

THE ROLE OF COVID-19 MEDIA EXPOSURE TO PANIC BUYING WITH ANXIETY AS MEDIATOR

Kezia Natalia¹, Meike Kurniawati^{2*}

¹Faculty of Psychology, Tarumanagara University, Jakarta

²Faculty of Psychology, Tarumanagara University, Jakarta

Email: meikek@fpsi.untar.ac.id

*Corresponding author

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ABSTRACT

Media exposure to traumatic event can cause anxiety. One of the actions taken during COVID-19 to reduce anxiety is panic buying behavior. This study aims to determine the role of media exposure related to COVID-19 on panic buying with coronavirus anxiety as a mediator. This research is conducted in Jabodetabek from September 2021 to April 2022. The population in this study was emerging adulthood (18-25 years old) with a sample of 397 people. Sampling is done by sharing questionnaires using google form through social media. Data analysis uses multiple linear regression techniques. The results showed that most of the respondents were female (58.7%), aged 21 years (43.8%), had a final high school/vocational/equivalent education (66.2%), domiciled in Jakarta (55.2%), had no history of COVID-19 (72.5%), had a family with a history of COVID-19 (51.1%). Based on the results of the main data analysis, it was found that participants in this study had low levels of media exposure, coronavirus anxiety, and panic buying. The results of the analysis showed that there was a significant and positive partial mediation role between media exposure to panic buying with coronavirus anxiety as a mediator variable. It can be concluded that excessive media exposure related to COVID-19 can increase coronavirus anxiety and trigger the emergence of panic buying behavior. Therefore, the government or information spreaders can pay more attention to the spread of valid information to prevent the emergence of panic from rumors and false information.

Keywords: COVID-19, media exposure, anxiety, panic buying, emerging adulthood

1. PREFACE

At the end of 2019, the world was hit by a pandemic called COVID-19, it is known that COVID-19 comes from the same family as Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS)-CoV and Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS)-CoV which primarily attacks the human respiratory system [1].

Not only on physical health, another impact of COVID-19 is on everyone's mental health. Data comparing depression and anxiety level before and after the pandemic showed that post-pandemic depression rates more than doubled [2]. This shows that COVID-19 has a significant impact on the mental health of people in Indonesia, especially in the 18-29 years old age range [3][4].

The very fast spread of COVID-19 and the enactment of several policies in Indonesia such as Large Scale Social Restrictions (PSBB) and the Enforcement of Community Activity Restrictions (PPKM) have caused the world to start limiting direct interaction and shifting to online media [5]. There is an increase in the number of internet users when compared between 2020 and 2021 [6][7]. It also can be concluded that there was an increase in media exposure during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Lack of information during COVID-19 can lead to increased anxiety [8]. However, without realizing it, frequent media exposure about traumatic event can also increase fear and anxiety which causes individuals to become stressed [9].

Anxiety is reflection of anticipation if future threats which are usually characterized by muscle tension, awareness of danger, and avoidance behavior [10]. Increased anxiety and fear can make individuals behave selfishly and may take unethical actions that are only selfish to overcome fear and anxiety [11].

During the COVID-19 people, people panic buying for items that are considered to be able to saved themselves such as mask, hand-sanitizer, medicine, and others. Panic buying has a significant impact on vulnerable buyers such as elderly or people with disabilities who need the item more [12].

Since the first crisis of the COVID-19 pandemic emerged, there have been at least 5 panic buying phenomena in Indonesia [13] [14] [15].

The purpose of this was to analyze the role of COVID-19 media exposure on panic buying with anxiety as a mediator on emerging adulthood in Jabodetabek.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

The research method used is quantitative research using statistical descriptive and multiple linear regression analysis technique.

Participants in this study amounted to 397 people with the following characteristics: Male and female aged 18 to 25 years who live in Jabodetabek. Have a minimum education of high school or equivalent. Using at least one of the following media (a) Television, (b) Whatsapp, (c) Facebook, (d) Search Engine (e) Instagram, (f) Newspaper, (g) Twitter, or (h) Tiktok

Sampling using purposive sampling technique and obtained a description of participants, namely women (58.7%), 21 years old (43.8%), final education high school or equivalent (66.2%), domiciled in Jakarta (55.2 %), had no history of COVID-19 (72.5%), and had a family with history of COVID-19 (51.1%).

