

INFORMATION SEEKING RELATED TO THE CONGREGATIONAL WORSHIP IN PANDEMIC COVID-19:

Between Conventional Media and Social Media

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Abstract: The Indonesian government had issued a regulation that restricted the implementation of congregational worship during the Covid-19 pandemic to prevent the transmission of the virus. However, not all people comply with these government regulations. Information become one factor that influence a person's behavior. This study aims to find out how the Indonesian Muslim community uses the media to obtain information related to the implementation of worship during the Covid-19 pandemic. The reason for choosing the Muslim community is because as the majority people in Indonesia and there are a number of congregational worships performed by Muslim. This study uses a quantitative method by conducting a survey of respondents aged between 18-55 years. Online questionnaires were distributed to respondents in the period September 2021 – October 2021. After the validity and reliability tests, there were 92 answers which would then be processed. The results showed that the majority of respondents were in the age range between 18-37 years (a 73 percent) and the majority (65 percent) stated that they joined certain religious organizations. Social media is widely accessed because of the ease of access to information, relevance of information, usefulness, and updating of information. The majority of respondents (78 percent) use social media as their main source of information seeking. There are also conventional mass media, official media belonging to organizations, and official media from religious organizations are rarely used. Access to information is a factor why social media is widely chosen. Even so, respondents still put their trust in conventional mass media thanks to the accuracy of the information and the credibility of the media.

Keywords: Information seeking, conventional media, mass media, social media, media usage

Abstrak: Pemerintah Indonesia sempat mengeluarkan peraturan yang membatasi pelaksanaan ibadah berjamaah di masa pandemi Covid-19 untuk mencegah penularan virus tersebut. Meski begitu, tidak semua masyarakat mematuhi peraturan pemerintah tersebut. Informasi merupakan salah satu faktor yang mempengaruhi tindakan seseorang. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui bagaimana masyarakat Muslim Indonesia menggunakan media guna memperoleh informasi terkait pelaksanaan ibadah di masa pandemic Covid-19. Alasan memilih masyarakat Muslim karena sebagai umat mayoritas di Indonesia dan terdapat sejumlah ibadah berjamaah yang dilakukan masyarakat Muslim di Indonesia. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kuantitatif dengan melakukan survei terhadap responden yang berusia antara 18-55 tahun. Kuesioner online disebarkan kepada responden dalam kurun waktu September 2021 – Oktober 2021. Setelah melalui uji validitas dan reliabilitas, terdapat 92 jawaban yang kemudian akan diolah. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa mayoritas responden berada pada rentang usia antara 18-37 tahun (total 67 responden) dan mayoritas (65 persen) menyatakan bergabung pada organisasi keagamaan tertentu. media sosial banyak diakses karena kemudahan akses informasi, relevansi informasi, kebermanfaatan, dan

pembaruan informasi. mayoritas responden berada pada rentang usia antara 18-37 tahun (73 persen) dan mayoritas (65 persen) menyatakan bergabung pada organisasi keagamaan tertentu. Mayoritas responden (78 persen) menggunakan media sosial sebagai sumber utama dalam pencarian informasi. Ada pun media massa konvensional, media resmi milik organisasi, dan media resmi dari organisasi keagamaan jarang digunakan. Akses informasi menjadi faktor mengapa media sosial banyak dipilih. Meski begitu, responden masih menaruh kepercayaan terhadap media massa konvensional berkat tingkat akurasi informasi dan kredibilitas media.

Kata kunci: *Pencarian informasi, media massa, media konvensional, media sosial, pemanfaatan media*

A. Introduction

The Covid-19 pandemic has affected various human activities, including religious activities. The Indonesian government has issued several policies related to religious activities during the COVID-19 pandemic, such as the temporary closure of mass worship spaces in the beginning of COVID-19 pandemic in Indonesia (March – June 2020), restrictions on congregational worship, a formal instruction to pray at home, and pilgrimage suspension in 2020 and 2021. A number of religious organizations also called on their members to take similar precautionary measures. However, for a few moments, the government gave concessions to allow congregational religious activities, which resulted in creating new contagion clusters.¹

Public responses to the government regulations regarding congregational worship during the pandemic shows mixed results. The government instruction for the public to refrain from congregational worship as a response to the Covid-19 pandemic was not completely obeyed by all people. Some people understand and obey the new rules, while some others didn't get the update about the rules. However, there were a lot of people who chose to ignore the new rules, although they know the new rules.² Majority of religious people believe that Covid-19 can endanger themselves and can cause death. Therefore, they agreed to comply with the government policies in order to prevent the spread of Covid-19 outbreak. They refrained themselves from performing mass worship and forwent religious holiday celebrations to avoid crowds.³ However, another survey finds out that more than 20% of the population living in the red zone (referring to areas with a high case rate) stated that they dared to take the risk of being exposed to the Covid-19 virus in order to carry out mass worship. This shows the tendency of religious people in Indonesia to put more emphasis on the emotional dimension of religion rather than logic and common sense.⁴

Information also contributes to people's behavior towards health protocols. In crisis situations – including the Covid-19 pandemic – the need to obtain accurate information is very important because there is a large amount of information circulating from the accurate one until the unconfirmed and hoaxes⁵ on such a topic. Various institutions published various kinds of information to the community. Not only traditional news media or journalistic institutions, but

¹ Menag Yaquut Cholil Qoumas, "Klaster Tarawih Kembali Muncul, Menag Minta Patuhi Panduan Ibadah Dan Protokol Kesehatan," *Kemenag.Go.Id*.

