

# Ganjar Pranowo's Rhetoric in Counseling the Dangers of the Covid-19 Pandemic

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## Abstract

Good communication competence with the community is the main pillar that must and must be possessed by a leader, especially during the Covid-19 pandemic. The limited variety of accesses in the realm of society lives, becomes a challenge for a leader to be able to remain present in the midst of society lives with various sectors such as the health sector and the sluggish economy. Information uncertainty, the rise of hoax news and disinformation regarding the Covid-19 issue demand competence from a leader. This research aims to find out how Ganjar Pranowo's rhetoric as the Governor of Central Java in providing counseling and interacting with the society during the Covid-19 pandemic. This research uses descriptive qualitative method, by developing persuasive rhetoric theory and relationship maintenance theory. The results in this research are that Ganjar has good public speaking competence, this is indicated by Ganjar Pranowo's rhetorical ability when interacting with the public which he displays through social media Instagram. Ganjar, has a rhetorical ability that is not rigid, the communication built by Ganjar shows effective communication. Ganjar is able to foster an atmosphere with the society, the communication displayed is wrapped in a humorous manner atmosphere in a humanist touch. In supporting the success of his rhetoric, Ganjar applies verbal communication skills that are supported by nonverbal communication.

**Keywords:** Rhetoric; Public Speaking; Effective Communication; Verbal Communication; Non Verbal Communication.

2020 is a historic year that will not be easily forgotten by many people starting the year with struggle and patience, one of which is the emergence of the Corona Virus or Covid 19 which has plagued more than 200 countries infected with this virus. No exception to the country that gets the nickname gemah ripah loh jinawi, this motherland is also infected with the widespread spread of the number of positive cases of the covid-19 virus. On March 2, 2020, for the first time the government announced two cases of positive Covid-19 patients in Indonesia.

Many problems face the lives of Indonesian people in the midst of the corona pandemic.

We can know together that economic issues are a vital issue that is hotly discussed by many people from various social classes amid the Covid-19 pandemic. As a result of the outbreak of the corona virus which is very fast in transmission, various sectors of life have been paralyzed, especially in the economic sector, of course it will be very pronounced, for example in trade and labor issues. The slowdown in the rate of import and export, even the reduction of labor, until the unemployed workforce becomes a real

event faced during the covid-19 pandemic. Reporting from the official website of the Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Indonesia, the economic situation is described as starting to deteriorate. Several institutions have even predicted a weakening of the world economy, including the International Monetary Fund (IMF) which projects the global economy to grow minus 3%. In the labor sector, it is also starting to be felt with many entrepreneurs who have to turn the steering wheel to keep saving the fate of their companies, not infrequently many have to be forced to be laid off and without pay.

In addition to labor issues and economic issues that became vital issues during the co-19 pandemic, there are other issues that are no less important, namely health issues. Like a mushroom that grows in the winter, during the pandemic that colonized the Indonesian nation, life seemed to be worthless. Every day, positive cases of covid-19 cases are increasing as if they have no gap to decrease or slow down. Almost all people of various ages have felt the ferocity of the covid-19 virus. Reporting from the Kompas.com page, the peak of the covid-19 case which was the biggest climax throughout the outbreak of covid-19 in the country occurred in July 2021, even the addition of the positive number of covid-19 at that time reached 31,189 cases in the last 24 hours. A unit of numbers that is not small, which is also a warning for each of the main covid-19 task forces to work more optimally. The increase in the number of victims confirmed positive for covid-19 has also increased the level of public anxiety. It is not uncommon for there to be a clash of interests between regulations issued by the government and the interests of the community. This can be seen, since the issuance of government regulation PP No. 21 of 2020 concerning large-scale social restrictions as an effort to handle the covid-19 case, like a simalakama fruit. The situation is not only a crisis of economic and health issues, but is also exacerbated by a crisis in humanity. Many are then unable to understand the situation, and are easily provoked. Instead of

the reason for the urgency of economic needs, the government and the community once walked out of harmony. The small people, the street vendors are a sector of special concern. It is not uncommon for the existence of existing regulations to cause conflict with various rules that are less effective and do not seem to favor the small community. How could it not be? The emergence of large-scale social restriction rules, with details regulating the working hours of street vendors, various community responses also colored the existence of these regulations.

