

Lampiran Korespondensi: What do Indonesian Startups Communicate

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Media International Australia MIA-21-0044

1 message

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12 April 2021 at 11:36

Reply-To: matthew.allen@utas.edu.au

To: jandyluik@petra.ac.id

12-Apr-2021

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Sincerely,

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matthew.allen@utas.edu.au



Media International Australia MIA-21-0044

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matthew.allen@utas.edu.au



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13 April 2021 at 10:38

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To: jandyLuik@petra.ac.id

12-Apr-2021

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Editor
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Eudaimonic Media during the COVID-19 Pandemic

Journal:	<i>Media International Australia</i>
Manuscript ID	Draft
Manuscript Type:	Original Article
Keywords:	eudaimonic media, inspirational content, startups Indonesia, public communication, empathic communication, COVID-19 pandemic
Abstract:	This article aims to discuss eudaimonic – inspirational – media during the COVID-19 pandemic. It specifically focuses on the videos released by start-up companies in Indonesia through each of their official YouTube accounts. As start-ups were also experiencing the impact of the pandemic, one of their biggest challenges was to communicate optimistic messages to the public with the right content and context. Thus, this article examines how the eudaimonic themes that emerged from the studied videos contribute to dealing with the impact of the pandemic in Indonesia. Drawing from data collected between March and December 2020, this qualitative study finds four eudaimonic themes: empathic communication, manifestation of human values, presenting actions taken, and optimistic expressions. This article also discusses the role of eudaimonic media in the discursive practices of handling the pandemic as well as reflecting a company's basic values.

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Eudaimonic Media during the COVID-19 Pandemic

ABSTRACT

This article aims to discuss eudaimonic – inspirational – media during the COVID-19 pandemic. It specifically focuses on the videos released by start-up companies in Indonesia through each of their official YouTube accounts. As start-ups were also experiencing the impact of the pandemic, one of their biggest challenges was to communicate optimistic messages to the public with the right content and context. Thus, this article examines how the eudaimonic themes that emerged from the studied videos contribute to dealing with the impact of the pandemic in Indonesia. Drawing from data collected between March and December 2020, this qualitative study finds four eudaimonic themes: empathic communication, manifestation of human values, presenting actions taken, and optimistic expressions. This article also discusses the role of eudaimonic media in the discursive practices of handling the pandemic as well as reflecting a company's basic values.

Keywords: *eudaimonic media; inspirational content; startups Indonesia; public communication; empathic communication; COVID-19 pandemic.*

INTRODUCTION

In a challenging situation, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, the public needs reliable and optimistic media communication. The government is not the only entity that has the authority and sufficient resources to provide this; various stakeholders also have a social calling to share reliable and optimistic news with society (Quinn, 2008; Reynolds and Quinn, 2008). Moreover, technology-based start-up companies in Indonesia have this social calling as well. Specifically, this calling refers to sharing a message that encourages optimism among

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2
3 Indonesians. However, creating an inspirational message in these difficult times is not an
4
5 easy task. Developing and disseminating a public message in these situations tends to be
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7 complicated because it could have a counterproductive impact on the sender of the message
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9 and potentially jeopardise the achievement of instilling optimism. Therefore, this study aims
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11 to explore this area of communication during the COVID-19 pandemic through a eudaimonic
12
13 perspective.
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16
17 Eudaimonic content is related to the Aristotelian nature of happiness. Eudaimonic
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19 refers to an inspirational feeling of happiness that is obtained not because of pleasure
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21 (hedonic), but because of a deeper ‘transcendental’ achievement. It is more than just an
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23 expression of positive emotions (Oliver and Raney, 2011; Rieger and Klimmt, 2019; Roth et
24
25 al., 2014; Wirth et al., 2012). Thus, eudaimonic content is inspirational and meaningful
26
27 content that can trigger feelings of happiness that surpass the mere expression of positive
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29 emotions. It can make someone feel inspired or moved, and could cause physical reactions
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31 such as warmth in one’s chest, a lump in the throat, goosebumps, and tears (Dale et al., 2017;
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33 Oliver et al., 2012; Raney et al., 2018).
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38 In our field of study, social media content has received attention from researchers in
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40 different contexts. For example, a study in Indonesia used Erving Goffman’s framework,
41
42 namely self-presentation or impression management to study social media content (Author,
43
44 date1). The study examined ingratiation, a self-presentation strategy (Jones and Pittman,
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46 1982) that is dominantly used in social media, both by individuals and organisations, which
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48 gives praise or positive nuanced messages (Author, date2; Wijayanti and Surachman, 2019).
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50 Regarding the inquiry into this new media, studies of eudaimonic content (and its effects)
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52 itself began to develop and received attention from researchers in various communication
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54 settings (Dale et al., 2017, 2020; Oliver et al., 2012, 2018). However, little to no inquiry has
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2
3 been carried out by researchers into eudaimonic content in public communication during an
4 unexpected difficulty like the COVID-19 pandemic.
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8 Thus, this article explores the significance of public communication with a
9 eudaimonic perspective by examining the official YouTube accounts of technology-based
10 start-up companies. Due to the increasingly rapid flow of disinformation – which some say is
11 an *infodemic* (Eysenbach, 2020; Solomon et al., 2020; Zarocostas, 2020) – there is an
12 unavoidable need for accurate and credible content. In responding to this threat, the central
13 and local governments continuously disseminated reliable information through different
14 channels; for example, by building various online portals for COVID-19 information, holding
15 daily press conferences, sending appeals through national and local media, and increasing
16 information dissemination about COVID-19 protocols through their verified accounts on
17 social media (KSP, 2020). Despite these efforts, there was also a call from the public to the
18 government to keep increasing communication with the public (Ardiyanti, 2020; Halim,
19 2020).
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35 In addition to providing reliable information, communications through various
36 channels during the pandemic need to deliver a sense of optimism. This is not only a
37 challenge for the government, but a challenge for any communicator who has access to the
38 public. In this context, profit-oriented companies may participate in these discursive
39 processes by creating ‘inspirational’ content. However, the studies of ‘inspirational’ content
40 in difficult times such as the COVID-19 pandemic is still relatively new. Moreover, the
41 absence of a ‘guide’ to building such content has caused start-up companies in Indonesia to
42 take a forward leap by releasing ‘inspirational’ videos to the public through their verified
43 YouTube accounts.
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56 Considering the challenges above, the author’s motivation, and the present situation,
57 this article focuses on answering a key question: *How do the eudaimonic themes of the videos*
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3 *released by start-up companies contribute to addressing the impact of the COVID-19*
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5 *pandemic in Indonesia?* By studying the video documents uploaded by unicorn start-up
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7 companies – start-ups that have a minimum valuation of USD 1 billion – through their
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9 verified accounts on YouTube, this article will analyse the relationship between the
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11 eudaimonic themes in the videos and the characteristics of the respective start-up companies.
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13 It will also contextualise the analysis to Indonesia’s situation during the release of these
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15 videos, since the COVID-19 pandemic is increasingly disrupting people’s lives.
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20 Therefore, the remainder of this paper will follow the subsequent structure. An
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22 explanation about the definition and previous studies related to eudaimonic media content
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24 will be provided first. Then, in the method section, the steps taken to carry out this qualitative
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26 textual analysis will be elaborated on. The analysis will first describe the findings and then
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28 discuss the significance of these eudaimonic themes to the discursive practices during the
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30 pandemic. The conclusion will include a brief summary and provide researchers with the
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32 implications related to eudaimonic media content in unforeseen difficulties.
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36 37 **CONCEPTUALISING EUDAIMONIC MEDIA: DEFINITIONS, AND RELATED** 38 39 **STUDIES** 40

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42 According to Aristotelian understanding, eudaimonia means happiness that is oriented
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44 to moral virtue. For Aristotle, eudaimonia is related to activities that express virtue, which
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46 can be considered as the best within us, or excellence (Waterman, 1993). Furthermore,
47
48 eudaimonia, which is interpreted as a subjective state, refers to ‘the feelings present when one
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50 is moving toward self-realisation in terms of the developing one’s unique individual
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52 potentials and furthering one’s purposes in living’ (Waterman et al., 2008: 42). In a line with
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54 this, ‘to be *eudaimonically* happy, one must live his or her life in accordance with one’s
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56 daimon, which is the true self (the potentialities and the realizations of each individual)’
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58 (Wirth et al., 2012: pp.408-409). This understanding of happiness in eudaimonia is what
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2
3 distinguishes it from a hedonic perspective. Although hedonic and eudaimonic perspectives
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5 share the same meaning of happiness, Aristippus of Cyrene considered hedonic happiness to
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7 be oriented towards pleasure or pleasure with one's life (Waterman, 1993). However, this
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9 orientation does not imply that eudaimonic happiness does not concern itself with pleasure;
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11 rather, it does include pleasure under it but also include a vast array of other forms of
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13 happiness. In short, eudaimonic and hedonic happiness can share the same meaning but each
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15 has a different nature.
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20 Many scholars have developed studies on the different conceptualisations of
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22 eudaimonic and hedonic happiness. For instance, Waterman (1993) investigated the
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24 relationship between personal expressiveness (eudaimonic perspective) and hedonic
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26 enjoyment. Another study explored how these two concepts have implications for
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28 understanding intrinsic motivation (Waterman et al., 2008). In the context of communication
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30 studies, Oliver & Raney (2011) used these two conceptualisations as two types of motivation
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32 to consume entertainment shows. These two concepts were also used to understand the
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34 effects of consuming media such as political talk shows, comedy shows, and dramas
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36 (Weinmann et al., 2016). However, in terms of analysing media content, several previous
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38 studies have focused only on the eudaimonic perspective.
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43 While previous studies have examined eudaimonic content, none of them were in the
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45 context of the pandemic. Some of the studies focused on the audience's response towards the
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47 moral virtue content in films (Oliver et al., 2012), as well as their response to the role of
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49 affective and cognitive challenges of media content (i.e., film) in hedonic and eudaimonic
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51 entertainment experiences (Bartsch and Hartmann, 2017; Wirth et al., 2012), political talk
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53 shows on television (Roth et al., 2014), inspirational YouTube videos (Dale et al., 2017),
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55 inspirational news disseminated through social media platforms (Ji et al., 2019), meaningful
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3 memes on social media (Rieger and Klimmt, 2019), and inspirational posts on Facebook
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5 (Dale et al., 2020).
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8 Meanwhile, studies in the context of understanding eudaimonic media content in
9
10 difficult times such as the pandemic, especially in videos affiliated with certain brands, still
11
12 have room for further exploration. There has been an operationalisation of eudaimonic
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14 content; for example, the elicitors of the ‘inspirational’ video content, such as appreciation of
15
16 beauty and excellence, gratitude, hope, and religiousness, trigger self-transcendent emotions
17
18 from the audience (Dale et al., 2020; Oliver et al., 2018). However, due to the novelty of the
19
20 pandemic, this study will emphasise constructing eudaimonic themes.
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23 24 25 **METHOD** 26

