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ARTICLE

Assessing the Role of Surabaya City Government's Responsiveness Toward Public Acceptance of COVID-19 Mitigation Policies

Dyah Ayu Wiranti[*] and Putu Aditya Ferdian Ariawantara

[1]*Universitas Airlangga, Surabaya, Indonesia*

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ABSTRACT
Public acceptance, involving community awareness and support, is crucial for successful policy implementation. Despite challenges faced during the performance of the COVID-19 mitigation policy in Surabaya, the city government has shown responsiveness in addressing the issue. This study investigates the influence of the Surabaya City Government's responsiveness on public acceptance of the COVID-19 mitigation policy. Employing the Policy Acceptance Model and government responsiveness theory, a quantitative survey was conducted with 400 purposively sampled respondents. Results indicate a significant positive effect, indicating that higher government responsiveness leads to greater public acceptance of the COVID-19 mitigation policy. These findings support existing theories and validate the importance of community support in policy implementation.

A. INTRODUCTION

A new virus called the novel coronavirus or SARS-CoV-2 was found in December 2019 (WHO, 2019). This virus led to the development of COVID-19 (Hui et al., 2020), a disease that rapidly spread and was officially declared a global pandemic by the WHO (Lindsey & Mann, 2020). The Indonesian government implemented multiple policy instruments to address the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic in different areas (Olivia et al., 2020).

However, the efforts made by the Indonesian government to curb the transmission and risks of COVID-19 have been deemed insufficient (Nasution, 2021). According to a report by the international magazine Forbes, Indonesia ranks 17th out of 20 countries in handling COVID-19, suggesting a lack of responsiveness in managing the pandemic's impact during its early stages. This reality led to far-reaching consequences that fell short of expectations, including in Surabaya City, where the transmission rate proved challenging to control (Nasution, 2021)

As one of the largest cities in Indonesia, Surabaya has a population of 2,874,314 and an area of 326.81 km, making it the most densely populated area in East Java Province. Large cities provide a more conducive environment for spreading the virus (Hsu, 2020). In addition,

* Corresponding Author
Email : dyah.ayu.wiranti-2023@fisip.unair.ac.id

Surabaya was once the epicentre of the COVID-19 outbreak at the beginning of the pandemic, making it the most significant contributor to the spread of COVID-19 in East Java. Therefore, the urgency of COVID-19 pandemic control policies in big cities like Surabaya is crucial (Sumar'in et al., 2021).

One of the fundamental challenges the government faces in implementing a policy is public acceptance. This perspective emphasizes that public acceptance, how the community can understand the risks and comply with government policies and programs, is one of the keys to the success of policy implementation (Bicket & Vanner, 2016). On the other hand, low public acceptance of COVID-19 policies indicates a low public awareness of COVID-19 (Barello et al., 2022). Prem et al. (2020) stated that communities with low awareness of the COVID-19 pandemic are more vulnerable to transmission.

The Surabaya City government has implemented various policies to handle the COVID-19 pandemic. One is the issuance of Mayor Regulation Number 16 of 2020 concerning Guidelines for Large-Scale Social Restrictions (PSBB). However, this policy has faced challenges in public acceptance. Surabaya residents had a low awareness of this virus, as reflected in a survey conducted by laporCOVID-19.org in collaboration with the Social Resilience Lab of Nanyang Technological University. The survey revealed that 59% of the Surabaya residents considered the COVID-19 pandemic trivial. Facing this reality, the Surabaya Government was quite responsive by implementing several programs to encourage public awareness and supervision of COVID-19, including the 'Kampung Tangguh Wani Jogo Suroboyo' initiative.

The Surabaya City Government's responsiveness was also demonstrated in handling issues related to the PeduliLindungi application. The Indonesian government created this app, currently known as SATUSEHAT, to aid in COVID-19 control and prevention efforts, provide educational materials, issue crowd warnings, offer vaccination certificates, and limit public facility capacity (Sefrika, 2021). However, during implementation, Surabaya residents faced some challenges related to the app, including delayed vaccine certificate issuance, which was needed to access public facilities. In response, the Surabaya City Government launched 'Wasit Vaksin', an app enabling the residents to obtain their vaccine certificates promptly and efficiently.

