Prevention Communication Approach to COVID-19 Virus at the Bantul Regency Mosque

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Abstract

The communication approach is crucial in facing the pandemic as a preventive measure and reducing the risk of its spread. COVID-19 prevention should be studied to reduce the risk of transmission. The highest increase occurred in the Special Region of Yogyakarta, particularly in Bantul Regency, one of the reasons is the activity of visiting places of worship that do not comply with health protocols. The aim of the research was to examine the preventive communication actors for the transmission of COVID-19 at the Al-Muharram Mosque, Bantul Regency. The research method used is qualitative with a case study approach. The research found that the preventive communication actors of COVID-19 are always conveyed by the Takmir of Al-Muharram Mosque, either directly during Friday Khutbah, *Pengajian*, or through socialization via banners, posters, and social media such as Instagram, Facebook, and personal Whatsapp of the Takmir of the Mosque to provide warnings and prevention of the spread of the COVID-19 virus. The communication content conveyed by the Takmir of the Mosque includes topics related to hadiths in facing an epidemic, implementing health protocols, and encouraging early detection culture for each individual's health to prevent COVID-19 transmission. The role of the trusted Takmir supported by appropriate data sources and media becomes an effective communication approach shown by the orderly behavior of the congregation and the community. The contribution of this research found that religious figures have a role in handling COVID-19 through persuasive and educational messages conveyed in sermons and arranged as religious messages.
Keywords: Communication Approach; COVID-19; Place of Worship; Preventive

Abstrak

Pendekatan komunikasi sangat penting dalam menghadapi pandemi sebagai tindakan preventif dan mengurangi risiko penyebarannya. Pencegahan COVID-19 harus dipelajari untuk mengurangi risiko penularannya. Peningkatan tertinggi terjadi di Daerah Istimewa Yogyakarta khususnya Kabupaten Bantul, salah satu penyebabnya adalah aktivitas mengunjungi tempat ibadah yang tidak sesuai dengan protokol kesehatan. Tujuan penelitian untuk mengkaji aktor komunikasi preventif penularan COVID-19 Masjid Al-Muharram Kabupaten Bantul. Metode penelitian yang digunakan kualitatif dengan pendekatan studi kasus. Hasil penelitian menemukan bahwa aktor komunikasi preventif COVID-19 selalu disampaikan oleh Takmir Masjid Al-Muharram baik secara langsung pada saat Khutbah Jumat, Pengajian, maupun sosialisasi melalui media spanduk, poster serta media sosial seperti Instagram, Facebook, dan Whatsapp personal Takmir Masjid untuk memberikan peringatan dan pencegahan penularan Virus COVID-19. Konten komunikasi yang disampaikan oleh Takmir Masjid terkait hadist menghadapi suatu wabah, menerapkan protokol kesehatan, dan mengajak untuk memiliki budaya deteksi dini pada kesehatan tiap individu untuk mencegah penularan COVID-19. Peran Takmir yang dipercaya dan didukung oleh sumber data dan media yang tepat menjadi pendekatan komunikasi yang efektif yang ditunjukkan perilaku yang tertib dari Jamaah dan masyarakat. Kontribusi penelitian ini menemukan bahwa tokoh agama memiliki peran dalam penanganan COVID-19 melalui pesan-pesan persuasif dan edukatif yang disampaikan dalam khotbah-khotbah dan disusun sebagai pesan-pesan keagamaan.
Keywords: *Pendekatan Komunikasi; COVID-19; Tempat Ibadah; Preventif*

Introduction

Global problems often impact the order of life in Indonesia. One of which is the spread of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) at the end of December 2019, which has become a new historical record disrupting the respiratory system and causing death. COVID-19 is a respiratory disease related to a new corona virus that was first identified at the end of 2019 in China and has a relatively high mortality rate and is quite contagious. The massive spread of this virus is categorized as a pandemic in Law No. 24 of 2007, under which a pandemic is a non-natural disaster, and in Presidential Decree No. 12 of 2021 concerning the Determination of a Non-Natural Disaster of COVID-19 Spread as a National Disaster. It indicates that, nationally, Indonesian citizens are facing a major crisis. This national disaster crisis is not only related to health conditions but also affects various sectors such as employment, economy, business, education and tourism (Sugihamretha, 2020). In short, overcoming COVID-19 is a crucial topic to be studied to determine the best solution to reduce the risk of its transmission.

