

Trump and Biden's Covid 19 Policy Narrative on Twitter

Iva Rachmawati¹, Machya Astuti Dewi², Frans Richard Kodong³
and Panji Dwi Ashrianto⁴

^{1,2} International Relations Department, Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, Universitas Pembangunan Nasional 'Veteran' Yogyakarta, Indonesia.

³ Informatic Engineering Department, Faculty of Industrial Technology, Universitas Pembangunan Nasional 'Veteran' Yogyakarta, Indonesia

⁴ Communication Department, Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, Universitas Pembangunan Nasional 'Veteran' Yogyakarta, Indonesia

Abstract

Social media can be one of the tools of state diplomacy to provide information to the public, change public perceptions and ultimately influence public behaviour. During the pandemic, social media has become one of the strategic diplomatic tools to reach the public and governments of other countries. In addition to conveying information about state policies in dealing with the pandemic, social media is also a means for the state to influence the public and other countries in taking a stand against the pandemic. This article looks at the policies and communication efforts of the two American Presidents on Twitter social media related to the Covid19 Pandemic through the descriptive analysis method. A structural approach to the concept of social media diplomacy is used to show that the narrative on Twitter influences the perception and behaviour of its users. This research found that the different narratives on Twitter and the differences in user perceptions and behaviours, indicating that social media diplomacy has a real impact on user perceptions and behaviour.

Keywords: *Social Media Diplomacy, Covid 19 Pandemic, Narrative, Influence*



This is an open access article under the CC-BY-NC license

INTRODUCTION

Social media is a medium of information that is currently widely used by world leaders and political elites. They choose social media because it offers several instruments to create an open space for political debate, creating inexpensive, fast, and flexible interpersonal communication. According to Thomas and Streib (2003), the internet increases political knowledge more than print newspapers. Online news is more accessible and provides space for everyone to be involved (interact/exchange ideas). Mossberger, Tolbert, and McNeal (2008) marked an increase in civic engagement in politics because of the ease provided by social media in providing information. Social media can help them to increase their knowledge of political issues.

With increasing public involvement in the internet, research (Stieglitz et al., 2012) reveals that most politicians are willing to engage more in social media. They need to stay updated about the latest political discussions and their reputation on social media and detect new trends and identify influential users in various social networks. Social media or digital platforms can also become permanent campaign media for politicians (Farrel & Webb, 2000; Norris, 2000). Meanwhile, Tarrow (2005) states that politicians use the internet to facilitate coordination between political groups, shift political goals from a local to a transnational dimension, and connect worldwide struggles.

During a pandemic, social media is one of the means of communication to the public to spread information about the situation due to the pandemic, policies regarding the pandemic, social services

Corresponding author

Iva, Machya, Frans, and Panji. iva.rachmawati@upnyk.ac.id

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.31098/bmss.v1i4.280>

Research Synergy Foundation

related to the pandemic, political attitudes related to the pandemic, and influencing public behaviour in dealing with the pandemic. A study examining the use of Twitter from 17 November 2019 to 17 March 2020 by leaders from G7 countries found 203 Covid-19-related tweets that went viral (Rufai and Bunce, 2020). Donald Trump is no exception, and the American President is also very active in using Twitter to communicate about the Covid-19 pandemic. Unfortunately, Trump's Twitter is considered by many not to show a positive narrative of the pandemic situation. Through research on Trump's Twitter, Maierova (2020) believes it is more gibberish than positive attitudes and policies to tackle the pandemic.

Meanwhile, in their research, Kertész, and Berzleja (2020), consider that Trump's Twitter is mostly about untruth, politicizing the issue of the pandemic, and busy flattering himself. In contrast to Biden, who showed a positive response to his Twitter related to Covid 19. Young (2020) claimed that his positive Tweet about handling the pandemic impacted Biden's 2021 election. According to Young, Biden's tweets in 2 The day continue to increase the number of responses and retweets compared to Trump, which tends to be flat in 2 days on the Covid19 issue. This article aims to see the relationship between Trump and Biden's policy narratives on user perceptions and behaviour on the Covid 19 issue.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Holmes (2013) maps the approach to public diplomacy into two, namely rational and structural policies. The rationalist view places diplomacy as an act of negotiation, where both parties are vying for a better position. The practise of diplomacy is an effort to construct knowledge about relations between countries, collect information, automate work paths and routines, disseminate information, and build institutions. The rationalist views then affect the use of digital technology to assist diplomatic performance. Diplomacy uses technology to manage information flow as an essential input in foreign policymaking and vice versa. Digital technology is seen as a suggestion to disseminate information to the public or particular groups. Thus, several social media belonging to the ministry of foreign affairs or the country's embassy are created solely to disseminate information. The impression of one-way communication into diplomacy through social media is considered propaganda in a new form involving the public, who then re-upload the content.