Both of these examples illustrate the Surabaya City Government's commitment to being responsive in addressing several COVID-19 pandemic policy issues its residents face. However, issues will continue to arise alongside every implementation of COVID-19 mitigation policies in Surabaya, as seen by the Minister of Health, Budi Gunadi Sadikin's statement that the pandemic is expected to coexist with society for hundreds of years, similar to the Polio virus. Therefore, it is interesting to investigate how the local government's quick response to meet residents' needs can increase public acceptance of COVID-19 mitigation policies in Surabaya, which experts suggest is the key to policy implementation success (Salvia & Morello, 2020).

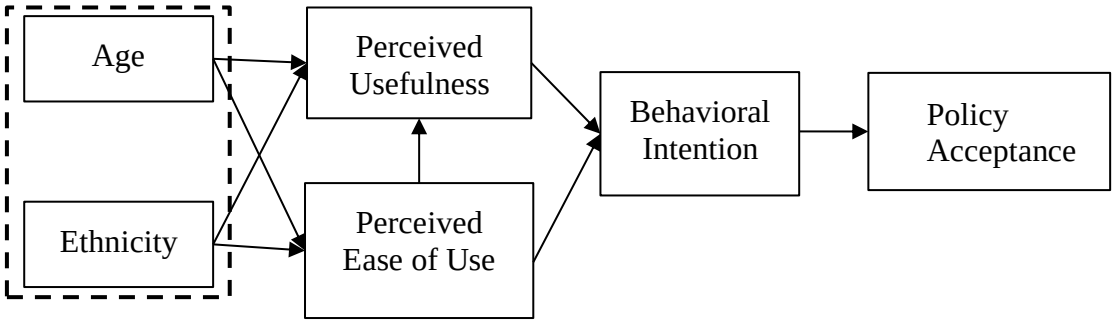
This study aims to investigate the influence of the Surabaya City Government's responsiveness on public acceptance of the COVID-19 mitigation policy, building upon the contextual background of the described problem. In particular, the research endeavours to discern whether the level of responsiveness exhibited by the Surabaya City Government significantly and positively affects the adoption of COVID-19 mitigation policies among the residents of Surabaya.

B. LITERATURE REVIEW

Policy Acceptance Model

The significance of public acceptance, as evidenced by behaviours such as encouragement, affirmation, and approval, has been widely acknowledged in the scholarly literature (Cohen et al., 2014; Kraeusel & Möst, 2012). In policy assessment, Pierce et al. (2014) introduced the Policy Acceptance Model (PAM) as an extension of the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) formulated initially by Davis (1989). PAM incorporated TAM's constructs while adding age and ethnicity as variables, serving as a framework for studying new policy acceptance (Davis, 1989; Pierce et al., 2014).

Davis' well-established Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) from 1989 illuminates how individuals adopt technology based on perceived benefits and user-friendliness (Davis, 1989). TAM centres on Perceived Usefulness (P.U.) and Perceived Ease of Use (PEOU), predicting technology adoption. Ethnicity shapes decisions (Yogeeswaran et al., 2014), affecting PEOU and P.U. Age plays a significant role in change acceptance, with age-related information processing variations (Ologeanu-Taddei et al., 2020). Older adults often resist new products and services (Ologeanu-Taddei et al., 2020). Thus, policymakers must consider intergenerational equity, investing in youth while supporting older adults (Denton, 2011). Additionally, diverse demographic groups cohorts harbour policy concerns like education, employment, migration, healthcare, and social security (Horrigmo, 2013).



(Source: Pierce et al. (2014))

Figure 1. Policy Acceptance Model

Several studies in various countries have found the importance of public acceptance for the effectiveness of COVID-19 mitigation policy implementation. Kyriakidis et al. (2023) noted in their research, which included a case study in Athens, that inadequate citizen involvement in the COVID-19 policy planning process can result in reactions of disagreement or rejection, thus directly impacting the effectiveness of COVID-19 mitigation policy implementation. Furthermore, the study conducted by Voo et al. (2022), focusing on the cases of Hong Kong, Singapore, and Malaysia, highlighted the pivotal role of public acceptance as a critical determinant significantly impacting the efficacy and achievement of COVID-19 control measures. It underscores the imperative need to recognize and address public attitudes and concerns through well-informed implementation and communication strategies, ultimately pivotal in fostering widespread compliance and enhancing overall success in combatting the pandemic.