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28 The approach used in this study is qualitative content analysis. It focuses on looking
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30 for meaning and, ultimately, the theme of the media text from a bottom-up approach (Baxter
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32 and Babbie, 2004; Jankowski and Wester, 2002; Jensen, 2002). Thus, this inductive method
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34 enables researchers to categorise the text (the *manifest*) and the latent meanings contained in
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36 it.
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40 The first stage is based on the sample of this study. The first step of this stage was to
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42 group start-up companies in Indonesia. This study took six start-up companies that are
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44 categorised as unicorns, which are start-ups that have a minimum valuation of USD 1 billion
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46 (Kamalia, 2020; Lee, 2013). Further, five out of the six start-ups had released videos related
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48 to the COVID-19 pandemic in March–December 2020 through their official YouTube
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50 accounts. Therefore, this study examined the videos from these highest valued startup
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52 companies: Gojek, Tokopedia, Traveloka, JD.ID, and Bukalapak.
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56 The next step was the selection of the units of analysis. From the videos released by
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58 the start-up companies (two start-ups released more than one video), the total duration is 944
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60 seconds; however, each of the videos has a different duration so the number of analysis units

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3 is different for each one. This study took a sample of 158 sequences as the units of analysis.
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5 One of them consisted of a combination of several scenes that are sorted based on the
6
7 narration in each video. The number of units of analysis per video are as follows: the first
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9 video had 16 units of analysis; the second video had 31; the third had 19; the fourth had 12;
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11 the fifth had 19; the sixth had 12; the seventh had 24; and the eighth had 25.
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15 The second stage is the inductive analysis of the videos. The coding sheet of
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17 qualitative content analysis approach (Elo and Kyngäs, 2008; Erlingsson and Brysiewicz,
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19 2017) was adapted to identify the meaning units, codes, categories, themes, and overarching
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21 themes. To identify the meaning units (the *manifest* meaning of each sequence), four kinds of
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23 data were used, that is, the narration, video, graphics, and audio from each video sequence.
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25 Then, the code (e.g., one-three keywords) from each meaning unit (or, from each identified
26
27 unit analysis) was interpreted. Categories were built by looking at the similarities and
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29 differences in the codes. To construct the theme, the results of this category were interpreted
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31 to obtain a latent meaning. The theme itself (the latent meaning) is then more abstractly
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33 analysed to discover the overarching themes, which in this study are eudaimonic themes.
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39 **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

41 **Eudaimonic Themes**

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43 In general, the studied videos contained inspirational traces that were seen in the
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45 existence of empathic articulation efforts regarding the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic,
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47 along with the appreciation of togetherness and the forms of support seen in these difficult
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49 times. Furthermore, by conducting an inductive text analysis of the existing videos, four
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51 specific themes of eudaimonic content emerged, namely: empathic communication,
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53 manifestation of human values, presenting action taken, and optimistic expressions.
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Empathic Communication

The first eudaimonic theme found in these videos was the empathic communications that aim to bring a sense of understanding public's situation in these difficult times.

Specifically, empathic communication is communication via a combination of video, audio, and graphics, that conveys the key message of 'we all are affected by the pandemic' with a storytelling method that contains empathy. This exploration found four categories in delivering empathic communication, as outlined below:

1) Conveying Bitter Reality

In this category, the key message shown is an empathic feeling of the unpleasant reality faced by each company, its partners in running existing businesses, and other communities. The bitter reality was that companies can only accept this situation; however, they must continue to struggle against it. The codes seen in this category were an inevitable situation and the income crisis. In the videos, there are examples such as the written texts: '2020 dipenuhi dengan kata pertama' (translated as: '2020 is filled with the words: for the first time') (Traveloka Video #2, 2020), and 'Setelah adanya pandemi ini, jelas membuat tamu menjadi berkurang' (translated as: 'after this pandemic had just started, it is obvious that the hotel guests become fewer') (Traveloka Video #1, 2020).

2) Expressing Emotional Feeling

The next empathic category found was the expression of emotional feeling as an impact of the pandemic. These acts of making one's thoughts known were emphatically communicated through the studied videos and were associated with one's expression to the problems that occurred. The codes that appeared in the sample videos were feelings of disappointment, reflection, happiness, awe, and reconciliation. To be more specific, an example from the data includes the expression of a woman who was upset because she could not travel, which was accompanied by the visualisation of the cancelation of travel plans.

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3 Another example is a daughter who was reflecting alone in the house while her father was
4 hospitalised.
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7 *3) Companies and Partners Continue to Operate with Caution*

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10 The following category relates to the continued operation of the companies in the
11 midst of ongoing social restrictions. This category of empathic communication aims to
12 emphatically ensure the viewers that the companies and partners are continuing to work
13 (outdoors) with extra caution during the pandemic. The studied videos provided special
14 emphasis on the steps that the companies and partners are taking to not ignore looming health
15 problems. The codes in this category were disinfecting (sterilising) facilities, using masks,
16 measuring body temperature before doing activities, washing hands, socially distancing,
17 maintaining a maximum commitment to work, and implementing standard protocols when on
18 the move. Therefore, the visualisation used in the videos was of an employee/partner
19 completing the COVID-19 health protocol while on the move as well as the facility
20 disinfection (sterilisation) process for users/consumers.
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35 *4) Activities from Home Are a Necessity*

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38 The last category in empathic communication is the presence of a key message of
39 how this pandemic requires people to do activities from home. The existing videos contain an
40 explicit message on the process of adapting to activities from home rather than, for example,
41 doing them from one's office. Furthermore, the related codes in the videos were the situation
42 of having limited access to people and spaces, online meetings, and getting used to working
43 from home. An example of a scene that illustrates this situation is the visualisation of the
44 animated face of a boy working in his house with a sullen face. Another example is a
45 daughter who decided to get used to working from home while staying with her father who
46 lives alone (Tokopedia Video #1, 2020).
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Manifestation of Human Values

The second theme that relates to eudaimonic content is the presence of human values in the companies' video. These human values are described below.

1) Serving the Community

This category underlines the impression that continuing to carry out one's duties and roles even during the pandemic is a part of serving the community. In other words, the videos imply that serving community is more than just a feeling; it is a real act of service for the people. In the researched videos, the codes were mobility of working, serving action, making consumers comfortable, and being trusted. This category can be seen in examples such as the scene of an employee partner who keeps delivering packages to the customer's place.

2) Respecting the Forefront Workers

Besides emphasising acts of service, the next manifestation of human values in these videos was to respect everyone who was at the forefront of the pandemic. An included description in the videos seemed to convey that while most people stay at home, the frontline workers of the pandemic continue to work. The videos explicitly presented the struggle of the frontline workers, such as health workers, who are dealing with the pandemic. Also, one of the videos suggested the partners of these start-up companies as the frontline workers with different roles such as delivering goods and supplies to the people at home. This human value was manifested in the codes as the dedication of forefront workers as well as the respect for them. An example in the videos is the caption: '*Untuk mereka yang menjadi garda terdepan, kegigihannya membuat kita bisa #dirumahaja mendapatkan rasa nyaman*' (translated as: 'For those who are at the forefront, your persistence allows us to get a sense of comfort #dirumahaja [#stayathome]') (Gojek Video #1, 2020).

3) *Finding the Silver Lining*

Without undermining the impact of the pandemic, this study found a key message of looking for a silver lining. This category showed the manifestation of human values by inviting the audience to see the positive things during the current difficult situation. Implicitly, these videos invited the audience to stay strong and not give up on the existing situation. The visible forms of code were thinking positively, being role models, performing acts of solidarity, and having the time to be together. An example that showed the positive meaning behind adversity is a scene of Indonesia's quiet 2020 Independence Day celebration that is normally celebrated with various events; then, the scene immediately cuts to the array of people sharing knowledge and opportunities through online communication platforms (Bukalapak Video #1, 2020).

4) *Prioritising Health and Safety*

The last category of this theme is conveyance of the prioritisation of health and safety. In particular, the companies prioritise their partners (workers) who are still working during the social restrictions. In one of the videos, the narrator explicitly stated that 'their [the workers] health and safety is the priority and aim' (Gojek Video #1, 2020). Thus, the codes in this category were to protect oneself and to prioritise safety. An example is a scene of a partner who is maintaining social distance and wearing a mask and the presence of additional facilities to prioritise safety during face-to-face interactions (Gojek Video #1, 2020; Gojek Video #2, 2020). Furthermore, there is also a scene that shows food parcels being given to consumers as well as the efforts made to maintain the food's hygiene.

Presenting Action Taken

These videos have shown that communication to the public during these difficult times needs a kind of progress report on what has been done so far. Specifically, a message that outlines the actions have been taken for the affected parties, and in some cases, the

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3 further actions that will be taken. Therefore, the theme of this third finding focuses on the
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5 kinds of actual support provided by the start-up companies.
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8 *1) Providing Preventive Action Supplies*
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10 This category shows the support of start-ups regarding COVID-19 preventive action
11 given to employees or partners affiliated with the company. This category focused on
12 tangible support such as prevention kits. Therefore, the codes for this category were
13 providing health masks and hand sanitisers. An example is a scene of a partner (worker)
14 receiving prevention kits such as masks, hand sanitisers, and gloves.
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21 *2) Contributing to the Provision of Daily Supplies*
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23 In addition to providing COVID-19 prevention kits, the studied videos presented
24 other tangible forms of support such as contributions to the companies' partners' (workers)
25 daily supplies. This form of support is reflected in the codes of caring action in the form of
26 giving daily supplies and cash subsidies. Thus, an example is the giving of a package of daily
27 supplies by a company's representative to the partners affiliated with the start-up.
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35 *3) Transition of Working Practices*
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37 Apart from the kinds of actions taken in the above two categories, the studied videos
38 also showed the actions taken by the start-up companies in terms of their working practices.
39 Particularly, these videos highlighted how the companies were transitioning to remote
40 working practices. In the dataset, the codes that represented this category were online
41 collaboration and working from home (WFH). One of the examples is a visualisation (video
42 collage) of many people who attended a meeting via a video conference platform.
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51 *4) Contribution to Building the Nation*
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53 The fourth category is the awareness building of the start-up companies' contribution
54 to society, or in a larger context, to the nation. This category indicates the small deeds,
55 including during the pandemic, of the start-up companies that contributed to the broader
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1
2
3 context of the nation. In this instance, these videos illustrated how companies could
4 participate in providing support to consumers, communities, small and medium-sized
5 enterprises, and the nation. Therefore, the codes in this category were economic contribution
6 and consumer service contribution. Examples from the data include a text that explicitly
7 mentioned the value contribution of a start-up company to Indonesia's GDP and a text stating
8 that 'Helping to create impact for the greater good, is part of our DNA' (Gojek Video #3,
9 2020).

20 *Optimistic Expressions*

21
22 Finally, the last eudaimonic theme found in these videos was the optimistic
23 expressions that aim to bring a sense of optimism in these difficult times. Moreover, a unique
24 characteristic found alongside this theme was that these expressions were modified through a
25 creative combination of video, audio (narrations, jingles, and soundtrack), and graphics
26 according to the brand identity of each start-up. Below are four kinds of expressions found in
27 the studied videos.
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36 *1) Expressing Appreciation*

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38 Optimistic expressions were found in the start-ups' appreciation of the work done by
39 the people facing the pandemic. This was seen in the videos through the codes of verbal
40 appreciation and non-verbal appreciation. One of the examples is a scene of several hotel
41 employees wearing health protocol equipment, giving a *Namaste*-style greeting. Besides this
42 gesture, there is written text that says '*Kita optimis keadaan akan balik kayak semula*'
43 (translated as: 'We are optimistic that things will turn back to how they were before')
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(Traveloka Video #1, 2020).

