 2020; Widyaningrum et al., 2020). There are still many people who do not implement physical distancing behavior and continue to hold meetings or gatherings. This can happen due to several factors behind physical distancing behavior related to COVID-19 (Qian, 2020). In Indonesia, the term social restriction has been regulated in Articles 59 and 60 of Law Number 6 of 2018 concerning Health Quarantine. According to the law, social distancing *is* the restriction of certain activities of residents in an area suspected of being infected with a disease and/or contaminated in such a way as to prevent the possibility of spreading the disease or contamination. Referring to these rules, social distancing aims to reduce the potential for the spread of infectious diseases, where social distancing aims to limit people's social activities to stay away from physical contact and crowds (Bish, 2020).

The implementation of social distancing can be carried out with someone who is not allowed to shake hands and always pays attention and maintains a distance of at least 1-2 meters when interacting with other people, especially with someone who is sick or at high risk of suffering from Covid-19 (Guo, 2021). Some examples of the implementation of social distancing that are commonly carried out are working from home (*work from home*), studying at home for students and students, postponing meetings or events that are attended by many people, not visiting people who are sick but simply by phone calls or teleconferences. (Elran, 2020).

In addition to not understanding the concept of social distancing, there are still many urban communities (urban residents) who live by maintaining a collective lifestyle as in villages, so that they have a collectivistic character (Brooke, 2020; Marroquín, 2020). In this collectivistic society, togetherness in social groups is the main thing, so that the implementation of social restrictions is difficult to implement. Discussions on the perceptions and experiences of urban communities regarding social distancing during the Covid-19 pandemic are indeed necessary so that urban communities can behave appropriately in supporting the prevention of the spread of COVID-19 nationally.

Method

This research was qualitative research which was presented in descriptive form. The location of this research is in Central Java Province. The method of data collection was carried out by in-depth interviews. The data analysis technique used content analysis through the *ATLAS.ti* software which includes data collection, data reduction, and

categorization, data display, and concluding.

Results and Discussion

In this discussion, researchers will discuss and describe their findings through in-depth interviews with several respondents. Broadly speaking, this study will discuss 3 things related to social distancing, namely knowledge, application, and attitudes that need to be done when seeing social distancing *violators*. More details will be presented in the form of a graph below.

Knowledge about social distancing

Social distancing or limiting contact with other people is the best way to break the chain of spreading the corona virus disease 2019 (COVID 19). Most people are certainly familiar with the term because, during the Covid-19 pandemic, certain policies were promoted to break the chain of the spread of Covid-19, one of which was about social distancing. Of the six respondents who have been interviewed by researchers, all respondents already know about social distancing or also known as social

restrictions. The following is the narrative of Pandu, the respondent whose name has been changed by the researcher.

> *4:2* *"Social distancing, so social distancing is one of the recommendations from the government to the community to carry out social distancing, especially to places that have the potential to cause crowds, now people have to do social distancing by keeping their distance, wearing masks, washing hands."*

