

STUDENT BEHAVIOR IN SEARCHING FOR COVID-19 VIRUS INFORMATION THROUGH TWITTER

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ABSTRACT. The COVID-19 pandemic that was present at the beginning of 2020 brought many changes to people's behavior. Government policies in handling COVID-19 which require people to work and study from home as well as social restrictions have changed people's lifestyles. In such circumstances, social media has become a means of obtaining information, however, users need to examine more deeply about the truth of the information. Students as part of the community who understand the use of social media, especially Twitter, become a community group that actively interacts to find and provide information about COVID-19 through Twitter. So with a qualitative approach, this paper examines how students seek information on COVID-19 transmission through Twitter based on psychological conditions, demographics, interpersonal relationships with the community, environment and social media characteristics. based on the analysis that has been done, it is found that psychologically social media must be able to provide healthy, entertaining information, provide learning, information according to needs and be able to satisfy the social network cognitively and affectively. In addition, demographically, Twitter is easier to use by the younger generation but this group is not wise enough to understand valid information. Thus, community participation, especially families, is important in providing understanding and understanding of the information obtained. Then, the role of Twitter users in assisting the government in disseminating information regarding the handling of COVID-19.

KEYWORDS: Communication, Student Behaviour, Information Through twitter, Covid-19

INTRODUCTION

In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic has become an extraordinary global event. This pandemic has spread to almost all parts of the world and affects all sectors of society such as the economy, education to social life (PICH & Sardjono, 2020). In Indonesia, the first case of COVID-19 was found on March 2nd, 2020, which infected three Indonesian citizens, then the number of people infected increased dramatically (Gorbiano, 2020). At the beginning of 2021, there were more than nine hundred thousand cases of accumulated cases of COVID-19 contamination in Indonesia (M. Handayani & Hendriana, 2021). The peak of the spread occurred when the Delta variant spread in mid-July 2021, where the daily cases crossed the forty-four thousand cases per day.

The Information about this pandemic has become the headlines or trending topic from various mass media or social media. The information that usually makes headlines includes variants, the development of the pandemic, the government's handling of the pandemic, and other information related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

However, there is no effective medicine or treatment method to cure COVID-19. Various efforts have been made by the Indonesian government to reduce the spread of covid, including implementing Large-Scale Social Restrictions in both national and local areas, socializing social distancing, socializing the use of masks, and clean living habits. The community is expected to be able to adapt to new habits during the pandemic period by limiting every activity they do both in work, education, and socialization between communities. The government has also held and recommended a

COVID-19 test for all citizens to be able to trace and break the chain of spreading the COVID-19 virus. The latest important policy taken by the government to overcome the COVID-19 pandemic is to vaccinate all citizens who deserve vaccines (Setyawan & Lestari, 2020).

However, due to various government policies in dealing with the pandemic by implementing restrictions on community activities and vaccinations on a national scale, they were able to reduce the number of pandemics. Based on data from the COVID-19 task force until the end of December 2021, the daily number of new cases can be reduced to below 150 new cases per day.

For various programs and policies in handling COVID-19 to be successful, the government has carried out various socialization through various media, both print, electronic and social media. The socialization is expected to be able to provide correct information regarding the policies such as vaccination, the restrictions on community activities, number of cases, hospital information, etc. The socialization strategy must also be able to convey information equally to all levels of society so that it is hoped that misinformation will not appear in the community (St.Amant, 2020). The socialization of the COVID-19 treatment program also involved various parties from central and local government institutions, the private sector to volunteers, and used various media to disseminate this information.

There are various ways for people to find information about COVID-19. The actions and behavior of each individual in meeting their information needs must be different according to their needs (Soleymani et al., 2021). Social media is one of the popular sources of information by the public because of the ease of accessing information. This media is easier to use because it can communicate between a person or individual using only a smartphone because it is very simple so it can be carried everywhere. In addition, users can communicate directly with the virtual, so they can see what is going on and can capture information in various parts of the world.

One of the most popular social media in the form of internet-based applications today is social media applications, one of which is Twitter. Twitter, one of the social media created by Dorsey, is in great demand today, including in Indonesia. From statistical data in January 2021 conducted by Hootsuite We Are Social, it can be seen that in 2021 Twitter social media is ranked fifth with 63.6% of the total population. The percentage of this data is users aged 16 to 64 years. This figure can be said to be large because it has passed half of the total population of people in Indonesia (Kemp, 2021).

