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## HOW DO JAKARTA'S MILLENNIALS PERCEIVE THE FEAR OF COVID-19 OUTBREAK'S BEGINNING?

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**Abstract.** *This article discusses emotional expression and experience of Jakarta millennials in perceiving fear at the beginning of the Covid-19 outbreak in Indonesia. This research was conducted through a case study method which was narrated descriptively. The initial concept led this research in finding data was the Extended Parallel Process Model theory proposed by Kim Witte and several supporting concepts in emotional communication. The results show that Jakarta millennials perceive fear as internal anxiety created by threats as an external danger. They consider Covid-19 as a frightening threat with a high level of vulnerability and severity that has an impact on health, economic and social aspects. They also have a high level of efficacy by having the understanding of Covid-19 and health protocols and efforts to implement them. Individual differences through media literacy and direct experience of Covid-19 are important aspects that encourage efficacy to achieve danger control from fear that change beliefs, intentions, attitudes, and behaviors of Jakarta millennials in fighting the transmission of Covid-19 through the application of health protocols.*

**Keywords:** *Fear; Covid-19; Millennial; Media; Experience.*

**Abstrak.** Artikel ini membahas mengenai ekspresi dan pengalaman emosi milenial Jakarta dalam mempersepsi rasa takut pada awal wabah Covid-19 di Indonesia. Penelitian ini dilakukan melalui metode studi kasus yang dinarasikan secara deskriptif. Konsep awal yang mengantarkan penelitian ini dalam menemukan data adalah teori *Extended Parallel Process Model* yang diajukan Kim Witte dan beberapa konsep pendukung dalam komunikasi emosional. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa milenial Jakarta mempersepsi takut sebagai kekhawatiran yang bersifat internal yang diciptakan oleh ancaman sebagai bahaya yang bersifat eksternal. Mereka menganggap Covid-19 sebagai ancaman yang menakutkan dengan tingkat kerentanan dan keseriusan yang tinggi yang berdampak pada aspek kesehatan, ekonomi dan sosial. Mereka juga memiliki tingkat efikasi yang tinggi dengan adanya pemahaman tentang Covid-19 dan protokol kesehatan serta upaya penerapannya. Perbedaan individu melalui literasi media dan pengalaman langsung terhadap Covid-19 merupakan aspek penting yang mendorong efikasi untu mencapai pengendalian bahaya dari ketakutan yang mengubah kepercayaan, intensi, sikap dan perilaku milenial Jakarta dalam melawan penularan Covid-19 melalui penerapan protokol kesehatan.

**Kata kunci:** Rasa Takut; Covid-19; Milenial; Media; Pengalaman.



## INTRODUCTION

March 2, 2020, Indonesia's Presiden Joko Widodo announced the first positive case of Covid-19 in Indonesia (Fadil, 2021). Covid-19 has occurred in various regions, especially in big cities such as Jakarta. Jakarta as the capital city of Indonesia is the center of government, economy, and international traffic. Jakarta is the city with the highest Covid-19 cases in Indonesia (Dzulfaroh, 2021).

Covid-19 threatens and fears every individual age level, as well as the millennial generation as one of the most vulnerable groups (Rodríguez-Hidalgo et al., 2020). In 2045, Indonesia will face a demographic bonus where millennials, as the majority productive age with an estimated 63.5 million (50% of the world's working population) (IDN & Nielsen, 2020), will be the locomotive of Indonesia's development. Unlike the previous generation, millennial characters are directly influenced by environmental aspects such as peers, culture, media, and the education system (Ng & Johnson, 2015).

The presence of Covid-19 will affect millennials as the nation's next generation. This virus can do irreversible damage to the health, education, nutrition and well-being of children around the world (UNICEF, 2020). Besides having an impact on physical health, Covid-19 also has an impact on psychological health which can lead to emotional feelings such as fear.

Fear has had an influence in the development of a pandemic. Fear control is as crucial as efforts to prevent, treat, and physically recover from the impact of COVID-19. Fear has psychological and psychiatric implications that are no less crucial to overcome. In a pandemic, fear increases anxiety and stress levels in individual health and intensifies symptoms for individuals with pre-existing psychiatric disorders (Ornell et al., 2020).