Government Responsiveness

Grossman & Slough (2021) stated that a responsive government reflects citizens' preferences (as demonstrated by polls and individual or collective actions) in policymaking. Another view comes from Grimes & Esaiasson (2014), who elaborated responsiveness as the willingness and ability of politicians and public officials to listen and respond to citizen input and concerns. They actively engage with citizens, consider their opinions, and address their needs. Responsiveness ensures that the government is attentive to the voices of its citizens and is willing to act upon their input to improve policies and decision-making processes. Furthermore, Wawointana et al. (2019) argued that stateliness refers to the capacity of the government to acknowledge the citizen's needs, determine the most important tasks and goals for providing services, and create public service programs that align with the citizen's needs and desires. Responsiveness means ensuring that programs and service activities align with citizens' needs and aspirations.

Government responsiveness has emerged as a critical factor in ensuring the success of various government policies amid the COVID-19 pandemic (Guo et al., 2022). A study by Yusuf et al. (2021) comparing Vietnam's and Indonesia's responses to the pandemic underscored the utmost importance of government responsiveness in adeptly managing crises, particularly within the pandemic context. The study emphasized government responsiveness as a pivotal determinant in crisis management, especially during pandemics, highlighting the need for proactive and collaborative governance to uphold public well-being and ensure effective crisis mitigation. Another study at the regional level conducted by Triputro et al. (2021) further highlighted the essential role of government responsiveness during the COVID-19 pandemic, specifically in implementing social restrictions at the village level. The challenges stemming from cultural gatherings accentuate the necessity for government intervention to curtail disease transmission. Additionally, the research sheds light on the urgency for swift government reactions to address villagers' needs, as potential conflicts related to the pandemic may arise. This underscores the vital role of agile governance in safeguarding public health and promoting community harmony.

The Influence of Government Responsiveness on Public Acceptance

This research endeavours to utilize the underlying principles of the Policy Acceptance Model (PAM) and the theory of government responsiveness to construct a theoretical framework to comprehend the public acceptance of policies that respond to the COVID-19 crisis. As per the Policy Acceptance Model (PAM), individuals, acting as rational beings, determine their level of acceptance by evaluating the associated benefits, costs, and risks (Pierce et al., 2014). When significant policies or projects are implemented without or with limited public consultation, there is a likelihood that the public will express dissatisfaction, as the absence of public involvement in the planning process often triggers disapproval (Kyriakidis et al., 2023). A study by Voo et al. (2022) revealed the imperative nature of responsiveness to public needs to implement acceptable policies. Moreover, during times of crisis, government responsiveness to the concerns and conditions of the public serves to enhance citizens' trust in the government's commitment and capability to safeguard their well-being, rights, and voices (Chen et al., 2016). In the context of crisis response policies, the heightened public trust in the government's response can subsequently foster increased public acceptance (Siegrist & Bearth, 2021). Consequently, the primary objective of this research is to investigate the correlation between government responsiveness and public acceptance of COVID-19 crisis response policies, employing the Policy Acceptance Model as the foundational basis for analysis.

When individuals perceive a heightened degree of government responsiveness, they are more inclined to view policies as effective, increasing their acceptance. This notion is

corroborated by the findings of Kim & Shim (2020), asserting that a government's responsiveness to a policy contributes to an augmented acceptance among its citizens. Additionally, Guo et al. (2022) found that government responsiveness positively impacts public acceptance. Moreover, Guo et al. (2022) expounded upon the logical nexus between government response and public endorsement of specific policies, noting that this relationship holds during both crisis and non-crisis periods, albeit with potential variations in magnitude contingent upon different circumstances.

Based on the theory discussed, the following hypotheses were formulated.

- H0: There is no positive and significant effect of the Surabaya government's responsiveness on the acceptance of Surabaya residents.
- H1: There is a positive and significant effect of the Surabaya government's responsiveness on the acceptance of Surabaya residents.