² Sudirman Sudirman, Edi Gunawan, and Muh Rusdi Rasyid, "Covid-19 Dan Ibadah (Resistensi Perubahan Hukum Islam Dalam Mempertahankan Rutinitas Ibadah)," *Aqlam: Journal of Islam and Plurality* 6, no. 1 (June 2021).

³ Akmal Salim Ruhana and Haris Burhani, "Pengetahuan, Sikap Dan Tindakan Umat Beragama Menghadapi COVID-19," *Simlitbangdiklat.Kemenag.Go.Id*.

⁴ Dadang Darmawan et al., "Sikap Keberagamaan Masyarakat Menghadapi Wabah COVID-19," *Religious: Jurnal Studi Agama-Agama dan Lintas Budaya* 4, no. 2 (May 2020): 115–124.

⁵ Narayana Mahendra Prastya, "Komunikasi Krisis Di Era New Media Dan Social Media," *Jurnal Komunikasi* 6, no. 1 (2016): 1–20.

several large institutions have also begun to penetrate this sector. Information that was originally processed from the editorial desk, can now be produced and distributed by anyone, for example through social media platforms.⁶

However, this change poses consequences, namely information credibility or trustworthiness issues.⁷ The freedom to choose various sources of information has made people tend to seek information that suits their needs and don't really pay attention to the information credibility.⁸ Such a tendency became more apparent during the COVID-19 outbreak where the society accessed information related to the COVID-19 from various sources, many of which contradicts the information provided by official channels. Abundance of information available on the internet allows everyone to seek information freely, according to their needs. However, much of the information related to the COVID-19 is disseminated by unreliable parties who do not actually have the competence and this kind of information is perhaps doubled in numbers and easy to find during the outbreak.

The focus of this research is to find out how the information seeking behavior of the Indonesian Muslims in seeking information related to religious activities during the Covid-19 outbreak. The research uses quantitative methods that make use of Google Form as a means of data collection. The criteria of the respondents used in this study are Indonesian citizens, both male and female, Muslim, at least 18 years old, and living in Indonesia.

A number of previous studies discussed how Muslim communities in Indonesia prefer to seek information about COVID-19 from digital media platforms. Study on the media behavior patterns of the West Java Muslim community during the COVID-19 pandemic shows that respondents prefer to seek information about COVID-19 from social media compared to conventional media such as newspapers, radio, and television; Instagram is the most preferred social media platform they used to seek information related to COVID-19; They use social media frequently to check information (every day) related to COVID-19, but very rarely (not every day) do they actively comment or share information they found related to COVID-19; The Muslim community of West Java often get health information, such as medical advice, medicine, and health tips; but seldom get negative information such as threats, criticism, or hate speech regarding the handling of COVID-19.⁹

Another study shows the COVID-19 pandemic had encouraged the community to actively seek Islamic da'wah information. Their initial motive in seeking information on Islamic da'wah is to avoid the flood of information related to the COVID-19 pandemic they experienced; The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic instead has caused the Muslim youth community to be active and selective in seeking Islamic da'wah information through online media. The process of searching for Islamic da'wah information starts from grouping needs, making schedules, and online discussion groups using online discussion platforms such as Google Meet, Zoom Meeting, and WhatsApp's Video Call. The source of the research data is interviews with four informants who are members of the Muslim community.¹⁰

⁶ Syifa Syarifah Alamiyah, "Peluang Dan Tantangan Citizen Journalism Di Indonesia," *Jurnal Ilmu Komunikasi* 7, no. 2 (2015): 27–39.

⁷ Ida Nuraini Dewi Kodrat Ningsih, "Euphoria Jurnalisme Warga Dan Kredibilitas Berita," in *Prosiding Konferensi Nasional Komunikasi 2015: Konsep, Kreangka Kerja, Kreativitas Karya Kaya Kultur*, ed. Irwansyah et al. (Ikatan Sarjana Komunikasi Indonesia, 2015).

⁸ Puji Rianto, "Media Baru, Visi Khalayak Aktif Dan Urgensi Literasi Media," *Jurnal Komunikasi Ikatan Sarjana Komunikasi Indonesia* 1, no. 2 (December 2016): 90.

⁹ Yulianti Yulianti et al., "Media Usage Behavior during Covid-19 Pandemic," *Diakom : Jurnal Media dan Komunikasi* 3, no. 2 (December 2020): 117–126.

¹⁰ Ditha Prasanti and Kismiyati El Karimah, "Pencarian Informasi Dakwah Islam Melalui Media Online Pada Masa Pandemi COVID-19 Bagi Komunitas Muslim," *Jurnal Ilmu Komunikasi* 18, no. 3 (December 2020): 292.