The Extended Parallel Process Model (EPPM) (Anderson & Guerrero, 2011; Witte, 1992a) attempts to refine the theory of the fear approach through the integration of previous theories (Leventhal, 1970; Rogers W., 1983; Janis, 1967 in Witte, 1992b). According to the EPPM, messages that arouse fear start from assessing the threat and the ability to overcome it, namely efficacy. This assessment resulted in three responses to the message: no response, acceptance, or rejection. When an individual fears, one assesses the level of severity (How dangerous is Covid-19?) and susceptibility (Am I at risk of catching Covid-19?) of threats (threat = severity + susceptibility). Second, one assesses the level of efficacy (solution) which consists of response efficacy (Do health protocols prevent the dangers of

Covid-19?) and self-efficacy (Will I apply the health protocol?) against threats (efficacy = response efficacy + self-efficacy). The level of threat and efficacy determine whether the individual will subsequently control the danger rationally (danger control) or control the fear emotionally (fear control).

If severity and susceptibility are low, then the message is not responded to because the individual does not feel threatened. As a result, fear is ignored, does not process any information about the recommended efficacy and so there is no change in attitude, intention, or behavior.

If severity and susceptibility are high, the individual feels threatened and becomes afraid. Threats become greater thereby increasing fear and conversely amplified fear increases threat.

When the efficacy is higher or as high as the threat, the individual will be involved in the danger control process. High efficacy coupled with high threat encourages protection motivation and danger control responses in which people think carefully about the recommended responses in persuasive messages and adopt them as a tool to control harm. Threats can mediate the relationship between fear and danger control.

If the threat exceeds efficacy, then the process of controlling fear occurs. Thus, the perceived efficacy is low. Conditions strengthen when the perceived threat is high to encourage defensive motivation. Individuals will focus on efforts to eliminate fear through denial, defensive avoidance, or irrelevant reactions. Fear plays an important role in the fear control process because it is a direct cause of fear control responses.

Individual differences, such as worldview, trait variables (e.g., control locus and anxiety), or past experiences indirectly influence outcomes (e.g., attitudes, intentions, behavior, etc.). In contrast, individual differences were considered to affect threat perception and efficacy only, which in turn affected the results. Thus, the EPPM suggests that individual differences indirectly affect outcomes, mediated by perceived threat and efficacy.

Several literatures examine EPPM theories and concepts as well as those related to fear in the context of health in general and specifically in the context of the Covid-19 Pandemic. Several studies have looked at the effectiveness and gaps in EPPM theory (Berto, 2015; Eriyanto & Zarkasih, 2018; Gharlipour et al., 2015; Karimi et al., 2017; Kotowski et al., 2011; Moylett & Hevey, 2019; Popova, 2012; Rintamaki & Yang, 2014; Zhang Meadows, 2020; Zonouzy et al., 2019). Other studies have tried to analyze fear

through testing the validity and reliability of the Fear of Covid-19 Scale (FCV-19s) and other fear measurement tools (Ahorsu et al., 2020; Caycho-Rodríguez et al., 2021; Jahangiry et al., 2020; Sakib et al., 2020; Soraci et al., 2020; Stănculescu, 2021). Other researchers have looked at fear in the context of the Covid-19 Pandemic in various ways such as its relationship to social collectivism (Huang et al., 2020), mental and physical health during self-isolation (Fernández-Abascal & Martín-Díaz, 2021), psychosocial, (Karataş & Tagay, 2021; López-Núñez et al., 2021; Yuan, 2021), justice (Bunch, 2021), and a qualitative fear study of migrant life experiences (Finell et al., 2021).

Previous studies looked at the effectiveness of the EPPM quantitatively. Only the main concepts tested such as threat, efficacy and control processes that affect changes in attitudes, intentions, beliefs, and behavior. Individual differences such as world view, experience, trait variables and other factors have not been studied in depth with a qualitative approach. In fact, individual differences are an important aspect that determines the level of threat and efficacy in individuals so that it indirectly determines the occurrence of individual changes to follow the expected persuasive message which is the expected outcome/result on the effectiveness of the EPPM. Thus, it is important to identify and to explore other factors in the aspect of individual differences along with the development of communication, information, and globalization technologies.

Introduced by the EPPM theory, researchers seek to identify Jakarta's millennial process in perceiving fear of the Covid-19 Pandemic at the beginning of its arrival and analyze the renewal of concepts, theories, or findings that can enrich the theory (Neuman, 2014).

## **METHOD**

Qualitative was chosen as approach to reveal the uniqueness of a social phenomenon through a critical interpretive approach that cannot be explored by quantitative research (Denzin&Lincoln, 2005). In addition, a qualitative approach was chosen to open up academic opportunities in extending the concepts, principles, and theories that exist in the EPPM theory. The following describes some important aspects of the qualitative research methodology framework that the researcher presents (Hennink et al., 2011).

This research was conducted in Indonesia, specifically the Jakarta area. Jakarta was chosen because it is the city and province with the highest number of Covid-19 case. Therefore, the determination of the context is done intentionally. Jakarta is also the capital city, the center of

government, the center of the economy, and the densest population mobility in Indonesia. This research was conducted in October, in the first year of the Covid-19 epidemic in Indonesia.