Data was collected by distributing online g-form questionnaires. The g-form contains informed consent, demographic data, Panic Buying Scale (PBS), Coronavirus Anxiety Scale (CAS), Media Exposure Survey.

The Panic Buying Scale (PBS) is a scale designed to measure the behavior of people buying more goods than usual caused by negative feelings such as fear, panic, and uncertainty that often encountered during periods of crisis or disruptive events [16]. Using a likert scale of 1-7.

Coronavirus Anxiety Scale (CAS) is a scale that represent physiological arousal symptom associated to increased fear and anxiety, namely (a) dizziness, (b) tonic immobility, (c) sleep disturbance, (d) loss of appetite, (e) experience of nausea or abdominal distress when thinking about or being exposed to information about COVID-19 [11]. In this study, CAS was adapted into 9 items using a Likert scale of 1-5.

The Media Exposure Survey was compiled by researcher based on the type of media most accessed by the public in Indonesia to find information related to COVID-19 [17].

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

The result of the reliability and validity test using Cronbach Alpha showed the following result: Panic Buying Scale ($\alpha = 0.913$), Media Exposure Survey ($\alpha = 0,634$), dan Coronavirus Anxiety Scale ($\alpha = 0,949$)

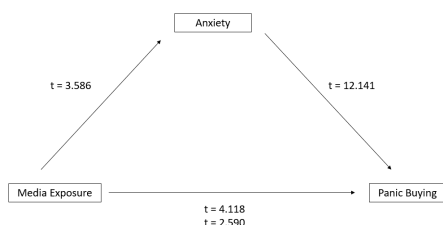
The result of data analysis using descriptive statistics found that the level of panic buying, anxiety, and media exposure to participants in this study was low. Furthermore, the main analysis test is carried out using multiple linear regression. Multiple regression testing was carried out in 3 stages. The first stage is to do a linear regression test between media exposure and panic buying. The calculated data are $R^2 = 0,041$, $t = 4,118$ and $p = 0,000$ ($p < 0,05$). Shows that there ia a significant effect of media exposure on panic buying with an effect of 4,1%.

The second stage is to do a linear regression test between media exposure and anxiety. The calculated data are $R^2 = 0.032$, $t = 3.586$ and $p = 0.000$ ($p < 0,05$). Shows that there is a significant effect of media exposure on anxiety with an effect of 3,2%.

The third stage is to do linear regression test between media exposure and anxiety to panic buying. The calculated data are $R^2 = 0,302$, the media exposure variable shows $t = 2,590$ and $p = 0.010$ ($p < 0,05$), while the anxiety variable shows $t = 12.141$ and $p = 0.000$ ($p < 0,05$). These results indicate that anxiety as a mediator has a significant effect with an effect of 30,2%. Complete data can be seen in Figure 1.

Researchers conducted differential test on the variables to the demographic data. The results of the analysis found that in the terms of gender, there was a significant difference in anxiety ($p = 0,005 < 0,05$) and panic buying ($p = 0,027 < 0,05$), there was no significant difference in media exposure ($p = 0,654 > 0,05$). Judging from the family history of COVID-19, there was no significant difference in anxiety ($p = 0,873 > 0,05$). In terms of education, there was no significant difference in panic buying ($p = 0,386 > 0,05$)

Figure 1



Discussion

Based on the result of validity and reliability test using Cronbach Alpha, it can be concluded that all measuring instrument have good validity and reliability.

In this study, it was found that there was a significant and positive partial mediation effect between media exposure on panic buying with anxiety as a mediator. This shows that the higher media exposure, the higher the anxiety which will lead to an increase in panic buying.

Meanwhile, the lower the media exposure, the lower the anxiety resulting in a decrease in panic buying behavior.

These findings are supported by research conducted which found that repeated exposure to COVID-19-related media can produce psychological distress and trigger feelings of anxiety and panic. During the COVID-19 pandemic, consumer decision in buying products are significantly influenced by anticipatory anxiety. This makes individuals compelled to do panic buying behavior. Panic buying behavior can function as a coping mechanism to control fear, anxiety, and provide a sense of security from unpredictable situation [18] [19] [20].

