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Tabligh as a Form of Information Sharing for Women: 'Aisyiyah during the COVID-19 Pandemic in East Java

By Tri Susantari,¹ Yunus Abdul Halim,² and Adam Syarief Thamrin³

Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic has made everyone adapt in order to survive. The pandemic has an impact on all sectors of society, including religion, economy, health, and education. 'Aisyiyah is an organized women's Muslim group that helps the community in dealing with COVID-19. 'Aisyiyah uses *tabligh* as a form of information sharing to educate their cadres and the public regarding community problems in dealing with COVID-19. Through qualitative research methods, this study describes in detail how the model and impact of *tabligh* activities have been carried out by 'Aisyiyah during the pandemic. The results of the study show that *tabligh* regarding COVID-19 has been a means of education and enlightenment in the community that was met with high enthusiasm from the public. The During the pandemic, 'Aisyiyah East Java was involved in the Social Ta'awun Movement (people-help movement), Centelan and "For Masks." Other efforts were also carried out by 'Aisyiyah to reach cadres and congregations and invite them to take part in online discussions, to make them feel that they are recognized, accepted, and treated humanely. A negative drawback of online outreach is that many people in East Java cannot attend because of difficulties in using information technology, but the positive impact is that people are able to attend *tabligh* at any time and do not need to attend in person. 'Aisyiyah cares for its cadres through measures such as helping to boost immunity and strengthening faith and psychological health as well as providing moral support and assistance to cadres and their families who were left behind during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Keywords: COVID-19 Pandemic, Women's Community Groups, Online Information-sharing, *Tabligh*, 'Aisyiyah, Muslim Women

Introduction

The current COVID-19 pandemic has become an obstacle for people in their quotidian activities. The increasing number of cases of sickness or death has limited the mobility of all citizens in daily life. The high number of COVID-19 cases in Indonesia is also quite damaging to sectors besides the health sector, such as the economic sector and domestic business or trade sector (Muqsith et al., 2021). In addition to the health and economic sectors, the education sector also faces serious problems. The impact of closing schools and replacing face-to-face education with online schools imposes many limitations on teachers and students, due to unequal levels of digital literacy and unequal access to technology and infrastructure support.

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The struggle that women face during the current COVID pandemic should receive attention and support from various parties and groups, including women's organizations. One of the women's organizations that focuses on empowering and increasing women's independence in Indonesia is 'Aisyiyah, which has taken concrete action on a national scale. 'Aisyiyah East Java continues to assist women during the pandemic. One action taken by 'Aisyiyah is *da'wah*, which aims to spread goodness. 'Aisyiyah routinely conducts religion and humanity studies through the Zoom application. 'Aisyiyah also organized a movement to plant 5,000 trees with the Central Executive 'Aisyiyah. 'Aisyiyah also provided vaccinations at 'Aisyiyah Hospital in several areas, namely Ponorogo, Nganjuk, and Tulangan Sidoarjo. The donation center Lazismu of 'Aisyiyah East Java is always well supported, and they have also participated in raising funds for humanitarian disasters in Palestine.

'Aisyiyah, as a women's organization that encourages the empowerment and independence of Indonesian women during the pandemic, has brought its *tabligh* function to Indonesian women in general, and to 'Aisyiyah cadres in particular, in order to protect them and their families and to offer a form of concrete resistance by women against COVID-19. As reported on the 'Aisyiyah website (www.aisyiyah.or.id), some of 'Aisyiyah strategies involved a collaboration between the Central Executive 'Aisyiyah and The Asia Foundation (TAF). In addition, 'Aisyiyah also provides access to literacy and new knowledge for women, especially to maintain food security through the Budikdamber Catfish and Vegetable Planting conducted by 'Aisyiyah Bima of West Nusa Tenggara. The activities of 'Aisyiyah are in line with Erich Fromm's thoughts about the sense of responsibility, love, and compassion between fellow human beings. The relationship between 'Aisyiyah and its cadres is a form of love and responsibility that allows women to strengthen and support each other during difficult times. Fromm (2005) interprets love as an attitude and character orientation that includes activities such as the form of sisterly love practiced by 'Aisyiyah. This research about 'Aisyiyah and their efforts to help women during the pandemic was conducted through 'Aisyiyah East Java, because it had a fairly high number of cases of COVID-19.