Population in this research is college students who live/domiciled in Jakarta. They were chosen because of the consideration of the ideal and moderate representation of the millennial generation in various aspects. Participants in this study were determined purposively based on research context. This case study research takes a student who lives/domiciled in Jakarta. Data were collected from 13 university/college students who had studied for more than two semesters; originated/domiciled in Jakarta before and during the Covid-19 outbreak; not currently experiencing/confirmed Covid-19; and engaged in activities outside home several times in a week. The social and economic status of the participants were not differentiated.

Data were collected through online semi-structured interviews (Bryman, 2008) using social media to get direct and authentic responses from Jakarta millennials regarding their expressions and experiences in perceiving the fear caused by Covid-19 from various perspectives, arguments, and belief. With this qualitative interview, hopefully rich and in-depth data will be collected so that it can see what the various beliefs and arguments of the participants are and how the fear of the epidemic affects the emotions and ways of thinking of the participants. The data collected is used to see how participants respond and process information/emotional messages of fear of Covid-19. So that it has an impact on beliefs that are able to change/not change attitudes, intentions, and behaviors to avoid or reduce the impact of Covid-19.

Data is recorded with a digital recording device. The interviewer is the researcher himself using Indonesian language. The data obtained from the interviews were then transcribed, processed, and analyzed directly by the researcher. The identity of the participants in this study is maintained and kept confidential so that only the researcher knows the identity of the participants. Likewise, all data obtained is sorted so that only general data are clearly written in the transcript, while personal and sensitive data are used pseudonyms and only use initials.

The analytical approach used is grounded theory (Neuman, 2014). The findings in the data are drawn at the concept/theory level so that they can better understand how the phenomenon of fear of COVID-19 can be seen from the point of view of academics and social sciences. In general, the data were analyzed using the Strauss coding method (Bryman, 2008). The core work of analysis on qualitative data is carried out through: code

development (deductive and inductive); description; comparison; categorization; conceptualization; and theory development which is carried out circularly and simultaneously. More than that, it is hoped that new ideas/concepts can be found that can explain the fear approach to the Covid-19 phenomenon. In collecting data, researchers used WhatsApps social media through the video call feature. The data will also be verified through documentation studies as a secondary instrument and the triangulation process. The analyzed data was also verified through an empirical data strategy by re-examining the data; match with alternative theory; and validation from participants.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### *The Understanding and Reasons Behind Fear of Covid-19 threat*

Some Jakarta millennials are at home during the epidemic, such as online lectures; do homework; assisting the family business; teach online tutoring; and surf on smartphone like social media. Some do activities outside the home such as working outside; community activities such as recitation; afternoon exercise; assisting the family business outside the home; and teach private lessons to students' homes. Basically there is a change in the habits of daily activities due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Fear is a crucial psychological problem. Participants who are millennials understand fear in several ways. Fear is interpreted as a sense of worry, anxiety, emotion, restlessness, anxiety about danger/threats. Fear is also interpreted as a response to external stimuli such as situations that give pain or danger/threats.

Meanwhile, millennials understand threats as dangerous and risky external subjects/objects, factors, potentials, or warnings that can create fear, restlessness, worry, anxiety, and discomfort. They believe threats can change things through certain actions and things. Thus, it can be said that threats cause fear.

Millennials reason to be afraid of Covid-19 because they are able to bring many problems in life. The fear of Covid-19 has an impact on aspects such as health and the economy. Besides, Covid-19 is a very contagious disease, spreading so fast and causing death. The outbreak was so clear and the impact was so real. Apart from themselves, millennials are also afraid of being virus carriers for their families at home. It was revealed that everyone has the potential without exception to the spread of this virus.

*"...Why can we be afraid of covid-19? Because it makes our minds become worried about this dangerous virus."*

Fear arises from threats. Covid-19 is a threat to health. People feel threatened because the number of infected in Indonesia is increasing and so are the dead. It does not only attack health, but also attacks other aspects of life such as the economy, thereby giving the community a potential crisis.

### *The Vulnerability and The Seriousness of Covid-19*

Millennials in Jakarta revealed that there are those who feel vulnerable (high vulnerability) and not vulnerable (low vulnerability) to Covid-19 transmission. Those who feel vulnerable reason that Covid-19 is a virus that can spread from one person to another very quickly. In addition, with the emergence of cases in every age range and there are even people who are infected without symptoms, those who feel they are young, diligent in exercising, consuming nutritious food and having high immunity feel that they are still vulnerable due to the indiscriminate reasons. However, there are also those who feel optimistic that they are not vulnerable if they are able to implement health protocols and adopt a healthy lifestyle. They argue that prevention is better than cure.