Based on additional data analysis, there was no significant difference between the anxiety of participant who had a family history of COVID-19 and participant who did not have a family history of COVID-19. The result of this study is not in line with some research who found that participant's anxiety level were higher when at least one family or friend had COVID-19. Possibly this is because the questions in this study were not in-depth, so the researcher could not find out how the condition of the participant's family was at the time of the questionnaire. The supporting journals described above show that the condition of the participant at that time had families who were exposed to COVID-19.

The significant difference in anxiety in terms of gender is supported by some research. It was explained that women had higher level of anxiety than male participants. It is also said that men have a greater capacity to deal with stressors [23] [24]. Women's higher anxiety levels can be caused by genetic and biological factors such as chromosomes and reproductive hormones [25].

In Indonesia, although there has been an increase in prices for several types of goods. There is no need to worry about stocks of essential item to deal with COVID-19 such as masks, hand sanitizers, gloves, and food ingredients [12]. This supports the findings in this study that there were no significant differences in panic buying between educational groups. However, this result is not in accordance with other studies that found that there was a significant positive difference [26] and significant negative difference [27].

There is a significant difference between the panic buying of male participants and female participants. The results of data analysis showed that the panic buying of female participants was higher than male participants. This finding is in accordance with research which found that panic buying was mostly carried out by female participants (54%) compared to male participants (46%) [12]. This is also in line with research which found that women showed more panic buying than men. This is because women tend to express hoarding behavior or pile up goods in large quantities [27]. It is said that women are more worried about COVID-19 than men, so women take more precautions especially when shopping [28].

There is no significant difference in media exposure between male and female participants. This is probably because in Indonesia, access to information between men and women is quite equal. Supported by data which explains that the comparison of audiences aged 18-19 years from various social media is 15,4% female and 16,6% male [29]. This result is also supported by a study which found that there was no significant differences between the amount of media use and gender [30].

The level of media exposure, anxiety, and panic buying of participants in this study was low. This result is not in accordance with the theory which assumes that the level of media

exposure, anxiety, and panic buying during the COVID-19 pandemic tends to be high. This may be due to data collection that was not carried out in the early days of COVID-19 so that people have developed psychological resilience to COVID-19 over time. This is supported by study which shows that the resilience level of the sample in United States taken in the third week after the lockdown has increased compared to the resilience taken in the first week [31].

Some of the influencing factors are daily activities, exposure to outdoors and sunlight, doing little exercise. At this time, the government has not imposed strict restrictive regulation such as PSBB and PPKM as before this research was carried out, so that people can carry out activities outside their home as normal which can increase the psychological resilience of the Indonesian people. In addition, this may be due to the COVID-19 pandemic which has been more controlled due to the vaccine.

The limitation in this study is the lack of participant demographic data such as economic level, employment status, place of residence, marital status which may affect the variables in this study.

4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

There is a significant and positive partial mediation effect between media exposure to panic buying with anxiety as a mediator variable in emerging adulthood in Jabodetabek. A positive relationship indicates that the higher the media exposure, the higher the anxiety and panic buying behavior. Meanwhile, the lower the participants' media exposure, the lower the anxiety and panic buying

This research is expected to help further researchers who will examine topics relevant to this research. This research can be used as a reference that can support research. Suggestions for further research is to deepen the topic of this research. Researchers can add economic level, employment status, place of residence in the demographic data. Researchers can also add psychological resilience variables in further research to see if psychological resilience really affects the psychological condition of people during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Suggestions for people who want to find information related to COVID-19 to do so by looking at trusted sources so that they can reduce the emergence of anxiety due to rumors and fake news. Suggestions for the government to be able to make this discovery as a preparation so that they can act quickly such as clarifying rumors and fake news that are spread in community to minimize the occurrence of increased anxiety due to media exposure. The government can reduce the spread of information that can increase public anxiety such as the number of victims and focus more on information that can reduce anxiety such as how to deal with COVID-19. Psychologists can design program that can improve or maintain the psychological health of Indonesian people in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, especially related to anxiety. Given that low anxiety will reduce panic buying.

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