C. METHOD

The research employed a quantitative approach with an explanatory correlational design. The explanatory research design aims to reveal the relationship between predetermined variables, and test formulated hypotheses (Bettis et al., 2014). This study adopted a simple paradigm consisting of one independent variable (X), government responsiveness, and one dependent variable (Y), public acceptance. Therefore, a simple correlation technique was used to measure the magnitude of the relationship between the independent and dependent variables (Effendi & Tukiran, 2014).

This study employed the survey research method, wherein data is systematically gathered from pre-selected participants using a structured questionnaire tool, as outlined by Effendi & Tukiran (2014) and Robinson (2014). Survey implementation is facilitated through an online platform using a technology-based approach to increase objectivity and avoid potential bias, explicitly utilizing a Google Form, with the survey's reach further amplified through strategic deployment across various social media channels.

The study's target population encompasses the residents of Surabaya, with a purposive sampling technique meticulously implemented to ensure samples align with the specific characteristics or criteria relevant to the research queries (Robinson, 2014). These sample criteria deliberately focus on Surabaya residents aged 15 to 64 directly impacted by COVID-19 mitigation policies. The precise calibration of sample size was done using the Slovin's formula, balancing Surabaya City's total population of 2,880,284, as per the 2022 statistical agency publication, and a margin of error was set at 5%. This calculated approach yielded a meticulously determined sample size of 400 respondents. An impressive participation of 432 individuals underscored the survey's reach, yet a purposeful selection process produced a final dataset of 400 respondents, thoughtfully refined to align exclusively with the predefined criteria.

The analysis technique utilized in this study was Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) using AMOS 26. SEM was selected due to its ability to ensure the model's fit with the data, thereby enhancing the validity of the findings. Additionally, SEM effectively addresses measurement errors, which is crucial for obtaining accurate estimations (Byrne, 2016).

D. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Characteristics of Respondents

This study collected data through a questionnaire administered to the respondents through various social media platforms from November to December 2022. Four hundred thirty-two respondents completed the questionnaire, but only 400 data were deemed suitable for the

research criteria. Thus, 32 respondents' data were not used in this analysis. The characteristics of the 400 respondents used in this study are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Characteristics of Respondents

Characteristic	Frequency	%
GENDER		
Male	170	42.5%
Female	230	57.5%
Total	*400*	*100%*
AGE GROUP		
15-25 (Gen Z)	181	45.3%
26-41 (Milenial)	193	48.5%
42-57 (Gen X)	16	4%
58-64 (Boomer)	10	2.5%
Total	*400*	*100%*
ETHNICITY		
Javanese	314	78.5%
Chinese	28	7%
Maduranese	18	4.5%
Sundanese	13	3.2%
Other	27	6.8%
Total	*400*	*100%*
LAST EDUCATION		
Elementary	18	4.5%
Junior High	24	5%
Senior High	189	47.3%
Diploma, Bachelor, and above	169	42.3%
Total	*400*	*100%*

Source: Data Processed by Authors (2023)

Distribution of Respondents' Answers in Government Responsiveness Variables

Table 2. Government Responsiveness Variable Questionnaire Score (N=400)

Score	1		2		3		4		5	
Q	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
1	4	1	15	3.8	72	18	201	18	108	27
2	5	1.3	26	6.5	61	15.3	188	47	120	30
3	8	2	18	4.5	87	21.8	182	45.5	105	26.3
4	8	2	15	3.8	73	18.3	201	50.2	103	25.8
5	9	2.3	28	7	102	25.5	161	40.3	100	25
6	7	1.8	27	6.8	91	22.8	167	41.8	108	27
7	5	1.3	27	6.8	82	20.5	167	41.8	119	29.8
8	5	1.3	20	5	80	20	162	40.5	133	33.3
9	6	1.5	17	4.3	94	23.5	166	41.5	117	29.3
10	6	1.5	25	6.3	97	24.3	171	42.8	101	25.3

Source: Data Analyzed by the Authors (2023)

Table 2 illustrates that most respondents' responses received high scores (4 and 5), suggesting that the Surabaya City Government is generally responsive. This indicates that the government is committed to delivering services promptly, accurately, and effectively addressing public complaints.