The rationalist views also convince Liao (2020) that social media platforms allow anyone to communicate. It provides equal opportunities for diplomats to communicate directly with other diplomats and the public regarding foreign policy or additional information related to diplomatic activities and international issues. Diplomats can immediately get responses from different countries and the public for any information they spread on social media. Social media allows diplomats to observe events, gather information, and identify key influencers. They also provide a channel to influence netizens through traditional means. Social media can also assist in information dissemination, consultation processes, policy formulation and help share ideas (Waters and Lemansky, 2011; Westcott, 2008). National governments and diplomats have adopted digital media to facilitate outreach (Fisher, 2010; Mergel, 2010). 2013; Slaughter, 2009).

Web 2.0 and live streaming, mobile phones, and online messaging have resulted in significant changes in behaviour, understanding, and patterns of international communication. Social media has even changed the rules of global communication. The exchange of ideas or dialogue through social media is a source of information used by the public and the ministry of foreign affairs (Ociepka, 2012). (Liao, 2020). The rise of social media networks led to a consensus among scholars and practitioners of public diplomacy, if not for the name, but at least for the phenomenon. The phenomenon consists of the emergence of a "new"

public diplomacy that must face a media environment transformed worldwide, characterized by networks of selective audiences and fragmentation of media discourse (Pamment, 2014).

Changes in social media changes in international interactions are the reason for the emergence of the second approach, namely the structuralist approach. The structuralist approach views diplomacy as something epiphenomenal to power politics. Still, it is believed to influence the international system. This approach underscores the specific effects of the psychological environment on the individual, which Ted Hopf uses to explain the logic of custom in the global system (Holmes 2013:8). International relations theory focuses on analysis, conscious, rational, and controlled. Still, social interactions are more reflective, automatic, unconscious, and run based on habits. Subconscious processes are, in fact, critical in social interaction and diplomacy between individuals, where individuals unconsciously share information in face-to-face meetings.

The significant influence of technological developments, in the end, brings diplomacy to a stage that was previously unimaginable where information and engagement can be done virtually. The structural approach believes that public diplomacy is held to disseminate state policies and build reputation or image as in the rational approach. Public diplomacy has developed towards efforts to foster mutual understanding, build trust and engagement. Public diplomacy is also directed at establishing cooperation and collaboration between various institutions and the public. The strategies used in offline public diplomacy are cultural exchanges, student exchanges, sending ambassadors, democratic and religious forums, and others. The goals can be carried out in the online space through dialogue, exchanging ideas, and growing mutual trust and, ultimately, cooperation. Serrano-Puche's (2015) research shows that the intensity of social media use can also affect emotions. Emotions permeate nearly every aspect of the online communication experience, from the hand-held nature of the technology to the sense of personal immediacy to expressing and sharing feelings with others. These emotional connections are more important than they are digital connectivity in the practical mind. From Q&A on Twitter to live Facebook events, digital diplomacy enables ministries of foreign affairs or diplomats to engage with audiences in countries where they don't even have a physical presence. They can open virtual embassies to get their message across and dialogue (Costa, 2017).

This research is within the framework of a structural approach where diplomacy through social media platforms is believed to significantly influence the perceptions and behaviour of decision-makers and the public. Ideas narrated in social media belonging to state leaders, diplomats, or certain elites can control the emotions and minds of the people and decision-makers. Including the concepts of managing the pandemic can influence the netizen's behaviour in responding to issues related to the Covid19 pandemic. Narratives uploaded by states, state leaders, or diplomats can reference form and public behaviour and policy choices.

RESEARCH METHOD

The method used in this study is a qualitative research method. Qualitative methods refer broadly to data collection and analysis strategies that rely upon collecting and analyzing non-numeric data. Qualitative methods are used to understand better how we make sense of the world around us. As such, we must focus on the meanings and processes that make up international politics (Lamont, 2015:78). Principle strategies for collecting qualitative data include documentary research and internet-based research. The documents used in this research are related to Pandemic policy in America. Secondary documents are related to research and reports on pandemics and pandemic policies in the United States.

Meanwhile, internet-based research is used to obtain articles and documents related to research and view the two presidents' narratives on their respective Twitter. Although Trump's Twitter has been banned, many papers and articles have documented the narrative. From the descriptions used by the two presidents, Trump and Biden, this research will examine the relationship between user perception and behaviour patterns. This pattern will show how narrative choice relates to user perceptions and behaviour.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

America's Response and Policy to the Covid-19 Pandemic

The Covid 19 pandemic, which was first discovered in Wuhan, China, eventually spread to America. The first case of COVID-19 in the U.S. was reported in Washington State on January 21, 2020. Since then, the chances of those exposed to Covid 19 have increased very rapidly. The death rate that occurred in early 2020 even exceeded the death rate caused by terrorist attacks on 9/11, which reached 305,037 cases per day on January 5, 2021, with the highest total death of 4,467 on January 12, 2021 (<https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/country/us/>).

This situation indicated the slow response of the American government at that time. Balogu (2020) stated that when America was at the epicentre of the COVID-19 pandemic, China and South Korea had experienced a decline. On March 26, 2020, the U.S. became the first country with more than 100,000 confirmed cases of COVID19. The figure is still growing exponentially, with more new issues every day. The slow response and the lack of testing have also occurred to those exposed to the Covid 19 virus. In 2018, medical preparedness and biodefense adviser Luciana Borio once suggested at a symposium that influenza is America's number one health security threat. Still, the government doesn't have enough readiness to face it. For two years, the government did nothing to address the problem. Meanwhile, President Trump argued that he did not know anything about this (Balogun, 2020).

