

# Discourse Analysis

## ON MEDIA REPORTS AND HOW IT AFFECTS HUMAN BEHAVIOUR

*during the Corona Virus (COVID-19) outbreak*

### Introduction

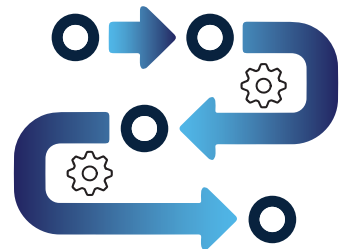
Information relayed to the public is highly important especially during an outbreak situation. The COVID-19 outbreak that began in December in Wuhan, China has caused a huge pandemic across the world and the world responded with measures to contain it; including the Movement Control Order (MCO) conducted in Malaysia. These measures are conveyed through media but unfortunately are also marred with misinformation or even fake news that caused panic and confusion; which in turn causes chaos in the public.



### Objectives

To conduct a discourse analysis on media reports and the reported effects on human behaviour; specifically during the corona virus (CoViD-19) outbreak.

# METHODOLOGY



## THEME 1:

### COMMUNICATION CHALLENGES

#### SUB-THEME 1 Accuracy of information disseminated

- needs to be vetted
- accurately portrayed
- tone must be empowering
- tone must not meant to scare



#### SUB-THEME 2 Reach of information

- needs to be widespread and as far reaching through various channels

#### SUB-THEME 3 Trust in information

- at the beginning was severely lacking
- trust for Ministry of Health (MOH) gradually increased



#### SUB-THEME 4 Fake news / Information

- Misinformation can cause
- distress
  - panic
  - riots (worse case)

#### SUB-THEME 5 Handling of misinformation

- need to be managed in a decisive, but not totalitarian that stops the spread and reduces widespread panic



#### SUB-THEME 6 Resource allocation

- is vital in ensuring communication and services reaches to the target audience

## THEME 2:

### COMMUNICATION CONSIDERATIONS AND MEDIA

#### SUB-THEME 1

##### *Clear and understandable recommendations & messages*

- needed to be easy for news media and targeted audiences to understand



#### SUB-THEME 2

##### *Rapid & accurate information dissemination*

- needs to be disseminated as fast as possible



#### SUB-THEME 3

##### *Credible spokesperson*

- A single or several key spokespersons are imperative in delivering accurate information



#### SUB-THEME 4

##### *Communication tailoring towards sub-groups*

- Tailoring of messages, recommendations and materials is essential to ensure the information can be easily understood and accepted



#### SUB-THEME 5

##### *Media & Networking*

- Relationship with media is imperative as the information conveyed by media who themselves act as a tool in information dissemination



## THEME 3:

### DEVELOPMENT & EVALUATION OF MEDIA & PUBLIC COMMUNICATION

#### SUB-THEME 1

##### *Communication plans and chain of command*

- must follow a standardized process that is credible and through a clear chain of command



#### SUB-THEME 2

##### *SME and expertise essential to process*

- Input from scientists and subject matter experts (SME) are critical in formulating key messages and developing plans or materials



#### SUB-THEME 3

##### *Outcomes in assessing communication effectiveness*

- Various methods can be used in assessing effectiveness of communication and its effect can be fairly prevalent



“Malaysia is amazing!” This was one of about a thousand responses from Japanese netizens to a tweet praising Malaysia’s guidelines to its people in the wake of the Covid-19 coronavirus disease outbreak in China.

(Japanese citizens hail Malaysia’s response to Covid-19 outbreak on social media/Malay Mail/20-02-2020)



## THEME 4:

### AMPLIFICATION OF RISK

#### SUB-THEME 1 Traditional and social media

- the mix between traditional and social media can effectively influence the public



#### SUB-THEME 2 Experts in providing information

- especially in infectious disease experts, physicians and hospitals are perceived as the best public influencer in communicating information



#### SUB-THEME 3 Government agencies in managing the event

- have a strong role to play in influencing the public's behaviour through regulations and management



#### SUB-THEME 4 NGO's role

- (NGO's) can also help manage the crisis especially NGO's that are familiar to the public

#### SUB-THEME 5 Negative effects

- sometimes media reporting can cause undesirable reactions due to misinterpretation and may cause panic; especially during disease outbreaks



#### SUB-THEME 6 Individual privacy

- Public concealment to information especially on individual's identity is necessary to avoid unwanted attention or cause backlash

## CONCLUSION

Although information cannot be fully controlled, better management can be applied to outbreak incidences via proper information dissemination. The following recommendation can be applied to future outbreaks:

### Recommendations

- 01** Pre-emptive information dissemination via a singular, formal channel to avoid misinformation or spread of fake news
- 02** Constant updates to targeted population or sub-population through a trustworthy spokesperson would allay speculation and answer all impending questions
- 03** All experts should corroborate in talking in the same language to avoid conflict of information that can lead to further confusion

