



# Best Practice on Civic Engagement: An Analysis of How College Students Coping During Covid-19 Pandemic

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**Abstract.** The Covid-19 pandemic is an ongoing problem in the world. Preventing and reducing transmission is key to combating this situation. This study describes civic engagement during the covid-19 pandemic among college students in East Java, Indonesia. The survey was conducted through google form (G-form) from June to October 2020. Our respondents come from Mataraman culture, Arek culture, Pandalungan culture, and Madura culture. A total of 946 respondents fulfilled and returned the questionnaire. There are four groups of questions, namely civic appreciation and trust, participation in public life, attitude during the covid-19 pandemic, and behaviour during the covid-19 pandemic, consisting of thirty-six statements. The statement is measured on a Likert scale. Our study found that college students in East Java have a high appreciation for health workers (84.5% - 92.7%). The participation in preventing and handling the Covid-19 pandemic was the most agreed upon compared to other statements (45% - 54.85%). For attitude and behaviour during the covid-19 pandemic, our respondent agreed to get valid information and wear a mask, and vice versa. Overall, the finding shows no difference between the four culture typologies.

**Keywords:** civic engagement · covid-19 · pandemic · college student

## 1 Introduction

The covid-19 pandemic is a devastating public health problem around the world [1, 2]. The World Health Organization (WHO) announced on March 11, 2020, that covid-19 was a pandemic, and the number of cases increased massively, affecting more than 150 countries, and reaching 1.4 million death [3]. Indonesia reported 2 confirmed cases of covid-19 on March 2, 2020. Since then the cases increase and cause more than 1000 thousand people infected [4].

The covid-19 pandemic is a destructive condition for all countries in the world, physically and mentally [5]. The government, media, and communities should co-operation to end this pandemic [6]. The government gives the right information through media for society to understand the situation [7]. Society will be aware and engage to reduce and prevent virus transmission. Therefore, civic engagement can be used as one tool to combat the pandemic.

Civic engagement is a process carried out by citizens in a conscious, voluntary, and participatory manner either as individuals or collectively to resolve public issues or problems. In resolving the process of public issues/problems, citizens of course need a set of knowledge, skills, and values themselves so that their quality of life can be better. This set of abilities is usually obtained by citizens in the context of formal, non-formal or informal education [8–16]. Based on the explanation above, it can be concluded that civic engagement is a form of awareness of citizens who voluntarily participate to involve themselves in solving problems in their lives.

Keeter emphasized that civic engagement is divided into 3 indicators, namely civic indicators, electoral indicators, and indicators of political voice [17]. Civic indicators consist of (1) Community Problem Solving, (2) Volunteer, (3) Group of Membership, (4) Participate In Run/Walk/Ride and (5) Charity. While the Electoral Indicator indicators are as follows: (1) Voter Registration (2) Volunteer for A Candidate or Political Campaign, (3) Persuade Others To Vote For A Candidate Or Party (4) Display Campaign Button Or Sticker, (4) Contribute Against the Campaign, (5) Contributing To A Campaign, Party Or Group. Then the Indicators Of Political Voice consist of: (1) Contacted/Visited A Public Official (2) Contacted A Newspaper Or Magazine (3) Contacted A Radio Or Television Talk Show, (4) Protested (5), Signed An Email Petition (6)) Signed A Written Petition (7) Boycotted A Company (8) Canvassed.

A lot of covid-19 research is focused on diagnosis, clinical manifestation, pathophysiology, therapy, and the economic-physiological impact of this pandemic [1, 6, 18–20]. The civic engagement of the population in the covid-19 situation is still rare, especially among college students. Therefore, with this research, we aim to describe best practices for civic engagement among college students in East Java.

## 2 Method

### 2.1 Setting and Participant

This study was using the explanatory survey method. The survey was conducted online using Google Forms (G-form) and distributed to college students in East Java, Indonesia. Data were collected from June to October 2020. Respondent in this study was a college student ranging from 17 – 25 years old. A total of 976 respondents were filling the form and sent it back to the researcher. However, 946 data from the respondent was to meet our eligibility criteria. The respondents were divided into two groups namely East Java and non-East Java. Respondent comes from East Java and was categorized into four groups of culture typologies namely Mataraman culture, Arek culture, Pandalungan culture, and Madura culture. This fourth multiethnic in East java is expected to describe a culture in East Java.