Social anxiety has been growing in people's lives throughout the pandemic. This has also invited the attention of high-ranking state officials, leaders to provide assistance to the community, both through education, socialization, and various other interesting efforts. This is certainly a reminder that the life of the nation and state under the umbrella of democracy does bring its own nuances in its running practices. As the holder of the helm, a leader will be in the spotlight of the community, both at the central level such as the president to the lowest level and closest to the community, namely a RT or RW chairman. What becomes their actions and all their decisions, the community becomes an authorized assessor to provide an assessment and view of what they (leaders) have done. The existence of an executive institution at the regional or provincial level, namely the Governor, is no exception. As the number one person in the provincial government environment, the Governor has his own strategy in conveying information, messages, and all his activities to the public as a form of accountability report from the position entrusted to him, including in handling the covid-19 case. Ganjar Pranowo as the governor of Central Java has a unique and interesting way of conveying messages to the public, which makes his steps considered as interesting rhetoric in providing information to the public by still provides peace of mind amidst anxiety and other social issues. Ganjar, utilizing various media as

an intermediary in providing information to the public.

The birth of social media has indeed provided wider opportunities for anyone to express their feelings, express their opinions. The existence of social media is a form of mass media that gets more attention and is in great demand, especially considering its various features that offer faster and interactive delivery of information online. The freedom to access message content seems to negate the existence of conventional mass media as a source of actual and factual news that is oriented towards news ethics. The increasingly massive use of social media has shifted mainstream social media in disseminating information about politics and state power. Data from the Press Company Union (SPS) reveals that in the last 6 years there has been a decline in the circulation of national newspapers. In 2011 the number of circulation was still around more than 9 million, but shrank in 2016 to reach a percentage of 11% to 8 million (Ngorang, 2016).

The tantalizing benefits of social media are practically utilized by political actors as an ideal platform to build communication with the public, both to find out the needs and desires of the community, provide information, to persuade and influence the public through what they share on social media (Anon n.d.). Various social media are like fields to sow arguments. Interestingly, Ganjar Pranowo seems to have his own spirit that makes communication with the public followed by a pleasant, reassuring feel in delivering messages. Not only through social media, in the real world face-to-face, Ganjar still seems to have the same quality. As a leader, Ganjar's simplicity and calm demeanor are shown as he meets and responds to various life dynamics during the Covid-19 pandemic, especially in the Central Java region.

## Research Methods

This research was conducted using descriptive qualitative methods. Erickson in Susan Stainback in (Sugiyono, 2016) explains

that qualitative research methods are carried out in depth, where researchers involve themselves and record what they find carefully, conducting theoretical studies of documents that can be found in the field obtained during the research, then make a detailed report of the research results (Fadillah et al., 2024). Data collection was conducted through interviews, referring to the interview guide that had been prepared. In addition, empirical data was also collected through observation and documentation. The empirical data obtained was then subjected to a coding process for analysis.

## Results and Discussion

Rhetoric is one of the activities in political communication that represents the competence of an orator in processing and distributing information to the public, with the hope that the public can understand and respond to the content of the message conveyed (Abdul n.d.). Rhetoric in political communication plays an important role in a conversation about political activities, as long as communication goes well, that is when the political interests of each party can be seen clearly by the public, especially with the presence of social media being the right place for political actors such as Ganjar Pranowo to present what activities have been carried out, especially during the co-19 pandemic. The euphoria of utilizing various social media must still pay attention to ethics. We realize the importance of political socialization, so ethics is an inseparable part, because the message will greatly affect the people who carry out the political learning process. For this reason, this is where ethics becomes very important. A political campaign activity basically does not occur in an empty space, the community as media consumers certainly needs more educational content, not just content that ultimately misleads or builds negative perceptions. This becomes important in order to find ethical aspects in the context of political communication amidst political interests. In other discussions, ethics is also often associated with the word moral. In

