The Acceptance of COVID-19 Vaccination in Aceh Province

Rizanna Rosemary¹, Ikhsan², Sari Rahmani³
¹,²,³Universitas Syiah Kuala, Aceh, Indonesia
rizanna.rosemary@usk.ac.id

A B S T R A C T

The resistance to Covid-19 vaccination is not solely the community's fault. Educating the public on the importance of vaccination and the prevention of hoax information would contribute to the need for exemplary implementation of vaccination programs in Aceh Province. Insufficient information regarding vaccination to the public has caused many people to refuse vaccination. This study aims to evaluate the health promotion strategy of the Aceh Provincial Health Office in the implementation of Covid-19 vaccination in Aceh through Lawrence Green’s (1984) behavioral theory. This qualitative research was conducted by observing and interviewing six Aceh Provincial Health Office informants and analyzing relevant documents. The results of the study indicate that there are factors in the health promotion strategy that shape people's acceptance toward Covid-19 vaccination; (1) including predisposing factors through providing information, forming attitudes and values of beliefs about vaccination in various media platforms; (2) enabling factors through the availability of facilities, medicines, and health workers; and (3) reinforcing factors which manifested in the formation of the supports from community leaders and the availability of policies that support Covid-19 vaccination. The study suggests improving these factors to gain positive responses from the public toward the Covid-19 vaccination program.

Keywords: Aceh; Covid-19; Behavioral Theory; Vaccination

A. INTRODUCTION

The Covid-19 pandemic is considered to have ended, but it does not mean that the possibility of other health disasters in the future is not likely to occur. Understanding the
implementation of health communication strategies that an organization or agency has carried out is one way to assess the success of the strategies and apply them to other health pandemic situations. Meanwhile, health promotion is a form of health service that is based on conveying messages about health to create awareness of healthy living (Kholid, 2012). During the Covid-19 pandemic, vaccination is a form of awareness of healthy living that was needed because the formation of Herd Immunity in Indonesia requires around 182 million people to be vaccinated (Kompas.com 2021). Thus, a health promotion program is important in shaping healthy behavior in society because it can increase preventive behavior (Van den Broucke, 2020).

The Indonesian government has taken various steps since Corona Virus 2019 (Covid-19) was declared a national epidemic in mid-March 2020. Daily reports from the Covid-19 National Cluster Unit website in June 2021, the number of positive confirmed Covid-19 in Indonesia reached 1,894,025 people, with 1,735,144 recovered patients and 52,566 people dying (Agustin et al.; Depkes, 2009; Indonesia, 2023). To prevent the spread of Covid-19, in February 2021, the President of the Republic of Indonesia issued Presidential Regulation No. 14 of 2021 concerning vaccine procurement and vaccination implementation in the context of pandemic mitigation Covid-19. One of the contents of the PP is article 13A (2) states that everyone who has been determined as a target recipient of the Covid-19 vaccine must take part in vaccination (Indonesia, 2021).

Vaccination is an activity that is carried out thoroughly throughout Indonesia. By definition, the Ministry of Health (2021) explains vaccination as giving vaccines (biological products containing antigens in the form of microorganisms) into a person's body to actively cause or increase a person's immunity against a disease. That if one is exposed to the disease, then people who have been vaccinated will not get sick or only experience mild illness and are not a source of transmission (Indonesia, 2023).

In the case of Covid-19, to end the pandemic in Indonesia, President Joko Widodo targets 70% of the population, or around 182 million Indonesians, to have Covid-19 vaccination to form Herd Immunity (Farisa & Krisiandi., 2021). Herd Immunity Or herd immunity is a condition where most people have immunity/protection against a particular disease. Furthermore, large groups of people will affect vulnerable groups who are not vaccinated. This condition will be obtained if the vaccinated group is higher and more evenly distributed than the unvaccinated group (Indonesia, 2023).