Distribution of Respondents' Answers in Public Acceptance Variables

Table 3. Public Acceptance Variable Questionnaire Score (N=400)

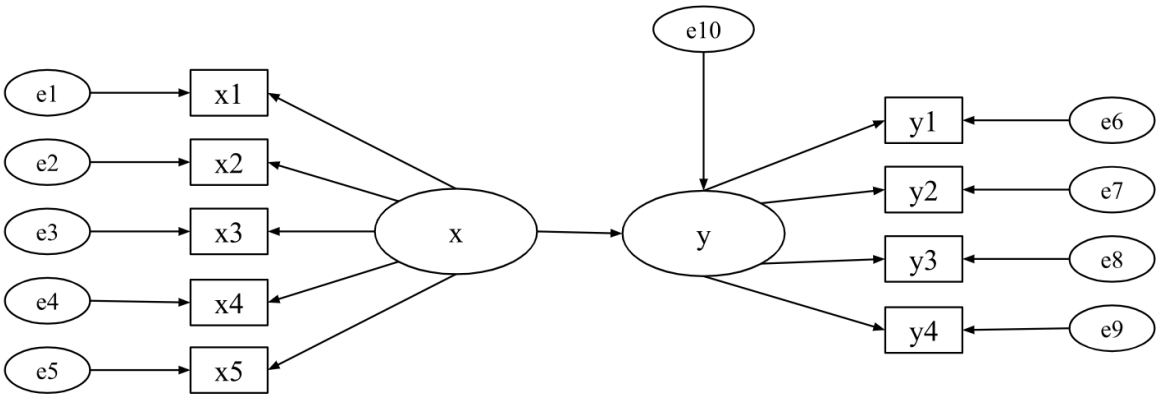
Score	1		2		3		4		5	
Q	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
1	5	1.3	20	5	74	18.5	175	43.8	126	31.5
2	7	1.8	10	2.5	55	13.8	201	50.2	127	31.8
3	4	1	15	3.8	64	16	154	38.5	163	40.8
4	5	1.3	25	6.3	77	19.3	190	47.5	103	25.8
5	1	0.3	19	4.8	69	17.3	189	47.3	122	30.5
6	6	1.5	11	2.8	66	16.5	184	46	133	33.3
7	4	1	18	4.5	68	17	184	46	126	31.5
8	5	1.3	22	5.5	66	16.5	176	44	131	32.8
9	4	1	19	4.8	75	18.8	106	49	106	26.5
10	2	0.5	15	3.8	70	17.5	193	48.3	120	30
11	2	0.5	15	3.8	57	14.2	183	45.8	143	35.8
12	2	0.5	24	6	69	17.3	158	39.5	147	36.8

Source: Data analyzed by the Authors (2023)

Table 3 indicates that most respondents' answers are positive (4 and 5). Therefore, it can be concluded that the people of Surabaya have accepted the COVID-19 mitigation policies implemented in Surabaya. It means that the public has felt the usefulness and ease of the COVID-19 mitigation policies in Surabaya. In addition, attitudes towards the policies are also good, and the public supports implementing COVID-19 mitigation policies by the Surabaya City Government.

Measurement Model: Validity and Reliability Test Result

The loading factor was examined to evaluate the validity of the instruments. If the outer loading exceeds 0.5, the tool is deemed valid. Upon conducting measurement model testing using AMOS, it was found that the loading factor for each variable indicator was greater than 0.5. Hence, it can be concluded that the research instruments utilized in this study are valid (Figure 2).



(Source: Data Analyzed by the Authors)

Figure 2. Measurement Model

Table 4. Validity Test Result

Construct	Indicator	Loading Factor	Criteria
Government Responsiveness (X)	Responsiveness in providing service (x1)	0,799	Valid
	Speed in taking action (x2)	0,797	Valid
	Accuracy in taking action (x3)	0,782	Valid
	Precision in taking action (x4)	0,819	Valid
	Responsiveness to public complaints (x5)	0,772	Valid
Public Acceptance (Y)	Attitude toward policy (y1)	0,816	Valid
	Perception of the usefulness of the policy (y2)	0,847	Valid
	Perception of the usefulness of the policy (y3)	0,721	Valid
	Support for policy implementation (y4)	0,796	Valid

Source: Data Processed by Authors (2023)

Next, the Average Variance Extract (AVE) was evaluated by averaging the variance captured by a construct from all measurement variables used in the analytical test. The construct is considered valid if the AVE value surpasses 0,5 (Byrne, 2016). The measurement results in Table 4 revealed an AVE value of 0.76 for variable X and an AVE value of 0.79 for variable Y, indicating that both variables meet the standard of > 0,5, thus indicating robust validity.