### 2.2 Data Collection

Civic engagement was measured by a statement from Doolittle and Faul [21] and The Assembly Civic Engagement Survey ACES [22]. In this study, we use a questionnaire consisting of four groups and containing thirty-six statements. The first question

**Table 1.** Characteristic of respondents

Variable	N (%)
Age (mean $\pm$ SD)	20.12 $\pm$ 1.137
Sex	
Female	529 (55.9)
Male	417 (44.1)
Typology	
Non-East Java	163 (17.2)
Mataraman	270 (28.5)
Arek	300 (31.7)
Pandalungan	155 (16.4)
Madura	58 (6.1)

describes civic appreciation and trust and consists of 6 statements. Participation in public life consists of 9 statements. Attitude for the society around Covid-19 consists of 9 statements. The last question described behaviour during the Covid-19 pandemic consists of 12 statements. All statement was measured using a Likert scale. The categories disagreed and agreed. The analysis was only for East Java college students. Data were presented descriptively. Numerical data were presented in mean and standard deviation, while categorical data show in frequency and percentage.

### 3 Result and Discussion

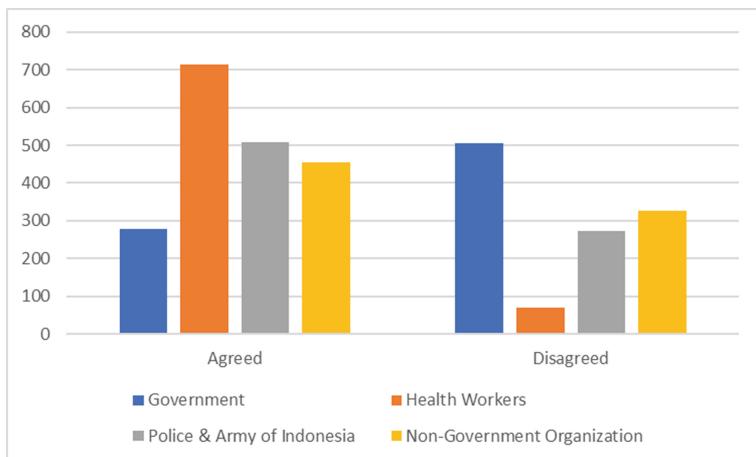
The Covid-19 cases in Indonesia have rapidly increased in the last few months. The number of infected people with covid-19 is 4.188.529 cases and caused 140.323 death [23]. This paper describes the civic engagement among college students in East Java during the Covid-19 pandemic. Civic engagement describes in four main categories, namely civic appreciation and trust, participation in public life, attitude toward society, and behaviour around the Covid-19 pandemic. Overall findings show that college students appreciate health workers, they know how to participate in the community, have a good attitude toward society, and well behave during the Covid-19 pandemic.

#### 3.1 Characteristic Respondent

Among all the respondents, the average age was 20 years old, more than 50% was female respondents, and the most frequent respondent that filled the form came from Arek culture typology (31.7%) (Table 1).

#### 3.2 Civic Appreciation and Trust

The measurement of civic appreciation and trust was described in six statements. Among all the statements and typologies groups, the respondents agreed to give the highest



**Fig. 1.** Civic Appreciation and Trust

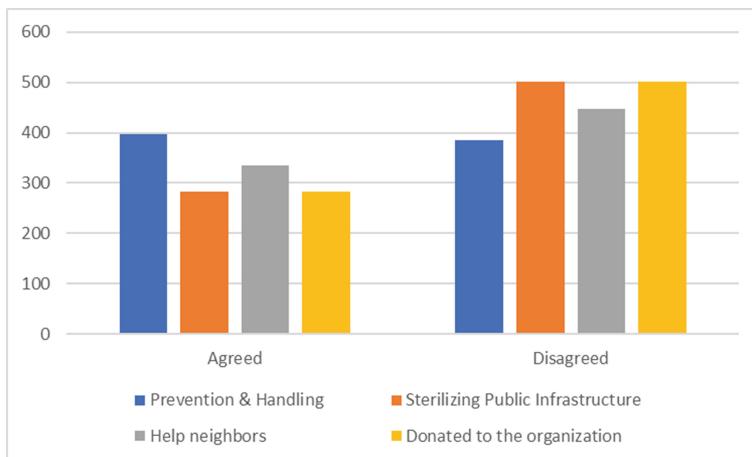
appreciation to the health workers, Mataraman (90.7%), Arek (92.7%), Pandalungan (91%), and Madura (84.5%) Otherwise, the statement that shows appreciation for the government in preventing and handling Covid-19 pandemic among the respondents was around 30.7% - 51.7% (Fig. 1).