Previously, a research study on the same topic was conducted by Anggraini in 2021 with a qualitative approach that emphasizes the analysis of the *da'wah* strategy itself by prioritizing *tabligh* as a communication strategy in preaching. However, the basic difference between this research and previous research is that the understanding and position of *tabligh* is not just a communication strategy, but rather functions as a means of religious mediation to spread the word of Allah to the wider community, and is thus accompanied by a sense of love and action.

The research methodology involved these questions: 1) What programs and *tabligh* activities did 'Aisyiyah East Java conduct during the current COVID-19 pandemic? 2) How did the *tabligh* activities allow the people participating to feel a sense of belonging, recognition, and humanity? and 3) What was the impact on the people of East Java after the *tabligh* were carried out by 'Aisyiyah East Java?

Literature Review

Previous Studies

D. Anggraini (2021) concluded that *da'wah* strategies during a pandemic tend to have an effect on changes in delivery and communication methods. Another study by Uswatun Hasanah (2021) focused on *da'wah* in Madurese society and used a qualitative approach. Hasanah noted that in the Madura community, communication is done offline because most of the Madurese are not tech-literate. Communication strategies to minimize COVID-19 deaths and illness were also

carried out in Singapore in various ways, according to research conducted by the Indonesian educational and cultural attaché in Singapore (2020). Singapore used home-based education methods that allowed students to continue to receive education as well as to convey information about the pandemic to the students' families at home. These studies show awareness of the importance of taking care of each other during a pandemic.

Erich Fromm's Concept of Humanistic Education and the Tabligh 'Aisyiyah

According to Erich Fromm, education is a means to humanize people (Soekanto, 2000). This humanistic approach is related to humanistic psychology in education which emphasizes the affective, cognitive, and psychomotor aspects of human development. In this learning process, students must receive recognition, acceptance, and humane treatment (Indrianto, 2018).

Education, which is called *tabligh* within the 'Aisyiyah organization, must be motivated by humanistic purposes. In the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, the *tabligh* activity carried out by 'Aisyiyah played a role in the community by forming a COVID-19 task force that involved women in implementing its activities. One of the activities was to provide education to the public about the procedures for living amidst COVID-19 and for adjusting to the "new normal" according to the teachings of the Qur'an and Sunnah. *Tabligh* task-force activities were not restricted to education, but also involved cadres and volunteers making hand sanitizers, distributing free masks, donating basic ingredients for cooking, and recruiting volunteers so students, lecturers, nurses, and medical analysts could be deployed to 'Aisyiyah and Muhammadiyah hospitals. People who took part in these activities felt recognized, accepted, and humanized by seeing the efforts made by 'Aisyiyah. Through these activities 'Aisyiyah has gained appreciation from Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi, and especially for supporting humanitarian issues, peace, and women's welfare (republika.co.id). However, 'Aisyiyah is not alone in fighting the pandemic and supporting women's independence and empowerment. Perempuan Berkisah also takes its own approach to empower and assist the women's community during the pandemic (Pasaribu, 2021).

Liberal Feminists and the Struggle of Women 'Aisyiyah'

Liberal feminism was developed in the 18th century in the west and uses the basic assumption of John Locke that every human being deserves human rights, which are the right to life, the right to freedom, and the right to happiness. At that time, the fulfillment of these human rights had only been enjoyed by men. In the 18th century, women were considered to lack the ability to reason, so women were not afforded the same civil rights as men (Megawangi in 'Aini, 2018).

'Aisyiyah is a women's organization that exists to fight for women to have equal rights. 'Aisyiyah has a vision of increasing the dignity of women according to Islamic teachings about educational, cultural, economic, legal, and health aspects of life. 'Aisyiyah participates in charities such as formal or non-formal education, hospitals, maternity hospitals, and health centers. Their social welfare activities help the community, including women, through empowerment and direct assistance as well as public advocacy regarding social issues. There are many challenges faced by 'Aisyiyah, including the existence of a patriarchal culture in the community and organizations they work with.