B. Literature Review

1. Active Audience and Information Media Selection

Active audiences are media consumers who are considered to have the ability to choose and decide the media they will consume and have preferences for selecting and using information or using the media. The active audience in this theory is assumed in five assumptions, namely: (1) active audiences and goal-oriented media use; (2) the initiative in linking need satisfaction to media choice rests with the audience; (3) the media competition; (4) audiences have self-awareness of their media use, interests, and motives so as to provide researchers with an accurate picture of their use; and (5) assessment of media content can only be assessed or interpreted by the audience. Audience activity, explained in this theory, is not only in terms of choosing media, but also on the context of utility in which audiences use media to fulfill certain tasks, or uses; intentionality, the public's initial motivation in determining the use of media; selectivity, namely the context of interest or motives seen in the use of media; and the imperviousness to influence is seen in how audiences construct their meaning to the media content.¹¹

Social media allows everyone to choose any information according to their needs. On the one hand, social media brings positive benefits that it is able to fill the information gap resulting from the lack of conventional media ability to provide information quickly and accurately. On the other hand, the use of social media as a source of information also demands its users more consideration to curate information. Many people are misled by unreliable information on COVID-19 distributed widely on social media and instant messages.¹²

The increasing numbers of hoaxes, however, are also influenced by a person's motives when seeking information and using media. A person's motives in seeking information are also influenced by his perspective on the issue he's been seeking. Often, we are trapped in a thinking bias in which we tend to trust information that strengthens our belief, regardless of whether the source of the information is valid or not. On the one hand, today people have many choices in seeking information on anything, thanks to social media. On the other hand, social media users are required to be able to curate information independently, to check whether or not a piece of information is valid.¹³ A study states that a small number of respondents unconsciously helped to spread hoaxes about the COVID-19 because they thought that the information that they shared was valid and useful for others because they get it from who they thought trustworthy people. With regard to the quality of information distributed on social media, another to be noted is the amount of information circulating that often makes some respondents in doubt whether to believe the information or not. The public panic on the Coronavirus outbreak has resulted in a more instant and wide distribution of misleading information on the COVID-19 in the hope that the information can be useful in preventing or treating the infection.¹⁴

2. Trend on Information Media Selection during the COVID-19 Pandemic: Traditional Mass Media vs Social Media

The COVID-19 pandemic has been declared as a crisis situation, where this situation comes as a surprise and affects various sectors and everybody in the world. Crisis situation increases the public's need for valid information. However, the presence of internet access has made the crisis situation even more complicated. Thanks to the internet, information circulation becomes more swift, diverse, and everyone can be an agent of information. Hence, there are various kinds of information from that valid information originating from official sources, information that is still unconfirmed, to false information (hoaxes) intentionally created by parties who have the

¹¹ Lynn H. Turner and Richard West, *Introducing Communication Theory: Analysis and Application*, McGraw-Hill Education (New York, 2010).

¹² Christiany Juditha, "People Behavior Related To The Spread Of Covid-19's Hoax," *Journal Pekomm* 5, no. 2 (October 2020): 105.

¹³ Rianto, "Media Baru, Visi Khalayak Aktif Dan Urgensi Literasi Media."

¹⁴ Juditha, "People Behavior Related To The Spread Of Covid-19's Hoax."

intention and interest to further aggravate the situation that are shared by a lot of people who do not know the validity of the information.¹⁵

The increasing use of the internet and the number of choices of information has led us to an important issue, namely the people's trust in information from the media they choose, whether it is conventional mass media or social media. The literature on mass communication mentions the difference between conventional mass media – in some readings, it's referred to as "traditional media" – and the social media or new media in terms of interactivity and the technology used. Conventional media are print media such as newspapers and magazines, broadcast media, film media,¹⁶ online news portals, and books.¹⁷ What's called social media, on the contrary, include those user-generated content platforms (such as blogs or microblogging – the difference is only in the number of characters), social networking media, sharing media, shared content media¹⁸ and also instant conversation channels.

Information accuracy will bring a sense of public trust in the media presenting the information.¹⁹ Regarding the information accuracy, based on several studies discussing the current proliferation of information media, it is found that television news and newspapers are much more trusted than online media, even though in terms of the number of audiences, television and newspapers are inferior to online media.²⁰

Another research shows 45% of its respondents admit to consuming mass media more often during the COVID-19 pandemic than before. It's also found that mass media (news/journalism products) tend to be consumed by respondents with higher education levels. Private television channels, health associations official websites, and social media are the three most widely used media by Indonesian people in seeking information during the COVID-19 pandemic.²¹

Social media allows people now to search information more flexibly, including those related to the COVID-19. This, for example, research shows that more than 80 percent of its respondents stated that they use social media to seek information about the COVID-19, that via social media they can help each other, that they use social media as an escape from their daily routine and personal problems during the COVID-19 outbreak. 19, that social media can satisfy their need for information on the COVID-19 and information on social media is satisfying to do something.²²

A study on the impact of mass media coverage on the Pamekasan community's perception of the Coronavirus shows how the majority of the respondents said that they got initial information and followed the development of the COVID-19 pandemic through mass media. On the other hand, however, when it comes to media channels people use for information, social media still dominates other forms of media as a reference for information about the COVID-19 pandemic. The dominance of social media as an information reference lies in information fluidity and speed shared among its users, allowing its users to get updated information about

¹⁵ Prastya, "Komunikasi Krisis Di Era New Media Dan Social Media."

¹⁶ Melvin L. DeFleur and Margaret H. DeFleur, *Mass Communication Theories : Explaining Origins, Processes, and Effects 2nd Edition*, Routledge, 2nd Editio. (New York, 2022).