The COVID-19 pandemic is still ongoing, with the number of cases quite a lot every day (Susanto, 2021). As a non-natural disaster in the health sector that was the most massive experienced by Indonesia in the last five decades, the impact caused by this pandemic disaster is multidimensional and spreads to almost all provinces, and not only limited to the health sector, where status has been assigned. National disaster in the health sector, but has a very significant impact on other fields, especially the economy and socio-culture. Governments in various countries including Indonesia have begun to make various policies to minimize the spread of COVID-19 by limiting community activities (Prihantoro & Handayani, 2022) in Indonesia it is called the PSBB (Scalable Social Border) (Husein et al., 2021). Large-Scale Social Restrictions (PSBB) are regulations issued by the government, especially the Ministry of Health (Kemenkes) in order to deal with epidemics. The government's action in choosing the social distancing path is due to economic factors because if you choose the lockdown route, it can have an impact on the aspect of reduced or no state revenue in the tourism sector, reduced or no state revenue from the corporate tax side, reduced or no state revenue in the export sector. goods to other countries, and increased financing for people's lives (Putsanra, 2020).

In this case, a communication approach is essential to reduce information uncertainty during the pandemic (Nurjanah et al., 2019). Communication can also be part of preventive measures in dealing with the pandemic. Communication can be in an appeal, education, or warning of a violation to support reducing the risk of the spread of COVID-19. One factor causing the high number of people infected with COVID-19 is the emergence of new variants (Generali, 2021). Especially a trusted communicator which has a big effect because it can affect a person's beliefs and actions in dealing with COVID-19. As explained that interpersonal communication is communication that occurs directly between two or more people and directly gets feedback from the communicant to the communicator (Murniati & Muqodim, 2021). Actor communication has the potential to influence or invite others which is direct communication or face-to-face communication between the sender and the recipient of the message (Effendi, 2006).

After the end of the second wave of the spread of COVID-19 in Indonesia in July - September 2021, the positive cases have steadily decreased. However, on November 8, 2021, the highest increase occurred in the Special Region of Yogyakarta, especially in Bantul Regency with a total of 156,151 positive confirmed cases, contributing to the highest number of positive increases on a national scale (Mufarida, 2021). The Faculty of Medicine, Public Health, and

Nursing of Universitas Gadjah Mada (UGM) released the results of a reference Whole Genome Sequencing (WGS) research from the Research and Development Center of the Ministry of Health. This research was conducted following the spike in COVID-19 cases. The main factors causing the spike in cases were massive social interactions and violations of health protocols, exacerbated by new virus variants spreading faster (Rokom, 2021). As stated by Amin's research, it is stated that the activities of Muslims worship together are more frequent than members of other religions. Muslim worship prays in congregation at the mosque five times a day, causing the mosque to become a central hub for COVID-19 transmission (Amin et al., 2021).

The activity of visiting places of worship not complying with health protocols was the primary reason for this extreme increase. Many people ignored the order to wear masks and keep a distance to prevent COVID-19, resulting in the highest number of cases in Bantul Regency. Based on research data conducted by Nurmansyah there were 137 (12.5%) respondents did not keep their safe distance in the prayer line or Shaf, whereas only 25% of respondents brought their own prayer equipment when praying at the mosque. Similarly, only about half of the respondents wore a mask when praying at the mosque (Nurmansyah et al., 2022). Especially in the news on BBC. com when places of worship were opened there were still many concerns about the high spread of cases in places of worship (Irham, 2020).

The government on March 31 2020 has issued a regulation for socializing policies regarding social distancing is difficult to do directly when the government prohibits crowds and direct interaction. This reality is a challenge for religious leaders to be able to optimize digital-based media as an approach to socializing this policy. Social distancing is a person's attempt not to be in contact within a tight range or away from crowds of people (Eikenberry et al., 2020).

The outbreak of the COVID-19 outbreak has encouraged new adaptations in various dimensions of life, including religious practices in society. This new adaptation includes the implementation of daily life activities, such as adjusting the distance during congregational prayers. It is in this context that the role of religious leaders becomes important. Because, if the material delivered to the congregation covers the theme of public health in the right media and pays attention to the characteristics of the congregation, then issues of pandemics and adaptation to worship which are crucial and sensitive issues can be communicated more effectively. The knowledge of religious leaders, in the practice of daily life makes a central example of healthy living behavior in the midst of society during the COVID-19 crisis (Muchammadun et al., 2021).