Trump showed a negative response to the Covid-19 pandemic even though the Centers for Disease Control and The Military's National Center for Medical Intelligence had warned the government. In contrast, National Security Adviser Jon Bolton, whom Trump appointed in April 2018, dissolved the Office of Pandemic Emergency Response to streamline the NSC's (National Security Council) operations. Luciana Borio (Director of Medical and Biodefense Preparedness at NSC) immediately resigned in response to Trump's policy (Shesgreen, 2020).

The lack of response and policies to overcome the Covid 19 Pandemic during President Trump's time was seen by Trump (2020) due to Donald Trump's willful ignorance. This concept refers to Trump's intention not to listen to his subordinates' input, ignoring the opinions of experts to consider himself the most correct. (Shear et al. 2020; Lipton et al. 2020; Leonhardt 2020). Trump's willful ignorance is also part of Carter and May's (2020) research on Trump's failure to respond to the pandemic. Carter and May (2020) state that the inability to handle the pandemic is caused by limitations when considering ideas, institutions, and the influence of interests in response to the pandemic. First, in terms of ideas, the U.S. response was hampered by an inability or unwillingness to acknowledge the Covid-19 threat and articulate a clear vision to address it. The Trump Administration failed to advance and commit to the clarity of ideas in response. Public health experts were well aware of the actions that needed to be addressed in the COVID-19 outbreak when the U.S. announced its first case on January 21, 2020.

However, instead of a genuine commitment to tackling it, the Trump administration positions the problem outside the country. Second, experiencing dysfunction of coordination both in administrative and inter-agency. Instead of improving the performance of institutions, they are busy blaming China for the Covid 19 Pandemic. Third, various conflicts of interest have weakened the idea of anticipating the pandemic and building coordinating institutions in tackling the pandemic. Civilians and health professionals have tried to deal with Covid 19, as has been done by the Bronx Documentary Center by placing posters and leaflets on how to deal with Covid 19. However, these efforts have been hampered by the lack of support from the government and more influenced by political transactions among political elites, presidents, federal-state relations, political parties. The uncertain economic situation due to the pandemic has increasingly affected resistance to the Covid-19 response.

Meanwhile, Camacho and Glicksman's (2021) research looked at the failure of handling pandemics due to structural errors. They mentioned that the Trump Administration's planning for response to the COVID-19 pandemic was poorly structured. Trump Administration's planning for response to the COVID-19 pandemic was characterized by (1) an illogical combination of more centralized planning and decentralized response authority that failed to leverage the beneficial aspects of either. (2) Particularly for the pandemic response, a toxic mix of haphazard overlap and poorly delineated authority to different policymakers within the executive branch. And (3) a crippling lack of coordination in planning and response, both within the federal government and between the federal government, state and local governments, and the private sector. The upshot was a delayed, confusing, and ineffective effort to combat the virus and hundreds of thousands of potentially avoidable illnesses and deaths. One example that can be seen in the structural mishandling of the pandemic is the termination of the pandemic early warning program precisely two months before Covid 19 spread in China. The government is believed to have withheld intelligence reports in December 2019 that sounded the alarm about the world health crisis. The Trump administration has denied the enormity and seriousness of the COVID-19 pandemic, calling it a hoax and a scheme devised by the Democratic Party to influence politics. President Trump more often responds to crises with "it's under control and everything will be fine," "no problem," "(Covid 19 virus) will go away," and so on.

Trump's attitude seems to indicate that new changes occurred in March 2020. The changes, of course, are too late for America to mark Covid 19 as a pandemic. There were already 4,500 Covid 19 cases in America. Trump recommends doing school and working from home and avoiding more than ten people (Rutledge, 2020). After being pressured by the Senate, the President ordered the General Motors Company to produce ventilators for Covid-19 sufferers and gave the "Stay at Home" instruction, although it was immediately repealed. President Trump also did not require wearing a mask at a press conference on April 3, 2020. In response to the policy, 42 states made their own "Stay at Home" policies by closing schools, bars, restaurants, and playgrounds. In several districts in California and Washington state, mayors encourage their constituents to wear masks to stem the spread of COVID-19. This action may be too little and too late. But what the Governors of New York, Maryland, Washington State, Michigan, Illinois, and California have done is enough to help overcome the more severe spread of the Covid 19 virus. They are enacting a "Lockdown" or "Stay at Home" policy, providing the infrastructure needed by health workers (Balogun, 2020).

In contrast to Trump, Biden, who was elected on January 20, 2021, immediately issued policies that tended to be positive towards the Covid-19 Pandemic through The National Strategy for The Covid 19 Response and Pandemic Preparedness (Biden. 2020). The National Strategy provides a roadmap to guide America out of the worst public health crisis in a century. It outlines an actionable plan across the federal

government to address the COVID-19 pandemic, including twelve initial executive actions issued by President Biden on his first two days in office. The National Strategy is organized around seven goals: 1. Restore trust with the American people. 2. Mount a safe, effective, and comprehensive vaccination campaign. 3. Mitigate spread through expanding masking, testing, data, treatments, health care workforce, and transparent public health standards. 4. Immediately expand emergency relief and exercise the Defense Production Act. 5. Safely reopen schools, businesses, and travel while protecting workers. 6 | 6. Protect those most at risk and advance equity, including racial, ethnic, and rural/urban lines. 7. Restore U.S. leadership globally and build better preparedness for future threats.

