

# COMPARISON OF GOVERNMENT POLICIES: EMPIRIC STUDY OF SOME COUNTRIES IN SOUTHEAST ASIA ON COVID-19 MANAGEMENT

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## COMPARISON OF GOVERNMENT POLICIES: EMPIRIC STUDY OF SOME COUNTRIES IN SOUTHEAST ASIA ON COVID-19 MANAGEMENT

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### Abstract

The policies for dealing with the Coronavirus Diseases (Covid 19) pandemic in Indonesia, Taiwan, and Vietnam are compared in this paper. By executing a total lockdown until September, the number of positive cases of COVID-19 in Vietnam and Taiwan was reduced, lowering the Covid-19 fatality rate. Meanwhile, Indonesia has never been accused of implementing a total lockdown. Taiwan and Vietnam have similar outcomes. During September, the addition of positive Covid 19 was documented seven times. This study is the outcome of examining the best and worst government policies and writing in research utilizing the literature technique. Using the library approach, this research will collect as much information as possible about Covid-19 from print and electronic media in Indonesia, Vietnam, and Taiwan, and it will examine the policies of the three governments. The study's findings indicate that experience, the country's political history, and leadership all play a role in developing measures to combat Covid-19. The policies can influence people's habits in place. Community behavior and culture, on the other hand, can influence policy. A key point is the involvement of public health experts in public health emergencies.

**Keyword :** Government Policy, Empirical Studies, Countries in Southeast Asia, Covid-19 Countermeasures

### INTRODUCTION

The Covid 19 epidemic is one of the most recent pandemics. This epidemic poses more significant and complex challenges amid deepening globalization and considerable advances in digital technology. The impact of Covid 19 on the global and domestic political economies was studied shortly after its discovery (Ciotti et al., 2020). Unlike earlier pandemics, which were spread through animal intermediaries or particular human encounters, Covid-19 is spread directly between people (Shereen et al., 2020). When the Covid-19 pandemic occurred, governments in various countries were in a problematic situation. They must take strategic activities to deal with and respond to the pandemic catastrophe. Each country shows varied degrees of preparedness. The Covid-19 pandemic has also revealed good and bad government management and policy. Before taking the necessary steps to deal

with the pandemic more systematically, the Indonesian government initially fumbled and was caught up in denial about the epidemic's intensity and impact (Mas'udi & Winarti, 2020).

According to the journal *Wellness and Healthy Magazine*, the term "pandemic" does not refer to the severity of an illness but rather to the extent to which it has spread. On September 27, 2020, *Worldometers.info* reported that 33,046,360 persons had tested positive for Covid-19 worldwide. There were 998,276 deaths, and 24,401,436 reported recoveries associated with Covid-19. This coronavirus has a wide-ranging influence. Because little was known about the Covid-19 epidemic in its early stages, several countries underestimated the virus, causing havoc in their country. According to Mangadar Situmorang, the Covid-19 pandemic generated shock for reasons other than its rapid and widespread spread or the enormous number of deaths in a very short period.

The main point is that countries must prepare to deal with it (Wantu et al., 2021). In truth, considerable powers such as the United States and affluent European countries need more competence. This is evident from the scarcity of healthcare facilities, such as the insufficient number of hospital beds, medical personnel, and personal protective equipment (PPE). Governments worldwide are under tremendous pressure to make decisions and take appropriate actions in response to the impact of Covid-19 (Kominfo, 2020). Countries are attempting to endure the Covid-19 epidemic until an official medication or vaccine is developed and disseminated to all countries without exception. Each country's national conditions and capacities are unique, and each outbreak has its features. As a result, not all countries can apply similar approaches to combat the Covid-19 epidemic.

Aside from advances in technology and health care, the pandemic has forced the government to create trial-and-error measures, which impact the survival of its population (Beom, 2020). Different reactions to the Covid 19 pandemic closely relate to each country's political structure, culture, and leadership style. Japan's schools and institutions will be shuttered beginning in mid-March 2020. The closure has caused nearly 13 million Japanese learners and students to remain home, halting all face-to-face lecture sessions and business internship programs (Davidson et al., 2020). Vietnam, Laos, India, Sri Lanka, and Malaysia intend to halt all educational operations in early March 2020. The outbreak has also raised new concerns about whether the political system is more relevant and effective at dealing with crises for the sake of human civilization. Political scientists argue the nature of a regime, democratic vs. authoritarian, and which government policy alternatives, lockdown vs. no lockdown, are effective.