56 *2) Creative Modification of Brand Identity*

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58 One common characteristic of these corporate videos is a modified form of brand
59 identity to express optimism. Usually, this modified form of optimistic call-to-action appears
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2
3 in the middle of the video, as well as at the end, and is accompanied by a hashtag. For this
4
5 category, the codes found were campaign title and company motto. An example is the written
6
7 text ‘#AnakBangsaBisa *lewati ini bersama*’ (translated as: ‘#AnakBangsaBisa [We can] get
8
9 through this together’) (Gojek Video #1, 2020; Gojek Video #2, 2020). The campaign
10
11 #*AnakBangsaBisa* has a literal translation as ‘nation’s children can’ or ‘Indonesians can’, but
12
13 ‘*Anak Bangsa*’ has been translated as ‘we’ to fit the context here. Another example is the
14
15 written text ‘#JalanBersama *dulu, Traveloka kemudian*’ (translated as: ‘#JalanBersama [walk
16
17 together] first, Traveloka later’; Traveloka is an online ticket and hotel bookings company)
18
19 (Traveloka Video #1, 2020; Traveloka Video #2, 2020).
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23 24 3) *Incorporating ‘Big Days’ in the Message*

25
26 In expressing optimism to the public, this study found that these videos incorporate
27
28 the momentum of ‘Big Days’ into the message. Big Days here refer to the religious days and
29
30 the national celebrations/anniversaries. These Big Days have a special connection to
31
32 Indonesians. Therefore, in communicating optimistic messages to reach people’s awareness,
33
34 the messages were often related to these special events. From the dataset, the codes were the
35
36 celebration of Independence Day and *Idul Fitri (Eid al-Fitr)*. One example in those videos is
37
38 the presence of written text ‘*75 tahun yang lalu kita merdeka dari penjajah, maka 17an kali*
39
40 *ini kita juga akan merdeka*’ (translated as: ‘75 years ago we were independent from the
41
42 colonialists, so this year’s Independence Day we will also be free’) (Bukalapak Video #1,
43
44 2020). Another example is ‘*Ramadan tahun ini menjadi berbeda*’ (translated as: ‘This year’s
45
46 Ramadan is different’) (JD.ID Video #1, 2020).
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50 51 4) *Call for Supporting Each Other*

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53 Besides these appreciation and awareness building categories, this study found
54
55 another category that explicitly calls for collective action. There were calls for supporting
56
57 each other in facing the mutual problem of the pandemic. Therefore, this category has codes
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3 such as a call for mutual commitment and a call for working together. In the videos, an
4
5 example is a written text ‘*Jadi yang penting sekarang kita semua #JalanBersama untuk tetap*
6
7 *melayani dengan baik*’ (translated as: ‘The important thing now is that we all #*JalanBersama*
8
9 [go together] to continue serving well’) (Traveloka Video #1, 2020). There is also a
10
11 text ‘*Satukan kekuatan dan komitmen dari Sabang sampai Merauke*’ (translated as: ‘Let’s
12
13 unite the strength and commitment from *Sabang* to *Merauke* [from west to east of
14
15 Indonesia]’) (Gojek Video #1, 2020).
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20 21 **The Dual-Role of Eudaimonic Media**

22 In the context of handling the impact of the pandemic, these four emerging themes led
23
24 us to further discuss the dual-role of eudaimonic media. On one hand, eudaimonic themes
25
26 are involved in discursive practices related to the preferred grand narration of the government
27
28 and seemingly the public on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. On the other, these
29
30 eudaimonic themes symbolise start-up companies’ camaraderie with their (prioritised)
31
32 stakeholders during these difficult times.
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36 37 ***Optimism and Gotong Royong in Handling the Pandemic***

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39 The COVID-19 pandemic has a multi-dimensional impact on human life and its
40
41 handling was subject to public scrutiny. The pandemic indeed impacted the health aspects of
42
43 Indonesian communities, as well as the rest of the world. Moreover, this unprecedented
44
45 global event also affected other areas of human life such as social interactions and economic
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47 activities, specifically in the form of social restrictions and the slowing down of economic
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49 growth; an unfavourable situation for any nation, which will be explained below.
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53 As reported by *BBC Indonesia*, in response to the spread of COVID-19, the
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55 Indonesian government (both central and locals) decided to limit human movement under the
56
57 guidelines of implementing Large-Scale Social Restrictions that were issued by the Ministry
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59 of Health (Tanati, 2020). Consequently, these social restrictions limited mobility; roads were
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3 empty, airport activities were closed, and land and sea travel were also affected. At the same
4
5 time, economic activities also received great shocks that manifested in the panic buying
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7 phenomenon (Shadiqi et al., 2020), stockpiling indications, and scarcity of items that were
8
9 easy to initially find. Furthermore, the report from Statistics Indonesia/Central Statistics
10
11 Agency (BPS, 2020) on Indonesia's economic growth in the first quarter of 2020 shows that
12
13 it reached 2.97% (*y-on-y*) (slowing down from the first quarter of 2019: 5.07%) and
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15 experienced a contraction of (minus) 2.41% (*q-to-q*) from the first quarter of 2019. This has
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17 apparently fashioned a public perception of the impact of the government policies to the
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19 nation's economic performance. Such a situation would further increase public worry.
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24 Reflecting on this, communication processes or the dissemination of messages to the
25
26 public becomes a crucial agenda to be addressed. This urgency arose because of the
27
28 circulation of hoaxes and disinformation regarding COVID-19's impact and its handling,
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30 which can influence the thoughts of individuals and groups of society. All these simultaneous
31
32 situations could escalate the public's worry about the pandemic and potentially reduce their
33
34 confidence and optimism. Thus, in addressing these challenges, eudaimonic media may
35
36 contribute to the discursive practices of optimism and togetherness – *gotong royong* in
37
38 Bahasa – in facing the pandemic.
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43 Therefore, this eudaimonic media came at a time when Indonesia needed messages of
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45 optimism. Based on the findings, the launch timelines of these videos had the same
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47 momentum as the intensifying impact of the pandemic, with the celebration of *Eid Al-Fitr*
48
49 and Indonesia's Independence Day. From the analysis of the findings, building optimism and
50
51 togetherness is a major narrative that these start-up companies have created. Also, based on
52
53 the companies' financial capability that is categorised as high when compared to the other
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55 start-ups, and given the breadth of operations and services of these start-ups to the people, an
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57 official statement regarding the COVID-19 pandemic cannot be avoided by them. Hence,
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3 there is a 'social' call for these companies to inform the public of what they have done so far,
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5 which then brings them to be involved in the public discourse.
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8 The construction of emphatic and optimistic messages alongside displaying the
9
10 companies' contributions in the videos is of importance to this analysis. The timing of the
11
12 video launching and the current social contexts of Indonesia due to the impact of the
13
14 pandemic call for responses, including from the start-up companies, which are part of
15
16 discursive practices during the pandemic. Specifically, there is an impression that these
17
18 companies promote optimism to the public. In this study, although eudaimonic media
19
20 presents the bitter situations and the struggles of dealing with the pandemic, the presentation
21
22 itself aims for conveying an inspirational and meaningful content that can trigger feelings of
23
24 happiness. Also, the findings show that these videos focus on activities that express the
25
26 virtues and advantages of collaboration during such struggles. Through this dissemination,
27
28 the videos are consequently taking part in the discursive practices of handling the pandemic
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30 by reflecting on the efforts/deeds aimed at bringing out the best in us during these difficult
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32 times.
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38 Moreover, in this time of crisis, this analysis has shown that public addresses through
39
40 videos go beyond just presenting the action taken. The videos of start-up companies, that
41
42 have a narration and creative treatment according to the eudaimonic themes, take a stance in
43
44 the public discourse; in this case, bringing a sense of optimism and *gotong royong*.
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48 ***Conveying (Prioritised) Participatory Role***

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51 Another role of eudaimonic media that arose from the findings is that the videos
52
53 convey various forms of participation in terms of handling the pandemic that have roots in
54
55 the characteristics of Indonesian start-up companies. These videos explicitly use a creative
56
57 modification of brand identity from each start-up to signify their participatory role. For
58
59 instance, modification of 'catchphrases' of the companies for expressing optimism such
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3 as ‘*Kami percaya #AnakBangsaBisa lewati ini bersama*’ (translated as: ‘We believe
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5
6 #*AnakBangsaBisa* [we can] get through this together’); the hashtag here is a ‘trademark’ of a
7
8 company. Another example is that there are partners who wear uniforms and have properties
9
10 that are specific to a particular start-up. Through this way of presenting their brand identity in
11
12 the videos, these companies implicitly express their participatory role. Moreover, these
13
14 videos convey the value of these companies; a value that is related to ‘developing one’s
15
16 unique individual potentials and furthering one’s purposes in living’ (Waterman et al., 2008:
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18 42).
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22 With the relatively short duration of the video, it is a challenge to emphasise the
23
24 values that underlie a start-up’s existence and how such values continue to be the foundation
25
26 of these difficult times. One can develop the content through a general ‘typology’ that has
27
28 been developed previously such as the appreciation of beauty and excellence, gratitude, hope,
29
30 and religiousness (Dale et al., 2020; Oliver et al., 2018). Another way, which was found in
31
32 this study, is by conveying four inductive eudaimonic themes together with the value of the
33
34 particular start-up. In other words, a company creatively constructs the video according to its
35
36 unique basic value proposition.
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40 For example, in the videos shown by one of the start-up companies that is initially
41
42 associated with transportation, the basic value of ‘solving mobility challenges’ (people and
43
44 goods) combines the eudaimonic themes. Despite massive social restrictions during the
45
46 release of this video, the start-up company and its partners emphasise how (goods) mobility
47
48 becomes a participatory role in facing the pandemic. Additionally, by launching up to three
49
50 videos, there is a repetition of this manifested value, which is an actual contribution of the
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52 company, not only to partners and employees, but also to the society and the nation’s
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54 economy in general. Juxtaposing these three studied videos unveils a common thread of
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3 strategic creative treatment, which is the construction of meaning and key messages through
4
5 the company's purpose of existence.
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8 This way of incorporating the basic value of a company in an eudaimonic video can
9
10 be seen as a prioritised participatory role. In other words, a start-up company highlights their
11
12 participatory role through its video with an emphasis to a particular prioritised stakeholder or
13
14 to a prioritised big issue at the time of release. Thus, we can read that there is the subjectivity
15
16 in highlighting or imprinting particular basic values of a company within the eudaimonic
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18 themes. Consequently, one might argue for highlighting the working sustainability of the
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20 partners – the frontlines as it was suggested in one of the videos – as the prioritised action in
21
22 the videos. Another might argue for emphasising customers' needs. All in all, the video now
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24 belongs to the public, who is also facing the pandemic and who will actively read the
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26 participatory role of these start-up companies.
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31 32 **CONCLUSION** 33

34 This study has shown that delivering optimistic messages during an unpleasant
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36 situation requires a highly subjective approach that depends on the context of the sender and
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38 the momentum of delivering it. By analysing the start-up companies' videos, which were
39
40 released during the Pandemic as an embodiment of eudaimonic media, this study found that
41
42 the discovered eudaimonic themes contribute to the discussion about handling the pandemic
43
44 and what kind of role, in this case, a startup company can participate in. Not only that, this
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46 article also discusses how the four themes – empathic communication, human values, action
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48 taken, and optimistic expression – are consolidated by the basic values of a start-up company.
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50 Moreover, once these forms of public communication are released, then these key messages
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52 are involved in the larger narrative of handling the pandemic. Particularly, a preferred
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54 meaning that arose from these companies' videos is bringing optimism by *gotong royong* to
55
56 face the pandemic.
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3 Finally, this current study has contributed to the repository of knowledge regarding
4 media communication of an organisation to the public, in particular through eudaimonic
5 media. Although the context here is very specific in terms of the kind of difficult time, i.e.,
6 during the COVID-19 pandemic, and in terms of the senders, i.e., a group of start-up
7 companies, the eudaimonic themes found can serve as a starting point for mapping the
8 content released by other companies in Indonesia. This will also help understand how these
9 forms of communication are inherently involved in discursive practices during difficult times.
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Media International Australia - Decision on Manuscript ID MIA-21-0044

1 message

Media International Australia <onbehalf@manuscriptcentral.com>

27 May 2021 at 05:18

Reply-To: matthew.allen@utas.edu.au

To: jandy.luik@petra.ac.id

26-May-2021

Dear Dr. Luik:

Manuscript ID MIA-21-0044 entitled "Eudaimonic Media during the COVID-19 Pandemic" which you submitted to Media International Australia, has been reviewed. The comments of the reviewers are included at the bottom of this letter.