The Biden government also managed to hit a US\$1.9 trillion pandemic relief law. A \$160 billion fund is devoted to preventing Covid 19, including the procurement of vaccines, tracing, and developing health facilities (The White House, 2021). This fund is not only intended to prevent Covid 19 but also to cope with the impact of the pandemic, such as economic assistance for low-income groups (Himmelstein and Woolhandler, 2021). Biden ensures that everyone can be tested regularly for coronavirus infection by increasing the number of testing sites and increasing the production of rapid tests. Biden instructs tracing the spread of the virus as a basis for making public policy at lower levels and improving health facilities and quality across America. Biden's approach received a reasonably good response. Biden said that efforts to increase the tracing of 100,000 workers and wear masks in the first 100 days of his term were not a political statement but a patriotic act (Ollstein, 2020).

The policy is to place the response to the pandemic as a priority part of the government's policies, and Biden has received several positive responses from health actors. "This marks a pretty radical change," said J. Stephen Morrison, director of global health policy at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington DC. They compared Biden's strategy to wartime national mobilization. Likewise, Janet Hamilton, executive director of the State Council and Territorial Epidemiology, based in Atlanta, Georgia, responded positively. "We are excited to see the launch of a national strategy to ensure we have a coordinated path forward" (Maxmen and Subbaraman, 2021).

In his foreign policy, Biden has also put the fight against Covid 19 as one of a number of his foreign policy priorities. In the Interim National Security Strategy Guidance, the Biden government places the pandemic as significant as other issues in international cooperation.

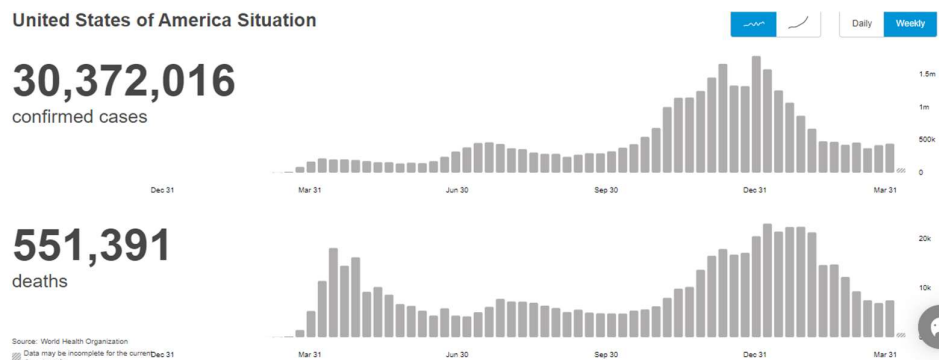
"Recent events show all too clearly that many of the biggest threats we face respecting no borders or walls, and must be met with collective action. Pandemics and other biological risks, the escalating climate crisis, cyber and digital threats, international economic disruptions, protracted humanitarian crises, violent extremism and terrorism, and the proliferation of nuclear weapons and other mass destruction weapons all pose profound in some cases, existential dangers. None can be effectively addressed by one nation acting alone. And none can be effectively addressed with the United States on the sidelines" (Interim National Security Strategic Guidance, 2021).

More than that, Biden reversed the Trump Administration's decision to withdraw the U.S. from the World Health Organization (WHO). In February, he announced a US\$4 billion contribution to the WHO-led COVAX program to distribute vaccines to low- and middle-income countries, with US\$2 billion coming soon and the remainder to be disbursed in 2021 and 2022. This policy makes the U.S. the most considerable financial donor. Worldwide for COVAX, which as of May 31 had distributed more than 77 million doses of vaccine (mainly AstraZeneca and Pfizer-BioNTech) to 127 countries. The U.S. Secretary of State continued, America must be the leader in dealing with the pandemic. Together with the WHO, the United States has provided \$11 billion for tackling the impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic. America also

provided \$2 billion to support the Covax Program (Provision of Vaccines for underprivileged countries) and \$2 billion for other countries to deal with the pandemic. (Parry, 2021).

The impact of these policy changes is entirely accurate on the condition of Covid 19 cases, as can be seen in Graph 1. A decrease in Covid 19 points after Biden took office (Look at Graph 1). The number continued to decline until it only reached 72,966 on April 10, 2021, and 5,004 cases on July 4, 2021.