Table 5. AVE and Construct Reliability Test Result

Variable	Public Acceptance (Y)			Government Responsiveness (X)		
	Loading Factor	*Loading ² Factor*	Error	Loading Factor	*Loading ² Factor*	Error
y1	0.816	0.66	0.13			
y2	0.847	0.71	0.10			
y3	0.721	0.51	0.23			
y4	0.796	0.63	0.19			
x5				0.77	0.59	0.22
x4				0.81	0.67	0.17
x3				0.78	0.61	0.24
x2				0.79	0.63	0.15
x1				0.79	0.63	0.18
the sum of the std loading	3.18			3.96		
$sum\ of\ std\ loading^2$		2.53			3.15	
sum of error			0.66			0.99
Average Variance Extract	0.79			0.76		
Construct Reliability	0.90			0.94		

Source: Data Analyzed by the Authors (2023)

Construct reliability can be deemed satisfactory when its value is greater than or equal to 0,7. If the construct reliability value falls below 0.7, it may be considered that the measured constructs are not yet dependable or consistent (Byrne, 2016). The measurement results in Table 5 indicate a construct reliability value of 0.94 for variable X and a construct reliability value of 0.90 for variable Y. This implies that both variables meet the standard of ≥ 0.7, affirming that the research instruments are reliable and suitable for the study.

Goodness-of-Fit Criteria

The next step involves evaluating the model's appropriateness through an assessment using various Goodness-of-Fit criteria. In Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), an equally vital facet involves assessing the fit of the structural model. This assessment determines the congruence between a proposed theoretical model and the actual data. A model is deemed favourable or well-fitting when the estimated covariance matrix closely approximates the observed covariance matrix, as Hair J et al. (2015) outlined.

Table 6. Goodness-of-Fit Index

Goodness-of-Fit Index	Cut-off Value	Value	Model Evaluation
RMSEA	≤ 0.08	0.086	Marginal Fit
GFI	≥ 0.90	0.946	Good Fit
AGFI	≥ 0.90	0.907	Good Fit
TLI	≥ 0.95	0.953	Good Fit
CFI	≥ 0.95	0.966	Good Fit

Source: Data Analyzed by the Authors (2023)

Table 6 presents four criteria classified as Good Fit and one standard classified as Marginal Fit. Four to five qualifying goodness-of-fit criteria are adequate to evaluate the model's appropriateness (Hair et al., 2019), implying that the research model is deemed suitable for further analysis.

Hypothesis Test

Hypothesis testing was conducted by comparing the critical ratio (C.R.) value to its critical value (t-value) (1.65 at a 5% significance level). If the C.R. value exceeds the critical value, H0 is rejected, and H1 is accepted. Based on the test results, a C.R. value of 15.28 was obtained, indicating the acceptance of the hypothesis (H1). We examined the beta value to assess the relationship between X and Y. In this case, the beta was 0.725 (p=0.000), signifying that variable X significantly and positively influenced variable Y.

Table 7. Hypothesis Test

Hypothesis	β	S.E.	C.R.	P	Result
X → Y	0.725	0.047	15.288	0.000	positive, significant

Source: Data Processed by Authors (2023)

The Responsiveness of the Surabaya City Government in COVID-19 Mitigation Policy

According to Grossman & Slough (2021), a responsive government mirrors the preferences of its citizens, as demonstrated through polls and individual or collective actions in policymaking. It means that to measure the responsiveness of the Surabaya City Government, the perspective of Surabaya residents as policy subjects who directly experience the outcomes of implemented policies is essential. The empirical findings of this study indicate that the Surabaya City Government's responsiveness to the COVID-19 Response Policy, as perceived by Surabaya society, is commendable. Responsiveness is assessed based on indicators such as responsiveness to public complaints, provision of services, accuracy, precision, and speed in action.