The reviewers have recommended publication, but they have asked for a number of substantial revisions to your manuscript. I have also read the work and confirm their view. In particular, we all are unpersuaded by the use of theories around eudaimonic media. They do not feel well integrated into your article and, perhaps, it would be better for you to remove completely any attempt to link the videos to eudaimonia and address the topic in more pragmatic terms.

As reviewer 2 notes, there is plenty of interesting and valuable material in the paper so we are keen to work with you on improvements. Therefore, I invite you to respond to the reviewers' comments and revise your manuscript.

The scale and extent of changes (including considering ways to recast the whole paper away from EM) is large and I've given you more time to revise than normal. We would really want to see a reworked paper, and you should highlight the changed areas in yellow (background) in your resubmission and submit a clear and detailed statement of the changes you have made, responding to each comment by the reviewers.

To revise your manuscript, log into <https://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/mia> and enter your Author Center, where you will find your manuscript title listed under "Manuscripts with Decisions." Under "Actions," click on "Create a Revision." Your manuscript number has been appended to denote a revision.

You may also click the below link to start the revision process (or continue the process if you have already started your revision) for your manuscript. If you use the below link you will not be required to login to ScholarOne Manuscripts.

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You will be unable to make your revisions on the originally submitted version of the manuscript. Instead, revise your manuscript using a word processing program and save it on your computer. Please highlight the changes to your manuscript within the document by a coloured background. Do not use track changes.

Once the revised manuscript is prepared, you can upload it and submit it through your Author Center.

When submitting your revised manuscript, you will be able to respond to the comments made by the reviewers in the space provided. You can use this space to document any changes you make to the original manuscript. In order to expedite the processing of the revised manuscript, please be as specific as possible in your response to the reviewers.

IMPORTANT: Your original files are available to you when you upload your revised manuscript. Please delete any redundant files before completing the submission.

Because we are trying to facilitate timely publication of manuscripts submitted to Media International Australia, your revised manuscript should be uploaded as soon as possible. If it is not possible for you to submit your

revision in a reasonable amount of time, we may have to consider your paper as a new submission.

Once again, thank you for submitting your manuscript to Media International Australia and I look forward to receiving your revision.

Sincerely,
Professor Matthew Allen
Editor, Media International Australia
matthew.allen@utas.edu.au

Reviewers' Comments to Author:

Referee: 1

Comments to the Author

This is an interesting article analyzing eudaimonic themes of videos by unicorn start-ups shared to the Indonesian public during Covid and what those themes say about the start-up itself.

While this is an interesting approach, I don't think the article has enough merit to contribute meaningfully to the eudaimonic scholarship as it lacks theory and empirical rigor. I wish the authors the best for the future of their work, maybe in another journal. [ED NOTE: In light of this rejection, I sought a 3rd review and also discussed your work with reviewer 1 - they are a scholar of eudaimonia and were highly critical of your use of it; but they also agreed that, in terms of media, this article was worth continuing with and so agreed afterwards that a revision was the best outcome]

I provide some specific and more general feedback below:

Page 2 line 29: The Authors talk about eudaimonic content to trigger feelings of happiness. I would recommend using well-being as a concept here.

The paragraph on page 3 about the infodemic seems out of place to me and not related to the eudaimonic content dissemination perspective of the article.

I am a bit unsure as to why the authors chose the Covid angle for their paper. It seems like they simply analyzed the themes of respective unicorn start-ups in Indonesia, but it happened to be during covid? Not sure if this is the case. But since this is a textual analysis with no effects angle no questions can be answered as to how this content impacts audiences during the pandemic. Henceforth the rationale for the study on page 6 also seems not particularly relevant from a scholarly angle. That is, as the paper is positioned, without a specific rationale for the textual analysis, it does not have much scientific merit to contribute to the scholarship of eudaimonic entertainment.

The paper also does not seem to have a specific research question it is trying to answer, which is problematic from a theoretical standpoint.

As for the methods: What type of start-ups were there? Where did the authors get the list of them? In order to replicate the study, more information on the selection process of the sample is needed. How were the scenes coded? Were there multiple coders at work? How reliable are the coded themes? More info on the methods needed here. I am not a qualitative researcher so please excuse my feedback if it does not apply to textual analysis.

The conclusion of the themes is interesting from an industry angle. However due to what seems to me a lack in theoretical basis for the analysis of these videos, the conclusions to not forward the scholarship of eudaimonic entertainment (as mentioned before).

Maybe the authors find better luck with their work in a journal that is more focused on industry perspectives or is more applied in nature.

Referee: 2

Comments to the Author

MIA-21-0044 – Eudaimonic Media during the COVID-19 Pandemic

Dear authors,

Thank you for the opportunity to review this article.

This article explores the inspirational video content of tech start-ups in Indonesia during the COVID-19 Pandemic. The article has a promising premise: to understand the 'good feeling' media during a time of global sadness and uncertainty. This study is done in the context of Indonesian start-up companies and their YouTube channels. The structure of the article is excellent, and the clarity of language is outstanding. This is new knowledge of a particular type of media, which was examined during a global pandemic.

This is a welcomed article, but there are a few areas that can be tightened before it can be published in MIA. In particular, the readers of MIA would like attention paid to the following points:

- The start of the introduction needs to be re-written - Why do we 'need' optimistic media? This seems like an odd statement to open with. And why/how did the government do this? I would think during a pandemic that incorrect and up-to-date health information is the role of the government? I'm not clear why this is the premise for the article.
- What is a 'unicorn start-up?' (I see it is define it in the methods section, but please move this definition up to the first time you use the term in the Introduction)
- Tighten the language in the methods section, for example, P.6 line 39-40.
- The methodology description needs to be addressed and the language re-written. There are many brackets especially and it is difficult to follow with so many interruptions to the flow of the description.
- Typo P.8 line 8
- While the analysis is great, it would be useful to have a recap table of all the emerging themes just before the next section titled, "The Dual Role of Eudaimonic Media". This will assist the reader in recapping what was just read, with it fresh in the mind to address the 'so what' question which has been pre-empted by the following section.
- While it is a lovely idea that the companies are engaging in gotong royong in Bahasa, let's not lose site that they are commercial entities. As such, they are following a bottom line to make profit, or are otherwise deemed not viable in this scenario. I think the authors need to rethink this section (p.16) a little further to integrate the eudaimonic appearance alongside the economic drive of these businesses.
- And yes, I agree there is social call for these narratives, but is there any evidence it was received as such? These businesses may be publishing these messages, but did they make any impact on the broader society and its need for positive messaging during this time? Can the authors provide this evidence (which I am sure they have) or can the study be reframed to suggest it only half of the communication examination? This is important to bring to bear the significance of the thematic analysis. I direct your attention to this sentence especially on p.17: "Through this dissemination, the videos are consequently taking part in the discursive practices of handling the pandemic by reflecting on the efforts/deeds aimed at bringing out the best in us during these difficult times."
- I think this could also be addressed in more detail into the conclusion. The conclusion currently doesn't really tell us anything, and I think there is an opportunity for the authors to extend on the so what question, the reception of the media and the position of the companies in a post-pandemic life. Where are they now, where are they heading, etc. etc.?

Finally, I want to commend the authors on this work. It is refreshing to read a positive spin on media analysis in the current environment. I really enjoyed reading this perspective on media during the pandemic, and I hope my comments are helpful to develop this article further.

Referee: 3

Comments to the Author

I found this to be an interesting paper in its study of the type of message content companies communicated during the pandemic and how they framed themselves and their operations in relation to that pandemic – largely optimistically.

I was not overly convinced that "eudaimonic media" was the right term for what the researchers identified in their findings. There could be other ways of conceptualising the video content.

The paper seems a little bit confused about its focus. A research question asks:

"How do the eudaimonic themes of the videos released by start-up companies contribute to addressing the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in Indonesia?"

Then, soon afterwards, it is stated "this article will analyse the relationship between the eudaimonic themes in the videos and the characteristics of the respective start-up companies."

The authors should focus on the first question and remove that second objective as it is not answered in the paper anyway.

It is a bit too easy to justify this research by saying no one has investigated eudemonic media in a pandemic, in COVID, etc. There has never been a global pandemic in a mediatized world, so this justification is rather trite. It would be better to say "there has been minimal research into eudemonic media in times of crisis".

The authors need to explain - why did the study focus on start-up companies? Also, who were the target audiences for these videos? Can you tell us a little bit more about these stakeholders? Will they be product buyers and users, investors, for example? What is the purpose of the videos?

I do think it interesting how the start-up companies tried to frame their business during a pandemic around optimism. Why exactly do the authors think that the companies would construct optimistic messages – what is the rationale for this?

I did not find the paragraph immediately before the conclusion to be convincing – it brings in claims about sustainability and participatory roles seemed rather forced and not supported by the data.

The conclusion needs to circle back to answering the research question.



Media International Australia MIA-21-0044.R1

1 message

Media International Australia <onbehalf@manuscriptcentral.com>

7 June 2021 at 19:19

Reply-To: matthew.allen@utas.edu.au

To: jandyLuik@petra.ac.id

07-Jun-2021

Dear Dr. Luik:

Your revised manuscript entitled "'Good Feeling' Media During the COVID-19 Pandemic" has been successfully submitted online and is presently being given full consideration for publication in Media International Australia.

Your manuscript ID is MIA-21-0044.R1.

You have listed the following individuals as authors of this manuscript:

Luik, Jandy

Please mention the above manuscript ID in all future correspondence or when calling the office for questions. If there are any changes in your street address or e-mail address, please log in to ScholarOne Manuscripts at <https://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/mia> and edit your user information as appropriate.

You can also view the status of your manuscript at any time by checking your Author Center after logging in to <https://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/mia>.

As part of our commitment to ensuring an ethical, transparent and fair peer review process SAGE is a supporting member of ORCID, the Open Researcher and Contributor ID (<https://orcid.org/>). We encourage all authors and co-authors to use ORCID iDs during the peer review process. If you have not already logged in to your account on this journal's ScholarOne Manuscripts submission site in order to update your account information and provide your ORCID identifier, we recommend that you do so at this time by logging in and editing your account information. In the event that your manuscript is accepted, only ORCID iDs validated within your account prior to acceptance will be considered for publication alongside your name in the published paper as we cannot add ORCID iDs during the Production steps. If you do not already have an ORCID iD you may login to your ScholarOne account to create your unique identifier and automatically add it to your profile.