Tabligh Conducted by 'Aisyiyah during the COVID-19 Pandemic

Tajla (2002) defines information-sharing as an umbrella of concepts that include various collaborative behaviors. *Tabligh* is not individual behavior but occurs collectively in an organization. Information sharing is key to a successful relationship. When cadres in the organization have a strong commitment to sharing information, the internal relations between cadres will also be strong (Fawcett et al., 2007). *Tabligh* is an activity that aims to increase the quality of morals, worship, and *mu'amalah* (religious behavior) within the community based on the values of the Qur'an and Sunnah through messages that are enlightening and progressive. The strength of this *tabligh* program lies in the use of large numbers of recitations at the congregational or community level as a strategic medium for delivering messages that are enlightening and involve daily life in the surrounding environment (www.aisyiyah.or.id). In the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, the *Tabligh 'Aisyiyah* program also conveyed an educational message to the public about the coronavirus and how to behave while adhering to health protocols. This education was carried out by the COVID-19 Task Force 'Aisyiyah in various cities and regencies in Indonesia and included varied activities in each city. *Tabligh* that is done by 'Aisyiyah is in line with Islamic religious orders: "Men and women, some of them are helpers for others. They command (to do) what is right, and prevent evil, perform prayers, pay zakat, and obey Allah and the Messengers" (QS. At-Taubah: 71).

Research Method

In our research, the approach used is qualitative. Qualitative research uses a natural setting with the intention of interpreting the phenomena that occur within that setting. A qualitative descriptive approach in this study was used to describe women's struggles, and the role of 'Aisyiyah in surviving and fighting COVID-19, and the impact of their outreach.

This research focuses on how the women of 'Aisyiyah struggle and survive during the COVID-19 pandemic, how they struggle to protect others, and what forms their struggle and resistance take. The informants in this study included Regional Leaders and Branch Managers of 'Aisyiyah in parts of East Java with high numbers of COVID-19 cases. These areas included those recommended by the Regional Leader of 'Aisyiyah East Java. In this study, there were seven informants consisting of the leadership of 'Aisyiyah branches of the Surabaya, Sidoarjo, Malang, Lamongan, and Bojonegoro branches as well as cadres from the Surabaya and Sidoarjo regional branches.

The interviews conducted in this study involved interviewing the Regional Leaders and Branch Managers of 'Aisyiyah in East Java. Interviews were conducted systematically with guidelines that were based on the research objectives. Interviews were conducted by telephone due to the implementation of Community Activity Restrictions (PPKM) in East Java.

The data analysis involved generating reports and descriptions. The first stage of data reduction was carried out to determine data according to the problems to be studied so the reduced data could provide a clearer picture and make it easier to carry out further data collection. After doing data reduction, the next step was to display the data in narrative text. The last stage in the analysis was verification and drawing new conclusions.

Results and Discussion

Description of 'Aisyiyah's Tabligh Program in East Java

Tabligh is an information sharing activity or activity to convey information or teachings about the Islamic religion as well as to set a moral example for others. It is often referred to as *syiar* or recitation. *Tabligh* criteria for 'Aisyiyah includes having a good attitude, patience, and sincerity; using language that is easy to understand; prioritizing deliberation; presenting material with a strong basis in Islam; and not inciting participants to dispute with each other. During the pandemic, 'Aisyiyah's *tabligh* activities in person were constrained and participants looked for various ways to keep the activities going, so they moved their *tabligh* activities to virtual platforms through Zoom, Googlemeet, and Whatsapp applications.