In Aceh Province, the Head of the Health Office, dr. Hanif stated that vaccine administration is targeted at around 3.7 million people. The Aceh Health Office data divides the top health workers as the top priority, amounting to 56,450 people. The public service personnel, TNI, and Polri, as many as 365,294 people. Vulnerable, geospatial, socio-economic communities, as many as 1,771,014 people, and essential economic actors and other community groups, as many as 1,592,752 people (Aceh, 2023).
In November 2020, The Ministry of Health, in collaboration with the Indonesia Technical Advisory Group of Immunization (ITAGI), the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), and the World Health Organization (WHO), issued a survey on vaccination acceptance in Indonesia. The survey results stated that Aceh Province had the lowest level of willingness to receive the Covid-19 vaccine from all provinces in Indonesia, with an acceptance rate of around 46%. Meanwhile, West Papua Province is the province with the highest acceptance, which is around 74% (Nugraheny & Erdianto, 2020).

One of the reasons for the refusal to vaccinate in Aceh is religious beliefs and doubts about the halal vaccine (Indonesia, 2021). Uncountable from the beginning of the vaccination implementation on January 15, 2021, to October 1, 2021, Acehnese people who have received the first dose of vaccination have yet to reach half of the target, which is 1,020,155 people from 3.7 million people (Aceh, 2022). As of January 6, 2022, data from the Aceh Health Office recorded that five regions in Aceh have yet to reach the target of at least 70% vaccination. North Aceh is the lowest vaccination rate area, with only 50% absorption of people who have been vaccinated. Then South Aceh 61.4%, West Aceh 62.8%, Bireun 63.5%, and Aceh Tamiang 69.9% (Aceh, 2022).

Vaccine refusal in Aceh even occurred blatantly. On September 28, 2021, hundreds of residents forcibly dispersed the vaccine post at Susoh District, Abdya Regency. As a result of the forced dissolution, some health workers were injured, 9 vials of vaccine (10 doses), 33 vials of Sinovac vaccine (2 doses), medical devices in the form of masks, Hand sanitizer, Tension devices, syringes, and drugs are damaged and can no longer be used (Siregar, 2021).

The act of refusing vaccination is not just the fault of the community. The absence of the authorities' role is also one of the determining factors, especially those of the authorities, in educating and overcoming biased information in the community. Astuti et al. concluded that the lack of information experienced by the public and the lack of government preparedness to educate the public regarding vaccination have led to public rejection of the Covid-19 vaccine. The wrong perception in the community arises due to the lack of good communication from authorities, such as health workers, to convince the public about the effectiveness of the Covid-19 vaccine (Astuti, Nugroho, Lattu, Potempu, & Swandana, 2021).

In health communication, a method of delivering messages focuses on empowering the community to form an environment that cares about health, called health promotion. Health promotion is about improving public health status, which is one form of effort in health services based on delivering messages or information about health to instill knowledge about health so that awareness of healthy living arises (Kholid, 2012). Meanwhile, the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Indonesia (Department Kesehatan Republik Indonesia) in 2008 mentioned health promotion as activities to increase awareness, personal empowerment, increase knowledge,
change attitudes and behavior in the physical or social environment of individuals, groups, families, and communities towards health (Depkes, 2009). Health messages can reach a wider audience through a promising health promotion strategy, making health promotion an essential instrument in shaping public health behavior (Dheo, Masfiah, & Maghfiroh, 2019; Mujiati, Sumiarsih, & Pujianti; Rubai, Masfiah, & Maqfiroch).

Refusal to vaccinate is a health behavior. Conner and Norman explained that health behavior is not always related to improving health status, but is also related to a decrease or behavior in a person that makes their health level worse (Widayati, 2020). In this case, health communication applies to designing and develop activities and interventions in order to change people’s behavior positively. Health communication is a tool to reach the goal of changing people’s behavior regarding health, while the purpose of health promotion is to increase the value of health in society, help individuals to achieve healthy lives, and encourage the development and use of health service facilities, including changing individual/community behavior in the health sector (Susilowati, 2016).

In 1984, WHO introduced a health promotion strategy where there were three main strategies, including community empowerment, social support and advocacy. Advocacy is an activity that provides health assistance to the community through decision-makers and policy makers in the health sector. Social support is an activity aimed at seeking support from various elements (community figures) who act as a liaison between the executive and the community. Meanwhile, community empowerment is the process of providing information to families or groups and individuals continuously (Solang, Losu, & Tando, 2016).