Students are part of the community affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, one of the most and most active Twitter users. Various information relating to activities during the pandemic related to academics such as learning activities, Field Work Practices, Real Work Lectures, conducting research for thesis writing, and socialization between students and lecturers are important for students. In addition, students also need information regarding various policies for handling COVID-19 through various media, one of which is Twitter (Sahir et al., 2021).

Another important thing in finding information about COVID-19 is the number of hoaxes and fake news on various social media platforms. Society in general and students, in particular, must be able to identify the truth of the information. This is very disturbing because it causes misinformation and delays in the COVID-19 handling program that has been set by the government (Prajarto, 2021)

One of the government institutions involved in the socialization of the COVID-19 vaccination program is the Ministry of Communication and Information of the Republic of Indonesia (Kemenkominfo). In delivering information related to the program, the Ministry of Communication and Information uses various media, one of which is the social media Twitter @Kemenkominfo. In the socialization strategy, Twitter has advantages, including being able to convey information briefly and clearly, and Twitter has a very broad market segmentation. Information on Twitter can be amplified by using public figures or influencers so that it will have a big impact on society. By using Twitter, it is hoped that it will be able to convey information more clearly and comprehensively to all people (Jünger & Fähnrich, 2020).

Based on the above background, it is necessary to study the information-seeking behavior by students to obtain information about COVID-19 on the Twitter platform. So that students can anticipate exposure to COVID-19 through various valid and verified Twitter accounts. This research can be input to the government and stakeholders in the prevention of COVID-19 regarding effective socialization using Twitter for the student segment. So that students get valid information and avoid hoax information.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Information

In human interaction, communication is very important. In communicating how someone conveys information with various purposes. Information according to Rowley and Farrow that information aims for decision-making, problem-solving, communication and interpersonal relationships, learning, entertainment and leisure, population, and business and professional effectiveness (Rowley & Farrow, 2006). Information is a communication process of knowledge so it can be said that information is a new form of knowledge. There are important aspects in information, namely "recorded" and "communicated". Recorded in the sense that it has been stated, created, and stored in certain media. After the information is recorded and then communicated, this process is also known as the information dissemination process (Rully et al., 2021).

Sources of information play an important role for someone in determining attitudes or decisions to act. Sources of information are everywhere, in markets, schools, homes, institutions of a commercial organization, books, magazines, newspapers, libraries, and other places. The point is that where an object or event is located, information can be created which is then recorded and stored via print or electronic media (P. W. Handayani et al., 2020). The formation of people's behavior in seeking information is divided into three ways according to the circumstances, namely the formation of behavior with habits, the formation of behavior with understanding, and the formation of behavior using role models (Walgito, 1989).

Several factors influence how someone finally realizes information needs in the form of information-seeking behavior, including psychological conditions, demographics concerning the socio-cultural conditions of a person as part of society, interpersonal relationships in society, environment, and characteristics of information sources (Widiyastuti, 2016).

Social Media

Social media is online media (in a network) where users can easily participate, share and create content for blogs, social networks, wikis, forums, and virtual worlds. Blogs, social networks, and wikis are the most common forms of social media used by people around the world (Appel et al., 2020). Andreas Kaplan and Michael Haenlein (Rohmah, 2020) define social media as a group of internet-based applications that are built on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0 and enable the creation and exchange of user-generated content.

Social media has several characteristics that are not shared by other types of media, including (Safia et al., 2019):

1. Network, Social media is built from social structures formed in networks or the internet
2. Information, Information is important from social media because in social media there are activities to produce content to interactions based on information
3. Archive, For social media users, the archive is a character that explains that information has been stored and can be accessed anytime and through any device
4. Interactivity, The basic character of social media is the formation of a network between users. Its function is not just to expand friendships and increase followers on the internet.
5. Simulation of Society, Social Media Social media has a character as a medium for the society to take place in the virtual world. The interactions that occur on social media can describe the reality that occurs, but the interactions that occur are simulations that are sometimes completely different.
6. User-generated Content, This characteristic shows that the content in social media is fully owned and also based on users and account owners. This user-generated content indicates that on social media audiences are not only producing their content but also consuming content produced by other users.

METHODOLOGY

This study focuses on knowing the role of Twitter social media in the spread of COVID-19 information in everyday life. On Twitter, research was carried out on verified accounts (having blue ticks) as accounts for spreading COVID-19 information, especially health accounts, namely

@kemenkes, @kemenkominfo, @WHOIndonesia, @BNBP_Indonesia, @KawalCOVID19, and other accounts that assist in providing information.