Latin mores. Mores comes from *katamos* which means morality, character, or behavior. Thus, morals are usually defined as the teachings of morality. Moral means things about decency. Moral also means the teaching of good and bad actions and behavior. According to (Bernets, 2007) ethics is the science that discusses morality or about humans as far as morality is concerned. In other words, ethics is the study of moral behavior. In simple terms, Poedjowijatna says that the target of ethics is specifically on human actions that are done intentionally.

From the ranks of politicians, we find Ganjar Pranowo as an interesting sample, because as a leader Ganjar has a positive charisma, especially in when it comes to delivering messages to the public. He, Ganjar Pranowo, has a unique side that not all leaders in this country have. So this is what we will look at how Ganjar Pranowo's rhetoric when conducting socialization, when meeting and greeting the community, of course during the covid-19 pandemic, not to mention that we will also pay attention to how Ganjar Pranowo's communication ethics when conducting rhetoric uploaded through social media.

Before looking deep into Ganjar Pranowo's rhetoric, we will first see that Ganjar Pranowo, the governor of Central Java who served almost 2 periods, in his political work is inseparable from the support of branding on social media, Ganjar is proven to have a variety of social media platforms that oversee his journey in leading Central Java, ranging from Twitter, Youtube, Facebook, and Instagram. Through social media channels, one of which is Instagram, we can find out how Ganjar Pranowo is doing. Instagram, which in fact is a social media with the majority of millennial and generation Z hosts, appears to be massively targeted by Ganjar Pranowo, this is evident from the fact that Ganjar regularly uploads various activities he carries out in guarding community advocacy and in carrying out his duties, duties and functions as Governor.



Figure 1. Instagram profile view of Ganjar Pranowo

We can understand that Ganjar neatly arranges the contents uploaded through his social media, this shows that Ganjar also considers aesthetic values in using or optimizing the use of media. Various features on Instagram, for example, seem to be utilized by Ganjar, Feed posts, Reels, IG TV, IG Story are always colored with the latest content about the activities carried out by Ganjar Pranowo. Overall, Ganjar's posts seem to consider interesting communication strategies, this is evidenced by the fact that the content uploaded by Ganjar through his social media seems not rigid, so that the messages or information conveyed are relatively easier for the public to understand.

Furthermore, in his uploads, Ganjar uses Instagram as a medium or means to educate important things or important issues that carry public interest. For example, a post about the importance of implementing health protocols, which is attractively packaged. Ganjar seemed to have interpersonal closeness with 2 street busker children, to sing an arrangement song containing a message about the importance of being aware together to prevent corona. We can see that in addition to education, there is also an element of entertainment so that what is conveyed is easier for the public to understand. Ganjar, also follows what is trending in society, for example about the existence of persuasive communication that aims to influence people not to neglect nutritional intake by creating youth-style content, one of the interesting content, Ganjar combines romantic elements or nuances in his uploads. This is a little picture of Ganjar Pranowo's rhetoric that becomes an interesting seasoning when he is interacting with the public. Ganjar's competence in rhetoric is the main weapon for him to design political communication strategies in public life. Ganjar's communication can be said to be a non-rigid communication model. Tracing some of the public's responses through the comments page on each of Ganjar's posts, the public assesses Ganjar's communication as "crispy". The meaning of "crisp" can certainly be interpreted in this context as a form of communication that is simple, memorable, and can be easily understood by the public. All forms of suggestions, directions, instructions from Ganjar are messages that are not confusing. Ganjar, in this case, does not seem too rigid in his protocol as a governor, but on the other hand this does not make him forget about ethics when rhetoric. This is a unique skill, a rare skill that not every leader can do.