Several studies have examined various strategies for Covid-19 vaccination health promotion programs, such as health communication strategies related to vaccination (Dewi, 2021; Joyosemito & Nasir, 2021; Siregar, 2021), or increased public knowledge of vaccination (Murtiyan & Suidah, 2022; Nur & Rahman, 2021). However, there have yet to be studies that have tried to analyze and evaluate the Covid-19 vaccination program from health promotion activities, particularly examining the determinants of acceptance behavior resulting from the health promotion activities carried out. This paper aims to analyze the determinants of acceptance behavior of Covid-19 vaccination through the health promotion activities by the Aceh Government Health Office. The determinants of health behavior refer to the Theory of Health Behavior by Lawrence Green (1984).

Lawrence Green analyzed human behavior from the level of health. This theory has been widely used to measure the determinants of health worker health behavior (Mila, 2020; NISA, 2018) in various health issues such as HIV/AIDS (Adianti, 2019; Ispranawan, Saudah, & Zainuri, 2021). This theory distinguishes two factors that determine or shape health behavior: behavioral factors (behavior causes) and factors outside of behavior (non-behavior causes). Lawrence Green analyzed that behavioral factors are determined or formed from three factors—predisposing, enabling, and reinforcing (Green & McAlister, 1984). Green theory can
then conclude that the behavior of a person or society about health is determined by the knowledge, attitudes, beliefs, and traditions of individuals or society itself. In addition, the availability of facilities, attitudes, and behaviors of health workers and community leaders toward health will also support and strengthen behaviour formation (Best et al., 2003).

B. METHOD

This study analyzes the health promotion strategy of the vaccination program implemented by the Government of Aceh through a qualitative approach. This research was conducted in Banda Aceh City, where the Aceh Government Health Office is located. The selection of the Aceh Health Office is because the Aceh Government Health Office designed the health promotion program for the implementation of vaccination throughout Aceh Province. This research will use several data collection methods, such as observation, interviews, and document analysis.

Observations were made on various health promotions through media to communicate the vaccination program. The document analysis was done by reviewing information or news in the Aceh mass media related to the vaccination program's implementation. The informants for interviews were selected through a purposive sampling technique and based on the following criteria: (1) working at the Aceh Government Health Office, (2) directly involved in the implementation of the vaccination program, (3) involved in the design and implementation of vaccination-related health promotion, and (4) who understand the process of initial implementation of mass vaccination in Aceh.

Interviews were conducted using an open interview technique with two informants who best understand the implementation of health promotion and vaccination in Aceh. The two informants were Cut Ampon S.T M.Si, who was in charge of designing and establishing health promotion at the Aceh Health Service and Mohd. Ichsan, S. Psi., as one of the coordinators of the mass vaccination by the Aceh Government. Interviews were held on June 30 and July 1 2022, at the Aceh Health Service office.

Documents relating to promotional and vaccination activities were obtained from track record documentation provided by the Aceh Health Service, websites and social media belonging to the Aceh Health Service, and information spread on the internet. The interviews, observations, and documentation results were analyzed with Lawrence Green's Theory of Health Behavior, presented thematically and descriptively.

C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Health promotion is an effort to form a society aware of health behaviors. In this study, the health behavior in question was the Covid-19 vaccination. To shape health behavior, Lawrence Green (1984) mentions several factors that can shape a person's health behavior. Among them
are predisposing factors, probable factors, and reinforcing factors. The interviews show that the Aceh Government Health Office has considered and involved the three determinants of health behavior as mentioned in Lawrence Green's Behavioral Theory, which can be divided into three themes or focus of the problem.

**General messages in media promotion**

*Predisposing factors* help make a person decide to behave healthily. This factor arises from within man through knowledge, attitudes, beliefs, beliefs, and values. The message's general content will affect its effectiveness because it results in the relativity of receiving it. Both goals are divided into general and specific goals. Specific objectives will pay attention to the conditions of the promotion target from three things: cognitive, affective, and behavioral aspects (Leonita & Jalinus, 2018; Rosemary, Syam, Anisah, Yanuar, & Putra, 2021). Regarding vaccination, the cognitive side is the community that needs information about the importance of vaccination, and the affective side is the group of people who know the importance of vaccination but have doubts about halal vaccination. At the same time, the conative or behavioral side is the community that will be vaccinated but does not know how the procedures must and will be passed.