Thank you for submitting your manuscript to Media International Australia.

Sincerely,

Matthew Allen

Media International Australia

matthew.allen@utas.edu.au



Media International Australia - Decision on Manuscript ID MIA-21-0044.R1

1 message

Media International Australia <onbehalf@manuscriptcentral.com>

29 June 2021 at 12:29

Reply-To: matthew.allen@utas.edu.au

To: jandyLuik@petra.ac.id

29-Jun-2021

Dear Dr. Luik:

Manuscript ID MIA-21-0044.R1 entitled "'Good Feeling' Media During the COVID-19 Pandemic" which you submitted to Media International Australia, has been reviewed. The comments of the reviewer(s) are included at the bottom of this letter.

I am sorry to say that the answer is not (yet) a positive one. However, we hope the paper can be improved to the point where we can publish it. Let me explain.

This paper has proven to be difficult, for several reasons. Initially, when reviewed, one reviewer recommended rejection because it was not sufficiently clear or effective in its discussions of eudemonic media. There were others which also saw challenges and we decided to give you a chance to review and revise. While, evidently, you have addressed some of the concerns, it may be that in the revisions, the paper has in some places gone backwards rather than improving. As you will see below, a reviewer who we asked to check the extent of changes has not been satisfied with the work and also is now recommending reject. The other reviewer has asked me to liaise with you because he would like to see improvements - he is keen to try and publish but the article is not yet there.

So, I am going to ask for a comprehensive revision which might then permit publication. The next time it is submitted, moreover, I am going to seek 2 new referees since I don't want bias (for or against) to creep in from a second round of review by the same people.

To assist you, and in recognition of the fact MIA seeks to encourage and develop new voices (we rarely publish work focused on Indonesia and are keen to change this) with different perspectives (the focus on positive messages is also quite distinct and welcome), I have spend several hours working on the paper and have, in the attachment, provided an extensive commentary which I hope will help. Please look at my comments in the attachment.

I want to stress: there is a lot to be done. The paper has some less-than-publishable grammar and expression (although nothing you can't fix with some careful reading and editing) but the main problem is that it is disorganised in its structure and focus, and feels, on balance, like two different papers neither of which is fully complete. I would recommend, then, you approach the revision as tightening, make more explicit and clear, the paper which is driven by the data, while also moving the other material (largely what is your concluding pages) into a separate new paper.

My summary of the changes I propose you consider is here (read in concert with my more detailed comments)

INTRODUCTION

Main changes needed are to restructure it for clear progression – what are you studying, what is the way you are going to 'construct' this object of study for correct analysis, why are you studying this, and how are you doing it.

BACKGROUND

Much more literature review needed here which explains (or argues for) the importance of your study, why you have constructed it as you have, and how it fits into the wide ranging work of others. Is there something new here, other than just the focus on Indonesia? If so, show this with reference to the literature

METHOD

More literature and clearer explanation and justification. Note limitations too. (eg this is NOT about reception).

FINDINGS

Keep the presentation of findings much more concrete and less analytical. Rethink how you categorise some of

them (perhaps there are too many categories?). More examples (let the data speak). Also, link back to WHICH companies were doing what (variations?) and where were the points of emphasis. Present more data (since, clearly, you have done a very thorough coding etc).

I also wonder if you are prejudging the themes. This approach is helpful because it allows you to organize your presentation of findings but, equally, it made me feel I could not read the findings without already being told what they meant. Perhaps 'findings' should be much less thematized, THEN you use themes as the way to organize your analysis?

DISCUSSION

A major problem here is that you move off into some very important topics which are not closely related to the start of the paper, nor the data. Essentially, it feels like you are writing a second paper, but without the necessary literature review nor data. I would probably recommend you take most of this material out, park it for another paper, and instead 'finish off' analysis of the rich data you have.

Generally

I think there is a hidden issue in here about the relationship of this video promotional work and the STAKE of these companies in building back to economic activity. I don't necessarily believe the companies were doing this as a 'civic duty'. I think you need to be much more conscious of the profit motive, the brand building etc. This also relates to the complex relationships between government and private sector; and information and misinformation. I think this hidden issue is actually revealed in the way you START the paper by assuming the messages are a kind of public-service 'good feeling' communication. If, instead, you start by simply saying "what did large .id companies do via social-media messaging (focusing on YouTube) during the pandemic?" then you can leave the 'judgment' (is it branding? is it a service? is it self-serving? was it positive or not? did it build morale? or well being? both or neither?) UNTIL the conclusion, then the paper makes more sense as academic research. The second paper THEN can start (based on this paper) with your conclusions and develop an argument about the nature of such messaging in a country like Indonesia. The second paper is more conceptual, relying on pre-published data in paper 1.

So, technically, here is the info on revising:

To revise your manuscript, log into <https://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/mia> and enter your Author Center, where you will find your manuscript title listed under "Manuscripts with Decisions." Under "Actions," click on "Create a Revision." Your manuscript number has been appended to denote a revision.

You may also click the below link to start the revision process (or continue the process if you have already started your revision) for your manuscript. If you use the below link you will not be required to login to ScholarOne Manuscripts.

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You will be unable to make your revisions on the originally submitted version of the manuscript. Instead, revise your manuscript using a word processing program and save it on your computer. Because the paper will, effectively, be a very different paper, do not highlight changes - just submit a clean (blinded) copy as if your first submission. This allows me to get reviewers to look at it fresh.

Once the revised manuscript is prepared, you can upload it and submit it through your Author Center.

When submitting your revised manuscript, you will be able to respond to the comments made by the reviewer(s) in the space provided. You can use this space to document any changes you make to the original manuscript.

NOTE - please do NOT use your name here (You did on the last revision) - this means your reviewers know who you are :).

IMPORTANT: Your original files are available to you when you upload your revised manuscript. Please delete any redundant files before completing the submission.

It is likely these revisions might take some time so I will set a long deadline. Please do get back in touch if you need more advice.

Once again, thank you for submitting your manuscript to Media International Australia and I look forward to receiving your revision. There is plenty of work to do but I feel confident we can develop a positive, strong paper

from what you have already done.

Sincerely,
Professor Matthew Allen
Editor, Media International Australia
matthew.allen@utas.edu.au

Reviewer(s)' Comments to Author:

Referee: 3

Comments to the Author

The author has made a good effort to respond to the reviewer comments and I applaud them for their efforts. However, I do not find the manuscript to be of publishable standard. This is a shame as I do want to support the authors' endeavors.

Some of my concerns about the revised manuscript are the same concerns that I had with the previous version I reviewed. Having said that, I do want to acknowledge that some of my concerns have been addressed. For example, the confusion over what seemed to be two different research questions has been resolved.

As stated in my previous review, I do not think the author has explained why start-up companies were targeted for research over other types of companies. It's OK that the researcher did focus on start-up companies – but say that they provided a subset of many customer focusing companies that depended on stakeholder engagement and/or funding (the author needs to explain how they understand this). It also needs explaining WHY the start up companies released these videos and who the target audiences were for them. In these terms the author has not answered the point I made previously when I stated "The authors need to explain - why did the study focus on start-up companies? Also, who were the target audiences for these videos? Can you tell us a little bit more about these stakeholders? Will they be product buyers and users, investors, for example? What is the purpose of the videos?" A much better explanation of what the videos were designed to achieve needs providing. Only then can the reader really have the context to make sense of the findings. As it stands, the findings do not make a lot of sense because we do not know what the purpose of the videos was.

Page 1 line 49: "delivering optimistic media messages to the public is a part of the social calling for those who have access to public communication infrastructures". Is this really the case? What evidence is there to support this claim? The use of the term "social calling" needs rethinking here and on the next page line 3 and line 8. A social calling is generally taken to mean having a social duty or feeling a social obligation to do something.

Page 4 line 30: "Maintaining the public's morale in times of crisis is one way of dealing with a crisis." Please provide a reference for this claim. Also, maintaining morale might be part of dealing with the crisis, but it is not all of it. The study should reference social marketing literature as there are connections here in trying to engage certain emotions in marketing attempting to change public behaviours. This reference might be a useful starting point:

Peter, P. C., & Honea, H. (2012). Targeting social messages with emotions of change: The call for optimism. *Journal of Public Policy & Marketing*, 31(2), 269-283.

Page 4 line 35: "media communication has an important role in disseminating inspirational content via its nexus of channels." Please provide a reference for this claim. It could be argued that exactly the opposite is the case – i.e. that we need to encourage audiences to understand the dangers and threats of the crisis.

I find it very difficult to make sense of what a "unit of analysis" is in the methods section on page 7. This needs explaining – and I suggest more simply.

Also in the methods section, explain how the researcher triangulation was conducted.

The author needs some help with the use of the words "furthermore", "moreover" and "therefore". They are not used correctly which does not help with the issues around writing and English language expression. Generally, there needs to be a lot more polishing of the writing throughout the manuscript.

There needs to be clearer explanation of the notion that the start-up companies have a participatory role – as discussed on page 18. What are they participating in and to what ends?

Sadly, I am of the view that this research manuscript is not rigorous enough in its explanation of the problem being

investigated, of the context of the media materials being researched, of the findings and conclusions. I do not think the research is sufficiently embedded in relevant literature. I applaud the authors for giving this a go, but there remains a lot of work to be done.



Good-Feeling-Media-during-COVID-19-Pandemic-Ver-2-Final-2---ED-comments.docx

97K



Media International Australia MIA-21-0044.R2

1 message

Media International Australia <onbehalf@manuscriptcentral.com>

24 September 2021 at 11:59

Reply-To: matthew.allen@utas.edu.au

To: jandyLuik@petra.ac.id

24-Sep-2021

Dear Dr. Luik:

Your revised manuscript entitled "What Do Indonesian Start-Ups Communicate During The COVID-19 Pandemic?" has been successfully submitted online and is presently being given full consideration for publication in Media International Australia.

Your manuscript ID is MIA-21-0044.R2.

You have listed the following individuals as authors of this manuscript:

Luik, Jandy

Please mention the above manuscript ID in all future correspondence or when calling the office for questions. If there are any changes in your street address or e-mail address, please log in to ScholarOne Manuscripts at <https://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/mia> and edit your user information as appropriate.

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Thank you for submitting your manuscript to Media International Australia.

Sincerely,

Matthew Allen

Media International Australia

matthew.allen@utas.edu.au



What Do Indonesian Start-Ups Communicate During The COVID-19 Pandemic?

Journal:	<i>Media International Australia</i>
Manuscript ID	MIA-21-0044.R2
Manuscript Type:	Original Article
Keywords:	inspirational content, public communication, COVID-19 pandemic, start-up companies Indonesia, empathetic communication, media communication
Abstract:	<p>This article aims to explore media content during the COVID-19 pandemic. It focuses on the pandemic handling videos released by start-up companies in Indonesia through their official YouTube accounts. As start-ups were also experiencing the impact of the pandemic, one of their biggest challenges was to communicate optimistic messages to the public with the right content and context. Therefore, this article examines the contents of the videos released by start-up companies during the COVID-19 pandemic in Indonesia. Drawing from data collected between March and December 2020, this qualitative study finds four inspirational media themes: “we all are affected by the pandemic”, the appearance of human values, presenting action taken, and optimistic expressions. Further, this article discusses the arrangement of inspirational statements and acts of empathy, which are dominantly mixed with brand identities and echo the value of gotong royong.</p>

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What Do Indonesian Start-Ups Communicate During The COVID-19 Pandemic?