In this section, we evaluate how our respondents give their appreciation and trust to health workers, the government, and their society. Surprisingly, our respondents give high appreciation and trust for health workers compared to the government and society. This result is slightly different from a survey conducted in South Korea which found that the appreciation and trust for government increase during a pandemic but deteriorate for the press and religious organizations [7]. Based on our hypothesis, this situation occurs because health workers are the front liner in tackling the pandemic in Indonesia.

The young citizen with easy internet access gives their appreciation to the community or society around half of the maximum score. These results may be due to the environment around our respondents not giving attention to tackling the pandemic. But on the other side, this crisis condition may open opportunities for the leaders to coordinate communities in tackling the pandemic [1]. So, during a long-term pandemic, the leaders must work together with the community to maintain the quality of life of their population.

### 3.3 Participation in Public Life

The participation in public life among respondents during the Covid-19 pandemic was divided into nine statements. Of nine statements, the participation in preventing and handling the Covid-19 pandemic was the most agreed upon compared to other statements. It shows that respondents who come from Mataraman (54.85%) Arek (45%), Pandalungan (45.8%) and Madura (53.4%) agreed with the statements. Another statement that resulted in a positive sign was they reported to the authorities if any residents closed contact with the suspect or positive Covid-19. Donating to the organization to reduce



**Fig. 2.** Participation in Public Life

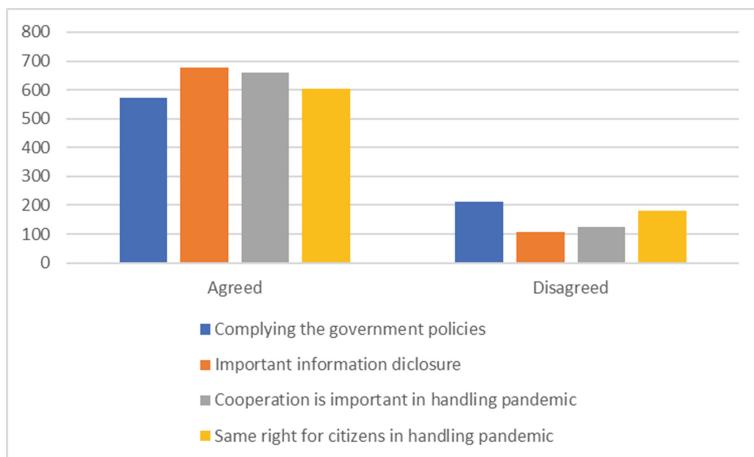
economic impact during the Covid-19 pandemic was the lowest statement agreed by the respondents (Fig. 2).

Our respondent participation in public live shows high agreement in preventing the transmission of the virus during the pandemic. They also agree with the statement that they will help their neighbourhood, and report to the authorities if they are residents who have close contact with the suspect or positive Covid-19 patients but their response about donations or assisting necessities for their neighbourhood is still low. Respondents in this study are college students who do not pay for their needs with their own money. Even though our respondents are still young but their willingness to participate in decreasing the spread of the virus is promising.

In a pandemic situation, the responses of the community are important. Not only oldster but also adolescents work together to reduce and prevent the spread of the virus. Working with community groups is required, especially to mobilize the population to prevent transmission, use their knowledge and experience, and help them to collect funding [24]. Everyone's participation matters, their cooperation can help the health system in handling the covid-19 pandemic [25].

### 3.4 Attitude During Covid-19 Pandemic

The third question described attitudes toward society among respondents in the Covid-19 pandemic. The respondents mostly agreed with the statement that said they believe that all citizens have the right to obtain valid information about the Covid-19 pandemic, Mataraman (91.1%), Arek (89%), Pandalungan (89%), and Madura (86.5%). This result was linear with the statement that said they believe that information disclosure regarding the Covid-19 pandemic is important, the agreed percentage was about 85.2% - 88.1%. The respondents also give a good response to the statement about the contribution of all society is important in handling the Covid-19 pandemic. The agreed statement was around 77.4% - 87.4% (Fig. 3).