The role of the takmir of the mosque is important in providing direction for the prevention of the COVID-19 virus. As was done by one of the takmir of the mosque in Bantul, namely the Al-Muharram Mosque, who had sought information regarding COVID-19 and considered the impact if the mosque did not take swift action.

> "At that time there was no call to close the mosque, but I saw that there were cases of up to hundreds of people in the Al-Muharram Mosque area so it was important for the Takmir of the Mosque to adopt a policy so as not to become accused of being a place for the spread of the COVID-19 virus." (Ananto Isworo, Head of Takmir of the Al-Muharram Mosque. Interview Results on March 29, 2022)

Based on the responsive strategies and steps of Takmir Al-Muharram, therefore, this research will be conducted at one of the mosques in Bantul, namely the Al-Muharram Mosque Bantul Regency which is unique because it is the fastest in carrying out preventive communication so that there were no cases spread in Al Muharram Mosque.

This study raises the question of how to

prevent the transmission of COVID-19 through communication approach at the Bantul Regency Mosque? The urgency of the research, namely how the communicator approach would help remind worshipers of places of worship to continue to comply with health protocols and support the reduction of COVID-19 cases. Hence, it provides benefits for normal life to return to worship in the congregation without worrying about the transmission of COVID-19.

This research develops previous studies on communication and COVID-19 to support communication on COVID-19 prevention. There are several previous studies on these topics. To begin with, Merkley et al (2021) conducted a study entitled Communicating Safety Precautions Can Help Maintain In-Person Voter Turnout During A Pandemic. This research illustrates the importance of implementing and communicating preventive measures designed to keep people safe – and feel safe – when voting (Merkley et al., 2021). The next research was conducted by Nan et al., (2021) entitled Public Health Messaging during the COVID-19 Pandemic and Beyond: Lessons from Communication Science. The results disclosed that in deciding the content – or what to say – in public health messages, health communicators should choose to target beliefs in two broad categories: beliefs about the outcomes of performing risk-reducing behaviors (i.e., outcomes beliefs) and beliefs about individual abilities or group to perform the behavior (Nan et al., 2021).

Furthermore, the research entitled The Crisis Communication in Using Artificial Intelligent to Face the COVID-19 Pandemic in Indonesia was written by Nurjanah et al., (2020). This study explains that communication analysis has played an important role in AI during a crisis, where policymakers must encourage sharing information and policy for citizens and communicate information to support decision-making. The study uncovered that the government must also carry out massive AI-based social campaigns on COVID-19-related matters in simple and easy-to-understand language and, if necessary, use regional languages in AI-based applications to make it quickly digested to the lower level of society.

The next research is entitled The Role of Interpersonal Communication in Combating COVID-19 by Varanida (2020). The results of his research indicate that the interpersonal communication process occurs effectively because the communicator can read the situation by first listening to the feedback given by the communicant. Opinions, criticisms and suggestions given by these communicants are things that can arouse enthusiasm or motivation for communicators to improve message strategies and roles to communicants. There are factors that support the role of village head communication in dealing with COVID-19 in Sungai Garam Hilir Village, namely initiative, skills, attitudes, knowledge, and physical condition. (Varanida, 2020).

The cultural approach is also one of the treatments in preventing COVID-19. Like the research conducted by Rahmadianawati entitled COVID-19 Handling in Aceh; Cultural Communication Perspective, the results show that the people of Aceh hold remembrance and prayers to repel reinforcements by gathering in places of worship or open fields to torchlight parades around their respective village boundaries guided by religious figures and figures, by implementing the protocols set by the government. This shows a balance between effort and prayer. At first glance, there is a contradiction between social distancing advice and rituals against the plague (Rahmadianawati et al., 2020).

Research conducted by Prasanti & Karimah, entitled Searching for Islamic Da'wah Information through Online Media During the COVID-19 Pandemic for the Muslim Community (2020). The results of the research conducted show that there are reasons to seek information on Islamic da'wah because of the infodemic about the COVID-19 pandemic, which

encourages the community to find solutions regarding the right information. Then there was a positive impact during the COVID-19 pandemic, namely the Muslim youth community became active and selective in seeking Islamic da'wah information through online media. using online applications for Islamic da'wah, such as Google Meet, Zoom Meeting, and WA Video Call. The COVID-19 pandemic has encouraged the mosque's youth community to remain active in seeking information about Islamic da'wah. The substance of this research contributes in the form of new policy recommendations that adolescents in seeking information through online media must be selective so as not to harm others (Prasanti & Indriani, 2022).