The framework is based on theoretical descriptions, so the concept of this research is the role of Twitter as a medium for disseminating information on COVID-19. The concept of this research is as shown in Figure 1.

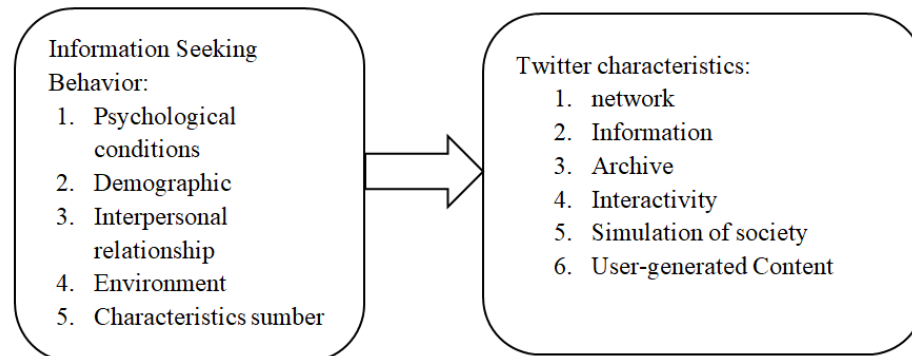


Figure 1. Research Framework

This study uses a qualitative descriptive approach which aims to determine, search, collect, process, and analyze research data. The selection of a qualitative approach in this study was based on the fact that the researcher want to obtain a depth of answer to explore the role of social media, especially Twitter as the dissemination of COVID-19 information with a sample of students who studying in the city of Yogyakarta.

This research requires data obtained from sources/informants. In this case, the researcher will summarize various situations and conditions from the results of data collection in the field regarding the search for information needs through social media for information on COVID-19 transmission among Yogyakarta students. The number of informants was determined as 7 students with ages between 19-20 years who are active Twitter users with different backgrounds from scientific concentrations in the fields of communication management and information management.

In this research data analysis method using triangulation in checking the validity of the data. In data collection techniques, triangulation is defined as a data collection technique that combines various data collection techniques and existing data sources. The value of the data collection technique with triangulation is to find out the data obtained are convergent, inconsistent or contradictory. Therefore, by using triangulation techniques in data collection, the data obtained is more consistent, complete and definite. The data sources of this research were obtained from documents and interviews from several subjects who had different points of view. All data obtained will be linked to the theoretical basis of the research so that there is a correlation between the two.

Data analysis in qualitative research is carried out during data collection and after data collection is completed within a certain period. The analysis technique that the writer uses in this research is a qualitative descriptive technique. In accordance with the research approach used, namely descriptive, then in analyzing the data that was collected it did not use static tests but non-statistical tests in accordance with qualitative research. (Miles & Huberman, 1992), suggested that activities in qualitative data analysis were carried out interactively and continued continuously until they were completed, so that the data was saturated. Activities in data analysis, namely data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification.

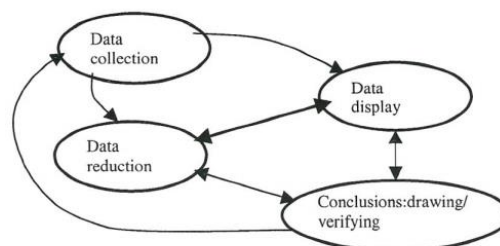


Figure 2. Components in Data Analysis (Sugiyono, 2017)

Data Reduction Researchers researchers summarize, take the main and important data, make categorizations according to the needs of researchers. Data that is not important will be discarded because it is considered unimportant to the researcher. The next step is to display the data. In quantitative research, data is presented in the form of tables, graphs, pie chart, pictograms and the like. then draw up the initial conclusions put forward are still temporary, and will change if no strong evidence is found that supports it at the next stage of data collection. However, if the conclusions raised at an early stage are supported by valid and consistent evidence when the researcher returns to the field to collect data, then the conclusions put forward are credible conclusions(Nirwana, 2020).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

With the current condition that the world is hit by the COVID-19 virus, the spread of information about covid is very high. There is a lot of information that is spread in the community, there is false information whose news content cannot be justified, but there is also a lot of valid information where it is clear who the source that issued the information is and the information can be accounted for the truth of the facts presented.

The impact of the transmission of the covid virus does not only have an impact on health but also has an economic and social impact, a lot of unemployment and restrictions on community activities cause the whole community to worry about fear and anxiety, depression so that people change their behavior in seeking the information they need.