The *tabligh* online activities were also carried out through recordings, as explained by informant S. These recordings were made by presenters from the assembly and then distributed via Whatsapp groups. Once shared, *tabligh* participants could also ask questions via chat. *Tabligh* by these means is efficient for participants, because they can listen to the recording at any time and recordings can be forwarded or shared with others. As S noted,

It's not just Zoom, Googlemeet. We record the meeting and then we have a question-and-answer session. The first one was last Ramadan, 2020. Then we record the meeting and there will be questions and answers with the live-streaming, or in a chat (Informant S, Surabaya, August 10, 2021)

The implementation of *tabligh* is not only carried out online, but has also begun to be carried out offline in several regional branches. The offline activity was carried out with fewer participants due to the need to reduce crowds and implement health protocols to minimize exposure to COVID-19. 'Aisyiyah performed an important social role in the midst of a pandemic. Social role is a concept of individual or group behavior in a dynamic society or phenomenon (Soerjono, 2007).

The material discussed and delivered in *tabligh* during the pandemic is related to motivating and encouraging enthusiasm with the interest of helping people in the spheres of health, education, and economics. Examples include messages about strengthening the economy through online product sales, information and training, preventing the stunting of growth in children and preventing tuberculosis. Moreover, in the implementation of *tabligh*, there is also information about *fiqh* and *munakahat*, or marriage, whose targets are women and teenagers. Explanations of various learning materials can enlighten the community as *tabligh* attempts to address various life problems.

The schedule of the 'Aisyiyah recitation during the pandemic was twice a month. Before the pandemic, the civil society recitation was held every Sunday morning and the *tabligh* of the central leadership of 'Aisyiyah was held every Friday afternoon.

During this pandemic, 'Aisyiyah aimed to adapt to the pandemic and to provide solutions that are in accordance with community needs. 'Aisyiyah aimed to combat hoax news about COVID-19 that had been scattered throughout the community. As informant H noted, "you can participate in helping to work against hoax news about this pandemic, including about worship because people feel confused, indecisive, and doubtful about how our worship in the mosque should be carried out at home" (Informant H, Lamongan, September 5, 2021).

Online media influences the public by providing information and by communicating strategies to increase awareness about business and how to utilize *da'wah* during the pandemic. Preachers also learned to be creative using social media. The information contained in social media is delivered freely and can be disseminated faster than other media such as brochures and pamphlets. The results show that social media culture in Indonesia can be used to teach the public about the latest research results related to COVID-19 (Ikhwan, 2020 and Kamila, 2020). The role of social media is quite important during a pandemic, according to Cahyono (2016), who notes that social media has shifted people's behavior patterns and culture. However, the existence of social media has weaknesses, since the level of digital literacy is still low in the community, so Aisyiyah also carries out offline activities including providing direct assistance and direct face-to-face discussions.

One movement sponsored by 'Aisyiyah during the pandemic is the Social Ta'awun Movement. The movement started at the beginning of the pandemic in April 2020 and involved providing basic food assistance (see Fig. 1) to residents affected by COVID-19, many of whom had lost their livelihoods. Social *ta'awun* is carried out by raising donations from union residents and the Muhammadiyah COVID-19 Command Center (MCCC) in the affected regions and then moving up to the branch level. The MCCC is a special team formed by the Muhammadiyah Central Executive to anticipate the spread of the coronavirus. The targets of social *ta'awun* are not only Muhammadiyah residents but also members of the general public who have been affected by COVID-19. Other social *ta'awun* movements include the Palestine Movement, the movement for earthquake victims, the movement to deliver rice boxes and PPE for health workers in hospitals (Fig. 2), and the online Stunting Prevention Education carried out by the Regional Leader of 'Aisyiyah Bojonegoro Regency, which collaborated with the Health Assembly, Tabligh Assembly, Educational Council and IGABA.

Figure 1: Distributing Food Packages



Figure 2: Providing PPE for Medical Personnel at Aisyiyah Hospital Bojonegoro



There are other forms of activity for helping others, namely *penhand (centelan)*. This activity was carried out by 'Aisyiyah in synergy with the economic assembly and health assembly. *Penhand* activities are a humanist form of caring for one another. As explained by informant S, “the *penhand (centelan)* activity is every Friday, the blessed Friday is replaced with a piggy bank. So there are people who pick up groceries, and there are people who take groceries” (Informant S, Surabaya, August 10, 2021).