*"I don't think it's just me but all those people who are actually vulnerable to covid. So we really can't underestimate it and as much as possible we are also on guard so as not to get infected because anyone can be vulnerable to contracting this covid..."*

Millennials in Jakarta consider Covid-19 to be a very serious virus. They know that Covid-19 generally attacks human health. They considered this virus dangerous because it interferes with breathing, is highly contagious, is susceptible to infecting medical workers and can cause death. People with congenital disease (comorbid) and the elderly are vulnerable. There are no effective drugs and vaccines yet, which worsens public health conditions. Therefore, millennials in Jakarta view a good immune system as important because it can relieve symptoms and speed up healing.

Fear decreases in individuals with higher levels of education and who perceive health well. Fear of the threat of Covid-19 can be controlled rationally when it has a high perception of efficacy. Efficacy is thus directly proportional to the level of

individual education and literacy of health information about Covid-19. Students are at a high level of education and as millennials have good digital literacy which supports increasing health information literacy.

The pandemic has threatened the health system, economy, and social affiliation in Indonesia. In the economic aspect, people find it difficult to meet their daily needs due to activity restrictions. This economic attack has the potential to cause a crisis in society. Millennials said that it was difficult for people to make money because all economic sectors experienced a drastic decline due to the impact of layoffs, reductions in employees, being laid off or working not full-time. The result is a decrease in income. Workers and employers are affected without exception. Covid-19 has also caused purchasing power to decline. Therefore, many small businesses close.

Participant see that the government is afraid of the economic impact of Covid-19 from the beginning until the pandemic is still ongoing. At the beginning of his arrival, Covid-19 also created fear in the community so that there was panic buying, especially for basic needs and health protocol tools such as masks. Demand for medical devices has increased in line with high prices. As a result, there was a shortage of medical equipment. Millennials view that social assistance (bansos) from the government in the form of cash and basic necessities has not been distributed optimally and evenly. They caught the issue of misappropriation of social assistance funds by individuals for personal or certain group interests.

Likewise, hospital personnel and medical personnel who manipulate test results and the deaths of Covid-19 patients to get special Covid-19 assistance from the government. When the public and the government are both afraid and panicked about Covid-19, the potential for blaming each other is even higher. This indicates that emotional thinking is more dominant than rational thinking. Therefore, all parties should focus on overcoming the dangers and impacts on various aspects of Covid-19 and using fear to increase response efficacy and self-efficacy (participant 3).

Covid-19 also has an impact on other aspects besides health and the economy. on the education side, learning activities are organized through online learning. Covid-19 also affects social life such as the limitations of community mobilization. Face-to-face interactions did not occur as usual. Crowds are prone to the spread of the virus so they should be avoided. Activity restrictions apply in various aspects of life such as in public facilities and places, only some vital aspects such as the provision of basic commodities that continue to run normally. Public places and

facilities are deemed to have to adapt health protocols (participant 5).

### *Efficacy, Control and Self-Change*

Millennials in Jakarta have shown that in responding to Covid-19 they have knowledge of health protocols (response efficacy) and apply that knowledge both consistently and not consistently (self-efficacy). Examples of response efficacy, for example, are shown by their knowledge of health protocols and clean and healthy lifestyles/patterns (PHBS), especially when leaving the house or traveling. Knowledge and understanding of health protocols understood by millennials include the behavior of wearing a mask to cover the nose and mouth every time they leave the house, washing their hands with soap or using hand sanitizer on their hands after handling certain objects/items, keeping their distance, or doing social distancing from other people to protect their health. avoid splashes (droplets), and do not come into direct contact with people who are sick. Some millennials try to maintain cleanliness, maintain health, exercise, and consume nutritious food. This shows how these millennials apply a healthy lifestyle in their daily life in the midst of the increasingly rampant pandemic.

*"Especially by wearing a mask every time I leave the house, diligently washing my hands and keeping my distance from other people."*

The application of health protocols and a healthy lifestyle is considered an effective way which they know is a recommendation from the government to prevent or minimize the transmission of Covid-19. They say that it is important to know the risks and avoid them. They agreed to follow the health protocol policies campaigned by the government. Health protocols are proven to protect against the transmission of Covid-19. Health protocols are the most effective and easy way to avoid exposure to Covid-19. Some said that good health protocols were supported by social quarantine (lockdown) and strengthening of health services by adding more Covid-19 tests.