ABSTRACT

This article aims to explore media content during the COVID-19 pandemic. It focuses on the pandemic handling videos released by start-up companies in Indonesia through their official YouTube accounts. As start-ups were also experiencing the impact of the pandemic, one of their biggest challenges was to communicate optimistic messages to the public with the right content and context. Therefore, this article examines the contents of the videos released by start-up companies during the COVID-19 pandemic in Indonesia. Drawing from data collected between March and December 2020, this qualitative study finds four inspirational media themes: “*we all are affected by the pandemic*”, the appearance of human values, presenting action taken, and optimistic expressions. Further, this article discusses the arrangement of inspirational statements and acts of empathy, which are dominantly mixed with brand identities and echo the value of *gotong royong*.

Keywords: *inspirational content; public communication; media communication; empathetic communication; new media; start-up companies Indonesia; COVID-19 pandemic*

INTRODUCTION

This article explores the nature of media content by examining the official YouTube channels of technology-based start-up companies in Indonesia. Specifically, this article focuses on the videos released by these companies during the COVID-19 pandemic.

As reported by *BBC Indonesia*, in response to the spread of COVID-19, the Indonesian government (both central and locals) decided to limit human movement under the guidelines of implementing Large-Scale Social Restrictions that were issued by the Ministry

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3 of Health (Tanati, 2020). Consequently, these social restrictions limited mobility; roads were
4 empty, airport activities were closed, and land and sea travel were also affected. At the same
5 time, economic activities also received great shocks that manifested in the panic buying
6 phenomenon (Shadiqi et al., 2020), stockpiling indications, and scarcity of items that were
7 easy to initially find. Furthermore, the report from Statistics Indonesia/Central Statistics
8 Agency (BPS, 2020) on Indonesia's economic growth in the first quarter of 2020 shows that
9 it reached 2.97% (*y-on-y*) (slowing down from the first quarter of 2019: 5.07%) and
10 experienced a contraction of (minus) 2.41% (*q-to-q*) from the first quarter of 2019. This has
11 fashioned a public perception of the impact of government policies on the nation's economic
12 performance. Such a situation would further increase public worry.

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The focus of this article is thus motivated by the present challenging situation such as the pandemic where, besides disseminating issue-oriented messages that is an essential need for the public (Quinn, 2008; Reynolds & Quinn, 2008), disseminating positive inspirational messages during this pandemic may influence individual and the society's well-being. Accordingly, we might ask whether we can observe, in the public communications of large business organisations, whether there is a tendency to, or interest in, promoting more positive views of the current and future situation than might be expected. Thus, this work seeks extensive knowledge on the nature of this inspirational message during times of difficulties and how profit-oriented brands, without being insensitive to the ongoing situation, construct inspirational messages.

The engagement of commercial brands in public communication regarding pandemic handling in Indonesia is beneficial, but it is not free of risk. On the one hand, their vast resources and network may position them as an 'opinion leader' to encourage optimism among Indonesians. On the other hand, one might see the videos that presented the companies' pandemic handling activities are part of their branding activities, which

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3 eventually brings commercial benefit for the start-up companies. These different views may
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5 open up a further discussion about the effect of these videos to the Indonesian public, but the
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7 crux of the matter here is that creating an inspirational message in these difficult times is not
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9 an easy task. Developing and disseminating a public message in pandemic-like situations
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11 tend to be complicated, as it could have a counterproductive impact on the sender of the
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13 message and potentially jeopardise the goal of instilling optimism. Therefore, this article is
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15 based on the kinds of messages that promote positive feelings – or, in some previous
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17 research, messages that promote “well-being” (Liu et al., 2019; Ryff, 1989; Ryff & Keyes,
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19 1995) or “eudaimonic happiness” (Huta & Waterman, 2014; Oliver & Hartmann, 2010;
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21 Oliver & Raney, 2011; Waterman, 1993; Waterman et al., 2008). For this research, we will
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23 describe these kinds of messages as ‘inspirational media’, which is not directly about
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25 promoting the business (even if that is a secondary motive) but which, by their content, may
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27 tend to promote in the public more positive feelings, despite the socio-economic challenges.
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33 In our field of study, inquiries to social media content in Indonesia have received
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35 attention from researchers, but these inquiries occur in general circumstances. For example, a
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37 study in Indonesia used Erving Goffman’s (1959) framework, namely, self-presentation or
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39 impression management to study the social media content of a group of users in a particular
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41 city (Author, date1). Another study has also explored the self-presentation of librarians in
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43 Indonesia (Wijayanti & Surachman, 2019). Both studies examined ingratiation, a self-
44
45 presentation strategy (Jones & Pittman, 1982) that is dominantly used in social media, both
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47 by individuals and organisations; the strategy involves praising audiences or sending out
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49 positive, nuanced messages to the targeted population (Author, date2; Wijayanti &
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51 Surachman, 2019). Concerning the circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic in Indonesia, a
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53 study has been conducted to examine a local radio’s efforts in increasing its financial revenue
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55 (Achmad et al., 2020). However, regarding the inquiry into the new media, little to no inquiry
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3 has been carried out by researchers into understanding inspirational content for the public
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5 during an unexpected difficulty like the COVID-19 pandemic.
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8 Considering the circumstances above, the author's motivation and the present
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10 pandemic situation, this article focuses on answering a key question: *What are the contents of*
11
12 *the videos released by start-up companies during the COVID-19 pandemic in Indonesia?*
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14 This study thus analyses the content of the videos from five start-up companies that
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16 reportedly were valued the highest in Indonesia, namely (alphabetically arranged),
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18 Bukalapak, JD.ID, Gojek, Tokopedia, and Traveloka. In 2020, these companies released
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20 videos related to the COVID-19 pandemic through their official YouTube accounts. Videos
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22 from these particular companies were selected because they released these videos to the
23
24 general public during the first few months after the pandemic outbreak in Indonesia.
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26 Moreover, these videos were launched in the midst of polarised discussions on prioritising
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28 health or the economy during the implementation of large-scale social restrictions in
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30 Indonesia. In addition, during that time, these emerging companies were relying on the
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32 movements of their riders or 'partners' to keep their operations running. In other words, these
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34 larger companies' public communication activities, including their YouTube videos, can
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36 significantly build the Indonesian public's optimistic feeling in facing the pandemic.
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42 The remainder of this paper will follow the subsequent structure. The first part of the
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44 article will discuss the importance of media content during a crisis. Next, the article will
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46 outline the methods used to analyse the media messages that are its focus. Then we will
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48 present the findings, discuss their significance, and draw conclusions to include a summary
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50 and provide researchers with the implications related to inspirational media content in
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52 unforeseen difficulties.
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BACKGROUND

Previous health crises have shown that health management is made more difficult when the public has been influenced in negative ways by media reporting and messaging, both online and through old media channels. For instance, learning from the previous similar experience in 2009, a review of media dramatization on the H1N1-related studies on news coverage concludes that “media may have—inadvertently—contributed to heightened risk perceptions through a high volume of coverage and an unbalanced emphasis on the threat of H1N1” (Klemm et al., 2016, p. 17). Using secondary data from the selected 13 prior content-analytic studies, Klemm et al. (2016, pp. 14–15) found that “huge media attention was not parallel to the trajectory of the epidemic, i.e. reflecting the number of infections, but was instead rather event-oriented”, and that “efficacy information, despite being the second most prevalent information in news on H1N1, was far less prevalent than threat information”. The takeaway point here is that the previous study, together with other related studies in communicating health through media (such as: Vasterman & Ruigrok, 2013; Yu et al., 2011; Zillmann, 2006), evidently remind us that media messages in times of crisis like in a pandemic are a key in shaping public’s perception, in which that perception can shape public’s feelings and behaviours toward the crisis.

Besides the risk of dramatization of media coverage, there is a risk of misinformation on digital platforms. Concerning global technology companies’ content moderation policies in handling misinformation during the pandemic, there is a call for more transparent content moderation strategies, which aim to not only provide more reliable content but also increase public trust (Baker et al., 2020). The main reason is that “the transmission of false and misleading information, whether shared intentionally or not, can influence beliefs and result in 'real-world harm'” (Baker et al., 2020). A matter of importance here is the stressing of the

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3 critical role of (online) media content in influencing users and society at large that has
4 brought the policy of content moderation by the social media giants as a subject of scrutiny.
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8 Back to the subject of this study, the previous instances indirectly share a concern for
9
10 the significance of media content for the public in times of crisis, including in times of the
11 current COVID-19 pandemic. Specifically, this current study pays particular attention to
12 media messages that promote the public's optimistic feelings in facing the pandemic. A
13 concrete example of this situation is a study of memes and collective coping regarding the
14 COVID-19 pandemic in Puerto Rico (Ortiz et al., 2021). As the pandemic has become a
15 stressful time for individuals, Ortiz et al. (2021) argue that "memes can evolve to be a
16 measure of collective coping in response to stressful situations where humour is used to
17 mitigate such effects" (p. 169).
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28 Similarly, the media presentation of individuals, such as celebrities, who show
29 perseverance in challenging times can trigger a sense of awareness of a specific disease and
30 motivate people to adopt preventive measures (Leung & Cheng, 2016). For example, in self-
31 presentation studies during the current pandemic, infected celebrities used social media to
32 share their COVID-19 statuses with their audiences, spreading awareness, de-stigmatising the
33 disease and amplifying prevention strategies (Mututwa & Matsilele, 2020).
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42 In light of these developments of media content that promotes positive feelings in
43 pandemic-like situations, this study aims to address the gap of knowledge prevalent due to
44 minimal research into understanding inspirational media in times of crisis. Specifically,
45 considering profit-oriented brands have released these kinds of content, this study seeks
46 extensive knowledge on the nature of inspirational messages during times of crisis, with the
47 awareness of the socio-economic challenges.
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METHOD

The method used in this study is qualitative content analysis. It focuses on looking for meaning and, ultimately, the theme of the media text from a bottom-up approach (Baxter & Babbie, 2004; Jankowski & Wester, 2002; Jensen, 2002). By definition, qualitative content analysis is "a method for systematically describing the meaning of qualitative material" (Schreier, 2012), and it can involve "category development" (Mayring, 2000) out of the studied texts or "systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes or patterns" (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Rather than focusing on the users' or audiences' interpretation – which may add to the limitations of this current study, the merit of this systematic categorisation approach to analyse media messages lies in its ability to inform us what the key messages are for a particular set of media contents. Therefore, the following are the stages taken for analysing media messages.

The first stage is based on the sample selection of this study. This study included six start-up companies in Indonesia that are reported as 'unicorns', which are start-ups that have a minimum valuation of USD 1 billion (Kamalia, 2020; Lee, 2013). Five out of the six start-ups: Bukalapak, JD.ID, Gojek, Tokopedia, and Traveloka had released videos related to the COVID-19 pandemic in March–December 2020 through their official YouTube accounts. The total duration of the videos is 944 seconds (two start-ups released more than one video); however, each of the videos has a different duration, so the number of analysis units is different for each one. This study took a sample of 158 sequences as the units of analysis. One of them consisted of a combination of several scenes that are sorted based on the narration in each video. The number of units of analysis per video are as follows: the first video had 16 units of analysis; the second video had 31; the third had 19; the fourth had 12; the fifth had 19; the sixth had 12; the seventh had 24; and, the eighth had 25.