Based on this research, it only focuses on the media, but has not discussed involvement about research linking preventive communication with an communicator approach, especially in the place of worship sector to reduce the COVID-19 crisis situation. Thus, this study will provide a novelty additional references on the application of preventive communication to reduce the spread of COVID-19 in places of worship, especially in mosques.

Discussing preventive communication in handling COVID-19, this research refers to techniques that can be used in communication strategies, Anwar Arifin (1994) in (Aftriana, 2017) explains that there are six techniques in preventive communication, including: 1) Redundancy (repetition) This technique is a method technique influence audiences by repeating messages to audience; 2) Canalizing, which is a technique by understanding and examining the effect groups to individuals or audiences; 3) Informative, namely this technique is a form of a message that aims to influence the audience by way of providing information or explanations; 4) Persuasive. Persuasive techniques are influencing by persuading; 5) Educative is a technique which is one of the efforts to influence the audience

from general statements made, which can be realized in the form of messages which will contain opinions, facts, and experiences; 6) Coercive is a technique of influencing society by force. This technique is usually manifested in the form of rules, orders and intimidations.

Research Methods

Research on prevention of the COVID-19 Virus through a Communication Approach at Mosques in Bantul Regency is descriptive qualitative with a case study approach. Case study research will examine in-depth research and will help to develop theory. Case study research is an in-depth study of a particular social unit and the results of this research provide a broad and in-depth picture of a particular social unit. The subjects studied were relatively limited, but the variables and focus studied were very broad in dimensions (Danim, 2002). Primary data collection techniques use a qualitative approach, namely conducting interviews and focus group discussions to measure perspective in depth (Sugiyono, 2011). Data collection was carried out through in-depth interviews with the Takmir Masjid Agung Bantul Regency and congregations and the people of Bantul Regency to find out the interpersonal preventive communication model that was carried out by the mosque takmir to the congregation of the mosque. The data analysis technique refers to the model introduced by Cresswell, where the process requires efforts to handle data in the form of text or images (Creswell, 2012). Therefore, analysis must be carried out with a deeper understanding of the data, data presentation, and broader interpretation. The steps taken in this study were to make guidelines after reading all the research data, classifying the data for analysis, analyzing the data in more detail, and presenting a description. To obtain validity data, source triangulation was carried out, as well as validity and reliability tests were carried out to obtain concrete research results on preventive communication with an interpersonal

communication approach in efforts to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in Bantul Regency.

Results of Research and Discussion

The COVID-19 pandemic is still ongoing, with quite a large number of cases every day (Susanto, 2011). The number of cases of the Corona virus continues to grow with some reporting recoveries, but not a few have died. COVID-19 itself is in the process of development, the handling of which causes many social changes and changes in various areas of life which often creates anxiety and fear among the people because of the speed of its spread. Through various discussions, trials and policies have been carried out to accelerate the handling of the COVID-19 pandemic. A communication approach is very important to reduce information uncertainty during a pandemic (Nurjanah & Mutiarin, 2020). Communication can be part of preventive efforts in dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic and in appeals, education, or warnings when violations occur to support reducing the risk of spreading COVID-19. Communication can be in the form of appeals, education, or warnings of violations to support reducing the risk of spreading COVID-19 (Generali, 2021). Places of worship are one of the clusters that need to be anticipated. Therefore, this research focuses on how mosque administrators in Bantul Regency carry out preventive communication to prevent transmission of COVID-19. There is the role of religious leaders who act as social agents in preventing COVID-19 through their religious activities. The effectiveness of this role is determined based on the use of media, an understanding of the demographic characteristics of the population and the strictness of the policies applied.

Communicator of Prevention COVID-19 Virus at the Al-Muharram Mosque

The main factors causing the spike in COVID-19 cases were massive social interactions and violations of health protocols, exacerbated by new virus variants spreading faster (Rokom, 2021). This high increase in the spread was greatly caused by the activity of visiting places of worship not complying with health protocols. Many people neglected health protocols by not wearing masks and keeping a distance to prevent COVID-19.