The results showed that the Aceh Provincial Health Office has carried out health promotion related to vaccination well by utilizing various media platforms. Information related to the benefits of vaccination was conveyed through various media platforms. The informant said the use of various media in health promotion aims to increase public knowledge of the vaccination program. *"When there is information to be conveyed, we use various existing media channels. We consider it to be able to reach all"* (Interview with Cut Ampon July 1, 2022).

Based on the results of interviews, various promotional media, primarily through the website (dinkes.acehprov.go.id site) and social media such as Instagram--@promkes.aceh with 3,172 followers and Promkes Aceh Facebook account with 23 thousand followers. Throughout 2021, the @promkes.aceh Instagram uploaded 143 posts related to Covid-19 vaccination, divided into two types, an infographic of vaccination and a call for vaccination in the form of posters.
The dinkes.acehprov.go.id was visited by around 1,500 to 2,000 visitors daily. Moreover, the health promotion team also promotes on online news sites and raises information to paid print media, such as in Serambi Indonesia, as well as in several outdoor media (billboards, banners) and electronic media such as television and radio, as summarized in Table 2.

Table 1. Covid-19 Vaccine Promotion in Electronic Media

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Moon</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Name and place of activity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Tree FM Radio Talk Show with the Theme Protect Yourself and Family with Vaccination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Interactive Dialogue in Studio with RRI Radio with the theme Protect Yourself and Family with Vaccination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Talk Show on Aceh TV with the Theme Protect Yourself and Family with Vaccination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Kasie Promkes &amp;; PM Dinkes Aceh interview with Metro TV Team discusses the issue of Vaccination phase 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Aceh Government Socializes vaccination to 289 sub-districts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Interactive Dialogue on Inews TV Aceh Government's Efforts in Succeeding the Covid-19 Vaccination Program in Banda Aceh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>Actively Talk Show Benefits of Covid-19 Vaccine Universally on Tost Radio</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Source: Research Findings, 2022

However, the media messages tend to be too general to focus on the importance of the Covid-19 vaccine and lack attention to the audience's background, needs, and expectations. This condition will likely affect how people accept the messages (Rosemary et al., 2021).
Adequate vaccination facilities

*Enabling factors* are auxiliary factors that become a means of behavioral health action. The form of supporting factors, for example, such as available facilities. For example, the availability of vaccines, vaccination sites, medicines, and the number of vaccinated officers. Regarding the availability of vaccines, informants stated that the Health Office is a distributor of vaccines in Aceh. Then, the vaccine was distributed to various sectors, such as the TNI/POLRI and Puskesmas. The informant mentioned cross-sectoral cooperation to increase the number of vaccinations with clerical groups, TNI/POLRI, and regional leaders. These sectors then do their way to increase vaccination achievement. For example, cooperation with the ulama is to meet once a month. Furthermore, they conveyed information through *tausiah* to communities in various districts/cities in Aceh.

The informant mentioned that there are standards for vaccination officers in the field. Vaccinators are prioritized to puskesmas health workers on duty at the immunization clinics. The health workers in the Heath Care Unit (*Puskesmas*) are equipped with technical instructions for implementing vaccination in combating Covid-19 issued by the Ministry of Health. In addition, the results of a survey of 26 health workers in various regions in Aceh, such as Banda Aceh, Sigli, Lhokseumawe, and Blangpidie, stated that they had carried out vaccinations following the established SOPs.

Although the implementation of vaccination SOPs by health workers is high, obstacles are also found, especially when there are changes in the number and operational standards due to the implementation of new health policy programs. For example, those who become vaccinators have had certification or training before, but as the community's enthusiasm to be vaccinated increases, recruited or assigned health workers who have yet to receive training can vaccinate.

However, despite the sufficient Covid-19 vaccination facilities, there still needs to be more individual approach interventions carried out by the Aceh Government Health Office in shaping attitudes in the community. Notoatmodjo (2007) divides three dimensions of behavior that can be used as health promotion boundaries: behavior change, behavior coaching, and behavior development (Notoatmodjo, 2022). Behavior change is a dimension of behavior that changes from negative to positive. For example, the behavior of those who have not been vaccinated becomes willing to be vaccinated. In comparison, behavioral coaching is a behavioral dimension where a person can maintain health by returning to vaccination. *Behavioral development* is a healthy behavior that has become a habit.