¹⁷ Dennis McQuail, *McQuail's Mass Communication Theory 6th Edition*, SAGE, 6th Editio. (Los Angeles, 2010).

¹⁸ Rulli Nasrullah, *Media Sosial : Perspektif Komunikasi, Budaya, Dan Siosioteknologi*, Simbiosis Rekatama Media (Bandung, 2015).

¹⁹ Luwi Ishwara, "Jurnalisme Dasar," *Kompas* (Jakarta, 2016).

²⁰ Ni Made Ras Amanda Gelgel, "Hubungan antara Intensitas Konsumsi Media dan Kepercayaan terhadap Media Di Bali," in *Trend Pola Konsumsi Media Di Indonesia*, ed. Asmono Wikan and Dwi Hartomo (Jakarta: Serikat Perusahaan Pers SPS, 2017).

²¹ Mira Rochyadi-Reetz, Eni Maryani, and Anna Agustina, "Public's Media Use and Gratification Sought during Corona Virus Outbreak in Indonesia: A National Survey," *Jurnal Komunikasi Ikatan Sarjana Komunikasi Indonesia* 5, no. 1 (June 2020).

²² Nurliya Ni'matul Rohmah, "Media Sosial Sebagai Media Alternatif Manfaat Dan Pemuas Kebutuhan Informasi Masa Pandemi Global Covid 19 (Kajian Analisis Teori Uses and Gratification)," *Al-I'lam : Jurnal Komunikasi dan Penyiaran Islam* 4, no. 1 (2020): 1-16.

Coronavirus more quickly and effectively. This is especially true considering how the initial government announcement about the COVID-19 has instead made many people confused. There was a slight impression that there was no clear coordination from the central government on how to handle the COVID-19 outbreak.²³

C. Research Methodology

This study uses a quantitative research design. Data were collected by a survey method using an electronic questionnaire. The questionnaire compiled consists of questions that aim to reveal media selection, level of trust in information, level of religiosity, social identity of religious institutions, and level of adherence to health protocols in religious activities.

The objective of this study are as follows:

1. To find out how media selection plays a role in defining the level of adherence to health protocols in religious activities.
2. To find out how far the level of trust in a source of information plays a role in defining the level of adherence to health protocols in religious activities.

The questionnaire was distributed between September 20th and October 30th, 2021 using Google Surveys to the network of each researcher, including fellow professionals, fellow members of the associations attended by researchers, their students, and the social circles of each researcher, such as their children's school community. The number of respondents who completed the survey up to the survey expiration was 127 respondents. After the reliability and validity test, the number of survey responses to be analyzed was 92 responses. Respondents were dominated by two groups of ages, namely a group of respondents who are between 18-23 years (a total of 39 respondents) and a group of respondents who are between 31-37 years (28 respondents). It was assumed that the majority of respondents are active internet users, which are widely found in their age range of 15-19 years, 20-24 years, 25-29 years, 30-34 years, and 35-39 years (APJII 2019-2020 survey [Q2]).

D. Results and Discussion

1. General Overview of the Respondents

The composition between the survey male and female respondents is fairly balanced with 44 male respondents and 47 female respondents. This shows that the distribution of gender among the respondents is balanced. Based on the educational background, the majority of the respondents are bachelor graduates (45 percent), followed by high school/vocational high school (38 percent) and a minor group of master degree graduates (13 percent). In terms of employment status, most respondents are students (30 percent), private employees (25 percent) and academics (17 percent).

The majority of respondents is from the Special Region of Yogyakarta, mostly Yogyakarta City and Sleman Regency. However, a few respondents came from other cities, such as Batam, Batulicin, Bekasi, Bogor, Pangkalanbun, and Rembang—their numbers are less than 10 people.

The majority of respondents (65 percent) claimed to follow or join a particular religious organization. This research did not ask respondents to mention in the names of religious organizations they joined, regarding it is personal information. Majority of the respondents latest educational background are undergraduate from higher education (program sarjana in Bahasa Indonesia) (45 percent), followed by graduate from senior high school (35 percent) and post-graduate (13 percent).

²³ Heny Triyaningsih, "Efek Pemberitaan Media Massa Terhadap Persepsi Masyarakat Tentang Virus Corona (Studi Kasus; Masyarakat Di Pamekasan)," *Meyarsa: Jurnal Ilmu Komunikasi dan Dakwah* 1, no. 1 (June 2020).