Graph 1. Number of Covid 19 Cases in America since February 2020



Source: WHO. 2021. <https://covid19.who.int/region/amro/country/us>

The COVID-19 Pandemic Policy Narrative on Trump and Biden's Twitter

Trump's Covid-19 pandemic policy can be found in several virtual diplomacies some time ago. In addition to showing his policies on the Covid-19 pandemic, Trump's tweets also illustrate how America's foreign policy is managed. Kertész and Berzleja (2020) show that Trump uses the pandemic issue solely to reach his political interests. In other words, Trump has politicized the Covid-19 pandemic on his Twitter account. At the same time, Yaqub's research (2021) found that Trump's tweets made America the worst country affected by Covid 19 in the world. There is a statistically significant negative correlation between the sentiment of his message and the number of Covid-19 cases in the United States, impacting American life and the economy. In addition, the research also shows a gradual shift from positive to negative sentiment in his message that mentions China and the coronavirus together.

Of course, the policy and the messages affect the domestic public view and affect foreign relations, especially China. Studies conducted by Yulin Hswen, ScD, MPH, et al. I. shows a significant difference in anti-Asian sentiment through the hashtags that appear in tweets with #covid19 and those that appear in tweets with #chinesevirus. About 20 percent of the nearly 500,000 hashtags with #covid19 exhibit anti-Asian sentiment, but the anti-Asian bias is evident in half of the more than 775,000 hashtags with #chinesevirus. When they looked at the timing of the President's tweet, they found that the number of anti-Asian hashtags - #chinesevirus - grew much faster after the March 16 tweet. The tweet was, "The United States will be very strong, support the industry, like Airlines and others, specifically affected by the China Virus. We will be stronger than ever!" (Kurtzman, 2021). Of course, this affects relations with China, which are becoming increasingly tenuous and full of competition.

Figure 1. Trump's Twitter: China Virus



Source: <https://twitter.com/jabinbotsford/status/1240701140141879298>

Trump's narrative characteristics on Twitter tend to be dominated by three things: misinformation about the threat of Covid 19, hatred towards China, and tools to attack political opponents (Yaqub, 2021). First, Trump's tweets are dominated by false and dangerous narratives about Covid 19. This narrative can impact users' misperceptions and behavior in dealing with the Covid 19 Virus. Especially if you only think that Covid 19 is just a common cold virus, it will lead people not to care too much about how deadly Covid 19 is. Trump uploaded this narrative at a time when the Covid-19 death curve continues to increase..

Figure 2. Trump's Twitter: Covid 19 is Flu Season



Source: <https://www.kxan.com/news/coronavirus/twitter-flags-trump-tweet-comparing-flu-to-covid-19-as-misleading-and-potentially-harmful/>

Second, Trump's narrative is dominated by hate narratives against China. Trump's tweets often offend China and corner it as the country that should be responsible for the Covid-19 pandemic.

Figure 3. Trump's Tweets: Hatred of China



Source: <https://www.thewrap.com/donald-trump-coronavirus-tweets/>

Third, Trump's Twitter narration shows that Trump is using the pandemic moment to attack his political opponents by using a strategy of political rhetoric.

Picture. 4 Trump Tweets: Attack Political Opponents



Source: <https://www.thewrap.com/donald-trump-coronavirus-tweets/>

However, with the narrative that tends to be negative, Young (2021) notes that Trump's Twitter shows more ability in building engagement with the public. In other words, Trump's Twitter got a lot of likes and was re-uploaded by netizens. Of course, this is a clear indication that Trump's negative narrative impacts public perception and behavior. In addition, research by Ugarte et al. (2021) also shows that the public is immensely affected by Trump's uploads. The results suggest that some public members adapted beliefs in response to President Trump's tweets. Social media may be used as a near real-time data source to capture these changing perspectives, including Covid-19-related misinformation. Initially, 417 tweets [19.5%] showed the belief that COVID-19 was a hoax, and 284 (13.3%) showed the impression that it was not serious. After President Trump tweeted about his infection, 66 tweets (3.1%) showed the belief that COVID-19 was a hoax, and 30 (1.4%) showed the idea that it was not serious. This pattern reversed after he tweeted, "Don't be afraid of COVID-19" (hoax, 164 [10.0%]; not serious, 199 [12.0%]). This research is also supported by the study of Fuentes and Peterson (2021). They also found a correlation between Trump's tweets and the perception of Twitter users.

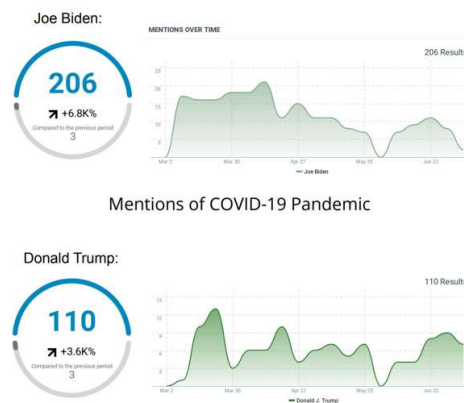
Picture. 5. Trump and Biden Tweet Engagement Comparison



Source: Ryan Young. 2021. "Covid 19 Trump and Biden Twitter Report". 3/7-7/7 Report Social Media Analytics Command Centers.

If Biden's tweets could only get 399.9 K engagements, Trump could get 459.3 K engagements. Trump's tweets are not only liked more often but Trump's tweets are also re-uploaded more often by netizens. Compared to Trump, Biden has tweeted more about the Covid-19 Pandemic. From March to June 2020, Biden has tweeted 206 times, and Trump has tweeted 110 times.