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3 The second stage is the textual analysis of the videos. The coding procedure of the
4 qualitative content analysis approach (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008; Erlingsson & Brysiewicz, 2017)
5 was adapted to identify the meaning units, codes, categories, themes and overarching themes.
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7 A meaning unit refers to a concise description of the manifest meaning of each sequence. To
8 identify the meaning units, four kinds of data were used: the narration, video, graphics and
9 audio from each video sequence. Then, one to three keywords from each meaning unit were
10 interpreted as the code. Categories were built by examining the similarities and differences in
11 the codes. Next, the results of this category were interpreted to obtain a latent meaning,
12 which then became the constructed themes. The themes themselves were then more abstractly
13 analysed to discover the overarching themes.
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26 Furthermore, to ensure trustworthiness, researcher triangulation was carried out
27 during the coding process. Since qualitative content analysis involves some degree of text
28 interpretation, triangulating the categorisation processes with other researchers is one of the
29 solutions for the trustworthiness issues (Cho & Lee, 2014; Elo et al., 2014; Hsieh & Shannon,
30 2005; Mayring, 2000). We applied the following suggestion: “one researcher is responsible
31 for the analysis and others carefully follow-up on the whole analysis process and
32 categorization”, afterwards, “all the researchers should subsequently get together and discuss
33 any divergent opinions concerning the categorization” (Elo et al., 2014, p. 5).
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46 **FINDINGS**

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48 Through the qualitative content analysis of the existing videos, four specific themes of
49 inspirational content emerged, namely: “we all are affected by the pandemic”, the appearance
50 of human values, presenting action taken, and optimistic expressions.
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3 ***“We all are affected by the pandemic”***
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5 The first theme out of the studied videos is the empathetic message that ‘we all are
6 affected by the pandemic’. All the studied videos highlighted this key theme. They presented
7 a similar pattern that the earlier duration of the videos was dominated by the general
8 presentation of this ‘bitter reality’ and followed by conveying the message that individuals,
9 society, and companies were impacted by the pandemic. This way of emphasising the theme
10 in the videos varies through different categories.
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19 The first category is conveying bitter reality. In this category, the key message shown
20 is an empathic feeling of the unpleasant reality faced by each company, its partners in
21 running existing businesses, and other communities. The bitter reality was that companies
22 can only accept this situation; however, they must continue to struggle against it. The codes
23 seen in this category were an inevitable situation and an income crisis. In the videos, there are
24 examples such as the written texts: ‘2020 dipenuhi dengan kata pertama’ (translated as:
25 ‘2020 is filled with the words: for the first time’) (Traveloka Video #2, 2020), and ‘Setelah
26 adanya pandemi ini, jelas membuat tamu menjadi berkurang’ (translated as: ‘after this
27 pandemic had just started, it is obvious that the hotel guests become fewer’) (Traveloka
28 Video #1, 2020).
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42 The second category found was the shared emotional state presented in most of these
43 videos. From the analysis, five out of eight videos highlighted the shared feelings of
44 individuals who were impacted by the effect of the pandemic. The codes that appeared in the
45 sample videos were feelings of disappointment, reflection, happiness, awe, and
46 reconciliation. To be more specific, an example from the data includes the expression of a
47 woman who was upset because she could not travel, which was accompanied by the
48 visualisation of the cancellation of travel plans (Traveloka Video #1, 2020). Another example
49 is a daughter who was reflecting alone in the house while her father was hospitalised
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3 (Tokopedia Video #1, 2020). Moreover, we also found that the video from Tokopedia (an e-
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5 commerce platform) presented more emphasis on this shared emotional feeling as their
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7 YouTube video took a setting of a daughter (mid 20's) who finds herself alone in a house
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9 waiting for her father.
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12 The next category relates to the continued operation of the companies amid ongoing
13
14 social restrictions. This category aims to emphatically assure the viewers that the companies
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16 and partners are continuing to work (outdoors) with extra caution during the pandemic. The
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18 studied videos provided a special emphasis on the steps that the companies and partners are
19
20 taking to not ignore looming health problems. The codes in this category were disinfecting
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22 (sterilising) facilities, using masks, measuring body temperature before doing activities,
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24 washing hands, socially distancing, maintaining a maximum commitment to work, and
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26 implementing standard protocols when on the move. Therefore, the visualisation used in the
27
28 videos was of an employee/partner completing the COVID-19 health protocol while on the
29
30 move as well as the facility disinfection (sterilisation) process for users/consumers.
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35 The last category is the presence of a key message of how this pandemic requires
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37 people to do activities from home. The existing videos contain an explicit message on the
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39 process of adapting to activities from home rather than, for example, doing them from one's
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41 office. Furthermore, the related codes in the videos were the situation of having limited
42
43 access to people and spaces, online meetings, and getting used to working from home. An
44
45 example of a scene that illustrates this situation is the visualisation of the animated face of a
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47 boy working in his house with a sullen face (JD.ID Video #1, 2020). Another example is a
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49 daughter who decided to get used to working from home while staying with her father who
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51 lives alone (Tokopedia Video #1, 2020).
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The Appearance of Human Values

The second theme that relates to inspirational content is the presence of human values in the startup companies' videos. Firstly, we found that serving the community was presented by six out of eight studied videos. These videos underline the impression that continuing to carry out one's duties and roles even during the pandemic is a part of serving the community. In other words, the videos imply that serving the community is more than just a feeling; it is a real act of service for the people. In the researched videos, the codes were mobility of working, serving action, making consumers comfortable, and being trusted. This category can be seen in examples such as the scene of an employee partner who keeps delivering packages to the customer's place, which is observed in the videos of the ride-hailing start-up company. A travel and accommodation booking start-up company has also presented the scenes of hotel staffs' preparing the room and welcoming the guests who are coming into the hotel. For the other videos released by e-commerce platforms, serving the community is framed through their companies' role in keeping facilitating buying and delivering some important items from home without being physically present in a shop during the pandemic.

Besides presenting acts of service, the next manifestation of human values in these videos was to respect everyone who was at the forefront of the pandemic. An included description in the videos seemed to convey that while most people stay at home, the frontline workers of the pandemic continue to work. Three videos explicitly presented the struggle of the frontline workers, such as health workers, who are dealing with the pandemic; one of the examples is the scenes of a sample video (Bukalapak Video #1, 2020) that presented two health workers doing their work while wearing their personal protective equipment, and then, followed by the scene of them looking exhausted and sitting down on the floor of a hospital's corridor. Additionally, one of the videos suggested the partners of these start-up companies as the frontline workers with different roles such as delivering goods and supplies to the people

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3 at home. This human value was manifested in the codes as the dedication of forefront
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5 workers as well as the respect for them. An example in the videos is the caption: ‘*Untuk*
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7 *mereka yang menjadi garda terdepan, kegigihannya membuat kita bisa #dirumahaja*
8
9 *mendapatkan rasa nyaman*’ (translated as: ‘For those who are at the forefront, your
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11 persistence allows us to get a sense of comfort #dirumahaja [#stayathome]’) (Gojek Video
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13 #1, 2020).
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17 Furthermore, without undermining the impact of the pandemic, this study found a key
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19 message of looking for a silver lining. This category showed the manifestation of human
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21 values by inviting the audience to see the positive things during the current difficult situation.
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23 Implicitly, these videos invited the audience to stay strong and not give up on the existing
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25 situation. The visible forms of code were thinking positively, being role models, performing
26
27 acts of solidarity, and having the time to be together. An example that showed the positive
28
29 meaning behind adversity is a scene of Indonesia’s quiet 2020 Independence Day celebration
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31 that is normally celebrated with various events; then, the scene immediately cuts to the array
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33 of people sharing knowledge and opportunities through online communication platforms
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35 (Bukalapak Video #1, 2020).
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40 ***Presenting Action Taken***

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42 Besides empathetically emphasising the bitter reality and presenting human values in
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44 their content, these start-up companies display what has been done so far through their
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46 YouTube videos. Specifically, a message that outlines the actions that have been taken for the
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48 affected parties, and in some cases, the further actions that will be taken. Therefore, the
49
50 theme of this third finding focuses on the kinds of actual support found in seven out of eight
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52 studied videos.
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56 The first category of this theme is the conveyance of the prioritisation of health and
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58 safety. In particular, the companies prioritise their partners (workers) who are still working
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3 during the social restrictions. In one of the videos, the narrator explicitly stated that ‘their [the
4 workers] health and safety is the priority and aim’ (Gojek Video #1, 2020). Also, this
5 category shows the support of start-ups regarding COVID-19 preventive action given to
6 employees or partners affiliated with the company. Thus, the codes in this category were to
7 protect oneself, to prioritise safety, and to provide health masks and hand sanitisers. An
8 example is a scene of a partner who is maintaining social distance and wearing a mask and
9 the presence of additional facilities to prioritise safety during face-to-face interactions (Gojek
10 Video #1, 2020; Gojek Video #2, 2020). Another example is a scene of a partner (worker)
11 receiving prevention kits such as masks, hand sanitisers, and gloves. Furthermore, there is
12 also a scene that shows food parcels being given to consumers as well as the efforts made to
13 maintain the food’s hygiene.

14
15 Besides health and safety-related support, the studied videos presented the general
16 support taken by these start-up companies to their workers. In addition to providing COVID-
17 19 prevention kits, the studied videos presented other tangible forms of support such as
18 contributions to the companies’ partners’ (workers) daily supplies. This form of support is
19 reflected in the codes of caring action in the form of giving daily supplies and cash subsidies.
20 Thus, an example is the giving of a package of daily supplies by a company’s representative
21 to the partners affiliated with the start-up (Gojek Video #1, 2020; Gojek Video #3, 2020).
22 Apart from the daily supplies to their partners, the studied videos also showed the actions
23 taken by the start-up companies in terms of their working practices (Tokopedia Video #1,
24 2020; Traveloka Video #2, 2020). Particularly, these videos highlighted how the companies
25 were transitioning to remote working practices. In the dataset, the codes that represented this
26 category were online collaboration and working from home (WFH). One of the examples is a
27 visualisation (video collage) of many people who attended a meeting via a video conference
28 platform (Traveloka Video #2, 2020).

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3 The last category of presenting action taken is the awareness building of the start-up
4 companies' contribution to society, or in a larger context, to the nation. This category
5 indicates the small deeds, including during the pandemic, of the start-up companies that
6 contributed to the broader context of the nation. In this instance, these videos illustrated how
7 companies could participate in providing support to consumers, communities, small and
8 medium-sized enterprises, and the nation (Bukalapak Video #1, 2020; Tokopedia Video #1,
9 2020; JD.ID Video #1, 2020; Gojek Video #2, 2020; Gojek Video #3, 2020). Therefore, the
10 codes in this category were economic contribution and consumer service contribution.
11 Examples from the data include a text that explicitly mentioned the value contribution of a
12 start-up company to Indonesia's GDP and a text stating that 'Helping to create impact for the
13 greater good, is part of our DNA' (Gojek Video #3, 2020).

28 *Optimistic Expressions*

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31 Another clear feature found in all of the videos was their call for people in Indonesia
32 to remain optimistic about the world, despite the difficulties of the pandemic. As argued
33 before, these videos may deliver optimistic messages, and the branding elements of these
34 commercial companies are somehow included. Therefore, this last theme captures the key
35 message of optimism mixed with each company's brand.