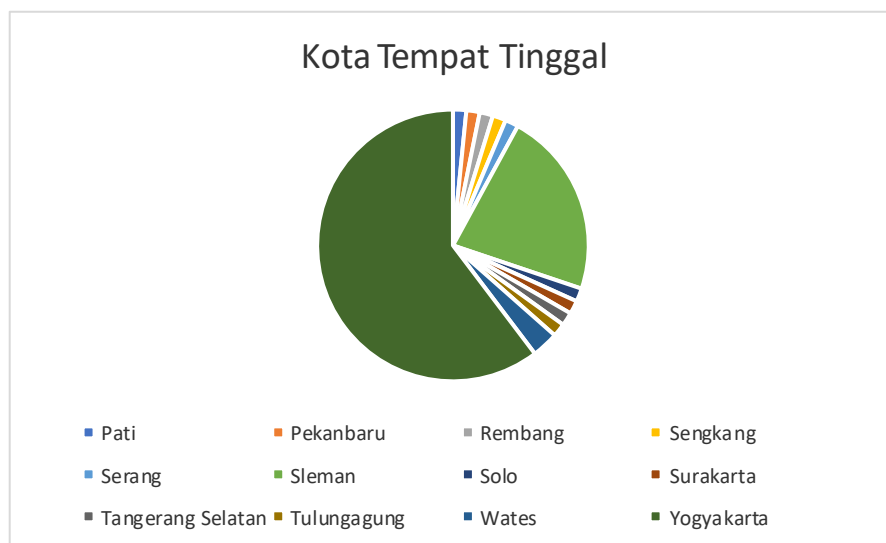


Figure 1. Respondents' Residence

Table 1 The Affiliation with Religious Organizations

Intensity	Do you follow a certain religious organization?	
	F	%
Yes	60	65.217
No	31	33.696
Missing	1	1.087
Total	92	100.000

Table 2 Latest Educational Background

Intensity	Latest Educational Background	
	F	%
D1/ D2	2	2.174
D3	1	1.087
S1	42	45.652
S2	12	13.043
SMA/SMK	35	38.043
Missing	0	0.000
Total	92	100.000

2. The Respondents' Means of Communication Technology

Communication technology commonly used by respondents is smartphones (smartphones), portable computers (laptops), and television. It was not rare that each respondent had more than one communication device. In terms of social media accounts, most respondents claimed to have an Instagram account (87 people), followed by Facebook accounts (80 people), Twitter (58 people) and Telegram (23 people). This survey did not intend to reveal the way they use their social media accounts, whether for personal or business purposes, whether the social media accounts include their real identity or anonymous identities, and the duration they use their social media for a certain period of time.

3. The Intensity of Conventional Media Usage

There are three categories of media types in this survey. First is the conventional mass media, second is the official media of religious institutions, both government agencies or community organizations. Unlike mass media, official media is a communication channel managed by an institution containing information that can be accessed by the public. In the context of this research, the term official media refers to the official website of the institution. Third is the social media account.

For the conventional mass media category, print media and radio constitute the media most rarely used by respondents to seek information. In the print media field, the answers are dominated by "rarely" (44 respondents) and "occasionally" (28 respondents). The answers on the field of other print media, namely books, are also dominated by answers "rarely" and "occasionally". Such an answer, it was assumed, is due to the nature of information presented in the book that is not as actual as the news media. In the field of radio, there is only a slight difference in numbers of respondents who answer "never at all" (32 respondents) and those who answer "rarely" (35 respondents). The number of respondents who answer "often" for print and radio media is less than 10 percent of the total respondents and there are no respondents who answer "always". It is found out that some respondents stated that they "often" and some even "always" use television as a source of information (a total of 26 respondents). However, in the case of television as a source of information, the dominant answers are "occasionally" and "rarely".

Online news media is the mass media often used by respondents compared to the other three. There are 43 respondents who answered often and always use online news as a source of information. However, it should also be noted that there is only a slight difference in the number of respondents who answer rarely and occasionally (39 answers) and the number of respondents who answer often and always use online news as a source of information. It means that online news media are not the main source of information among the respondents.

The declining use of conventional mass media as a source of information discussed in this study is a common phenomenon today. People prefer to use social media as a source of information over forms of conventional media. Arguably, conventional mass media have better information quality, since it involves supervisory institutions, such as the Press Council, the Indonesian Broadcasting Commission, which serves as monitoring bodies to ensure the journalistic code of ethics are adhered and correctly implemented. Nevertheless, it seems that the freedom offered by social media has attracted many people to use it. Social media allows everyone to freely express their opinions, exchange comments, and share various information. The absence of supervisory bodies who oversee various kinds of interaction on social media doesn't seem to stop everyone from using it.²⁴

Based on GlobalWebIndex data, conventional media audiences in Indonesia are decreasing from the first semester of 2019 to the first semester of 2020. This applies to television viewers, radio listeners, newspaper and magazine readers. In the first semester of 2019, Indonesian television viewers comprised 93.3% of the total respondents. But a year later, their audience declined to 90.7%. Meanwhile, magazines, which have the lowest market share among other forms of conventional media, also experienced a decline in readership. Their readership decreased from 51.3% in semester I - 2019 to 44.4% in semester II - 2020.²⁵ The findings of this study are in contrast to the findings of previous study that there was a tendency for people to access conventional mass media more during the COVID-19 pandemic than before. In addition, conventional mass media (news/journalistic products) audiences are mostly those respondents with a higher educational background.²⁶

²⁴ Husnul Khatimah, "Posisi dan Peran Media dalam Kehidupan Masyarakat," *TASAMUH* 16, no. 1 (December 2018): 119–138.

²⁵ Yosepha Pusparisa, "Media Konvensional Di Indonesia Menuju Senjakala," *Databoks.Katadata.Co.Id*.

²⁶ Rochyadi-Reetz, Maryani, and Agustina, "Public's Media Use and Gratification Sought during Corona Virus Outbreak in Indonesia: A National Survey."