Vietnam, Taiwan, and Indonesia were chosen as indicators of the effectiveness of their respective policies in dealing with Covid-19. The Asian countries featured in the *Global Democracy Ranking* survey are Indonesia, Vietnam, and Taiwan, with positions that are not considerably different. *Global Democracy* classifies Indonesia, Vietnam, and Taiwan as developing democratic nations or democratic countries in transition. Civil society and the democratic process share demographic and historical parallels, making them similar. One of them is the emergence of the uncivil phenomenon. The Indonesian government has implemented various measures in response to the rise in positive COVID-19 cases. The policy of the Indonesian government is divided into four constantly implemented components :

1. The requirement to wear a mask when in public or outside the home
2. The responsibility to wear a mask when in public or outside the home

3. The obligation to wear a mask when in public or outside the home
4. Contact tracing (tracing) of positive cases treated with rapid tests
5. Education and preparation for self-isolation on some tracing results that show positive test results from a rapid test or negative with symptoms to carry out independent isolation
6. Hospital isolation is used when independent isolation is not possible.

Meanwhile, physical separation is a fundamental approach to combating the COVID-19 epidemic. Aside from that, the government uses Net Social Security to assist people in dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic. Strategies for Prevention and Promotion In Indonesia, the government is attempting to prevent and raise public knowledge about the hazards of the COVID-19 virus. Implementing numerous norms and regulations for activities outside the home is one of the government's active measures to prevent the virus's spread. Furthermore, the government aims to boost people's immunity through medications or immunizations.

This was done to combat the COVID-19 virus in several clusters. Aside from that, the government is attempting to encourage people to live a clean lifestyle by washing their hands, wearing masks, keeping their distance, and avoiding activities that produce crowds of people through various advertising both on National TV and on banner boards. The Minister of Health of the Republic of Indonesia has recommended that the safe distance to comply with physical distancing standards be a minimum of one meter to prevent the transmission of COVID-19 through the air. President Jokowi established a task team to hasten the handling of COVID-19, which works as a technical advisor for handling the COVID-19 pandemic, to implement his preventive plan. Large-Scale Social Restrictions (PSBB) are being implemented through Permenkes 9 of 2020 to limit the spread of the COVID-19 virus (Fahrurroji, 2020).

This also reduces the frequency of community deaths due to COVID-19 virus exposure. Individuals who confirm exposure to COVID-19 are also asked to keep note of their interactions with anyone with a negative rapid test result. A PCR test is required if the result is reactive. According to the Minister of Health of the Republic of Indonesia, isolation in health institutions for 14 days is suggested for groups of high-risk COVID-19 patients, depending on the patient's condition. Meanwhile, the low-risk COVID-19 group is encouraged to isolate themselves by adhering to health measures.

This is shown by establishing organizations carrying out distinct identity politics in their movements through violent activities (Muradi, 2016). Countries affected by Covid-19, including Vietnam and Taiwan, implemented complete lockdowns as a policy alternative. Simultaneously, Indonesia instituted Large-Scale Social Restrictions (PSBB) for three months, commencing mid-March and ending in June 2020. According to a Knowledge Group report released on the Forbes website, Indonesia is one of the 20 countries with the lowest degree of viral attack safety and the highest transmission risks. Indonesia, India, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Cambodia, and Laos have the lowest level of security regarding quarantine efficiency, government management efficiency, monitoring and detection, and emergency treatment readiness (Colangelo, 2020). When the WHO declared Coronavirus Disease (covid-19) a pandemic, Indonesia, the world's most populous country, faced a tremendous issue. This disease has infected more than 110 countries and has been treated in various ways. These alternative attitudes are deemed successful if they can limit the spread of Covid-19 while

maintaining a low fatality rate. Government control and responsive policies are essential not just for controlling mortality rates but also for the overall survival of its population (Hanifah et al., 2023; Bintang et al., 2022).

This research attempts to assess the success of the three choices by examining the safeguards of Vietnam and Taiwan, which chose total limitations (lockdown), and Indonesia, which chose large-scale social restrictions (PSBB). Policymakers' decision-making mechanisms play the most critical influence in slowing the spread of Covid. The primary goal of this report is to present an early assessment of the country's response to Covid-19 management from the standpoint of policy efficacy. This essay will next outline the tactics followed by Indonesia, Vietnam, and Taiwan to deal with the epidemic and evaluate the effectiveness of the lockdown policies and the PSBB.