However, it was different from what has been implemented by the Al-Muharram Mosque, where since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Head of Takmir, Ananto Isworo, as a communicator to the congregation and the community around the Al-Muharram Mosque as a preventive measure by providing a policy to close the mosque, although, at that time, there was no firm policy from the government.

> "Al-Muharram Mosque is the first to do a lockdown to avoid positive cases and victims in the mosque. Because at that time I had just returned from Paris, and the COVID-19 issue had been discussed before. This is what made me quickly take action to close the mosque (Lockdown)." (Ananto Isworo, Head of Takmir of the Al-Muharram Mosque. Interview Results on March 29, 2022).
> "We know this lockdown policy is the best, but there has been a big change. Since the lockdown, there has been a new normal and an adjustment to the implementation of worship because PPKM has stopped many mosque activities for fear of being reprimanded by the government or of violating the rules. In the past, there were many mosque activities" (Marsiyah, Al-Muharram Mosque Manager for Women's Congregation. Interview Results on March 29, 2022).

Following the interview results, before the COVID-19 pandemic, mosque activities were extremely dense and dynamic, as if the mosque was never off for activities. It indicates that the community believed that the mosque could revive the spirit of the movement to empower them in various aspects of life, making

the mosque be used and function optimally by the congregation (Saefudin et al., 2020).

Nevertheless, this response shows obedience to the decision of the Takmir Masjid. So it can be judged that Takmir Masjid Al-Muharram is a very effective communication actor because he has the capability both in terms of background and knowledge. As this was conveyed by the mosque congregation who accepted and quickly carried out the appeal conveyed by the *Takmir* of the Al-Muharram Mosque because they were considered to have *credibility* in conveying the message.

> "The directives conveyed by *Takmir* we believe so far for our good. Because he also firmly conveys with evidence, so there is no reason to refuse the appeal given. " (Suratinah, Al-Muharram Mosque Congregation, Brajan, Bantul. Interview results on March 30, 2022)

The quick anticipation by Mosque Takmir to identification of the situation has been carried out, and the policy taken has been considered to reduce unwanted events (Nurjanah, 2019). The role of the mosque management leader, considered competent and credible, influenced people's trust (Apriliani, 2021) to take preventive steps more quickly to prevent the transmission of COVID-19 at the Al-Muharram Mosque.

As previous research (Muchammadun et al., 2021) that the knowledge of stakeholders, especially religious leaders, in the practice of daily life makes a central example of healthy living behavior in the midst of society during the COVID-19 crisis. Various aspects of people's lives are required to change rapidly when facing the COVID-19 crisis (Agung, 2020). As central and strategic figures in society, religious leaders are obliged to assist efforts, attend, and play a role in providing accurate and reliable data and information related to handling a pandemic to the general public. Strategic steps and quick actions in handling the COVID-19 pandemic must be informed immediately and reach the public as a form of communication and education for healthy living. This is very helpful in anticipating not to catch the virus. People can quickly understand the procedures that need to be done if they get infected. In fact, a special regional regulation was enacted in the implementation of the prevention of COVID-19. The Garda Siaga COVID-19 team was also deployed to cover the smallest RT (Rukun Tetangga) area to stem the emergence of many victims.

Content and Media Communication for COVID-19 Prevention at Al-Muharram Mosque

The noise of information and the instability of the situation caused by the COVID-19 pandemic requires communication to overcome the crisis and reduce uncertainty. According to Fearn-Banks (2007), crisis conditions, such as this pandemic, are major events that can negatively impact organizations, corporations, industry and the public. Therefore, there is a great need for leaders to make warnings as a preventive measure for handling the crisis. The implementation of preventive communication at the Al-Muharram Mosque was carried out by the mosque Takmir. The effort of the Takmir was conducted through an appeal to the community by collaborating with the Task Force to suppress or urge the public to be more assertive in closing the mosque.

> "At the beginning of this COVID-19 in Jakarta, I immediately gave the warning to close the mosque. Although many protested initially, I finally asked the Task Force to close the mosque compactly. This policy is needed to unite all mosques to comply with the government's lockdown policy." (Ananto Isworo, Head of Takmir of the Al-Muharram Mosque. Interview Results on March 29, 2022).

However, the delivery of the COVID-19 prevention message by Takmir Masjid is not supported by tools that can detect COVID-19 symptoms. This is because the use of a thermometer is only used during Eid prayers and certain moments such as Eid al-Adha, but

has not been used every time visitors come to Al-Muharram Mosque. But, the Takmir of the mosque has another way of warning residents through an unwritten agreement that when they start feeling the flu or other symptoms, they must immediately isolate themselves at home for up to two weeks. until they are completely healed. This is a form of local wisdom to reduce the level of anxiety of residents, especially the elderly so as not to go into shock.