Since the news of the coronavirus has entered Indonesia, the entire community has felt a tremendous panic. Corona virus has succeeded in weakening various sectors, ranging from the health sector to the economic field at once. To address this, the World Health Organization (WHO) issued a decision to implement social distancing. Wahyu, the respondent whose name is anonymous, presented information in interviews about social distancing. Here's his narrative.
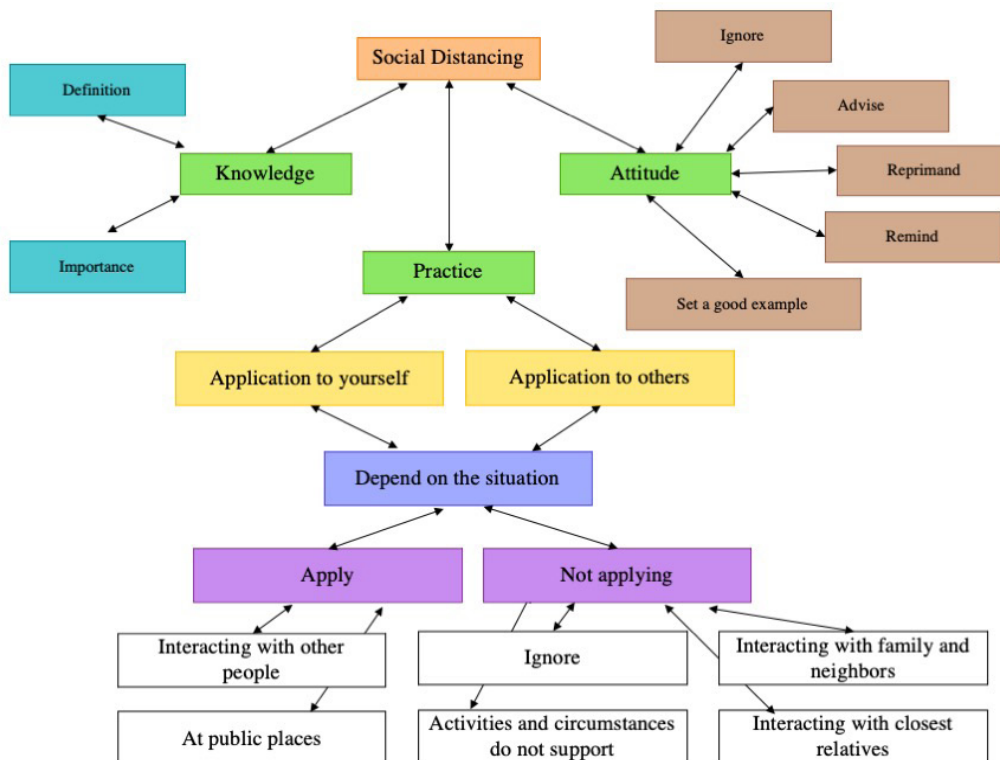
Pictere 1. Qualitative Content Analysis
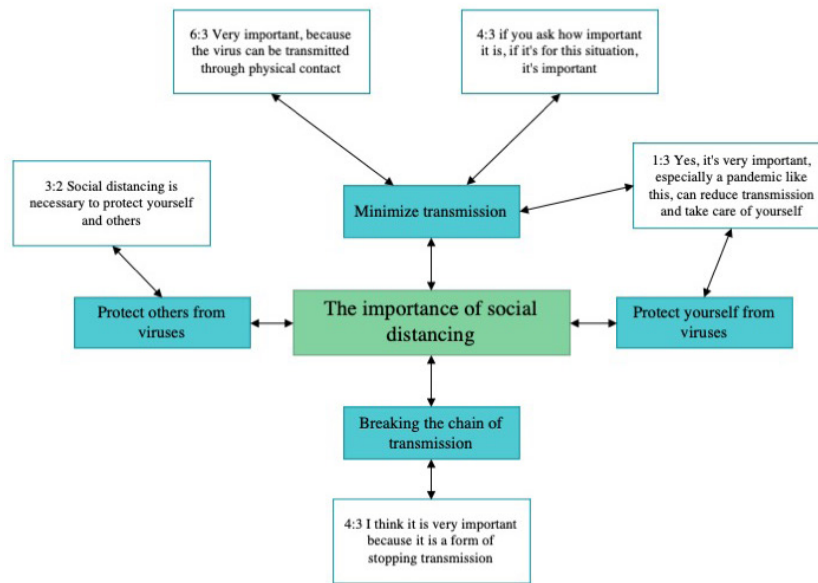
Pictere 2. Importance of Social Distancing

6:2 "Social distancing is a situation where we have to keep our distance from the people around us to break the chain of spreading the Covid-19 virus by reducing physical contact with others."

Based on the results of the interview above, the researcher can underline 3 important points, namely maintaining distance, reducing physical contact, and breaking the spread of the Covid 19 virus. This was also known by the respondent who the researcher disguised as Ayu.

1:2 "Social distancing means keeping a distance from other people, at least 1 to 2 meters. Social distancing is an effort to reduce the spread of the Covid-19 virus, especially during this pandemic, sis."

From some of the descriptions above, researchers can see that social distancing is well known by the public. But that is not enough, the researcher wants to get the more in-depth information to find out the extent of the respondent's understanding. Because basically knowledge is an important element in the formation of human behavior, in which knowledge-based behavior will last longer than non-knowledge behavior. Researchers dig up information about the importance of implementing social distancing during the

Covid-19 pandemic, the following data were obtained.

Ayu, one of the respondents whose name has been said that change, social distancing plays an important role in minimizing the transmission of the Covid-19 virus. The full explanation is as follows.
1:3 "Yes, it's very important, sis, especially a pandemic like this. By implementing that, yes, we can protect ourselves from viruses. If we describe it as rich, for example, when we apply social distancing when we meet other people, we don't know whether the person close to us is exposed to the virus or not. Yes, the term is if you keep your distance, you can minimize the spread of the Covid-19 virus.

Based on the narrative above, the author agrees with the statement from sister Ayu that everyone must implement *state* social distancing because viruses are invisible creatures. Moreover, the virus can spread from person to person so everyone should try to avoid the disease as much as possible. Below is a narrative from Lala and Dinda.

3:2 "… social distancing is necessary for the protection of yourself and those

closest to you, ma'am, especially in my house there is also a grandmother, so I am also more vigilant…"
2:3 "I think it is very important because this is a form of our efforts to break the chain of transmission of COVID-19."