Self-efficacy is how consistent and disciplined individuals are in implementing response efficacy (knowledge about Covid-19 and its prevention). In this case, self-efficacy is how consistent and disciplined millennials are in applying health protocols in everyday life both at home and (especially) outside the home when traveling. Millennials in Jakarta stated that they are trying to be consistent and disciplined in implementing health protocols because they don't want to be infected with the virus and transmit it.

In the millennial perception, the new normal is considered good in improving the community's economy after restricting social activities. The public needs to be encouraged to obey and be disciplined with health protocols so that the new normal does not appear to be the cause of the increase in positive cases of Covid-19, especially in big cities. The transition from old to new normal needs to be done because people have been in trouble for a long time. With the new normal, people can return to their original activities but still by following the health protocols announced by the government. Some people consider the new normal to be the same as being normal and safe from Covid-19 so that health protocols are ignored (Aly et al., 2020). Socialization of the new normal from the government is also considered to be still lacking for the people. Health protocols must consistently be maintained at individuals, facilities, and public places. For example, tourist attractions and shopping centers have started implementing the health protocols recommended by the government.

Hazard control against the threat of Covid-19 is very important. But it often happens that some people are only able to control their fear. In general, millennials see people believing in Covid-19, but there are also those who believe that this virus was created and planned for an interest and profit. For example, believing that COVID-19 is a Chinese conspiracy to win the trade war with America; believe in the issue of unscrupulous medical workers and hospitals manipulating patients and dead patients as if they were infected with Covid-19 to get financial assistance from the government. At the beginning, the government's handling was considered too late. The government and society are too confident and underestimate because they have natural immunity living in a tropical climate. Plus, initially there have been no cases or have not been detected because there is no virus detection test facility. Although millennials can understand that maybe this is done by the government to minimize public panic so they don't take Covid-19 too seriously. There are also inherited fears, such as people who are afraid not to eat and are afraid that their families will starve. Wearing a mask is afraid of raids by officers, not for fear of being exposed to Covid-19. There are also other irrational fears due to the arrival of guests/close relatives so that it is uncomfortable and awkward to keep a distance and use masks for fear of being considered unfamiliar and disrespectful.

The media has an important role in determining the public's understanding of whether

to control danger or control fear. Conspiracies through the media encourage people to believe in the manipulation of COVID-19. Massive information from various types of media, both new media (especially social media) and old media (especially television) increases the fear that exists among Jakarta millennials. News on TV, for example, makes people feel as if Covid-19 was scarier than reality. Likewise, the existence of films with the theme of epidemics seems to provide a frightening prediction about what bad possibilities will happen when the world is attacked by a virus outbreak. The cartoon series *The Simpson* is told to describe current events such as the virus, lockdown, and self-isolation even though this film was long before Covid-19 existed. They believe that there are some people who spread hoax news about Covid-19 that contradict the narrative with recommendations for implementing health procedures or information about medicines that are not yet credible and clinically and scientifically tested. Hoaxes make people do not believe in the existence of Covid-19. Some believe in the issue of the Covid-19 conspiracy, such as the issue that was buzzing on Twitter that this virus was originally made in China or America, which was leaked.

On the other hand, the media also helps in providing information regarding the handling of Covid-19. Millennials believe in the media, information and policies campaigned by the government on the grounds that as a society we must always remain vigilant about the Covid-19 outbreak. More than that, it is important to know the information accurately. They hope that the public will be able to distinguish between correct information and false information or hoax news circulating. These millennials understand that it is important to keep up to date with the latest information from reliable sources. There are millennials who did not believe in Covid-19, over time and saw news in the media about Covid-19 and then believed that Covid-19 was really real.

Millennials who had believed in the Covid-19 conspiracy through social media were awakened by the change in belief in Covid-19 when a relative, family, or close neighbor of the family was exposed to a Covid-19 case and died. From these cases, millennials believe that Covid-19 has really happened all this time. In addition, millennials who have suffered from diseases related to viruses or bacteria such as tuberculosis feel confident that Covid-19 exists and strive to be consistent in implementing health protocols. It can be concluded that the media and direct experience of Covid-19

make individuals believe that Covid-19 is really real and exists.

*"In my opinion, this Covid is a conspiracy, a virus created by human hands with the aim of seeking profit from this pandemic...(participant 13)*

*"...But everything changed when a close relative of mine turned out to be positive and died, followed by his child and housemaid who also died. I believe that covid does exist...(participant 11)*

### *Finding Analysis*

Millennials experience drastic changes in their daily activities. Millennials are reducing physical activity and increasing more time to stay at home during activity restrictions due to Covid-19 (Castañeda-Babarro et al., 2020). It is important for millennials to implement specific implementations on the emotional side, especially for vulnerable groups, to minimize psychological problems that may increase with the pandemic (Koçak et al., 2021).