> "Previous events have shocked parents easily and caused psychological pain. Therefore, residents must self-isolate when they feel symptoms and do not go to mosques. The psychological condition of the community can be maintained by early detection and taking care not to spread it to other people other" (Ananto Isworo, Head of Takmir of the Al-Muharram Mosque. Interview Results on March 29, 2022).

Takmir has always conveyed the call for COVID-19 pandemic alertness through Friday sermons, Friday night recitations, and limited *tadarus* for women. Furthermore, the Takmir also explained that the mosque congregation should realize that worship is related to personal interests, but social values should also be considered to take care of fellow worshipers of the Al-Muharram Mosque.

> "At the time of the Friday Sermon on a limited basis, I also conveyed related to the Hadith Narrated by Bukhari and Muslim that the Messenger of Allah said "When there is an 'Tha'un (an epidemic of infectious disease) it is a warning from Allah SWT to test His servants from among humans. So when you hear that a disease is spreading in a land, do not enter that land. And if the plague strikes in the land where you are, do not flee from it. And to emphasize again I convey the second Hadith which reads "Do not mix the sick with the healthy (Narrated by Bukhari and Muslim)". (Ananto Isworo, Head of Takmir of the Al-Muharram Mosque. Interview Results on March 29, 2022).

The implementation of the da'wah program

is not only intended to increase the piety of the congregation, but also literacy and habituation of health protocols both with verbal and non-verbal communication (Prakoso et al., 2021).

The choice of media in the communication strategy is the choice determined by the communicator on what media is considered the most suitable to be used in conveying the message. According to Littlejohn (2009) each medium has the potential for ritual and integration, but media perform this function in different ways. The media preventive forms applied to the Al-Muharram Mosque were by providing posters and large banners, closing the mosque by not accepting people for both Friday and five compulsory prayers, installing notification on flyers/posters, banners and social media such as Instagram, Facebook, and WhatsApps to communicate the closure of the mosque, and an appeal to comply with the health protocols in the neighborhood association (RT) and congregation groups.

The development of this communication technology encourages communicators who are not only used by individuals, but become an alternative used by managers of houses of worship in this case (mosques) to be able to provide information and education on da'wah and religious activities in mosques through the social media platform (Attaymini, 2021).

> "This is what I and the mosque management carry out to avoid COVID-19 cases at the Al-Muharram Mosque like using posters and large banners, closing the mosque by not accepting people for both Friday and five compulsory prayers, installing notification on flyers/posters, banners and social media. That's all to raise awareness about the dangers of COVID-19. (Ananto Isworo, Head of Takmir of the Al-Muharram Mosque. Interview Results on March 29, 2022).

Rahmawati et al. (2020) which states that education on health protocols in the new normal era is carried out by utilizing media posters that are disseminated through

Figure 1. Preventive Communication on Closing Policy of the Al-Muharram Mosque
Source: Takmir's Documentation (2020)

social media which can increase people's interest in reading (Rahmawati et al., 2020)

The forms of communication messages in banners to prevent the transmission of COVID-19 are as follows:

Mosque Takmir provided a large poster for the announcement of the Al-Muharram Mosque lockdown, followed by a declaration as a detailed explanation of the elimination of activities in the mosque environment. It greatly supported the clarity of the implementation of preventive communication designed to keep people safe and feel safe (Merkley et al., 2021). Preventive communication in the form of writing is important so that everyone when they want to visit the mosque can know that there are prohibitions and protocols that are important to implement (Farisi, 2020)

When facing the big days of Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha in 2020, this was conveyed through digital technology media, namely the social media Facebook owned by the takmir of the mosque. Previous research linking the COVID-19 pandemic with the Theory of Technological Determinism is research written by Aunillah (2020). The research revealed that the use of communication technology by Muslims in Indonesia during Eid Al-Fitr is a form of adaptation to rapid changes during the COVID-19 pandemic (Aunillah, 2020). However, during Eid Al-Adha, the strategy for preventing the spread of COVID-19 was to divide the locations for slaughtering sacrificial animals as many as three points and apply strict health protocols and mandatory taking the antigen test before serving.

