AVIATION POLICY REGARDING COVID-19 PROTOCOL FOR PASSENGERS

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Abstract. The purpose of this study is to evaluate the aviation policy and its implementation which focuses on passenger perception toward COVID-19 policy. Providing recommended solutions to the aviation authority of Indonesia to operate the policies effectively is important, thus air transport passengers can follow the procedures and feel safe and comfortable in a flight. This study used descriptive-qualitative methods with data collection techniques through depth-interview and document analysis. This aviation authority policy can work well if there are good collaboration and socialization for all parties involved. The result of this study is that the aviation authority policy related to COVID-19 is quite good, but its implementation, socialization, and supervision must be improved.

Keywords: Transportation, Public Policy, Aviation Authority, Passenger’s Perception, COVID-19

1. Introduction

The rapid spread of COVID-19 in Indonesia has affected many of the country's driving sectors, especially the transportation sector, which is the aviation industry. To cope with this pandemic, the national aviation authority, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation through the Ministry of Transportation enacted several policies, such as public policy applied to both airports and aircraft. Public policy is a decision or regulation made by the authorities to address public issues, in hope that the goals of the organization can be achieved. The main feature of public policy is a regulation that is expected to address public problems. Public policy is essentially not permanent, but must always be adjusted, due to the always-changing circumstances, such as: political; social; economic; and information changes. (Dr. Bambang Sudarya⁵, 2017)

William N. Dunn states that effectiveness in public policy can be seen by combining various models, such as efficiency, adequacy, levelling, responsiveness, and accuracy. These variables can be used as tools to check on the effectiveness of policy since the five variables can affect the effectiveness of the existing policy. Efficiency is very much related to effectiveness, if resources is used optimally then the effectiveness of policy can run smoothly. Adequacy means whether the goal that has been achieved is sufficient or not. Thus it can be seen to what extent the level of effectiveness can satisfy the needs, values, or chance of arising problems. Equalization means that policy can work effectively if the policy result and effort are equal. Responsiveness refers to whether the policies made are well received or not by the public because the success of the policy can be seen through the public response to its implementation. Accuracy
means that once the above variables might result well, then it can be seen whether the policy is appropriate or not. (Effendi, 2015)

The policy that has been implemented is contained in Circular Letter No. 9 of 2020, stating the Criteria and Conditions for Travel in the New Adaptation Period for a Productive and Safe Community from Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19). Several ways, such as wearing masks, keeping physical distance, and handwashing can protect oneself from COVID-19. One of the travel requirements for domestic passengers is to show a Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) certificate with a negative result or a Rapid-Test test certificate with a non-reactive result which is valid for 14 days upon departure and arrival abroad. If the area does not provide PCR facilities and equipment, passengers are required to show a symptom-free illness such as influenza (influenza-like illness) issued by a Hospital Physician. Similarly, for the requirement of foreign arrival, each individual is required to perform a PCR Test on arrival if they have not done it since the letter of PCR Test results from the country of departure is not valid. In addition, the PCR Test for the foreign visitors is excluded from PLBN (State Border Post) that does not have PCR equipment. Instead, it is done by conducting a rapid test and showing a symptom-free illness such as influenza (like illness). (Gugus Tugas Percepatan Penanganan Covid-19, 2020)

Ministerial Regulation number 41 of 2020 Article 14 contains the rules for adjusting the capacity (slot time) of the airport based on the evaluation, and also the restriction of the number of passengers from the total seating capacity with the application of physical distancing. (Kementerian Perhubungan, 2020a)

Meanwhile, Circular Letter number 13 of 2020 explains how the health protocol is implemented by the airline. The airlines implement some policies, such as using face shield and gloves, as well as having their health monitoring program for pilots, cabin crew, engineers, FOO, and ground staff. They also provide hand sanitizers, clean surfaces often touched by passengers, and only allow flights with maximum 70% of normal capacity, as well as ensure that passengers fill out a Health Alert Card. (Kementerian Perhubungan, 2020b)

The policy must be disseminated well because dissemination is very important, if there is no dissemination then it can be ensured that any goal we intend for ourselves or others will not be achieved. Dissemination is not only to convey information but also to seek support from various community groups. This dissemination is one of the important activities for the survival of a company or government. (Amalana, 2016)