### **Research Method**

The author's research design is a comparison study or casual comparative study. This writing style is descriptive research that compares two or more comparable or identical situations, events, actions, and programs (Syaodih, 2007). Data collection in the study utilizing the literature technique. This strategy is employed because it helps reconstruct empirical data, which is the essay's focus. Aside from its function as a bibliographical help, this strategy is acceptable as an alternative to circumventing writers' inability to go straight into the field.

The literature study method was used to obtain data in this study. Secondary data sources include mass media stories, both print and online, about the Covid-19 pandemic, emphasizing research in three countries: Indonesia, Taiwan, and Vietnam. The author chose these three countries to show distinct pandemic management policies. Other sources, like video recordings, serve as study support data to comprehend the Covid-19 outbreak better, impacted countries' responses, and its sociopolitical influence. The writers use a critical reading approach to process the data.

### **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

#### **Comparison of Indonesian and Vietnamese Policies in Handling Covid-19**

The Coronavirus is a hazardous and lethal infectious disease that must be eradicated, especially by enacting suitable government laws to manage persons' social lives so that they can return to normal. The government can serve the public interest with the correct policies (Suharto, 2008). Social policy, as public policy, is concerned with citizen welfare issues such as meeting fundamental needs and overcoming social problems through social services and social security (Spicker, 1995; Bridgeman, Peter, 2004).

The policy is also a tactic and instrument used by governments to improve the standard of living of their citizens (Bessant et al., 2006). Public policies, especially those addressing the Coronavirus, should directly impact the well-being of citizens. Government policy must directly influence fixing problems and increasing the overall well-being of residents (Nasution et al., 2023). Implementing social distancing policies to limit COVID-19 transmission will include social costs and economic risks that the government must meet. As a result, the decision to impose a social limitation policy must be justified by the state's ability to offer social and economic security to impacted residents (Mas'udi & Winanti, 2020). In the context of the COVID-19 epidemic, the government's policies must include all elements of life in order to avoid causing concern, unrest, and agitation in society. In an emergency, the government must act, specifically by enacting laws to solve problems or meet the

demands of its citizens (Dye, 2002; Van Tan, 2021).

Vietnam has suppressed the growth rate of Covid-19 through ten points, namely by implementing Early and Proactive Response, strict State supervision, war rhetoric, mass communication, threats of fines and punishment; people are required to obey regulations, wash hands, social distancing, cough and sneeze ethics, using masks, working from home, and self-quarantine (Le et al., 2021; Huynh, 2020). After passing through the lockdown phase, entry into Vietnam is rigorously monitored, and suspected cases are confined promptly. Beginning January 25, 2020, all persons entering from China will be required to provide proof of health, and all persons arriving from other countries will be required to show proof of health. Vietnam has halted visa exemption and limited entry of people from other countries. Since March 21, 2020, Vietnam has mandated isolation for anyone entering or traveling through the epidemic area and visitors entering the country. Vietnam has adopted social isolation throughout the country to limit the spread of the pandemic in society.

Vietnam achievement in overcoming the Covid-19 transmission rate is attributable to sound policies and strong leadership (Tran et al., 2020). The program was applied from the beginning so that everybody who had contact with a positive patient was summoned for an examination by the local authority. A criminal action policy is in place to penalize anyone who conceals a coronavirus illness and conveys misleading information (Mas'udi & Winanti, 2020; Ha et al., 2020). In the early stages of the outbreak, Vietnam activated its response system by increasing surveillance, laboratory testing, infection prevention, and control, case management in health facilities, clear risk communication messages, multi-sector collaboration, regional isolation, and travel restrictions.

The handling is substantially different against the backdrop of a similar issue. Sanctions are enforced on those who do not follow stringent policies. Suppose the scenario in Indonesia is still frequently witnessed by residents who do not adhere to PSBB policies. When comparing the lockdown and PSBB efforts of Vietnam and Indonesia, Vietnam should have suffered significant losses. In contrast, Indonesia, which merely imposed economic limitations, had no growth or even a fall in the welfare sector. The Vietnamese government, on the other hand, focuses more deeply on policies in dealing with an unstable economy during the pandemic, such as issuing incentives in the form of tax breaks and delaying tax payments, 5 months delay for businesses affected by COVID-19; this incentive program will be worth VND23 trillion (US\$ 974 million), another VND3 trillion (US\$ 129 million) in income tax and value-added tax payable during this period, Postponed land use charges to 31 October 2020 The estimated cost is VND4.5 trillion (US\$194 million). Even though Vietnam has adopted a lockdown, Vietnam will inevitably become one of the Southeast Asian countries with the quickest economic growth, regardless of the influence of COVID-19 (Nguyen et al., 2020).