Meanwhile, on the other hand, there is an information explosion that causes millions of information to be created every minute. We should be able to sort and sort information according to our needs, especially in the decision-making process. Changes in communication patterns and behavior have an impact on meeting information needs and information seeking behavior, because there are various factors that influence a person's behavior in seeking information to meet their needs. According to Wilson, there are several factors that influence information seeking behavior, namely psychological conditions, demographics, a person's role in society, the environment and community characteristics to fulfill their needs(Widiyastuti, 2016).

a. *Psychological Conditions*

Information seeking behavior on social media such as Twitter is strongly influenced by psychological conditions, for example someone who is worried will show different information behavior compared to someone who is happy. With the COVID-19 pandemic situation, many people feel lonely, have social anxiety and even experience depression, with conditions like this people are always actively looking for the information they need through social media. n informant stated that:

“I had mixed feelings when I found information about COVID-19 on Twitter.

I'm happy because a lot of information is circulating quickly so I don't miss the latest news about the current condition and know what to do if I experience symptoms of COVID-19. But on the other hand it's also sad because a lot of scary news can attack my psychology. I am afraid if the incident of the victim's death is happening around me, I panic when I want to go out, and sometimes I get angry and annoyed if there are conversations on Twitter that talk about people who violate health protocols”.

The explanation from the informant above explained that the information on Twitter regarding the COVID-19 pandemic was going very fast and affecting the psychology of students. Twitter is able to provide a variety of information needed to include feelings of happiness, sadness and fear.

However, since the COVID-19 pandemic began, there have been many anomalies, gaps of public knowledge, and this is allegedly caused by the inequality of public information that occurred due to the process of transmitting information that was not true and correct. Handling the pandemic as the government's responsibility is an undeniable public domain. Meanwhile, as a public domain, it has not accurately played a role in providing comprehensive information to the public about the situation. As there is still a lot of misinformation and even disinformation regarding the handling of the COVID-19 outbreak.

In social media, it has a data storage feature that contains information for its users. This is also explained by the informant's statement,

“Information storage on Twitter can be done with the save or bookmark feature provided by Twitter. If we like a post on Twitter, it is also included in the history trail on our Twitter profile. So, with this feature, it can be used and/or utilized as well as possible as an event journal”.

This means that information or data about the transmission, healing, prevention of COVID-19 can be stored as documentation, but if the information is less useful for users it can be discarded because Twitter also has a limited capacity in data storage, other than that by only using a smartphone or laptop. very easy and light to carry everywhere this is very fast when we open the desired information.

In social networks, everyone can interact with groups of individuals who are different in terms of social status, education, or another characteristics. Then they can complement each other's information about an event and make social media as new source of information and influence each other in attitudes to reach an agreement in tackling the transmission of the COVID-19 virus.

Through social media, a social simulation can be created where every individual who is joined has the same feeling and as if this protection is seen when there is a chat, we will definitely give responses, actions, reactions even though we have never met in person or know each other. In fact, the network often creates new content by adding its own features, not only using existing content called user generated content, this proves that social media is very effective as a communication medium.

Social media is a media platform that focuses on the existence of users who facilitate them in their activities and collaboration. In this case, social media can be a facilitator that connects users in a social bond (Nguyen et al., 2020). That is why the spread of information through interactive social media is very fast. Information about the COVID-19 pandemic is disseminated through social media in the form of text, sound, images, videos or a combination of these elements. Almost every second, minute, day, week, and even month of information about COVID-19 is milling about on social media pages. It is so easy to get information about COVID-19, both in parts of the world and in Indonesia.

In dissemination of information there is misinformation, information distortion, provocation, speculation, imagination, information engineering, distorting facts, hoaxes, dramatizations, conspiracy theories, and information that is not in accordance with the actual facts about COVID-19, especially during the first wave. and secondly that every day the mass media informs content containing information about COVID-19. The distribution of information through social media when compared to conventional media is still much faster, because in a matter of minutes or even seconds it can be sent to followers or users. This phenomenon shows that there is concern because the culture of information literacy, media literacy, data literacy, or even digital literacy of the Indonesian people is still low so it needs to be improved, but now people are faced with the complicated situation of a lot of COVID-19 information with various backgrounds, forms, motives, and different goals.(Andrianto, 2020).