To make proper policy, an evaluation is needed. You can see that the evaluation process is not only done by policymakers but more importantly by the public who feel the impact of the policy and of course the experts. (Dr. H. Muhammad Ridha Suaib, S.E., M.Si., M.M., 2016)
Public participation carried out by civilians (not government officials) aims to influence government policy. The public role in influencing government policy becomes increasingly important along with the technological advances in the field of communication and transportation. In responding to information, we are often influenced by prejudices or initial perceptions of information sources and their forecasts. (Prof. Said Zainal Abidin, Ph.D., 2016a)

Government policies in the economic or political fields are always responded by the people. The response depends on each other's perceptions and interests. These responses usually continue as reactions that are different to take advantage of positive impacts or to avoid and minimize the negative consequences of a policy. Along with the growing awareness of the negative or positive effects of government policy, public awareness about the need to take a role in influencing the policy is increasing. The public awareness influences many things such as: determining problems or policy issues; the formulation of the problem; the priority of the inclusion of the issue in the policy agenda; policy formulation; ratification; as well as in the implementation and assessment of policies. (Prof. Said Zainal Abidin, Ph.D., 2016b)

In the previous study “Kebijakan Revitalisasi Sistem Transportasi Publik Sebagai Langkah Antisipatif Kemacetan Total Di Kota Malang” (Revitalization Policy of the Public Transportation System as Anticipatory Measures to Total Congestion in Malang) shows that to make an alternative policy as a solution to deal with more severe congestion in the future, the government should act quickly, responsively and anticipatively before severe traffic jams occur like in Jakarta. Collaboration from various parties is needed to actualize this idea. Starting from the government, road users, and the community as stakeholders. (Yunas & Huda, 2017)

In another study "Analisis Kebijakan Transportasi Dengan Menggunakan Metode Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP) Studi Kasus: Angkutan Umum di Kota Serang“ (Analysis of Transportation Policy Using the Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP) Method. Case Study: Public Transportation in Serang City) said that the main source of traffic and congestion in Serang was the limited Traffic Facilities and Infrastructure so that if there was an increase of vehicles that were not accompanied by the addition of facilities and infrastructure would almost certainly result in traffic density and traffic congestion. The main obstacle was the limited local financial resources with a value of 0.134, followed by a damaged infrastructure that was not immediately repaired with a value of 0.089. Meanwhile, when viewed from the aspect of increased transportation, the most important obstacle was that road growth was not proportional to the transportation growth with a value of 0.059. Besides, the main priorities to overcome transportation and traffic congestion problems in Serang were the Improvement of Traffic Facilities and Infrastructure with a value of 0.224, structuring important areas with a value of 0.185, setting the route / changing modes with a value of 0.171, enforcing discipline with a value of 0.164, using mass
transportation/busway with a value of 0.153, and cooperating with the Serang Regency Government with a value of 0.103. (Sirajuddin et al., 2016)

The study of "Analisis Kebijakan Transportasi di Kota Bandar Lampung (Studi pada Transportasi Ojek Online dan Transportasi Publik)" (Transportation Policy Analysis in Bandar Lampung (Study on Online Ojek Transportation and Public Transportation)) stated that the quality of public transportation services was poor due to the lowered fleet and rapid trans bus routes. Rapid trans buses were increasingly shrinking as a result of the public who prefer to use online transportation. Meanwhile, online transportation that was already operational did not have clear legal rules. The absence of legality of online transportation, resulting in no guarantee of safety for online transportation passengers and drivers from the government. The government was not in its readiness for the online transport policy in Bandar Lampung which made Rapid Trans Bus difficult to operate. The reduced BRT (Rapid Trans Bus) fleet and routes made it difficult for the public to have maximum access to public transportation services. (Herman, 2019)

The purpose of this study is to evaluate the policies from aviation authority regarding COVID-19 and their implementation in public spaces that focus on passenger perceptions, as well as providing recommended solutions to the Indonesian aviation authority to operate the policy effectively thus the passengers can follow the procedures and feel safe and comfortable in a flight.

2. Method

This study aims to evaluate the policies of the aviation authority in Indonesia represented by the Directorate General of Civil Aviation through the Ministry of Transportation. This study focused on passenger perceptions of policy in the aviation world in the time of COVID-19. Thus, the aviation authority can find out the shortcomings and improve the policy.