#### **Comparison of Indonesian and Taiwan Policies in Handling Covid-19**

Looking at Taiwan, they learned a lot from the 2003 SARS outbreak and have made various changes, such as altering the legislation on notifiable infectious diseases to build a legal foundation for action. Setting up mechanisms for temperature checks, strengthening border quarantines, strengthening nosocomial infection control measures, establishing medical and prevention networks for infectious diseases, stockpiling materials for epidemic prevention, and screening capacity to ensure medical supply readiness) Improve international cooperation to receive timely information. Since Prime Minister Su took the following decisions, Taiwan's government has played a critical role in

dealing with Covid-19: The Central Epidemic Command Center (CECC) is being updated to the highest degree possible. The Ministry of Health and Welfare's Minister Chen Shih-Chung has been appointed commanding officer. The Ministry of Home Affairs Deputy Minister Chen Chung-Yan was named deputy commander for decision-making oversight and coordination (Taiwan Centers for Disease Control, 2020).

Furthermore, as the highest level of inter-ministerial agency, the Taiwan government established 9 work units for planning and policy (epidemic surveillance, border control, community transmission control, mobilization of medical treatment facilities, supplies, research and development, informatics, administration, and public communication). CECC was able to facilitate the mobilization and coordination of several ministries' resources and strengthen prevention efforts. Prof. Chang Shan-Chwen and CECC organized an advisory council. The executive vice president of National Taiwan University is composed of specialists in various disciplines such as clinical medicine, epidemiology, laboratory science, and nursing in order to make quick and well-planned decisions for broader control and reduction of community transmission to protect people's safety and health in Taiwan (WHO, 2020).

Taiwan developed a strict lockdown to prepare for the handling of Covid-19 (Wong et al., 2022; Lai & Brimblecombe, 2021). The Taiwanese government did not shut down but instead conducted PCR testing on 60,956 people who presented to health facilities with symptoms similar to Covid-19, with only 429 verified to be sick (343 infections from outside, 55 local illnesses, and 31 from the Navy). The CECC ruled that there is no need for mass COVID-19 coronavirus testing in Taiwan because infection rates have been very modest (0.7%) thus far. Government rules are executed by enacting a Home Quarantine policy based on provisions from the Central Epidemics Command Center (CECC). Penalties are set to begin on February 25, 2020: Violation of home isolation 200,000 - 1,000,000 NTD Violation of home quarantine 100,000 - 1,000,000 NTD The CECC may apply required disease prevention and control measures on persons who violate isolation or quarantine regulations, such as video recording, photographing, and releasing personal information (Summers et al., 2020; Cheng et al., 2020; Wang et al., 2020).

Taiwan also benefits from the contributions (volunteering) of students from the National University Taiwan and National Chiao Tung University's Faculty of Medicine, Department of Public Health, Department of Political Science, Management Department, History Department, and Communications and Technology Department. Looking at Indonesia's economic efforts in 2020, the government has responded to the impact of COVID-19 by issuing various regulations and policies, such as Government Regulation instead of Law (Perppu) Number 1 of 2020 concerning State Financial Policies and Financial System Stability for Handling the COVID-19 Pandemic in the Context of Dealing with Threats that endanger the National Economy or the Stability of the Financial System. The Perppu became Law Number 2 of 2020 on March 31, 2020 (Lee & Jeong, 2021; Arsil, 2018; Zamroni, 2018).

### **Conclusion**

The experiences of Indonesia, Taiwan, and Vietnam in dealing with Covid-19 in terms of effectiveness depend on the policies and role of the government in encouraging efforts to reduce the rate of decline. Indonesia took the PSBB step, which underwent duration adjustments for various

regions in its journey. Even though it succeeded in temporarily suppressing the rate of spread of Covid-19, PSBB was considered inadequate. Taiwan and Vietnam have chosen to lock down countries that are not closed. Even though it temporarily reduced the rate of covid numbers, the sudden imposition of regional quarantine and minimal preparation did not cause a humanitarian crisis. The decision to lock down the limited area succeeded in stabilizing the economy. Many countries choose not to lock the country because they understand that if they lock the country, the economy will drop drastically. Taiwan and Vietnam can be examples of countries that carry out limited lockdowns but can maintain their economy and manage to get out of the co-19 pandemic compared to Indonesia. Experience, the country's political background, and leadership play a role in making policies for handling Covid-19. People's habits can be changed depending on the policies in force. Conversely, community behavior and culture can also make policies. The role of public health professionals in public health emergencies is a central point.

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