The analysis reveals that most respondents view the Surabaya City Government as responsive in addressing complaints, delivering services, and doing so accurately, attentively, and promptly. As Grossman & Slough (2021) noted, this responsiveness is crucial in policy implementation as it demonstrates the government's capacity to comprehend the needs of its

populace and craft an agenda aligned with their priorities. Therefore, by Grimes & Esaiasson's theory (2014), it can be inferred that the Surabaya City Government can grasp the needs of its citizens, establish an agenda per their desired priorities, and devise programs that cater to their needs and aspirations. Consequently, the COVID-19 mitigation policies in Surabaya appear to align with the needs and aspirations of its residents.

Acceptance of the Surabaya Community in the COVID-19 Mitigation Policy

Public acceptance refers to a favourable stance towards something, demonstrated through various behaviours such as encouragement, confirmation, and approval (Cohen et al., 2014; Kraeusel & Möst, 2012). Hence, it is crucial to examine the viewpoint of the local community to assess the level of public acceptance regarding the COVID-19 mitigation policy in Surabaya. The term "public" in this context pertains to the residents of Surabaya who directly experience the implemented policies by the local government. Public acceptance also implies that a particular policy or action receives open support from individuals who may be influenced positively or negatively (Cohen et al., 2014). The acceptance measurement among Surabaya residents was evaluated using the Policy Acceptance Model theory (Pierce et al., 2014), extending the Technology Acceptance Model theory (Davis, 1989). This theoretical framework encompasses indicators such as public perception of the policy, their assessment of its usefulness and ease of implementation, and their support for its execution. Additionally, age and ethnicity are considered influential factors. Consequently, this study incorporates the descriptive presentation of respondents' age and ethnic group as considerations for generalization when measuring public acceptance.

Most respondents fall within the age range of 26-41 years, constituting the millennial demographic, with 193 respondents accounting for 48.5% of the sample. Following this, the Generation Z age group (15-25 years old) is the next most represented, with 181 respondents, comprising 45.3%. Generation X (42-57 years old) is represented by 16 respondents (4%), while the boomer age group (58-64 years old) consists of 10 respondents (2.5%). This data provides a representative sample of the population, as millennials comprise the most significant portion of Surabaya's population at 31.8%, Generation Z at 22.8%, Generation X at 19%, and boomers at 9%. In terms of ethnicity, the majority of respondents are of Javanese ethnicity, comprising 314 respondents or 78.5%. This reflects Surabaya's population demographics, as people of Javanese ethnicity predominantly inhabit the city due to its location on the island of Java. However, Surabaya is also a multi-ethnic area, with various nationalities such as Chinese, Madurese, Malay, Sundanese, and others coexisting with the Javanese population.

The analysis reveals that most Surabaya residents exhibit a high level of acceptance towards the COVID-19 mitigation policies implemented by the Surabaya government. This is evident from their positive attitudes towards the guidelines, perception of their usefulness and ease of implementation, and support for their execution, both currently implemented and future ones. This finding aligns with the Policy Acceptance Model (PAM) theory (Pierce et al., 2014), which states that individuals or the public will accept a policy if they believe that the policy will have positive results in terms of ease of use and the benefits of its usefulness (Jayaswal & Malati, 2020; Qureshi, 2019).

The Influence of the Surabaya City Government's Responsiveness on the Acceptance of Surabaya Residents

This study draws on the theory of government responsiveness and the Policy Acceptance Model (PAM) to establish a theoretical relationship between the responsiveness of the Surabaya government and the public's acceptance of COVID-19 mitigation policies in Surabaya. Empirical analysis of this study proves that the responsiveness of the Surabaya

government has a significant and positive influence on the public's acceptance, thus indicating that the higher the Surabaya government's responsiveness to its citizens, the greater the approval of the COVID-19 mitigation policies implemented by the Surabaya government. This finding aligns with Guo et al. (2022) theory, suggesting that responsiveness has a significant and positive effect on public acceptance, as well as Kim & Shim's (2020) theory that a government's responsiveness to a policy will increase the public's acceptance of the procedure, and Voo's et al. (2022) finding that being responsive to public needs is crucial for implementing acceptable policies. In other words, the COVID-19 mitigation policies implemented in Surabaya will likely be more widely accepted if the Surabaya government is more responsive.