The “Keep Using the Mask” movement was carried out in the Surabaya and Lamongan areas. This movement began with the distribution of masks and hand sanitizers in several Islamic boarding schools and other schools. 'Aisyiyah also distributed basic necessities to the families of patients affected by COVID-19 at the Aisyiyah Clinic in Brondong, Lamongan and the Muhammadiyah Hospital in Kediri Regency. In the early stages, 100,000 masks were distributed in all regencies and cities in East Java. Besides distributing masks, 'Aisyiyah also provides education to people regarding 3M practices. It addressed the issue of food security and invited the community to create a food garden by providing 50 kg of kale seeds. As demonstrated in Fig. 3, 'Aisyiyah received support from the East Java Provincial Government, the Muhammadiyah COVID-19 Crisis Center in East Java and Lazismu East Java (beritajatim.com). This is shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3: Government Support for Aisyiyah



We must keep up with increasingly rapid technological advances as a means of digital *da'wah* for 'Aisyiyah's mothers. On Saturday, July 17, 2021, 'Aisyiyah women from all over Java participated in an online-based training entitled "Aisyiyah Information System Management Training/SIA Batch 6," which was organized by the Central Executive 'Aisyiyah and was intended for regional secretaries (see Fig. 4). Although this agenda is for regional secretaries, it also invites young people to help as system/website operators.

Figure 4: Training by 'Aisyiyah



During the pandemic, the government's policies to minimize the impact of COVID-19 were considered insufficient to reach the high enough number of people in Indonesia. So, Aisyiyah's role is quite important in helping the government to manage the pandemic. In its implementation of *tabligh* activities, 'Aisyiyah creates a forum for education that is initiated with the aim of humanizing people. In organizing *tabligh* in the midst of a pandemic, 'Aisyiyah presented material to provide knowledge to the community regarding health, education, economics, and religion, and counteracted public confusion about the COVID-19 pandemic. For example, they provided education about how to worship in the midst of a pandemic, how to maintain health so as not to be exposed to COVID-19, and how to strengthen the economy in the midst of a pandemic by selling products online. The positive group movement organized by 'Aisyiyahis in line with the concept of a social group described by Haryanto (2011) as a collection of individuals who live together and have constructive and collaborative relationships.

Tabligh Activity Model

The response of the participants to the online recitation during the pandemic was quite high. The pandemic condition did not stop *tabligh* activities; on the contrary, online recitation made recitation more accessible and the best choice for the present. Informant A stated: "Alhamdulillah, we were present to listen and discuss the material and if possible, the head of the *tabligh* branch conveyed it to local members or members in their respective branches. They are very enthusiastic because they long to meet" (Informant A, Surabaya, 10 October 2021). Judging from the high enthusiasm of the members of 'Aisyiyah, they feel a sense of belonging, as described by Fromm (1994) and the learning process is oriented towards an effort to humanize people. They feel a sense of connection with each other, which can be seen from their eagerness to meet virtually even in the midst of a global pandemic. The quote by Informant A above shows the social capital of

'Aisyiyah as evidenced by the enthusiasm of the audience in participating in their activities. Robert D. Putnam describes social capital as part of social life, involving trust that encourages participants to move to achieve common goals (Field, 2011).

Based on Informant SN's statement that the "atmosphere for [religious] studying during the pandemic is quite active" (SN informant, Bojonegoro, August 20, 2021), it can be seen that the *tabligh* activities inspire active community participation in various cities in East Java. The community, even though it cannot do outside activities during the pandemic, still uses its time at home as well as possible and maintains the habit of reading for necessary knowledge. They feel that they have the same habit of reciting the Koran. Therefore, 'Aisyiyah continues to strive for the continuity of *tabligh* activities for its cadres. Before the pandemic, usually 'Aisyiyah carried out activities by gathering and then selling and buying each other's products; during the pandemic, they turned to online groups to accomplish these goals.