This study used a descriptive-qualitative approach with primary and secondary data sources. Primary data was in the form of interviews and secondary data was in the form of documents. Data collection techniques used were in-depth interviews and document analysis. In-depth interviews were conducted with passengers who experienced the aviation authority's policy in the time of COVID-19 and the manager of Garuda Indonesia was able to respond. The documents used in this study were Circular Letter No. 9 of 2020, Circular Letter No. 13 of 2020, and Government Regulation No. 41 of 2020. The data analysis that we used was data reduction by summarizing, choosing the main things, focusing on important things, and looking for themes and patterns. Therefore, the reduced data would give a clearer picture. (Sugiyono, 2017)

3. Discussion and Result
With the assistance and supervision rendered by the civil aviation stakeholder community, International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) suggested concerning a phased approach enabling the safe return to high-volume domestic and international air travel for passengers and cargo. The approach gives an introduction on an essential set of measures in forming a baseline aviation health safety protocol to preclude air passengers including aviation workers from COVID-19. Those measures will probably grow global aviation when it recovers from the current pandemic.

It is, nonetheless, crucial that each phase of the recovery needs two recalibrations of those measures supporting the common goal, which is to give a probability for air travel to consolidate new public health measures into the aviation system. Additionally, it is aimed at supporting economic recovery and growth. Our work should be capable of recognizing the needs so that public health risks can be minimized while having sensitiveness to what is operationally doable for airlines, airports, and other aviation interests. It is essential to ease the recovery during each of the impending phases.

In the effect of the COVID-19 outbreak, States, including government regulators, airports, airlines, and aircraft manufacturers among other stakeholders of the aviation ecosystem developed coordinates with public health authorities. A set of measures is undertaken so that health risks to air travellers, aviation workers, and the general public can probably be lessened.

Those measures are generated to provide a constant and foreseeable travel experience. Additionally, they give a contribution to the efficiency, safety, security, and sustainability for the transport by air of an increasing number of passengers and cargo and are likely to lower the risk of COVID-19 transmission between these groups and the public. The global recovery from the COVID-19 can be strengthened by implementing those measures. (ICAO, 2020a).

ICAO also stipulates the Public Health Risk Mitigation Measures, which is classified into two sections. The first section comprises generally applicable risk mitigation measures utilized in all phases of air passenger and cargo transport. The other section entails modules, attached to this appendix, which is specific to varied elements of air transport.

Implementing those measures should be carried carefully to ensure that it follows all applicable laws, regulations, requirements, standards, and guidance issued by relevant sub-national, national, and international authorities. Nothing in those guidelines has an intention in superseding or contradicting such requirements.

In general, practicable risk mitigation measures can be accomplished in numerous ways, such as Public Education, physical distancing, face-covering and mask, routine sanitation, health screening, contact tracing, health declarations, and testing. In public education, State and stakeholders have to work together so that
definite information can be disseminated rapidly. The information should be clear and reliable for the whole passengers travel experience. Additionally, social distancing should be retained by the World Health Organization (WHO) or applicable State health guidelines. Nonetheless, social distancing is not doable (e.g. in aircraft cabins). Accordingly, sufficient risk-based measures should be utilized. Face coverings should be worn, in line with applicable public health protocols. In all institutions, the efforts to prevent COVID-19, such as: when and how to wear facemask, how to take it off, to change, and to dispose of them, including hand hygiene after removal, must be adhered. Cleaning and disinfecting the potential spots for human contact and transmission need to be undertaken following what the public health authorities prescribe in the operational risk evaluation.

Screening encompasses pre-flight and post-flight self-declarations, temperature measurement, and visual observation carried out by health professionals. If a person is suspected to have symptoms of COVID-19, further action is compulsory. Exploring methods for collecting information and contact numbers are crucial, including web applications so that public health authorities can be assisted in contact tracing. Requesting updated contact information should be carried out since it is part of the health self-declaration. Additionally, the interaction between passengers and governments should be accomplished directly through government portals. Where feasible and justified, health declaration forms for COVID-19 need to be utilized for the entire passengers, following the health authorities recommendation. Encouraging self-declarations before arrival is also essential. Electronic tools should be capable to encourage paperless condition. Rapid tests cannot be a precondition for travel since they are unreliable and impracticable. Bear in mind that the rapid testing of all passengers before departure would not be viable unless there are more real-time, faster, and more reliable testing provided.

Risk mitigation measures, which are practicable in particular modules, need fixed guidance addressing Airport terminal building elements, such as: cleaning; disinfecting; hygiene; physical distancing; staff protection; access; check-in area; security screening; airside areas; gate installations; passenger transfer disembarking; baggage claim; and arrivals areas.