Picture. 6. Comparison of Biden and Trump's Twitter Numbers on Covid 19



Source: Ryan Young. 2021. "Covid 19 Trump and Biden Twitter Report". 3/7-7/7 Report Social Media Analytics Command Centers.

The policy change came when Joe Biden succeeded Donald Trump as President. Biden has shown his seriousness in responding to the pandemic. He always uploads this seriousness on his Twitter as an efficient form of political communication. Many studies have confirmed that certain users use Twitter primarily as an information search medium that fulfills their need for information (Hughes et al., 2012; Johnson and Yang, 2009). For example, a recommendation via Twitter from the U.S. governor for citizens to stay at home significantly reduced individual mobility during the COVID-19 pandemic (Grossman et al., 2020). Haman's research (2020) shows that some leaders have higher follower growth when using their Twitter account more often. Especially to upload information about Covid 19 or mention Covid 19. Netizens have a greater interest in updating the latest news from their prominent politicians.

Sentences that are provocative and attack other countries are no longer used. The weakening of public confidence was changed with Biden's Twitter encouragement. Biden convinces the public that he will always make the policy against the pandemic a priority for America, and America will be a pioneer in tackling the Covid 19 Pandemic.

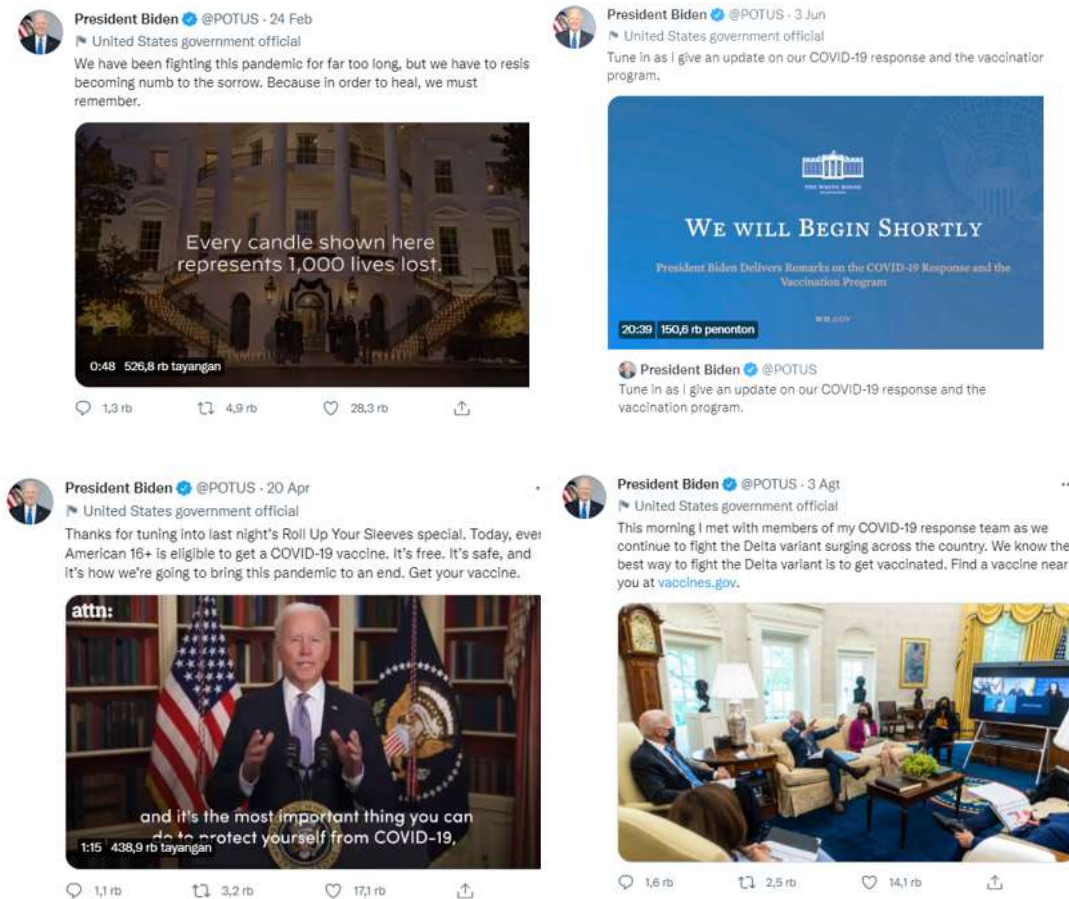
Figure 7. Biden's Tweet: Winning the Public Trust



Source: <https://twitter.com/POTUS>

In contrast, Biden always uploads statements about his support for the fight against the pandemic. He constantly tweets about reports on handling the pandemic and encouraging people not to give up against the pandemic.

Figure 8. Tweet Biden: Encouraging the Public



Source: <https://twitter.com/POTUS>

Biden also showed more cooperative and open efforts with other countries in fighting the pandemic through his Twitter uploads. This attitude is different from Trump's posts which often attack other countries, especially China. Biden also uploaded America's policy regarding donations to countries in need to form a better image of America. This policy is constructive for America in managing the management of the Covid-19 response and its relations with other countries.