The handling of COVID-19 should include collaboration between the government, the private sector, and also community leaders. Psychologically, every individual involved in the social network has a responsibility to be involved in overcoming the COVID-19 pandemic. Thus, in searching for information about the COVID-19 pandemic, psychologically, social media must be able to provide healthy, entertaining information, provide learning, information can meet needs and satisfy social networks cognitively and affectively.

b. Demographic

Based on the demographics of Twitter users in Indonesia, male Twitter users are 53 percent and women 47 percent. When viewed from the age range, the majority of people aged 16-24 years use the platform. While the age range of 23-34 years is 36 percent, ages 35-44 years is 18 percent, and ages 45-54 years is 3 percent, and 55-64 years is 1 percent. Indonesian Twitter users are also called 42 percent active every day (Azzahra, 2020).

This phenomenon shows that in Indonesia, social media users have different ages, education and backgrounds, these differences give rise to several strengths and weaknesses. The age difference in the most productive social network is the age of 24 years, where at that age has a very high emotional level so that they tend to do less information management to analyze the truth. Its influence on young people who only think from a practical point of view, causing disinformation, distortion of information, provocation, speculation, imagination, information engineering, distorting facts, hoaxes,

dramatizations, conspiracy theories, which can cause new problems that have a negative impact on society. Meanwhile, the adult age group is more careful in responding to information, full of calculations with a deep understanding of covid information so that information is more useful and valuable.

This is supported by the statement of an informant:

“I think sometimes the information circulating can be interpreted differently based on various ages and educational levels. Young people tend to manage information directly without being examined and full of emotion and minimal calculation, while the adult age group will respond to information maturely and full of calculations and deep understanding.”

Differences in education levels in social media networks make social simulations with complementary interactions. for example, when there is hoax information about "alternative medicine to prevent the transmission of COVID-19", of course those who work as medical personnel will comment that the information is wrong, and will explain medically that transmission can be avoided by wearing masks, adequate rest, and nutritious food, so that Twitter users will receive learning and testimonials from someone who is more competent about the information.

According to the informant said:

“Perhaps people with a background in technology can save information in various formats, while those who are not familiar with IT only save it in the gallery in the form of screenshots. It is also possible that young people know various features on Twitter to store information, while older people only take notes in notes or something like that.”

Cultural differences in social media networks can also support the formation of different content so that the information conveyed will complement each other and create new knowledge, this shows that in the search for information about COVID-19, it can be determined in the creation of content and dissemination of information based on the thoughts and attitudes of social networks in their interactions.

c. Interpersonal Relationship in Community

The active role of the community and society in preventing the spread of COVID-19, does not only require curative action, but preventive measures are needed to reduce the number of sufferers or victims of COVID-19 transmission. One of them is by increasing public knowledge, understanding and awareness of the dangers of COVID-19, through the media twitter can be used as a place of learning by creating more interesting information, which is integrated with photos and videos, as well as reviewing news and journals about covid19.

According to informants,

"Currently, we can make creative designs (photos and videos) easily using existing applications. Through the information contained in creative designs, other Twitter users will be more interested in knowing the information content of the content."

The public needs to be invited to create and share positive content related to COVID-19 and spread it through social media. Community participation in preventing the spread of COVID-19 is absolutely necessary, especially in creating and disseminating positive information about the corona virus.

In general, social media users form social simulations because the followers consist of different social groups such as doctors, teachers, students, public and government figures, so that in social media networks will share information about COVID-19 information and for other followers it can make The information is used as discussion material, although there are often different understandings due to differences in views and interests, other followers will be able to add and explain so that others can have the same understanding.

This opinion is supported by informants,

"Of course they can, because they are not only Twitter users, they are also Indonesian citizens consisting of the Health Service, public figures, or the government also use Twitter as a medium to disseminate information about COVID-19. so you can strengthen the news that is shared or even ask if there is something you don't

understand, later other users who are more authorized will provide answers to those questions."

With increasing public awareness of the spread of this virus, a lot of disinformation and hoaxes related to corona are circulating in the community. Hoaks news clouded the atmosphere and created unrest and concern in the community. To anticipate hoax information, the government has determined verified twitter accounts, such as KCPN's twitter and the Health office as a reference for correct information.

According to informant,

"With different backgrounds, it is often difficult to integrate the existing information because they have to analyze the information more deeply to determine whether the information is true or a hoax."