4. The Intensity of Social Media Usage

The third category is social media. Most of the respondents in this study chose social networks as a medium for seeking information about government policies related to religious activities during the COVID-19 pandemic, where 44 respondents answered often and 29 answered always, 2 people answered never at all, 2 people answered rarely, 15 people answered occasionally. In the case of user-generated content, most of the respondents (30 respondents) answered rarely, 29 respondents answered occasionally and less than half of the total respondents stated often and always.

New forms of media (YouTube, WhatsApp, Instagram, cyber media) constitute the choice of the majority of respondents in consuming daily information. Previous study shows that respondents tend to use WhatsApp and Instagram as the first media they accessed daily.²⁷ Other data shows a shifting trend that in general, from 2018 to 2020, more and more Indonesians are switching from conventional media or print media to online media as the main source of information. The most common media used in Indonesia is WhatsApp. This shows that digital platforms with direct and intensive interpersonal interactions, such as WhatsApp, are more preferred compared to other social platforms, such as YouTube and Instagram.²⁸

Based on the previous survey report, the attitudes and actions of respondents (read: religious people) are in line with their knowledge about the COVID-19 and related policies. Respondents who generally consist of Gen Xs and Millennials are categorized as middle class with good access to information. They get information and discourse mainly from social media rather than official sources. In fact, the official information center for the COVID-19, such as covid19.go.id only visited by a small number of respondents.²⁹

Based on our survey data, it is found that the majority of respondents preferred to use social networks over various forms of conventional media because social media provides clear and easy-to-understand information. This is clearly seen in their answer where 4 respondents chose print media (newspapers, magazines), 1 respondent chose radio, 16 respondents chose television, 9 respondents chose official online news, 2 respondents chose user-generated contents (blogs), 7 respondents chose official government websites, and zero number of respondents who chose for books, 29 respondents chose social networks (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram), 21 respondents chose video sharing services (YouTube), 3 respondents chose information/news aggregators (e.g. Line Today, Yahoo News).

It is found that the majority of respondents preferred to use social networks over various forms of conventional media because social media offers easy access to information. This is obvious in their answer where 3 respondents chose print media (newspapers, magazines), 1 respondent chose radio, 11 respondents chose television, 9 respondents chose online news, 2 respondents chose user-generated contents (blogs), 3 respondents chose official government websites, and there is no respondents chose books; in contrast to 46 respondents chose social networking platforms (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram), 15 respondents chose video sharing services (YouTube), 2 respondents chose information/news aggregators (e.g. Line Today, Yahoo News).

Official information can easily be found on social media. However, unlike official media or mainstream media that involve editorial procedures and journalistic codes of ethics, social media has its own way of presenting and sharing information. Information from mainstream media or government spokespersons, for example, will be processed, re-interpreted, and disseminated in many different ways and meaning by the netizen.

²⁷ Dwi Ajeng Widarini et al., "Kepercayaan Publik terhadap Media Arus Utama di Era Pandemi Covid 19" (Dewan Pers, 2021).

²⁸ RP Imawan, "Tren Penggunaan Media Oleh Masyarakat Indonesia 2018-2020," 2021, <https://populicenter.org/gagasan/esai/files/tren-penggunaan-media.php>.

²⁹ Ruhana and Burhani, "Pengetahuan, Sikap Dan Tindakan Umat Beragama Menghadapi COVID-19."

Respondents' knowledge and response to the COVID-19 and related policies are heavily influenced by information circulating on social media. This is evident from the majority of respondents (46.61%) who stated that they always checked information related to COVID-19 mainly via social media rather than official channels, such as covid19.go.id. In fact, the official channel providing information about government policies related to religious activities during the COVID-19 pandemic is rarely visited by the respondents. Most respondents (45.68%) stated that they have never accessed the Ministry of Religion's WhatsApp Center for COVID-19, and 24.74% said they rarely.

Previous studies show how social media dominates other forms of media as a reference for information about COVID-19. The dominance of social media as an information reference lies in information fluidity and speed shared among its users, allowing its users to get updated information about Coronavirus more quickly and effectively. This is especially true considering how the initial government announcement about the COVID-19 has instead made many people confused. There was a slight impression that there was no clear coordination from the central government on how to handle the COVID-19 outbreak.³⁰

Despite its usefulness, some level of caution is necessary when using social media, as shown by some Muslim community. Previous study on the media behavior patterns of the West Java Muslim community during the COVID-19 pandemic shows that respondents prefer to seek information about COVID-19 from social media compared to conventional media such as newspapers, radio, and television; Instagram is the most preferred social media platform they used to seek information related to COVID-19; They use social media frequently to check information (every day) related to COVID-19, but very rarely (not every day) do they actively comment or share information they found related to COVID-19; The Muslim community of West Java often get health information, such as medical advice, medicine, and health tips; but seldom get negative information such as threats, criticism, or hate speech regarding the handling of COVID-19.³¹

In another study concluded that the COVID-19 pandemic had encouraged the community to actively seek Islamic da'wah information. Their initial motive in seeking information on Islamic da'wah is to avoid the flood of information related to the COVID-19 pandemic they experienced; The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic instead has caused the Muslim youth community to be active and selective in seeking Islamic da'wah information through online media. The process of searching for Islamic da'wah information starts from grouping needs, making schedules, and online discussion groups using online discussion platforms such as Google Meet, Zoom Meeting, and WhatsApp's Video Call.³²

5. The Intensity of Government and/or Religious Organization Media Usage

Only a few respondents accessed the government's and the religious institutions' official website as a source of information. Based on data of the survey, the statistics of the respondents' media selection with regard to accessing the government official website in seeking the government policies related to religious activities during the COVID-19 pandemic is as follows; 7 people answered never at all, 31 people answered rarely, 32 people answered occasionally, 19 people answered often, and only 3 people who answered always.