Emotions are one of the most important parts of life. The emotions of fear and sadness have a socio-political importance in the resolution of life. Emotion, according to Aristotle and contemporary literature, is an important determining factor, an explanatory factor, and an indispensable companion for reasoning in making decisions (Briassoulis, 2019). The Covid-19 pandemic has increased fear, anxiety, stress and depression in students in countries that are seriously affected by Covid-19 (Rodríguez-Hidalgo et al., 2020). People are more prone to worry, depression and stress, especially in people with psychiatric disorders (Lauvrak&Juvet, 2020). Good emotional control and resilience are important supporting factors for millennials in overcoming Covid-19.

Ortony et al. (1987) defined emotion as an internal mental state primarily focused on affect. Emotions are internal rather than external. Emotions are affective states, not physical, cognitive, or behavioral states. This confirms the finding that fear as an emotion is internal, whereas threat is an external factor that affects fear. Evolution has made feelings/emotions a solution to existing problems by interacting with the environment. The primary function of feelings is to guide behavior (Anderson & Guerrero, 2011). Fear due to the threat of Covid-19 can encourage adaptive behavior changes that can save individuals from threats.

Fear due to the Covid-19 virus has increased levels of depression, stress, and worry, including millennials. It is estimated that there are many psychological issues for people with poor health and

people with friends/family who get sick or die from Covid-19. In addition, it is said that the fear of family members contracting Covid-19 is higher than the fear for themselves and in women is higher than in men (Cori et al., 2021). Millennials aged 16-25 years, especially women, have higher fear, worry, depression, and stress (Koçak et al., 2021). This is in line with the author's research which focuses on millennials as a crucial group and has potential problems in the future. However, gender differences are not the focus that the authors highlight.

As millennials think, scientists around the world are shocked and panicked to realize how quickly the virus spreads among people with eighty cases of death and over four thousand confirmed cases in 5 days (Kumar et al., 2020). Covid-19 is currently recognized as a pandemic by the World Health Organization (WHO) as more than 200 countries and territories worldwide are affected with increasing incidence (Peng, 2020).

Students as millennials are one of the most vulnerable to contracting Covid-19 (Rodríguez-Hidalgo et al., 2020), so adherence to health procedures and a healthy lifestyle are factors that determine how vulnerable students are to contracting the virus. Basically, all segments of the population are affected by Covid-19. However, some specific groups including children, the elderly and people with disabilities are more vulnerable than others. In comparison to millennials, older people are socially vulnerable due to mobility limitations and pre-existing social exclusion and isolation. The elderly are also economically vulnerable with the highest poverty rate in Indonesia. Only a few have access to minimum income support or pensions (Larasati, 2020).

Apart from the age context, Estrela et al. (2020) revealed that gender, class and race emerged as conditions that were vulnerable to Covid-19 exposure. It is contextually important to reveal the historical need to implement strategies to improve the lives of these populations during and after the pandemic ends. The author does not present this context to add diversity and depth to the review of millennial characteristics. Whereas millennial analysis in terms of gender, class and race will provide additional information considering that Jakarta is a very heterogeneous big city.

In the context of the research setting, Jakarta as one of the most populous cities in the world is also where the majority of the poor live. A study reveals the state of structured poverty in a country and the large inequalities among regions and ethnic groups influencing the spread of the pandemic. The pandemic response must prioritize the most vulnerable groups and reinforce the need for coordinated national action (Tavares & Betti, 2021).

This indicates that millennials from the lower middle group are so vulnerable to Covid-19.

Cases and death rates in Jakarta continue to grow due to the health impact of Covid-19. Globally, as of June 12, 2020, more than 7.5 million confirmed cases of Covid-19 with more than 421,000 deaths worldwide have been reported to WHO. The absence of a specific drug that is agreed upon to treat Covid-19 raises the urgent need for the development of antiviral drugs (Peng, 2020).

The economic impact of this virus is gradually becoming apparent. The outcome of this pandemic will probably be the end of globalization when trade and dependence on other countries will stop. Or conversely, the consolidation of globalization by providing enormous synergies to deepen and develop relations between countries (Moise et al., 2021). More specifically, Covid-19 affects employment and livelihoods in developing countries (Meester & Ooijens, 2020), especially in big cities like Jakarta. Only when the pandemic is over will society be able to fully assess the health, social and economic impacts of this global disaster and society should be able to take lessons especially in terms of public and global health for similar types of pandemics in the future (Di Gennaro et al., 2020). In the food sector, the Covid-19 crisis threatens the sustainability of the food and nutrition of millions of people (UN, 2020). In Jakarta, for example, there was a panic buying phenomenon where people flocked to buy and collect food and health stocks, resulting in a shocking shortage.