The other empirical finding of this study also shows that the higher the respondents' level of education, the higher their perception of government responsiveness and acceptance of COVID-19 mitigation policies. This aligns with Bell & Stevenson's theory (2015) that education level can influence public acceptance of a topic or issue. People with higher education levels tend to be more critical and able to analyze information better. They also tend to have a broader understanding of a particular topic, leading to better decisions. Additionally, individuals with higher education levels typically have greater access to information and resources, such as the Internet, books, and scientific journals, facilitating a more profound comprehension of particular issues or topics. Conversely, individuals with lower levels of education may lack sufficient understanding of specific issues or topics, making them more susceptible to inaccurate or incomplete information. This susceptibility can lead to confusion, fear, and uncertainty, ultimately affecting public acceptance (National Academies of Sciences, 2017).

Based on age groups, it is evident that Generation Z and Millennials exhibit higher perceptions of the responsiveness of the Surabaya City Government and public acceptance compared to previous generations. This aligns with Twenge's (2014) assertion that Generation Z and Millennials are more open to change and more inclusive in policy acceptance. Growing up in an era characterized by rapid technological and informational advancements, they are accustomed to change and more adaptable to policy alterations. Conversely, Generation X (born 1965-1980) tends to be more pragmatic and sceptical of government policies, having experienced economic and political uncertainties during their formative years. They grew up in an era of economic and political uncertainty and tend to be more wary of rapid policy changes. They also value independence and hard work (Ashraf, 2018). Similarly, the Boomer age group (born 1946-1964) tends to be more conservative and focused on traditional values such as authority, discipline, and hard work (Biggs et al., 2007). This age-based conclusion is consistent with the Policy Acceptance Model theory (Pierce et al., 2014), suggesting that age influences perceptions of policies, ultimately affecting policy acceptance.

Therefore, this research also identifies practical steps for local governments to foster citizen engagement in every policy decision-making process. Specifically, the responsiveness of local governments to the needs of citizens demonstrates the government's commitment to understanding their needs, thereby helping to persuade citizens to accept the implemented policies. This research also highlights how citizens' perceptions of policies can be influenced by their level of education and age group. Therefore, the government must develop strategies to facilitate dialogue and accommodate diversity to create policies acceptable to everyone.

E. CONCLUSION

Several conclusions can be drawn based on the research findings and the analysis discussed in this study, which examines the influence of the Surabaya City Government's responsiveness on public acceptance of COVID-19 mitigation policies in Surabaya. Firstly, the responsiveness of the Surabaya City Government is generally commendable. This indicates that the

government promptly provides services and addresses public grievances, characterized by speed, accuracy, and precision in its responses.

Secondly, the community in Surabaya has embraced the COVID-19 mitigation policies implemented by the government, suggesting that the society perceives the usefulness and ease of these policies. Moreover, they hold favourable attitudes toward the policies and extend support for their implementation by the Surabaya City Government, both for those already in place and for future policies.

Furthermore, the level of responsiveness demonstrated by the Surabaya City Government significantly and positively influences the acceptance among Surabaya's residents. This finding implies that as the government becomes more responsive to the needs and concerns of its citizens, the endorsement of COVID-19 mitigation policies implemented by the government among Surabaya's residents increases. These results provide empirical evidence supporting the idea that responsiveness plays a pivotal role in shaping public acceptance.

Drawing insights from the case of Surabaya City, this study underscores the importance for local governments to enhance their responsiveness by promptly addressing citizens' concerns and ensuring precision in service delivery during COVID-19 mitigation policies. This approach is essential for nurturing greater public acceptance and fostering trust. Subsequent research endeavours could broaden their scope to investigate additional variables influencing public acceptance and explore variations in residents' perceptions of COVID-19 policies across diverse clusters. Such an approach could yield valuable insights for refining responsive strategies tailored to the diverse characteristics present within Surabaya's population.

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