The statistics of respondents' media selection with regard to accessing the official website of religious organizations in seeking information about government policies related to religious activities during the COVID-19 pandemic is as follows; 28 people answered never at all, 24 people

³⁰ Triyaningsih, "Efek Pemberitaan Media Massa terhadap Persepsi Masyarakat tentang Virus Corona (Studi Kasus; Masyarakat Di Pamekasan)."

³¹ Yulianti et al., "Media Usage Behavior during Covid-19 Pandemic."

³² Prasanti and Karimah, "Pencarian Informasi Dakwah Islam Melalui Media Online pada Masa Pandemi COVID-19 Bagi Komunitas Muslim."

answered rarely, 30 people answered occasionally, 9 people answered often, and only 1 person answered always. The small number of respondents who chose to access the official website of religious organizations is a surprising finding considering that the majority of the respondents in this study admitted to joining religious organizations. The low preference to use official institutions as a source of information is in line with the results of a study that official information channels on the government policies related to religious activities during the COVID-19 pandemic are rarely visited by respondents.³³

³³ Ruhana and Burhani, "Pengetahuan, Sikap dan Tindakan Umat Beragama Menghadapi COVID-19."

6. The Respondents' Views on the Information Quality produced by the Media

An interesting finding in this study is that many respondents stated that the quality information in terms of accuracy and credibility of the sources are from conventional mass media. Such a finding contradicts the fact that conventional forms of media are rarely, sometimes, or even never used by respondents. Based on the survey data, the following finding may represent how participants view the media based on information accuracy, where 5 respondents chose print media (newspapers, magazines), zero number of respondents chose radio, 13 respondents chose television, 8 respondents chose online news, there is no respondents chose user-generated contents (blog), 39 respondents chose government official websites, 5 respondents chose books, 15 respondents chose social networks (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram), 5 respondents chose video sharing services (YouTube), 2 respondents chose information/news aggregators (e.g. Line Today, Yahoo News).

In terms of information credibility, 7 respondents chose print media (newspapers, magazines), 1 respondent chose radio, 22 respondents chose television, 10 respondents chose online news sites, 3 respondents chose user-generated contents (blogs), 23 respondents chose government official websites, 3 respondents chose books, 6 respondents chose social network (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram), 16 respondents chose video sharing services (YouTube), 1 person chose information/news aggregators (e.g. Line Today, Yahoo News).

Table 5 Respondents Opinion on Information Quality

Intensity	Information accuracy		Credibility of information sources		The reputation of media		The media shows useful and relevant information		The media presents updated information		The media show clear and easy-to-understand information		Easy to access	
	f	%	F	%	f	%	F	%	F	%	f	%	f	%
1. Print media (newspaper, magazine)	5	5.435	7	7.609	9	9.783	4	4.348	2	2.174	4	4.348	3	3.261
2. Radio	-	-	1	1.087	-	-	1	1.087	2	2.174	1	1.087	1	1.087
3. Television	13	14.130	22	23.913	15	16.304	18	19.565	13	14.130	16	17.391	11	11.957
4. Online news sites	8	8.696	10	10.870	7	7.609	10	10.870	14	15.217	9	9.783	9	9.783
5. User-generated contents (blog)	-	-	3	3.261	1	1.087	5	5.435	3	3.261	2	2.174	2	2.174
6. Government official websites	39	42.391	23	25.000	32	34.783	9	9.783	3	3.261	7	7.609	3	3.261
7. Books	5	5.435	3	3.261	7	7.609	1	1.087	-	-	-	-	-	-
8. Social networks (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram)	15	16.304	6	6.522	6	6.522	24	26.087	47	51.087	29	31.522	46	50.000
9. Video-sharing services (YouTube)	5	5.435	16	17.391	13	14.130	17	18.478	5	5.435	21	22.826	15	16.304
10. Information/news aggregators (e.g. Line Today, Yahoo News)	2	2.174	1	1.087	2	2.174	2	2.174	3	3.261	3	3.261	2	2.174
Missing	0	0.000	0	0.000	0	0.000	1	1.087	0	0.000	0	0.000	0	0.000
Total	92	100.000	92	100.000	92	100.000	92	100.000	92	100.000	92	100.000	92	100.000

Based on the survey data, it is found that in terms of the media reputation, 9 respondents chose print media (newspapers, magazines), there is no respondents chose radio, 15 respondents chose television, 7 respondents chose online news sites, 1 respondents chose user-generated contents (blog), 32 respondents chose government official websites, 7 respondents chose books, 6 respondents chose social networking (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram), 13 respondents chose video sharing services (YouTube) , 2 respondents chose information/news aggregators (e.g. Line Today, Yahoo News).