The crisis has crippled demand and supply; creates great uncertainty and long-term changes in consumer preferences and production practices. This makes everything so vulnerable and creates many new challenges. This crisis is one of the most severe blows to the track record of economic growth (Davradakis et al., 2020). In Jakarta, for example, Tanah Abang Market as the busiest market in Southeast Asia experienced a significant decline in economic activity. Millennials living in Jakarta are not only faced with health challenges, but also the economy.

Millennials in Jakarta once mentioned the implementation of social quarantine (lockdown). Social quarantine due to the virus has a serious impact on the economy not only at the city/country level, but globally (Davradakis et al., 2020). From several literature studies, it is said that people who have less income, are poor, live in deprived areas, refugees and certain ethnic backgrounds are associated with an ever-increasing risk of Covid-19 (especially the risk of death) compared to the general

population. These characteristics are the same as the city where Jakarta millennials live. Thus, the vulnerability of Jakarta's millennials is increasing in the absence of the implementation of social quarantine in Indonesia.

As suggested by millennials in Jakarta that in the short term, gradual efforts are needed to stop the spread of the virus, ensure that the entire population follows the recommendations for maximum prevention, and ensure the full involvement of government public health services (Tavares & Betti, 2021). However, the early days of the outbreak experienced by Jakarta millennials still hold many mysteries. Much is still unknown about the health effects of Covid-19. For example, it is not well known how the virus spreads; why it causes high mortality in some countries and low in others; and it is not known when a vaccine was discovered (there is no really effective vaccine yet) (Davradakis et al., 2020). Millennials consider health protocols to be the greatest opportunity. However, health protocols are easy to formulate but difficult to implement in the field (Fridayani & Iqbal, 2020).

As in Indonesia, especially in Jakarta, research in Brazil shows that many Brazilians lack the capacity to prevent and recover from Covid-19 infection (Tavares & Betti, 2021). In Indonesia, as both developing countries, the similar conditions do not seem much different. Poverty is structured due to the fact that the large population is not able to fully implement the recommended preventive measures and because of social conditions, the health care system cannot meet the basic requirements to avoid preventable deaths (Tavares & Betti, 2021). For a heterogeneous city like Jakarta, an effective social intervention is needed. Interventions are seen as important because they can improve individual mental health during a pandemic (Yıldırım & Güler, 2020). The role of volunteers and social workers in helping reduce the spread and minimize the impact of Covid-19 is very crucial and needed by the Indonesian people. Many individuals have high response efficacy (knowledge) about Covid-19 and health protocols. The participation of these individuals is needed in Covid-19 education. Education is needed to encourage self-efficacy in health-related matters during the Covid-19 pandemic (Dadfar & Sanadgol, 2020). The millennial generation, especially those represented by students, are potential agents of social change in meeting these criteria, as shown by some millennials in Jakarta.

It is certain that fear and the perception of risk that are connected directly and indirectly play a role in the preventive behavior that Jakarta millennials



adopt and the interventions they approve of. Assessing fear is also important because of its relationship to public health conditions by considering the protective significance of fear as an assumption of personal and collective responsibility in the beginning of an uncertain future (Cori et al., 2021). As mentioned by millennials, the main target for Covid-19 is to suppress transmission; provide optimal care for all patients and save lives; and minimize the impact of the epidemic on health systems, social services and economic activity (WHO, 2021).

In the realm of regulations, policies and local legal products for optimizing the application of health protocols, it is deemed necessary to be specific and serve as a reference. It is necessary to review its compliance with legal norms and the stages of policy formulation (Mustamu & Bakarbesy, 2020). Jakarta as the center and pilot of policy implementation should be a good example for other regions. Such as the new normal policy which is the government's effort to reduce the economic impact due to the pandemic so that it does not cause a prolonged crisis (Muhyiddin, 2020). The new normal means that people are required to continue to comply with health protocols in their daily activities, so there is a need for adaptation. On the one hand, the new normal has the opportunity to improve the economy, but on the other hand it provides an opportunity for the threat of positive cases of Covid-19 (Fridayani & Iqbal, 2020), as Millennials guessed.

Millennials in Jakarta are able to convert emotional input into rational output. Specifically, Krumhuber & Scherer (2011) argue that emotions are characterized by four components, namely cognitive components, readiness for action, feelings, and physiological changes. Cognitive and affective components (feelings) are the two things that determine whether the individual's fear can lead him to overcome the danger of a threat rationally or even overcome the fear of the threat so that it seeks to eliminate fear, but does not eliminate the source of the fear itself. Some of Jakarta's millennials can control emotional and rational things in a balanced way.