Figure 9. Biden's Tweets about Cooperation in Handling Covid-19





Source: <https://twitter.com/POTUS>

Until now, the Covid-19 pandemic is still ongoing. It is not easy to see the outcome of this issue, including whether positive narratives on Twitter will significantly impact the perceptions and attitudes of the American public. Moreover, when a new variant appeared, the number of Covid-19 sufferers increased again in August 2020, which did not only happen in America. However, the change in the narrative on Twitter of the number 1 person in America succeeded in reducing tensions related to handling Covid 19. Immediately after becoming President, Twitter was enlivened by congratulations and talks about bilateral Cooperation, including Cooperation in addressing the Covid 19 Pandemic (Devlin et. A. , 2021). Its performance in tackling the pandemic has also received a positive response, referring to a poll conducted by Langer Research Associates. The work program that has received appreciation from the community is that its performance against the pandemic received 64% approval. Its policy in the pandemic relief package received 65% approval and its proposal to increase corporate taxes by 58% (Langer, 2021).

CONCLUSION

Twitter has a fairly broad user base. Twitter is in demand because of its convenience and reaches by the public. In addition, Twitter has become a communication tool for the state and political figures where the public can access it easily. Because of the ease and the high number of requests, many state leaders use Twitter to communicate well with other politicians, the state government, and the public. The pandemic issue prompted more extensive use of Twitter by state leaders, including Trump and Biden.

Trump and Biden's use of Twitter has a different style. Trump tends to use Twitter as a political communication tool to support his only position as President. As a result, the pandemic issue only became

a tool to show his power and expand his influence in contrast to Biden, who put the pandemic as severe as the issue of terrorism, environmental issues, and unemployment issues in the country. The choices to wrap the case of pandemic affects the narrative that is formed by both of them. Trump's policies colored by willful ignorance produce narratives full of provocation and are presented in a rhetorical style. Meanwhile, Biden, with his policy of making America a leading state in dealing with Covid 19, offers a narrative that encourages and is open to cooperation in the fight against Covid 19. This difference in style affects the perception of his followers, as evidenced by some Trump followers who believe that Covid 19 is a hoax and increasing hatred. Against China. On the other hand, Biden has received broad support for his Covid control policies (although this pandemic period has not yet passed). Research on the impact of narrative on behavior requires further research considering that the pandemic has brought about significant changes through new variants that have not been appropriately handled.

Acknowledgement:

This research was funded by the UPN 'Veteran' Yogyakarta' Service and Research Institute. We are very grateful for the financial support and opportunities given to us.

REFERENCES

- Benski, T and Fisher, E. 2014. *Internet and Emotions*. New York: Routledge.
- Bjola, Corneliu and Marcus Holmes. *Digital Diplomacy: Theory and Practice*. New York, Routledge, 2015, p. 207.
- Comor, Edward, and Hamilton Bean. 2012. "America's 'Engagement' Delusion: Critiquing A Public Diplomacy Consensus." *International Communication Gazette* 74, no. 3 (2012): 203-220. Academic Search Complete, EBSCOhost.
- Camacho, Alejandro E. and Robert L. Glicksman. 2021. "Structured To Fail: Lessons From The Trump Administration's Faulty Pandemic Planning And Response". *10 MICH. J. ENVTL. & ADMIN. L.*, Issue # 2, 2021 Forthcoming .
- Costa, Valentin. "Shaping Public Diplomacy through Social Media Networks in the 21st Century". *RJHS* 4 (1) 2017
- Devlin, Kat, Regina Widjaya, J.J. Moncus, Christine Huang and Athena Chapekis. 2021. "Legislators in UK, Canada and Australia Express Post-election Enthusiasm for Biden Administration on Twitter". *Pew Research Center*. <https://www.pewresearch.org/global/2021/01/13/legislators-in-uk-canada-and-australia-express-post-election-enthusiasm-for-biden-administration-on-twitter/>.
- Haman, Michael. 2020. "The Use of Twitter By State Leaders And Its Impact On The Public During The COVID-19 Pandemic". *Heliyon*. Vol 6 Issue 11.
- Himmelstein, David U and Steffie Woolhandler. 2021. "Recovering from Trump: Biden's first 100 days". *Lancet*. 397(10287): 1787-1791.
- Holmes, Marcus, Ph.D. 2013. "What Is e-Diplomacy?". Paper Prepared For The 2013 7th European Consortium For Political Research General Conference In Bordeaux