The aircraft module encompasses particular guidance addressing boarding processes, seat assignment processes, baggage, interaction on board, environmental control systems, food and beverage service, lavatory access, crew protection, management of sick passengers or crew members, and cleaning and disinfection of the flight deck, cabin, and cargo compartment.

In promoting safety and sustainability of international air travel, a closely coordinated international approach to the treatment of aircrews, in line with recognized public health standards, will be predominant for alleviating burdens on critical transport workers. It encompasses screening, quarantine requirements, and
immigration restrictions applying to other travellers. The attached crew module comprises particular guidance addressing the contact of a crew member with a suspected or positive COVID-19 case. The module also addresses several aspects such as: reporting for duty, dedicated end-to-end crew layover foremost practices, crew members suffering from COVID-19 symptoms during a layover, and the positioning of the crew.

Cargo flight crews must implement the similar health and safety considerations and are communally included in the crew section of this document. Whilst air cargo consignments do not come into contact with the traveling people, the cargo acceptance and hand-over process tremendously encompass interaction with non-airport employees (ICAO, 2020b).

3.1 Aviation Authority Policy regarding the COVID-19 protocol for Passengers

Public policy implementation signifies a connection allowing the achievement of targets as the ultimate result of the activities the government undertakes. Identifying the errors of public policy will come after implementing public policy. The success of its implementation can be viewed from the emerging effects (Yunus & Rezki, 2020).

Aviation authorities in Indonesia have been working on ways to reduce the spread of COVID-19 at airports and on the planes through existing policies. The implementation of the aviation authority's policy regarding COVID-19 causes different perceptions from each passenger. Thus making the assessment formed by passengers regarding the policy also varies depending on the implementation and the point of view of each passenger.

Responses from the passengers, as a form of participation, can start the policy assessment process. From the results of the research conducted, there were mixed responses from aircraft passengers who experienced the policy. One of them was the people who agreed and felt comfortable with the policy. The officers implemented the regulation following what was ordered, which means the policy had been running well. Collaboration between governments, airlines, and the airport was also very good. They implemented the policy by checking body temperature before entering the aircraft and also encouraging physical distancing on the plane.

However, passengers cannot always support a policy. Policies can also not be accepted by passengers for various reasons. The government or airlines have not implemented the policy properly. In addition, there is lack of information received by the public regarding the policy. In this study, it was known that the implementation of this policy had not been evenly distributed to various airports in Indonesia such as the absence of guard officers for physical distancing at Kualanamu Airport. There was also a mismatch between the existing policies and the implementation process due to a lack of collaboration between the airlines and the government. In the policy, it is stated that the regions that do not have PCR or
rapid test facilities may use influenza-like illness certificates, but some airports in the regions that do not have PCR test facilities or rapid tests do not pass passengers who use influenza (influenza-like illness) certificates. The policy for every person who wants to enter and exit Jakarta by showing an Exit and Entry Permit (SIKM) is also different in its application. Passengers who did not have SIKM were still allowed to enter Jakarta. This makes the policy confusing, reflecting the government's uncertainty in overseeing the structure of the policy.

3.2 Passenger Comfort with Aviation Authority Policies

The new policies that are different from before can make passengers feel uncomfortable.

“Indeed, usually after I bought the ticket, I could go to my flight. Nowadays, it’s really hard to pass all the safety measures starting from the very beginning to the end. Also, at the airport door that we passed, there weren’t only one or two inspections.”

From the interviews of the second respondent, this policy affected their comfort as passengers because of the addition of the pre-flight process which made the duration longer than before.

“For me, it’s not that different, I’m still comfortable. Because it’s for me, not for the government or anyone else, it’s for me.”

However, according to the third respondent, they still felt comfortable with the services provided despite the addition of the pre-flight process. Because the policy is intended for the benefit of themselves and the public and to feel safe against the COVID-19 virus.

3.3 Socialization of COVID-19 Protocol for Passengers

A policy should also be well informing because it is one form of communication between the government, implementers, and the public. With good communication, the policy will be implemented well by all parties. From interviews conducted, the dissemination of this policy was good enough because the information was easily accessed from social media.

“The socialization about SIKM policy was not wide enough, that is why I tried to share it in my Instagram story and I put it on Highlight (Instagram) since many of my friends asked about it. They wanted to know about my flight to Java because they have matters to attend there, and since I'm from Sumatra, many people asked questions about that.”