In accordance with the results of Fauzuna's research, it is known that rules by mosque administrators in the form of writing, speaking, and sending messages via electronic media will have an effective effect for worshipers to comply with regarding health protocol rules while in places of worship (Fauzuna, 2022).

In line with the changing situation of the pandemic, when the cases decreased in 2021, the Takmir decided to reopen the Al-Muharram Mosque. When the mosque began to reopen with a limited number of worshipers and only residents, the Takmir put up a banner/poster about implementing strict policy and specifically for men, while women and children should pray at home.

The Mosque Takmir also carried out socialization by making posters/flyers shared through WhatsApp groups of congregation and residents. For groups from other areas who wanted to learn about the management of sadaqah waste, the mosque Takmir conveyed the conditions for visiting the Al Muharram Mosque, namely being healthy, without any symptoms, must wear masks, keeping a distance
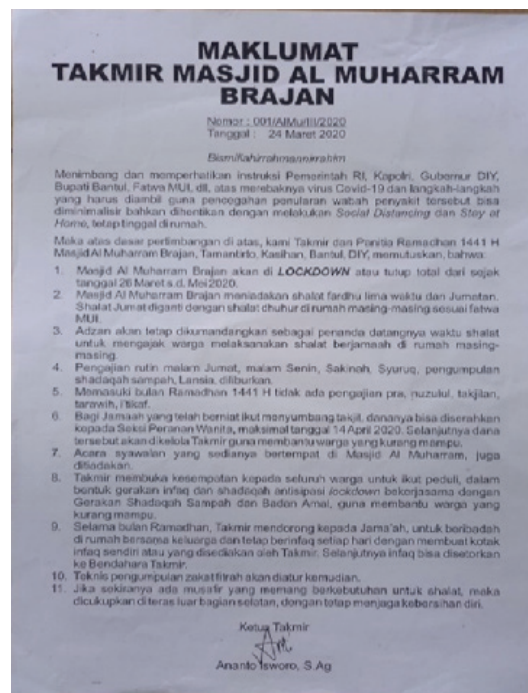
Figure 2. Preventive Communication on Notice of Takmir of the Al-Muharram Mosque
Source: Takmir's Documentation (2020)

and being limited to only ten people visiting.

Even though the role of communication actors in this case the takmir of the mosque has played an active role, technically according to Cardiah, Rahma and Andiyan based on their research results it is stated that worshipers must still have a high level of awareness independently to carry out health protocols while in the mosque environment (Cardiah et al., 2021).

Knowing that the COVID-19 pandemic has become endemic, the Takmir of the Al-Muharram Mosque decided to be more 'friendly' with the current conditions, although aware that COVID-19 has not over. The Takmir was worried that if they were 'fearful' for too long, their psyche and immunity would be vulnerable. The form of accepting and making friends with COVID-19 is showing a responsive attitude to the pandemic by the Al-Muharram Mosque management, which is a form of adaptation to emergency conditions. The adaptation process was carried out by reformulating the da'wah program which was made taking into account the presence of COVID-19. This reformulation not only pays attention to the effectiveness and efficiency of the da'wah activity program, but also needs to pay attention to the safety of all congregations who are present in the da'wah program activities. The adaptation made will be a protector as well as an opportunity so that the da'wah activity program can be carried out during the COVID-19 pandemic. As stated by Devi (2020), that the adaptation process will be able to run in harmony when everything supports the adjustment process being carried out, because it will affect the success and achievement of a program (Prakoso et al., 2021).

Instead, Takmir tried to make them happy by starting to open routine recitations, picking up trash, and pre-Ramadan recitations hoping that their happiness hormones would appear and create hard immune. Because during the COVID-19 pandemic, there was panic or mental psychological problems, fear, or social anxiety as described by Fatria (2020, in Parasanti & Indriani, 2022).

As the results of research conducted by Oh, Lee, Han (Prasanti & Indriani, 2022) stated

Figure 3. Preventive Communication on Giving Appeals to Mosque Congregation
Source: Takmir's Documentation (2020)

that the existence of the COVID-19 pandemic with various information media channels made people feel afraid and angry. Then the second strategy, providing space for activities and opening the congregation, would positively impact the congregation and mosque activities. In many cases, mosques were abandoned since their congregation looked for other mosques to accommodate their 'desire' for worship.