"You can ignore my chat, but don't ignore your health"

Ganjar Pranowo as one of the public figures in the field of regional government as Governor

of Central Java has a good political communication strategy. This can be proven from Ganjar's social media optimization, such as Instagram and Facebook. In the current era, public officials are flocking to create personal branding.

The picture shows Ganjar Pranowo's Instagram feed. The governor always shows various forms of content including invitations, activity visits, speeches, and humorous things. The purpose of Ganjar creating such content is to show that he as a leader can follow the pattern of the times that educates the public, especially attracting young people in a contemporary way. This can build people's trust that Ganjar is a leader who is not ignorant and flexible. The variety of content presented can be an indirect way of communicating to the public about the activities that have been carried out so far. Some posts that appear are not only photos, but some are presented in the form of videos. Even the published videos have been changed to a style that is more interesting, concise, and not too long. Furthermore, the language used in each content uses polite speech. The language used in Ganjar's social media posts can be said to be appropriate and non-controversial.

Ganjar's communication style is not rigid and viewers can catch the point he wants to convey. Ganjar can utilize captions with various forms of sentences. Not only news sentences, but also question sentences that can invite netizens to comment on the comment column.

Furthermore, another form of rhetoric from Ganjar Pranowo during the Covid-19 pandemic can also be seen through his uploads on Instagram social media. In the first picture, the Governor of Central Java, Ganjar Pranowo, together with the Mayor of Surakarta, Gibran Rakabuming, conducted a visitation at the Cemara 02 Elementary School building in Banjarsari, Surakarta City as a centralized isolation place. In the video, Ganjar appears to greet residents with his trademark jokes

"Do you feel like you're in debt?" "Many, sir."

In addition, Ganjar and Gibran were also seen asking about the need for food and fruits during the self-isolation process. they were also seen handing over a number of gifts of coffee, tea, vitamins, and milk boxes to residents.



Figure 2: Ganjar Pranowo Visits Isoman's House

In the second picture, Ganjar Pranowo as the number one person in Central Java is visiting the UIN Semarang Isolation Dormitory. Through his publication on the Instagram account @ganjar\_pranowo, the Governor of Central Java appears to be chatting and exchanging jokes with one of the little patients named Christopher. The upload then reaped many positive comments from netizens, even going viral on TikTok social media. Ganjar is one of the politicians who is good at adjusting to various conditions, including when building an atmosphere with small children.

In the third picture, Ganjar Pranowo conducts a visitation at Batang Regional Hospital and meets with a number of health workers who work there. Although he could only chat remotely, Ganjar seemed to encourage and appreciate the health workers who work there.

"Let your heart serve you. Kowe tak dongake keep healthy"

"Take care of your health to keep your spirits up because now you are what is needed. If a

patient gets angry, or a patient is upset, be patient, it's a test of your profession and service."

In the upload, Ganjar was seen giving empathy and expressing gratitude to all health workers who worked during the COVID-19 Pandemic.

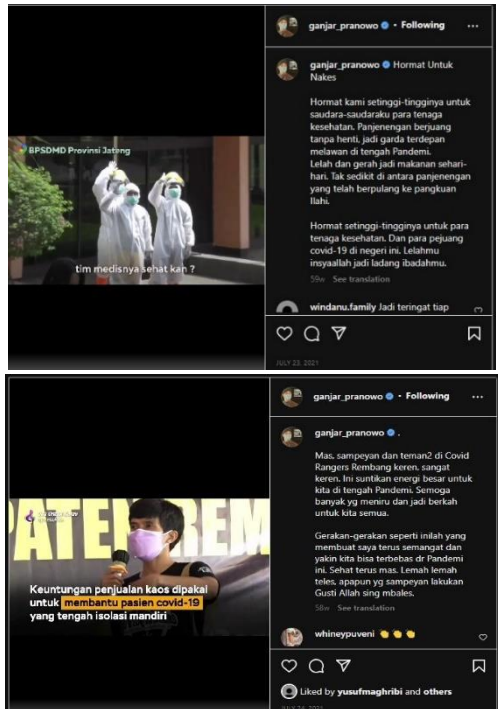


Figure 3. Ganjar's empathy and expressing gratitude to all health workers who worked during the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Ganjar's empathetic side in communicating with the community The fourth picture is of Ganjar's visit to the Rembug Desa event with the community.