This explanation is one of the reasons why the achievement of the first phase of vaccination is higher than the second stage, and the third stage (*booster*) again declined in Aceh. The lack of an interpersonal and integrated approach in socializing the importance of the second and third vaccines causes people to have no desire to maintain their health conditions by
returning to vaccination, exacerbated by the emergence of practices under which vaccine certificates can be available without the need for injections or other hoax information related to the safety of vaccine use (Rahayu, 2021).

**Positive external supports**

*Reinforcing factors* encourage and strengthen a person's attitude in carrying out health behaviors. Strengthening factors come from outside a person, such as the attitude of vaccination officers, the attitude of significant figures in society, and the form of policies issued by the government, such as the involvement of various parties in crisis management at Kyriad Hotel during the pandemic (Yanuar, Muharman, Rahmawati, Sartika, & Oktayuana, 2022). Informants mentioned that existing policies regarding vaccination being one of the factors that encourage the increase in vaccination rates in Aceh. Such as a policy on vaccine certificate requirements for people who will take direct cash assistance (*Bantuan Langsung Tunai*/BLT). Another example is the application of vaccine certificates as a requirement to enter the Universitas Syiah Kuala (USK) campus.

**Table 3 Vaccination Policy in Aceh**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Policy</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>February 2021</td>
<td>Presidential Regulation No. 14 of 2021 concerning vaccine procurement and vaccination implementation in the context of overcoming the 2019 <em>Corona Virus Disease</em> pandemic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 2021</td>
<td>Aceh Governor Instruction No.02/INSTR/2021 requires all State Civil Apparatus (ASN), whether they are civil servants or not, to take part in the Covid-19 vaccination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 2021</td>
<td>Issuance of vaccination permit for pregnant women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 2021</td>
<td>Residents who do not have a National Identity Number (NIK) get permission to take part in the vaccination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 2021</td>
<td>Home Affairs Instruction Number 48 of 2021 for the regions of Sumatra, Nusa Tenggara, Kalimantan, Sulawesi, Maluku, and Papua. This regulation regulates domestic travel, community activities, <em>Work From Home</em> (WFH) policies, opening restaurants/cafes, and using the PeduliLindungi application.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 2021</td>
<td>Governor's Instruction No. 23/INSTR/2021 Application of the Peduli Lindungi application when entering the Aceh Government office environment</td>
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</table>

Source: Research Findings, 2022

Solang, Losu, et al. (2016) explained that social support is a form of approach to the community through community leaders who are used as a liaison between promotional programs...
and people who will receive programs (Aceh, 2022; Solang et al., 2016). In promoting COVID-19 vaccination in Aceh, the health office seeks social support from several religious leaders and aims to convince the public of the halal vaccine.

In anticipation of the high doubts in the community regarding the halal vaccine, the Aceh Government Health Office, in collaboration with the Ulema Consultative Assembly (Majelis Permusyawaratan Ulama/MPU), determines policies/fatwas based on Islamic Sharia that support halal vaccines which also encourage increasing confidence in vaccination in Aceh in the early stages of Covid-19 vaccination in Aceh.

The Health Office also conducts social support with leaders in the community, for example, with sub-districts in Aceh. Furthermore, some policies help the Aceh Health Office facilitate cooperation with various sectors. In February 2021, President Joko Widodo issued a Presidential Regulation asking all government sectors to assist in implementing vaccinations in Indonesia. This condition further strengthens the external support system for the implementation of vaccination in Aceh.

D. CONCLUSION

This study examines the health promotion strategy for Covid-19 vaccination implemented by the Aceh Government Health Office. The results showed that health promotion had met the three determinants of health behavior referred to by Lawrence Green in Behavioral Theory. These three factors—predisposition, enabling, and reinforcing—determine the behavior of the Acehnese people in receiving the vaccination program. However, data shows that Aceh is among the provinces with the lowest vaccination achievements, indicating that other factors contribute to determining public health behavior related to the Covid-19 vaccine. In this study, predisposing factors that focus on general vaccine promotion messages cause target audiences with diverse backgrounds to have difficulty receiving the message; thus an interpersonal approach is necessary to complement the media approach. However, the results of this study are significant and can be used as a reference in preparing and making better and more effective health promotion.

REFERENCES