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38 The first key message found in the studied videos is a call for solidarity. Six out of
39 eight videos presented calls for supporting each other in facing the mutual problem of the
40 pandemic. Therefore, this category has codes such as a call for mutual commitment, a call for
41 working together, and verbal appreciation and non-verbal appreciation. In the videos, an
42 example is a written text '*Jadi yang penting sekarang kita semua #JalanBersama untuk tetap*
43 *melayani dengan baik*' (translated as: 'The important thing now is that we all #JalanBersama
44 [go together] to continue serving well') (Traveloka Video #1, 2020); Traveloka is an online
45 ticket and hotel bookings company. There is also a text '*Satukan kekuatan dan komitmen dari*

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3 Sabang *sampai Merauke*’ (translated as: ‘Let’s unite the strength and commitment from
4 *Sabang to Merauke* [from west to east of Indonesia]’) (Gojek Video #1, 2020). Another way
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6 of calling for solidarity was found in the start-ups’ appreciation of the work done by the
7
8 people facing the pandemic. This was seen in the videos through the codes of verbal
9
10 appreciation and non-verbal appreciation. One of the examples is a scene of several hotel
11
12 employees wearing health protocol equipment, giving a *Namaste*-style greeting. Besides this
13
14 gesture, there is written text that says ‘*Kita optimis keadaan akan balik kayak semula*’
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16 (translated as: ‘We are optimistic that things will turn back to how they were before’)
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18 (Traveloka Video #1, 2020).
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24 Another optimistic expression delivered by all of the studied videos is ‘we can get
25
26 through this together’. This subcategory of expression may sound familiar with calling for
27
28 solidarity, but it underlines the call with the mixture of each startup’s brand identity. The
29
30 common practice in these videos is this emphasis in the middle of the video, as well as at the
31
32 end, and is accompanied by a hashtag, campaign title and company motto. Moreover, a
33
34 unique characteristic found alongside this category was that these expressions were modified
35
36 through a creative combination of video, audio (narrations, jingles, and soundtrack), and
37
38 graphics according to the brand identity of each start-up. An example is the written text
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40 ‘#AnakBangsaBisa *lewati ini bersama*’ (translated as: ‘#AnakBangsaBisa [We can] get
41
42 through this together’) (Gojek Video #1, 2020; Gojek Video #2, 2020). The campaign
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44 #*AnakBangsaBisa* has a literal translation as ‘nation’s children can’ or ‘Indonesians can’, but
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46 ‘*Anak Bangsa*’ has been translated as ‘we’ to fit the context here. Another example is the
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48 written text ‘#JalanBersama *dulu, Traveloka kemudian*’ (translated as: ‘#JalanBersama [walk
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50 or moving together] first, Traveloka later’) (Traveloka Video #1, 2020; Traveloka Video #2,
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52 2020). Therefore, we can read these expressions as a combination of optimistic expression
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54 with branding motivation—because after all these studied videos were produced by the profit-
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3 oriented companies. Nevertheless, based on our analysis, the working together of
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5 ‘inspirational’ and branding motivation in the videos was arranged through a narration of
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7 setting up a scene, by presenting the bitter reality and impact of the pandemic and followed
8
9 by the emphasis of brand identity afterwards.
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12 The last category of optimistic expressions presented in these videos is the key
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14 message that you still can celebrate the ‘Big Days’ of Indonesians. Big Days here refer to the
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16 religious days and the national celebrations/anniversaries, and these Big Days have a special
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18 connection to Indonesians. Therefore, although only two videos presented this kind of
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20 message, it is worth mentioned here as this expression might be read as ‘because of the
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22 meaning of the Big Days we keep being optimistic in these difficult times’ or as ‘because of
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24 our brand and services you can still celebrate the Big Days meaningfully and optimistically’.
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26 Both kinds of reading work well to categorise the way these commercial companies
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28 ‘normalise’ their message to the public. Therefore, in communicating optimistic messages to
29
30 reach people’s awareness, the messages were often related to these special events. From the
31
32 dataset, the codes were the celebration of Independence Day and *Idul Fitri (Eid al-Fitr)*. One
33
34 example in those videos is the presence of written text ‘*75 tahun yang lalu kita merdeka dari*
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36 *penjajah, maka 17an kali ini kita juga akan merdeka*’ (translated as: ‘75 years ago we were
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38 independent from the colonialists, so this year’s Independence Day we will also be free’)
39
40 (Bukalapak Video #1, 2020). Another example is ‘*Ramadan tahun ini menjadi berbeda*’
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42 (translated as: ‘This year’s Ramadan is different’) (JD.ID Video #1, 2020).
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50 51 **DISCUSSION**

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53 The result of the analysis becomes the basis to answer the question of what do
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55 Indonesian start-up companies communicate during the COVID-19 Pandemic? Specifically,
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57 Table 1 presents the summary of content categorisation of inspirational media
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59 communication by start-up companies in Indonesia through their official YouTube accounts.
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As described in the findings, the majority of the videos encompass all the categories and there are variations of the creative treatments of the subcategories for each of the videos. Therefore, the summary table does not imply a set of criteria that must be followed as a prescriptive measure, rather it serves as a mapping of key messages constructed during the pandemic.

Table 1. Result of Content Categorisation

<p>“We all are affected by the pandemic”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>conveying bitter reality faced by each company, its partners in running existing businesses, and other communities</i> • <i>the shared emotional state of individuals who were impacted by the effect of pandemic</i> • <i>companies and partners are continuing to work (outdoors) with extra caution during the pandemic</i> • <i>the pandemic requires people to do activities from home</i> 	<p>The appearance of human values</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>continuing to carry out one’s duties and roles even during the pandemic is a part of serving the community</i> • <i>to respect everyone who was at the forefront of the pandemic</i> • <i>inviting the audience to see the positive things during the current difficult situation</i>
<p>Presenting action taken</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>conveyance of the prioritisation of health and safety</i> • <i>presenting the general support taken by these start-up companies to their workers.</i> • <i>the awareness building of the start-up companies’ contribution to society and to the nation</i> 	<p>Expressing optimism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>calls for solidarity to support each other in facing the mutual problem of the pandemic</i> • <i>combining ‘we can get through this together’ with each startup’s brand identity</i> • <i>you still can celebrate the ‘Big Days’</i>

The mapping of content conducted in this study informs us about the archetypal narration used in the early period of pandemic breakout in Indonesia. The public communication of these start-up companies, through their YouTube videos, begins with a set of empathetic communications. For example, the conveyance of “we are all affected” and the bitter reality incorporates the impact of the pandemic on individuals, businesses, and communities. This kind of communication thus highlights the statements of empathy and action that were taken by these start-up companies. In other words, they indirectly articulate that they understand and have responded to the pandemic situations accordingly.

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3 Furthermore, based on the reading of the video contents, the middle part of most of
4 the videos is dominated by the appearance of human values and actions taken. Specifically,
5 the key messages of emphasising the message of serving the community, portraying the act of
6 respecting those who are at the forefront of the pandemic, and looking for a silver lining
7 correspond with the presentation of action taken during the pandemic. Although a few of the
8 videos make an explicit connection between these two categories in their story, their side-by-
9 side appearances seem to suggest that the human values also inspired the companies to take
10 action. Above all, empathetic communications in the videos are strengthened with this kind
11 of key messages' arrangement and the creative treatments.
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24 The ending part of the videos may be dominated by optimistic expressions such as the
25 call for supporting each other, and you still can celebrate Indonesian Big Days, but this part
26 also highlights the presence of start-up companies' brand identity. Through this arrangement,
27 the ending part suggests a mixing of optimistic expression and branding, which may be
28 translated as we can get through this together with the support of our brand. The use of
29 different techniques to mix the company jargon through a hashtag is an instance here. Our
30 reading of this story arrangement is that the branding components explicitly and dominantly
31 appear at the ending because of the situations at that time. Additionally, signs or symbols
32 related to each business subtly appear in most parts of the video.
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45 In terms of the impression created, the findings show us that these companies' videos
46 promote optimism, specifically echo the value of *gotong royong*, to the Indonesian public in
47 handling the pandemic. Gotong royong is a value or an ethos well-known to Indonesians as
48 communal work that can be understood as helping each other or working together. In this
49 context, we argue that the high-valued start-up companies reflected the value in their videos
50 because of the proximity of that ethos to the Indonesian public. Particularly, the content
51 mapping shows us about framing this pandemic as a communal challenge, helping and
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3 supporting each other in these unforeseen difficulties, and calling for solidarity and
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5 togetherness in facing the pandemic.
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8 Therefore, this is the part where there is a risk in delivering an inspirational and
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10 optimistic message by a commercial company. These start-up companies such as Gojek, rely
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12 on the digital infrastructure that allows them to implement the work from home but their
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14 ‘partners’ and riders rely on the fieldwork to deliver goods/packages bought online, and
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16 Tokopedia, JD.ID, and Bukalapak, which centre on e-commerce activities and rely on other
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18 logistics/delivery companies, endeavoured to capture the mood of the nation at that time and
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20 came out with this ‘combined’ narrative in their videos. The release of these videos may be
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22 seen from the companies’ viewpoint as a smart business decision: keep connecting with the
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24 public—particularly with their customers—in times of difficulties, and eventually anticipating
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26 customers’ loyalty. In other words, these start-up companies deliver their public
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28 communication with various inspirational statements and acts of empathy, which is
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30 dominantly mixed with brand identities, with a purpose to relate (affectively) with the public
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32 who is struggling to face the pandemic. Whether this form of communication was effective in
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34 instilling optimism to the public or jeopardising it, further exploration into the effects of
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36 inspirational content to the audience or in terms of the audience’s reception will provide the
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38 answer.
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44 Nevertheless, at the time of writing, there have been a couple of updates regarding the
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46 start-up companies. As reported by *Kompas*, Gojek and Tokopedia have completed their
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48 merger to become Grup GoTo (Ramli, 2021). Also, *Kompas* has reported that Bukalapak
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50 becomes the first unicorn to list on Indonesia Stock Exchange, after their success in the Initial
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52 Public Offering (IPO) (Pertiwi, 2021). Additionally, the other companies are still operating,
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54 and actively maintain their (digital) media presence to the public.
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CONCLUSION

As a concluding note, this article argues that during the COVID-19 Pandemic, the high-valued Indonesian start-up companies presented their inspirational public communications that contained empathetic messages and acts of service accompanied by their brand identities. The impression found from their released YouTube videos is to promote optimism and echo gotong royong value to the Indonesian public. We also argue that this way of presentation intends to make the companies relate (affectively) with the public who is struggling to face the pandemic. Specifically, the four themes – “we all are affected by the pandemic”, the appearance of human values, presenting action taken, and optimistic expressions – represent a form of media communication that involves a highly subjective approach that depends on the context of the sender and the momentum of delivering it.

Still, there is a set of further questions for future exploration. A comprehensive communication study including the effects on the audience or audience’s reception will contribute to our knowledge in understanding the communication of inspirational messages to the public with the right content and context. Additionally, about a year after the release of the videos, two of the companies have merged, and one of them was listed on Indonesia Stock Exchange. Thus, a further study may also explore the relation of this form of public communication and the long-term strategic plan of the companies. Furthermore, one may ask whether this narrative of empathetic communication and branding-optimistic expressions becomes a dominant mode of communication by the businesses in reaching their public during the pandemic. Nevertheless, this current study offers an entry point to understand what has been said to the public during the pandemic.

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