Village Heads in Rembang Regency. In the publication, Ganjar is seen meeting with one of the members of the 'COVID Rangers' Community who tells how the community's activities include donation activities, handing over aid, and selling t-shirt products. Through

this short two-minute video, Ganjar responds to the 'COVID Rangers' story with the following statement:

"Masha Allah, it was amazing, cool to tell the story."



Figure 4: Ganjar Pranowo's visit to the Rembug Desa event

The short video ended with Ganjar stating that he would buy a 'COVID Rangers' t-shirt product for Rp1,000,000. Through this upload, we can see Ganjar as a public figure who is appreciative of all actions taken by his citizens, which in this case is in the form of volunteerism during the COVID-19 pandemic. Not only giving appreciation in the form of praise, but Ganjar also bought products at a high price. The fifth picture is Ganjar's visit to the self-isolation location in Segorogunung Village, Karanganyar on June 13, 2021. In the video, Ganjar is seen walking around meeting residents and positive COVID-19 patients. There Ganjar tried to build a pleasant atmosphere by asking about the health conditions of residents with various kinds of chatter

"Who has lost their sense of smell?" "No one"

"Nothing? Then you can smell everything? If someone farts, does it smell?" "Smell."

"This means it's healthy"

Through the dialog above, we can see that Ganjar tried to build a relaxed atmosphere during the visit. Not only that, Ganjar also asked about complaints or obstacles experienced by residents during the isolation process and he stated that he would follow up on these obstacles with the Regent. Ganjar said "What are the complaints in the service here, if it is lacking, let the Regent, the Governor all help, what is the lack?" then he continued by saying "Iki suwe-suwe jalukane ngejak gelut iki. TV, Wi-Fi, refrigerator yo tho, soft chairs yo tho, air conditioning, yo sampeyan move rene sisan yo rak" while accompanied by laughter with other residents.

By looking at the five posts on Instagram @ganjar\_pranowo above, we can conclude that Ganjar often shows his empathetic and humorous side to citizens on Instagram social media. Not only trying to build a pleasant atmosphere with adult citizens, Ganjar is also good at communicating with small children. In these posts, Ganjar as the governor of Central Java also often uses Javanese language in communicating with residents. This will indirectly create a sense of closeness between the people of Central Java and Ganjar Pranowo.

Based on the analysis above, if it is related to the theory developed in the field of communication science, then what Ganjar Pranowo did is an interesting rhetoric. Ganjar has proven to have competence in rhetoric and not everyone is able and competent to do so. The study of rhetoric pioneered by Aristotle focuses on how communicators are able to master communicators with information delivery strategies (C. Gatot H, 2008). Therefore, determining the strategy is important not only so that the speech is pleasant to hear, but also so that the message is conveyed properly. This is because in many cases, speeches only have an entertainment impact without making an impression on the hearts and minds of the listeners. It cannot be denied that the link between rhetoric in communication science and political issues is very close. At a practical level, rhetoric is used by intellectuals and rulers as the

main tool for conveying ideas or ideas and awareness of the community. This concept is strongly held by Ganjar Pranowo as the Governor of Central Java, in order for the public to understand the message conveyed by him, Ganjar chose a communication strategy that is social, humorous, and humanist. Furthermore, in rhetoric studies, we recognize that rhetoric plays an important role in influencing people or in academic language known as persuasive rhetoric. This is because rhetoric in Aristotle's view sees 3 important things.