**Fig. 3.** Attitude during Covid-19 Pandemic

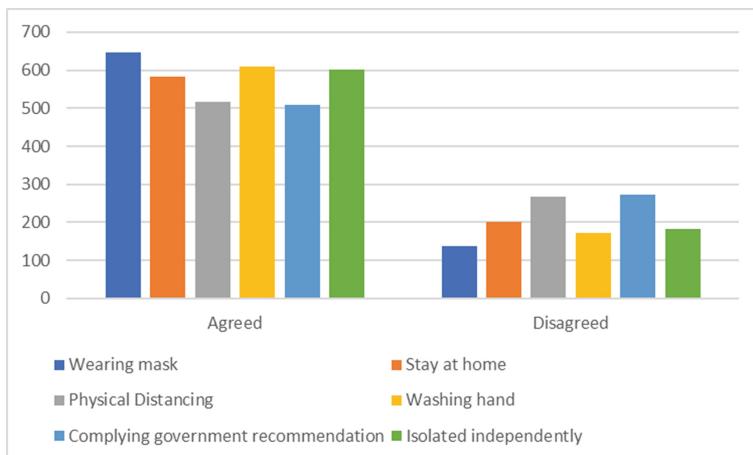
In this section, we emphasize information disclosure during the pandemic, compliance with government policy, and responsible for the safety of the community. During a crisis, everyone is responsible for their own and other people's health. Not only as an individual human being but also as a member of the community must apply physical distancing, wear a mask, and wash hands [26]. A young respondent with high education has a positive correlation with a good attitude during the pandemic [27].

The correct information during a pandemic is important, especially in the Covid-19 pandemic. This is because covid-19 is a new virus that is spreading very fast. Our finding shows that the respondent agreed with the statement that said all citizens have the right to obtain clear information about the covid-19 from the government. Knowledge about covid-19 should be provided by a reliable source [2]. False information will lead to uncontrol conditions during a pandemic. Therefore, effective communication is needed and should be fulfilled to suppress hoax information.

### 3.5 Behavior During the Covid-19 Pandemic

The last question shows how the respondent behaves during the Covid-19 pandemic. The highest results come from the statement that they agreed to wear a mask when going outside during the Covid-19 pandemic, the respondent agreed from Mataraman (82.2%), and Arek (857%), Pandalungan (78.1%), and Madura (79.3%). The respondents also give a positive response when they ask that they washed their hands more often during the Covid-19 pandemic, Mataraman (77%), Arek (80%), Pandalungan (76.1%), and Madura (75.9%). Other positive responses among them are that they agreed to stay at home during the Covid-19 pandemic, the percentage was 71.9% for Mataraman, 76.7% for Arek, 73.5% for Pandalungan, and 77.6% for Madura. However, using hand sanitiser seems not common among our respondents, the percentage of agreed to use hand sanitiser was around 34.4% - 56.9% (Fig. 4).

The behaviour of our respondents may change during this pandemic such as wearing masks, washing hands more often, using hand sanitiser, and staying at home longer [6].



**Fig. 4.** Behavior during the Covid-19 Pandemic

Although wearing a mask has a high percentage among them, some respondent prefers not to use a mask in daily activities. Wearing a mask was important to prevent covid-19 transmission [28]. According to the Ministry of Health of Republic Indonesia if there are two people and both of them wearing a mask, the probability of transmission is 1.5% and will reach 100% transmission if both of them do not wear a mask [29].

Statement about hand sanitiser has a lower agreement compared to wash hands and wear a mask. This finding is in line with the study conducted in Pakistan found that people carry hand sanitiser during the pandemic around 56.8% [6]. A study in Australia found that people fit in in one or more behaviour-related hygiene recommended by their government [30]. As far as we know, our respondents are not too familiar with hand sanitiser because water and soap are easily found in their surroundings.

The pandemic situation affected many people's daily life. They should adopt new health protocols such as wash hands, wear mask, and physical-social distancing. This new behavior brings hope to suppress the transmission of covid-19 in the community. The government and community need to work hard together in handling this pandemic [31]. While WHO stated that this pandemic will happen over a long period. Therefore, the citizen should obey the government regulation to minimize increasing Covid-19 cases [32].

## 4 Conclusion

There are no differences in civic engagement between the four culture typologies in East Java. Mostly, the respondent come from four typologies have the same opinion. During the covid-19 pandemic, college students were aware of some aspects such as information disclosure, compliance with the government policy, helping the community to prevent transmission, and giving high appreciation for health workers. The government needs to empower the community to handle the pandemic such as socializing health protocols, maintaining the flow of community mobilization in and out of the area, and helping to

spray disinfectants at public facilities. Further research about civic engagement during the pandemic is needed with larger and various respondents.

## 5 Suggestion

The pandemic situation does not prevent citizens from managing the crisis where they live. The contribution of citizens is an important element in managing the crisis due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

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