'Aisyiyah tries to coordinate the presence of its members through their respective circles or regional heads. The chairperson makes a list containing members who can attend *tabligh* and members who cannot attend. If there are members who are not present, the list includes the reasons why they cannot attend the *tabligh*. Some are not able to attend because they are resource persons for other activities. By ensuring that their members participate in *tabligh*, the cadres feel a sense of connection to each other and feel a sense of belonging to 'Aisyiyah.

The leaders also try to contact cadres who are not present at the recitation. Usually the reason is that the members have limited internet connections because there are many members living in rural areas. If there are members who are unable to attend, the leadership continues to provide a link to the recording so that members can still listen to the *tabligh* material at another time. The leadership of 'Aisyiyah cadres takes the initiative to find recitation links for all congregations. The efforts made by the leadership were due to a sense of belonging and love for fellow cadres of 'Aisyiyah. 'Aisyiyah who did not attend felt a sense of belonging because the leadership was still paying attention and questioning the reasons for their absence and was still trying to keep their members from missing out on information.

The participants in East Java Province were quite enthusiastic, because 'Aisyiyah invited everyone without exception. Invitations were distributed by way of Sharelink Zoom, pamphlets, and invitations through the commissariat. As an informant noted: "There are no cadres who are not invited because all communication is through the Whatsapp group so that all can access the Zoom link that has been shared" (SN informant, Bojonegoro, August 20, 2021). The leadership of 'Aisyiyah invited all members without exception to both online and offline *tabligh* activities. And the chairman also tries to contact members personally or to use personal chat to invite members and remind them when a *tabligh* activity will be held. As stated by Fromm (1994), in the humanistic flow the learning process is optimized so that participants are recognized. The attitude of the leadership to invite all members of 'Aisyiyah without exception makes the members feel recognized as part of the community.

The implementation of offline *tabligh* activities has begun, but there are not yet a large number of participants, because the pandemic is ongoing. The offline *tabligh* implementation is carried out with health protocols such as limiting participants, keeping social distance and wearing masks. The cadres and congregational participants feel humanized according to Fromm's terms, because the aim is to protect the congregation from COVID-19 by providing adequate and appropriate facilities.

Tabligh activities are carried out directly or offline in several areas that are located remotely or lacking technology, which prevents online attendance. Some of these members are constrained,

because they are less technologically literate or they live in areas that have inconsistent Internet access.

In its offline implementation, participants are given food, as informant S noted. The provision of food makes the Tablighi congregation feel humanized. Food is obtained from 'Aisiyah members who have paid their previous dues. When the *tabligh* holds the recitation there are mobile pots, but if the PDA does not have mobile pots, there is already money contributed from the branch. 'Aisiyah members pay dues voluntarily, because they feel they have become part of 'Aisiyah and that the fees promote the common good of their fellow human beings.

Accommodation and transportation of pilgrims attending *tabligh* activities are carried out individually. Neighbors travel to participate together. Accommodation is carried out individually by the pilgrims, because the implementation of *tabligh* activities cannot occur without participants staying overnight.

In the implementation of these offline *tabligh* activities, 'Aisiyah also pays attention to the safety and comfort of the participants. This makes the participants feel secure in attending *tabligh* activities, so they feel they are treated well and humanized as described by Fromm (2005). Informant N noted, "When I go offline, I use a temperature gauge, it's sprayed before entering,...and the room capacity was calculated" (Informant N, Sidoarjo, October 20, 2021). Based on informant N's statement, the implementation of *tabligh* offline pays great attention to the health protocols for the participants, requiring them to wear masks. When entering the room the participants' body temperatures are checked and they are sprayed with disinfectant. They are provided with hand sanitizer. Normally, they may not bring small children, but if they are forced to do so, the children must wear masks. *Tabligh* organizers also pay attention to the capacity of the room in order to maintain proper distance between participants. If there are too many participants to accommodate them safely, the door will be closed and those left outside can view video recordings of the activities.