In social simulations that occur on social media, there are many different thoughts and information, so that sometimes it causes problems that the information is not relevant to the reality, although there must be pros and cons, we can see this through posts and comments. In order to provide a response, it is necessary to carry out cross-checks and further in-depth analysis through Twitter media that have been verified by the government.

d. Environment

The social environment is a place where daily activities take place, for example the family environment, friendships, and the environment where they live will shape the behavior of each individual. The family is the social environment that an individual is first known to before interacting with other larger social environments. Family is the closest environment for individuals and strong relationships between members. These are able to influence each other, both physically and psychologically.

Families have a role in conveying information, reminders, and motivating to always implement preventive behavior, especially families who have knowledge about health and also for families in the Red zone. In addition, with the implementation of the Large-Scale Social Restriction policy, activities outside the home are limited and most of the time is spent with family at home.

According to informant

"People who live in red zones will certainly be more enthusiastic about finding out information about COVID-19, more searches are carried out than those who live in safe zones. It is this curiosity that makes someone learn more about the transmission and spread of COVID-19. People with health education will dig up the latest news about COVID-19 more often than those with no interest in pandemics and health."

The family has a big role and responsibility for the health of themselves and other members. Families can provide vitamins, nutritious food such as fruit and vegetables to increase immunity, provide masks, hand sanitizer, and others.

Searching for information on COVID-19 via Twitter will be an obstacle for the environment in remote areas, because the network quality is not as good as in urban areas. With a very slow and limited network so that access to information is always late. So that in social interaction it is necessary to use other and active media access to archive information, photos, events related to COVID-19 and make learning methods because the information obtained can be used as various research on the environment.

e. Characteristics

Social networks such as Twitter become a medium for presenting individuals in the virtual public space. Communication technology such as the internet, allows social relations to be carried out even though they do not meet in person, but interactions with technology can often be tracked, archived as evidence of social involvement, the data can be stored and analyzed.

According to the informant,

"Twitter is a very dynamic social media platform. Many people can give and receive information. Even Twitter is a platform that is very fast in issuing the latest news. Currently, the television media, Instagram, always cites content from Twitter because of the rapid spread of viral information. Moreover, the content on Twitter is mostly accurate, even though the one who spreads it is an anonymous account. However, other media should also be used to complement the information on Twitter.

Because Twitter is limited from the words that can be contained in a post. To insert photos and videos, I think Twitter is less effective, unlike Instagram, which can rely on microblogs to provide information. Especially for reviewing an article, I think Instagram is better to use than Twitter”

The characteristics of social media are providing light and heavy information, which includes light information is information in the form of entertainment. However, the information on COVID-19 is heavy news because it involves health problems that have resulted in many deaths. In addition, Covid has also had an impact on the country's economy, so Twitter users must be careful in providing feedback or input.

CONCLUSION

Social media also plays a role in distributing information during this COVID-19 pandemic, even some people have trusted all information on social media. Regardless of whether the information is true or not, we as a society should not immediately trust the information. It's a good idea to first filter any information that we get, search and analyze it more deeply before we post or repost any information content. An example is information regarding the development of the COVID-19 case. This is done to prevent the spread of hoaxes in the community. Especially for young people, it is necessary to have parental supervision in accessing all information presented on the internet.

A follower's behavior is greatly affected by the content it follows. A person's perspective can not be separated from the attitudes and behavior in their daily lives. If the person tends to behave and behave positively, then the information conveyed is also positive. If the person tends to behave and behave in a negative way, then he or she will tend to frighten, spread false information, or even cause a commotion. A person's behavior and attitude on Twitter can be a lesson for other users who see it. Coupled with education, background, and several other factors that also affect this. By itself one can judge which one is good and which one is bad for the events/information circulating on twitter.

Information seeking behavior regarding COVID-19 through Twitter for students can be observed based on psychological conditions, demographics, interpersonal relationships in the community, environment and social media characteristics.

In searching for information about covid psychologically, social media must be able to provide healthy, entertaining information, provide learning, information according to needs and be able to satisfy the social network cognitively and affectively.

In expanding social networks, demographic data can be used to find out which networks can be used to focus strength on content about COVID-19. Twitter media is very appropriate in disseminating information on covid because through tweeter information can be disseminated quickly to social networks and data can also be stored by users. to be used as new knowledge.

The active role of the community and elements of society in using Twitter is very important, because the community collaborates with the government to play a role in preventing the spread of COVID-19. Handling COVID-19 does not only require curative action, but preventive measures are needed to reduce the number of sufferers or victims of COVID-19 transmission.

Social environment such as family environment, friendship, and neighborhood, search behavior is very influential on close relationships. If a person's relationship is closer, the level of trust in the information conveyed will be higher, a friend or family member can increase the level of social support.

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