However, according to the fourth respondent, the socialization of this policy was not wide enough because there were still many people and their closest
people who was not informed about this policy. Moreover, some information was still unclear and there was still a lot to ask about this policy.

In addition to passengers, this policy must also be implemented by all the staff so that the policy can run well. However, there were still some of them who did not understand the existing policy system. This becomes a concern because the application of policies must be supported by all parties from top to bottom.

“At Kualanamu Airport, ah, actually I did not live in the city but in Rantauprapat. Now in Rantauprapat there was no rapid test or PCR and all that, so I tried contacting Batik Air airline to ask if I didn't have a rapid test or PCR certificate, what could I use? For this flight. Then the airline said that I could use a medical certificate, stating that I was not experiencing influenza, high fever, etc. After that, I made a medical certificate, but when I arrived at Kualanamu airport, my family and I did not meet the requirements because I was not allowed to use a medical certificate.”

According to the second respondent, health workers at Kualanamu Airport still did not understand the policy regarding health documents that had to be carried. If we look at the existing policies for regions that do not have PCR test facilities or rapid tests, they can use an influenza-like illness certificate.

3.4 Implementing Policies on Airlines

Airlines also play a role in implementing this policy. According to the interviews, the airline implemented regulations such as the application of 70% of the aircraft's capacity, arranging seats with applying physical distancing, and profiling documents by the rules of each region. Each airline employee took a role in cross-checking documents that passengers needed to prepare before the check-in. By implementing good policy, it will increase the sense of trust and comfort of passengers.

The airline expected that the government did supervision, "Upon arrival at the destination the passengers will be checked again by the task force". From the statement given by the airline, the government has conducted supervision related to existing policies.

The airline also said, "That's right because many people are still not comfortable with the implementation of rapid testing and PCR". Therefore, the existence of this policy also affected the interest of passengers in purchasing tickets since they were not yet comfortable with the PCR test and rapid test rules.

The policies have been disseminated through social media and when purchasing plane tickets. Even so in its application, some passengers did not carry documents under the policy applied so they were rejected by the airline.
“I don’t think so, for example, regarding the social distancing, when my family and I had a flight using Batik Air, they reduced the seat to three. The flight attendance only explained after I asked why. Since the ticketing, and check-in process, they still put people together, I think it’s more complicated to apply social distancing, why they don’t just move the seat, from A to C, while seat B can’t be used. Also while waiting for the plane, many people still use the banned seat, and nobody said anything, like “Excuse me, Miss. You can’t sit there.”. I guess since it’s human nature, when they see an empty seat, they just sit there rather than keep on standing.”

However, according to the statement from the second respondent related to the implementation of this policy, there were still protocols that had not been implemented properly such as the application of social distancing on the aircraft or at the airport. It appeared that the implementation of this policy was still not good. There must be a consequence applied so that everyone follows the existing protocol.

4. Conclusion

Based on the results of this study, the policies issued by the aviation authority in Indonesia are appropriately applied, and they do not affect passenger comfort. Although there are still several policies that did not go well due to several problems, such as: passengers’ lack of information; lack of collaboration between airlines and the government; government uncertainty in overseeing policies to the lowest structure; and longer pre-flight duration which can disrupt passengers comfort. This policy has been easily accessed on social media. However, some information is still unclear and their exposure is not wide enough. The lack of socialization to the officers by the government also turns into one of concern, because good policies must be carried out by all parties. The government has implemented oversight of the policy by re-checking the passengers at their destination by the task force. The existence of this policy also affected the purchase interest of aircraft passengers during the COVID-19 pandemic.

In the future, the researchers hope that the aviation authority can make a better contribution to providing policies that are precise and clear, so that passengers do not feel overwhelmed and uncomfortable. The flight authority must also facilitate the PCR Test inside the airport so that it will be more efficient to the passengers. To do the test passengers are required to arrive five hours earlier than the time of departure. Moreover, the addition of security officers is very necessary so that physical distancing can be fully implemented since there are still many people who disregard the policy, like sitting on a banned seat. The implementation of physical distancing must continue until the outbreak ends. Policy dissemination must also be clarified and massive so that every passenger understands the applicable policies. Finally, the dissemination to the officers must be carried out more so that passengers can feel more comfortable.
References