Tabligh activities offline during this pandemic are greatly minimized. If the *tabligh* activity is considered very important and urgent, then it will be done directly, but if not, then Zoom or Googlemeet will be employed. As explained by Informant H, "We don't gather in a closed place with poor ventilation and air conditioning because we are worried that there will be transmission through aerosols. So we gather in an open place if it's very, very urgent. If not, we just need to Zoom in" (Informant H, Lamongan, September 5, 2021). Providing *tabligh* in an open room with good air ventilation, and also providing nourishment in the form of snacks and raw food ingredients, makes the pilgrims comfortable and allows them to feel humanized.

The implementation of *tabligh* 'Aisiyah activities, both online and offline, is in accordance with the concept of the humanistic flow described by Fromm (1994). In this case, leaders must pay attention to how the participants in their learning process feel a sense of belonging, recognition and humanity. The cadres' and participants' enthusiasm during *tabligh* activities and the leaders who stay in contact with the cadres that cannot attend and provide them with links to the information, help cadres and congregations feel a sense of belonging. The invitation to comprehensive *tabligh* activities for all congregants without exception makes the cadres feel recognized. For offline *tabligh*, this begins with ensuring the nourishment and safety of its cadres during the activities.

Impacts of Tabligh Activities on the East Java Community

One finding is that many people cannot follow the online recitations because of difficulties in using technology (Hasanah & Hamdan, 2021) or limitations such as weak signals in rural areas,

as noted by an SN informant. These technological limitations create obstacles to information sharing and cause people to miss out on information. On the other hand, online *tabligh* implementation allowed pilgrims who usually could not attend offline to participate online while at home, increasing efficiency.

In the early days of the pandemic, there was also a lack of information that caused confusion in the community about dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic. Many people were misled by misinformation, which made people nervous and confused about what actions to take. After the *tabligh* and recitation offered the community a summary of information and instructions about government regulations regarding worship during a pandemic, then people were able to worship in accordance with the government health protocols and receive accurate information, which helped the community determine the right steps to take in the face of the pandemic. The *tabligh* activity educated people and provided public assistance in dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic.

The implementation of online *tabligh* also has other impacts. For example, the presenter cannot pay attention directly to the reactions of the audience while the material is presented and thus cannot judge optimally whether the presented material was understood properly or not. Some participants are unresponsive, because they have turned off their cameras, and other participants are unfocused, because they are doing other activities. This situation is described in the following statement by Informant N: "It's easy for the audience to understand a presenter when offline, while online sometimes they don't know, so he explains according to the material and doesn't see the audience or what the audience is doing" (Informant N, Sidoarjo, 20 October 2021).

The positive impact of the online *tabligh* is being able to attend the recitation easily without incurring accommodation costs and being able to listen to the recitation anywhere. In addition, participants improved their skills related to the use of technology, social communication, and health behavior (Ulfa & Mikdar, 2020). The results of the research show many changes and impacts resulting from *da'wah* activities. Because offline recitations are difficult for now, the preacher must become creative in finding ways to preach through social media, such as making videos and uploading them to YouTube or Facebook. This allows them to share knowledge even though they are not face-to-face with their congregation. However, the risks are that the preachers cannot ask directly if their meaning has been understood or that the congregation might skip the video if they are bored with the presentation.

To reduce the spread of COVID-19, the leadership takes preventive measures for cadres or recitation participants, namely limiting offline or face-to-face *tabligh* activities. As much as possible, *tabligh* activities are carried out online. Face-to-face meetings will be held if they are deemed urgent enough or when the pandemic begins to subside. If there is an offline *tabligh* implementation, the committee must also be able to control the setting and limit the number of participants.

The recitation worshipers who take *tabligh* offline must obey health protocols. For example, they must use masks, bring hand sanitizer, run 3M and remind other worshipers to use masks. Preventive measures for online *tabligh* activities include calls for healthy living, warnings to avoid accepting misinformation and encouragement to continue caring for each other and keeping in touch with neighbors.