It is undeniable by millennials in Jakarta that there are indeed parties who take advantage of the pandemic situation for the interests (benefits) of certain individuals/groups. This is able to erode public confidence in the pandemic, especially if the violation is carried out by government officials. Therefore, it is important to be able to maintain public trust and involvement in the fight against Covid-19. WHO proposes four key strategies for governments to maintain and strengthen public support for protective behavior against COVID-19: understanding communities through the collection

and use of evidence in the field; involve the community as part of the solution at every level of society; let people live their lives while still reducing the risk of the virus; and acknowledging and assisting the difficulties that communities are experiencing (WHO, 2020). As demanded by millennials in Jakarta, at the beginning of the outbreak, the government should be able to provide information related to the development of Covid-19 in a clear and transparent manner.

Policies and communications are the ultimate goal at maintaining and strengthening public support for protective behavior by adhering to the principles: transparent, by providing explanations of restrictions and changes and acknowledging the limitations of science and government; be consistent, in messages and actions and avoid size conflicts; strives for predictability in unpredictable situations; uphold fairness in every recommendation and limitation; and coordination, to avoid mixed messages (WHO, 2020). This is what Jakarta millennials seem to need from the government to eliminate misinformation during the pandemic.

Millennials in Jakarta expressed the urgency of media literacy so as to avoid hoaxes and misinformation. Communication and information traffic is so dense and dynamic in the era of global communication. The world community 2020 requires a connected community (Mitra & Agrawal, 2016), so that any information about anything in the world can influence people in other parts of the world. Billions of people create trillions of connections through social media every day, but few people realize how each click and push button builds the connection which, in the aggregate, makes up such a huge social network. The result is a very large, complex network of connections that connect people to communities, documents, locations, concepts, and other objects (Hansen et al., 2011). The mass media is also the main source of information about Covid-19. As with previous pandemics such as SARS (2003), H1N1 (2009), and MERS (2012), the media has significantly contributed to the Covid-19 infodemic (Anwar et al., 2020). Media coverage of Covid-19 during times of social restrictions, economic and social difficulties can stimulate fear and cause psychological distress (Anwar et al., 2020). The media, in a positive way, also increase the reach of broad and continuous public health communications (Anwar et al., 2020).

In the end, Jakarta millennials explained clearly that direct experience with Covid-19 changed their perspective on Covid-19. It is thought that there are many psychological issues for people in poor health and for people with friends and family who have fallen ill or died from Covid-19. In addition, there is a significant relationship between fear of

Covid-19 and stress, worry, and depression. Likewise, there is a significant moderating effect when having a congenital disease/experience of a similar illness and having a friend or family member infected or died from Covid-19 (Koçak et al., 2021). Thus, fear through media messages and personal experiences with the pandemic has an effect on the individual control process whether they ultimately try to control the danger or even control fear which ultimately has a negative effect on efforts to deal with Covid-19.

## CONCLUSION

Fear is understood by Jakarta millennials as a concern about threats. Fear is a form of emotion that is internal while threats are external which play a role in creating fear. Jakarta Millennials feel afraid and threatened because they feel vulnerable to contracting Covid-19, although some feel optimistic by consistently implementing health protocols and healthy lifestyles. Covid-19 is a serious disease that causes problems not only in the health aspect but also in the economic and social aspects. Jakarta Millennials have high response efficacy and self-efficacy with an understanding of Covid-19 and health protocols and strive to apply them consistently in daily activities. Threat and high efficacy are influenced by individual differences in producing hazard control over fear control. Individual differences that play a significant role in encouraging individual hazard control to change beliefs, intentions, attitudes and behaviors against the transmission of Covid-19 through the application of health protocols and healthy lifestyles are media literacy and direct experience of self and family/relatives against Covid-19.

This research provides a concept updateing the EPPM theory where media and direct experience are factors that influence the increase in threat and efficacy which are important aspects in perceiving Covid-19. However, this study cannot be generalized to a larger population because the data generated through interviews cannot provide comprehensive results in a population. Thus, it is important for further research related to the concept of fear, millennials, and in general in the psychological and social fields to use a quantitative approach to obtain generalized results of perceptions of fear of Covid-19.

This research is socially expected to be a consideration for the government and society in fighting the Covid-19 Pandemic and its derivative impacts on the social and economic dimensions. The government is deemed necessary to provide a more humanistic, transparent, and communicative-

effective approach to prevention and social rehabilitation for Covid-19, especially for the millennial generation as the generation whose future will be affected by the current pandemic situation. It is important or young generation to build a rational perception and mindset, positive-oriented emotion, management skills, and scientific fact-based information literacy skills.

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