When someone is communicating, conveying messages to others, they are forensic, demonstrative, and deliberative (Suhandang, 2016). Ganjar Pranowo seems to have done it, how he demonstrates the message or information to be conveyed, packaging it as interestingly as possible, so that there is reciprocity, there is a response from the community, and communication goes both ways, as it should be in the concept of deliberative communication where decision making involves the people directly, through listening to suggestions to support handling during the Covid-19 pandemic in the Central Java region.

Ganjar Pranowo's communication can be considered as an example of effective communication. Effective communication in the perspective of rhetoric theory is communication that creates an understanding of meaning between the communicator and the communicant. This of course can work well, because Ganjar Pranowo applies 3 important things in supporting his success in rhetoric, namely communication that prioritizes logos, pathos, and ethos. This means that Ganjar speaks based on facts, logic, and ethics in his political communication. In addition, Ganjar Pranowo also attaches credibility to himself in every word he says. Of course, this is a breath of fresh air for Ganjar Pranowo to ease his steps in leading Central Java. It confirms and reminds the study in communication psychology, that everyone can speak but not necessarily everyone is competent in processing what is spoken.

However, Ganjar presents himself as a quality figure, a classy leader through his competence in embracing the community, distributing information to the community, making him a leader who is close to the people. Another finding is that in his rhetoric, Ganjar always adjusts to existing developments, what is currently being discussed by the public, Ganjar does not miss to follow it. The humorous side without leaving the humanist side is something that needs to be underlined from the figure of Ganjar Pranowo and a new finding that not necessarily all leaders have it. A rare condition, but Central Java has it. In addition to the rhetoric theory study, Ganjar's action is a real effort in terms of maintaining or maintaining good relations between leaders and people through emotional approaches, verbal and non-verbal approaches. Relationship maintenance can also be understood as an action to maintain interpersonal relationships to foster conditions in the relationship in accordance with what is expected [8]. The expected conditions are certainly conditions that provide positive stimuli for the sustainability of the relationship. Although there are in a pandemic situation, does not create a barrier for Ganjar to stay close to the people. This is evidenced by Ganjar always taking the time to visit independent isolation houses, to greet, dialogue with the community and directly monitor services at independent isolation houses.

## Conclusions

Good communication competence with the community is the main pillar that must and must be owned by a leader if he wants his existence to be appreciated and received attention from the community. In various situations, leaders must appear ready. This is no exception during the Covid-19 pandemic which paralyzed various sectors of life and made several sectors experience sluggishness, such as the health sector and the economic sector. This certainly invites tremendous concern from people with the lower middle economic class, especially people



who depend on the business sector or street businesses. Opposition and various forms of protest from the community are things that cannot be denied during the Covid-19 pandemic. Health and economic issues play an important role to be saved, and also invite the attention of leaders or high-ranking officials in the Central Java region, namely Ganjar Pranowo. The Covid-19 pandemic period attracted public attention when Ganjar Pranowo did not ignore the existence of the community, and tried to create a conducive communication climate. Ganjar Pranowo visited people who were in self-isolation, Ganjar also made various appeals through social media regarding the importance of implementing health protocols to reduce the spread of Covid-19 in Central Java. Through the communication narrative delivered. What can be observed as well as the findings from the analysis on Ganjar Pranowo's social media, through his Instagram media account, Ganjar Pranowo

appears as a figure who has effective communication competence. It can be seen that Ganjar often shares moments of visiting the people, dialoguing with the people, and showing a humorous side in a humanist spirit. Ganjar does not use monotonous communication or rhetoric. It can be seen that the rhetoric built by Ganjar Pranowo is a rhetoric that is not rigid, which is acceptable and open to anyone. Based on this communication competence, Ganjar pays close attention to the logos, ethos, and pathos so that it really helps him to persuade people, the message or information conveyed by Ganjar is something that is easy to interpret for the wider community, even though it is only displayed through the media. Ganjar is very good at verbal communication and non-verbal communication in his rhetoric, so that his rhetoric represents responsive, deliberative, communicative, and persuasive communication.

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