Thus, it can be seen several reasons for the importance of implementing social distancing during the Covid-19 pandemic, including being able to maintain and protect oneself from the virus, minimize transmission, and break the chain of the spread of Covid-19. Suppawittaya et al said that social distancing *was* carried out to minimize interactions between individuals who may be infected but do not *self-isolate*. This, of course, requires the awareness of each individual to always implement social distancing.

Implementation of Social Distancing

According to several respondents, some respondents comply with s*ocial distancing*, starting from carrying out activities at home (*work from home*) or limiting interactions with other people. Respondents believe that the application of social distancing is the self-awareness to break the chain of the spread of the Covid-19 infectious disease. This is by what was conveyed by one of the respondents named Ratna as follows.

> *5:4 "Yes, by doing any activity at home (work from home), also by limiting interaction with other people, the application of social distancing is our awareness to break the chain of the spread of infectious diseases such as covid-19distancing"*

Although some respondents considered important social distancing, no party has been able to fully implement it. For example, they are still sorting and choosing to whom social distancing should be carried out. This is by the response of a respondent named Ayu.

> *1:4 "Yes, it depends on the situation, Ms. For example, people who are close to us, like family, don't keep their*

distance, because we know what their daily life is like. But when you meet other people, strangers, keep your distance, sis."

The fear of this disease that attacks the respiratory system seems to be defeated by the reality of meeting the needs of life, many of which have not been able to apply because of economic conditions, due to work reasons, or other reasons that require them to carry out activities and activities outside and cannot implement social distancing. maximally. This is by the following narrative of Lala.

> *3:3 "Yes, I did, Miss, but it's still not fully implemented. Because sometimes from activities and the surrounding conditions are less supportive to keep your distance. Also, sometimes I interact with neighbors and relatives who don't keep their distance."*

The application of social distancing to the respondent still depends on who he interacts with and where he is. If he is in a public place and or meets with strangers, he applies social distancing. Meanwhile, if he already knows the people he invites to interact with, such as family, neighbors, or relatives, the application of social distancing is ignored. Perceptions like this, it turns out that some people around the respondent generally do. The following is a narrative from Pandu.

> *4:5 "For the people around it, it depends on who we are at that time, if we are in a public place or public service, it means that the place applies social distancing with a very strict protocol, but when we are in a place where is it? It's only natural, what's important is that we are healthy and apply that, they are welcome, but if it's still within reasonable limits, they think that it's healthy to wash our hands, so we have to adjust where we are."*

Attitudes towards Social Distancing Violators

A policy or regulation is usually inseparable from obeying parties and violating parties. The policy is no exception

to social distancing to combat Covid-19. Compliance with a policy certainly cannot be separated from self-awareness and reflected attitudes. Violating behavior can certainly have a negative impact, both on yourself and others. Moreover, violations of policies regarding health protocols. The attitudes and behavior of each need to be controlled and considered.

Below is a graph of the attitude taken when respondents encounter perpetrators of policy social distancing *violators*.

Lala, a respondent whose name has been changed, explained her attitude when meeting social distancing *violators* as follows.

> 3:5 *"If the people closest to me are like family or friends, sometimes I remind you to practice social distancing, only if it's people who are not very familiar with me, I let them go because I am a bit afraid, if I reprimand fewer familiar people, Ms. the response will be like that, so I prefer to leave it alone."*

From the narrative above, the author can see that there is an indifferent attitude in the respondents when facing social distancing *violators*. This is because there is a concern that there will be a bad response if Lala reprimands the violator of the policy. Dinda added that if someone does not dare to reprimand even in polite language, he should set a good example. The following is the narrative of Dinda.

> 2:7 *"It would be nice if we could rebuke him with good and polite language, if we feel that people are not able to advise him, we should set an example by implementing social distancing starting with ourselves, we keep our distance from him and implement prokes other things that have been promoted by the government so that he will be aware and understand by himself, and grateful if he also implements it."*

The statement below is the narrative of Ratna, which the author adds as a complement to the information above.

> 5:6 *"If I try to remind him not to forget the importance of maintaining social distancing because if you let it go it will make things worse. Of course, according to the portion that I can."*

From the results of the narratives of several respondents, the authors can conclude that the attitudes shown by individuals when encountering social distancing violators are mostly 1) reprimand if the violators come from family, relatives, or closest people 2) allow if the violator is a foreigner 3) advise in polite language 4) remind and 5) set a good example.

Conclusion

Based on the research that has been done, the researcher can conclude the following points. People know social distancing well. The community has implemented social distancing in their daily life although it has not been implemented comprehensively due to situations and conditions that are not possible. Social distancing needs a process for the community to adapt because it is a new policy that has emerged in this pandemic era. The involvement of various components of the government and the community needs to be increased so that the expectations of this policy social distancing can be realized. Good counseling from the government will encourage the emergence of knowledge and an active role from the community to implement social distancing during this COVID-19 pandemic.

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