The respondents consider journalistic media as trustworthy media based on the following reasons, namely data and facts presented, the media reputation, reliable news sources. Most respondents from 34 provinces trust the information about COVID-19 that are provided by experts in relevant fields.³⁴

Despite its gradual decline, mainstream conventional mass media still play an important role in reducing hoaxes and becoming an easy reference for Indonesian people to obtain reliable information. In order to produce quality output, mainstream media involves several stages of news production with strict principles and rules. News that is newsworthy has gone through a long process until it was decided to be newsworthy and published. Until today, many people still consider mainstream conventional media as the main reference in obtaining reliable information. Despite its popularity, many believe that social media cannot become the main reference of information because of the nature of its contents (user-generated) and the fact that they often used to spread hoaxes.³⁵

Mainstream mass media, particularly print media, are expected to be selective in sourcing news from social media (online media), such as Twitter and Instagram. News originated from social media is often easily misunderstood by readers. Misreading often give birth to a hoax. The mainstream mass media are expected to continue to be committed to producing quality information in order to educate the general society to be critical of the information distributed on social media.³⁶

Information accuracy will bring a sense of public trust in the media presenting the information.³⁷ Regarding the information accuracy, based on several studies discussing the current proliferation of information media, it is found that television news and newspapers are much more trusted than online media, even though in terms of the number of audiences, television and newspapers are inferior to online media.³⁸ The tendency to use conventional mass media rather than social media stating that 45% of its respondents admit to consuming mass media more often during the COVID-19 pandemic than before. It's also found that mass media (news/journalism products) tend to be consumed by respondents with higher education levels. private television channels, health associations official websites, and social media are the three most widely used media by Indonesian people in seeking information during the COVID-19 pandemic.³⁹

In terms of information relevance, information usefulness, and information updates, social media such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and video sharing services, for example YouTube, are superior to conventional mass media and official websites. Based on the survey data, it was found that in terms of information most usefulness and relevance 4 respondents chose print media (newspapers, magazines), 1 respondent chose radio, 18 respondents chose television, 10 respondents chose online news sites, 5 respondents chose user-generated contents (blogs), 9 respondents chose government official websites, 1 respondent chose books, 24 respondents chose social networks (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram), 17 respondents chose services video sharing (YouTube), 2 respondents chose information/news aggregators (e.g. Line Today, Yahoo News) and 1 respondent didn't choose any media.

Based on the survey data, it was found that in terms of the media capability in presenting the most updated information, 2 respondents chose print media (newspapers, magazines), respondents chose radio, 13 respondents chose television, 14 respondents chose online news sites, 3 respondents chose user-generated contents (blog), 3 respondents chose government official websites, 0 respondents chose books, 47 respondents chose social networks (Facebook,

³⁴ Widarini et al., "Kepercayaan Publik terhadap Media Arus Utama di Era Pandemi Covid 19."

³⁵ Bambang Mudjiyanto and Amri Dunan, "Media Mainstream Jadi Rujukan Media Sosial," *Majalah Semi Ilmiah Populer Komunikasi Massa* 1, no. 1 (2020): 21–34.

³⁶ Mudjiyanto and Dunan, "Media Mainstream Jadi Rujukan Media Sosial."

³⁷ Ishwara, "Jurnalisme Dasar."

³⁸ Gelgel, "Hubungan Antara Intensitas Konsumsi Media dan Kepercayaan terhadap Media di Bali."

³⁹ Rochyadi-Reetz, Maryani, and Agustina, "Public's Media Use and Gratification Sought during Corona Virus Outbreak in Indonesia: A National Survey."

Twitter, Instagram), 5 respondents chose video sharing services (YouTube), 3 respondents chose information/news aggregators (e.g. Line Today, Yahoo News).

What makes social media interesting is its direct and actual interaction which in turn produces information abundance, where anyone can find any information about many things. Social media allows people now to search information more flexibly, including those related to the COVID-19. This, for example, is illustrated on research conducted by Rohmah showing that more than 80 percent of its respondents stated that they use social media to seek information about the COVID-19, that via social media they can help each other's, that they use social media as an escape from their daily routine and personal problems during the COVID-19 outbreak. 19, that social media can satisfy their need for information on the COVID-19 and information on social media is satisfying to do something.⁴⁰

E. Conclusion

While the majority of respondents consider traditional mass media (newspapers, radio, television) and official information sources, either published by the government or independent organizations, as a reliable source of information they can trust, they rarely access these media. The majority of respondents stated that social networking platforms are the information source they most frequently accessed in seeking information about COVID-19.

Most respondents from 34 provinces trusted information about COVID-19 provided by experts in related fields, so that until the time this research was carried out, there were still many people who considered mainstream conventional media as the main references in obtaining reliable information. Despite its popularity, many believe that social media cannot be a reference for mainstream information due to the nature of its information content (user-generated) and the fact that they are often used to spread hoaxes.

However, in terms of information relevance, usefulness, and updating of the information, social media is found to be preference to the conventional mass media and official websites. It is due to its direct and actual interaction which ultimately produce information, where everyone can find various information about many things, yet on flexibility seeking of information, including those related to COVID-19.

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⁴⁰ Rohmah, "Media Sosial sebagai Media Alternatif Manfaat dan Pemuas Kebutuhan Informasi Masa Pandemi Global Covid 19 (Kajian Analisis Teori Uses and Gratification)."

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