- Hughes, D.J. M. Rowe, M. Batey, A. Lee. 2012. "A Tale Of Two Sites: Twitter Vs. Facebook And The Personality Predictors Of Social Media Usage". *Comput. Hum. Behav.*, 28: 2.
- Johnson, P.R., and S.U. Yang. 2009. "Uses And Gratifications Of Twitter: An Examination Of User Motives And Satisfaction Of Twitter Use". Paper Presented at the *Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication*, Boston, Massachusetts.
- Kertész, Fanni and Zane Berzleja2020. "Donald Trump's Communication During COVID-19 Pandemic On Twitter Observed by his personal Twitter Account". Media and Communication Studies Culture, Collaborative Media and Creative Industries. (Master Thesis). Malmö University. <https://www.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:1481356/FULLTEXT01.pdf>
- Lamont, Christopher. 2015. *Research Methods in International Relations*. London: Sage Publications Ltd.
- Langer, Gary. 2021. "Biden's 100 Days: Low-End Approval, Yet Strong Marks On Pandemic Response: POLL". *ABC News*. <https://abcnews.go.com/Politics/bidens-100-days-low-end-approval-strong-marks/story?id=77218406>
- Leonhardt, David, 2020. "The Unique U.S. Failure to Control the Virus". *The New York Times*.
- Liaw, [Jessica Ong Hai](#). 2020. "Digital Diplomacy: The Role of Social Media". *Solid State Technology* 63(6):7551
- Lipton, Eric, et al., 2020. "He Could Have Seen What Was Coming: Behind Trump's Failure on the Virus". *The New York Times*.
- Maierova, [Eva](#). 2020. "We have done a great job! The coronavirus pandemic in Donald Trump's tweets". The 5th International Interdisciplinary Conference Language and Politics - Between Linguistics and Political Science.
- Maxmen, Amy dan Nidhy Subbaraman. 2021. " Biden's Ambitious COVID Plan: What Scientists Think". *Nature*. <https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-021-00220-x>
- Mergel, I. 2013. "Social Media Adoption And Resulting Tactics In The U.S. Federal Government". *Government Information Quarterly*, 30(2), 123–130.
- Mossberger, K., Tolbert, C. J., & McNeal, R. S. 2008. *Digital Citizenship: The Internet, Society, and Participation*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Norris, P. 2000. *A Virtuous Circle: Political Communications in Postindustrial Societies*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Ociepka, Beata. 2012. "The Impact of New Technologies on International Communication: The Case of Public Diplomacy." *Information Sciences* 59 (2012): 24-36.
- Pamment, James. "Articulating Influence: Toward A Research Agenda For Interpreting The Evaluation Of Soft Power, Public Diplomacy And Nation Brands". *Public Relations Review*. Vol. 40, No.1, 2014, p. 53.

- Parry, Matthew. 2021. "The Emerging Contours Of President Biden's Foreign Policy". *European Parliamentary Research Service*. [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2021/690650/EPRS_BRI\(2021\)690650_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2021/690650/EPRS_BRI(2021)690650_EN.pdf)
- Paul E. Rutledge. 2020. "Trump, COVID-19, and the War on Expertise". *American Review of Public Administration*. Vol. 50 (6-7).
- Rufai, Sohaib R. and Catey Bunce. 2020. "World Leaders' Usage Of Twitter In Response To The COVID-19 Pandemic: A Content Analysis". *Journal of Public Health* 42, 3 (2020), 510–516.
- Serrano-Puche, Javier, "Emotons and Digital Technologies: Mapping the Field of Research in Media Studies". *MEDIA@LSE Working Papers*, 2015.
- Shear, Michael D., et al., 2020. "Inside Trump's Failure: The Rush to Abandon Leadership Role on the Virus". *The New York Times*.
- Shesgreen, D. 2020. "Gross Mismanagement": Experts Say Trump's Decision To Disband Pandemic Team Hindered Coronavirus Response". *USA Today*.
- Slaughter, A. M. 2009. "America's edge: Power in the networked century". *Foreign Affairs*, 88, 94–113
- [Stefan Stieglitz](#), [Tobias Brockmann](#) and [Linh Dang-Xuan](#). 2012. "Usage of Social Media for Political Communication". Conference: 16th Pacific Asia Conference on Information Systems (PACIS), Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam
- Tarrow, S. G. 2005. *The New Transnational Activism*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.
- The White House, 2021." President Biden Announces American Rescue Plan". <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/legislation/2021/01/20/president-biden-announces-american-rescue-plan/>
- The White House. 2021. *Interim National Security Strategic Guidance*. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/NSC-1v2.pdf>.
- Thomas, J. C., and Streib, G. 2003. "The New Face of Government: Citizen-Initiated Contacts in the Era of E-Government." *Journal of Public Administration Research Theory*, 13(1), 83–102.
- Trump, Mary L., 2020. *Too Much and Never Enough: How My Family Created the World's Most Dangerous Man*. New York: Simon & Schuster
- Ugarte, Arjuna MD, et.al. 2021. "Public Attitudes About COVID-19 in Response to President Trump's Social Media Posts Dominic". *JAMA Network*.
- Westcott, N. 2008. "Digital Diplomacy: The Impact Of The Internet On International Relations". <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.1326476>
- Worldometer. 2021. "United States: Coronavirus Cases". <https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/country/us/>

- Yaqub, Ussama. 2020. "Tweeting During the Covid-19 Pandemic: Sentiment Analysis of Twitter Messages by President Trump". *Digital Government: Research and Practice*. [Volume 2. Issue 1](#) <https://doi.org/10.1145/3428090>.
- Young, Ryan. 2020. *COVID-19 Trump & Biden Twitter Report*. UCONN. Social Media Analytics Command Center. <https://smacc.lab.uconn.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/3062/2020/07/COVID-19-Trump-and-Biden.pdf>