The policy taken by the Takmir of the Al-Muharram Mosque has followed the stages of handling the crisis, namely the resolution stage, where Takmir stayed to be careful (Fajar, 2011) but has evaluated what steps were appropriate to maintain the unity of the congregation (Binus, 2017).

Based on research data, when examined on the theory presented by Anwar Arifin (in Aftriana, 2017) regarding communication strategies in efforts to prevent COVID-19, it is known that the communication strategy implemented by Takmir Masjid Al-Muharram namely first is redundancy, delivering repeated information with the same message to provide understanding and influence public awareness around the Al-Muharram Mosque, both conveyed on social media, posters, and during Friday prayer sermons. Furthermore, the second technique, namely participating in the application of informative techniques, namely to influence the audience to provide information and explanations about the importance of maintaining health and avoiding crowds in the mosque so that the Al-Muharram Mosque does not become a place for the spread of the COVID-19 virus. Third, the strategy applied is persuasive, namely giving persuasive messages to continue implementing health protocols, washing hands with soap, avoiding crowds, and using masks, and the fourth strategy is educative as a technique to influence audiences from public statements made during Friday sermons. chat to provide an understanding of the many negative events if you do not take care of your health and are impatient in dealing with COVID-19.

This research succeeded in examining the role of religious leaders in preventive communication to prevent virus transmission in the context of handling COVID-19. The context of a religious community with the approach of religious leaders plays a very social role in

Figure 3. Communication Safety Efforts from COVID-19 Transmission
Source: Takmir's Documentation (2020)

providing socialization of public health. As well as religious leaders as communicators in health communication for preventive activities for the spread of COVID-19 it is important to understand the use of media and the context of the message to be conveyed. As the results of this study were also strengthened by previous research (Muchammadun et al., 2021) which stated that citizen compliance with the COVID-19 health protocol was greatly influenced by the role of social media, advice from religious leaders, demographic characteristics of the population and enforcement of regulatory rules and policies.

Conclusion

The spread of COVID-19 in the Special Region of Yogyakarta, especially in Bantul Regency, contributed to the highest number of positive increases nationally. One of the causes of this extreme increase is visiting places of worship that do not comply with health protocols. Therefore, preventive communication is needed to provide early warning to the public. The results of the study reveal that the communication strategy implemented by Takmir

Masjid Al-Muharram namely first is redundancy, information, persuasive, and educative in the effort to prevent COVID-19 at the Al-Muharram Mosque. It is known that the Takmir of the mosque is an effective communicator because he is considered credible and responsive in taking the lockdown policy to prevent the spread of COVID-19 at the Al-Muharram Mosque.

The mosque takmir is active and aware of social issues and COVID-19, so anticipation has been made before the increase in COVID-19 cases occurs in Bantul. Furthermore, the communication message conveyed by Takmir for the prevention of COVID-19 is always conveyed at every opportunity, both during Friday prayers and recitations. The contents of the messages conveyed were among others conveying Hadith, inviting people to worship at home, and always reminding them to apply health protocols, namely wearing masks, washing hands, and keeping a distance. Takmir also persuaded the public to apply a culture of awareness to detect early on their respective health conditions so that transmission does not occur at the Al-Muharram Mosque. The

use of media to communicate messages through posters, pamphlets, large banners containing information on mosque closures to inform worshipers about the ban on Friday prayers and the obligatory five daily prayers.

In addition, information is also conveyed through Takmir's personal social media such as Instagram, Facebook, and WhatsApps Group. This research provides value and novelty about the importance of a key opinion leader, namely the mosque takmir, to protect mosque congregations by providing firm policies and appeals to be alert to the dangers of COVID-19 and maximizing elements of the communication approach to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in mosques. However, this research still has limitations on the approach to communication with religious figures who are very influential in preventing COVID-19. The contribution of this study found that religious leaders have a role in handling COVID-19 in Yogyakarta, especially the Bantul district through persuasive and educative messages conveyed in sermons and structured as religious messages. Handling COVID-19 is the task of all elements of society, including religious leaders and community leaders who have a big role to play in influencing society in avoiding the spread of COVID-19. The results of this study suggest that the role of religious and community leaders is very important in contributing to the handling of COVID-19, because they have room to convey persuasive messages during sermons or through religious messages. The involvement of religious and community leaders is one of the strategies that can be applied to future health communication models when facing an outbreak of the spread of the virus because it has a large congregation and has trust in religious leaders and community leaders.

Acknowledgements

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