The preventive measures against COVID-19 were used with cadres and participants in the study. The leadership pays attention to the psychological health of its cadres, so they are not stressed by the conditions of the pandemic. Another psychological health issue addressed by the leadership is helping cadres to maintain their faith by listening to the *tabligh* given by 'Aisyiyah. Preventive measures to maintain physical health include activities to encourage the use of masks

and the dissemination of informative pictures regarding mandatory vaccines. After being given information about vaccines, people started to understand vaccination and its importance. All cadres, both 'Aisyiyah and Muhammadiyah in each branch, were the first to receive vaccines (Informant H, Lamongan, September 5, 2021) so they would be safer to continue their work on other agendas.

The leaders of 'Aisyiyah also paid attention to the cadres and their families who were exposed to COVID-19. This began with collecting data on who was exposed and then assisting cadres who were exposed. The leaders communicated with the hospital to keep COVID patients in isolation and to attend to their nutrition and monitor them for up to fourteen days. The responsibilities of the Regional Leaders of 'Aisyiyah to their cadres who were exposed include guarding them from self-isolation, finding hospitals, and holding mass swabs. 'Aisyiyah also set up an *isoman* (self-isolation) committee, providing assistance in the form of material donations and food. For these areas, assistance is channeled through Lazismu. The cadres also share important information links that can help the surrounding community. Piggybacking was also employed—giving food by placing food ingredients on the fence of the houses of those who are in isolation. To maintain the health of the cadres, the leadership also provides vitamins and *empon-empon* through the MCCC (Muhammadiyah COVID-19 Comman Center) so that the stamina and health of the cadres are maintained properly. They distribute food ingredients, such as vegetables, liquid probiotic supplements, and masks. This form of assistance was the result of collaboration between 'Aisyiyah and the health office. The leadership also cooperates with the government and the COVID task force by distributing basic food items received from the local governor.

If there is a cadre member or a family member of a cadre member who dies due to COVID-19, the members of 'Aisyiyah do not merely offer condolences. If the surviving family members receive *takziah*, then members of 'Aisyiyah come for *takziah*. If there are members who do not receive *takziah*, then members provide compensation through a transfer in order to avoid direct contact. This shows a high form of solidarity and concern between the members of 'Aisyiyah. If referring to the concept of social groups, one element that is not in line is the tendency of fanaticism of 'Aisyiyah members towards organizations. This fanaticism causes increased competition with other similar organizations, such as with Muslimat Nahdlatul Ulama', and others. According to Quratta (2016), fanaticism is a logical consequence of social pluralism, and fanaticism allows solidarity among groups of like-minded people. However, strong organizational solidity can create a positive and constructive movement.

Conclusion

'Aisyiyah is a women's movement that believes women deserve the same rights as men. The struggle of the women of 'Aisyiyah against COVID-19 can be observed through online and offline *tabligh* activities. The material presented in *tabligh* during the pandemic is intended to motivate and encourage the spirit of the congregation members in their efforts to protect themselves from COVID-19. During the pandemic, coordination between 'Aisyiyah cadres became more intense. *Tabligh* is conducted routinely one or two times a month. Movements that 'Aisyiyah has carried out during the pandemic include the Social Ta'awun Movement (in the form of social services for *isoman* or affected residents of COVID-19), Palestine Movement, Movement for Masks, Centelan, Movement for our Brothers and Sisters affected by the Earthquake, PPE assistance and boxed rice for health workers, online training on information system management and online sales among others.

The online *tabligh* activity model carried out by 'Aisyiyah in East Java during the COVID-19 pandemic was received positively and enthusiastically. The cadre leaders tried to contact cadres who were unable to attend the recitation. The implementation of *tabligh* was enlivened by the congregation's discussion. This makes the cadres and other congregations feel a sense of belonging. The leadership of the East Java 'Aisyiyah cadres always invites members to participate without exception, which makes them feel recognized. In addition, it provides information technology training to senior cadres to help them create comfortable recitations both online and offline. This includes providing comfortable rooms, nourishment, and security according to health protocols. This makes the cadres and other congregations feel humanized. 'Aisyiyah tried various ways to help its cadres because of a high sense of concern for fighting against COVID-19 and protecting fellow cadres with responsibility, love, solidarity, and sisterhood.

One impact on the community after the *tabligh* activities were carried out by 'Aisyiyah was that many people could not follow the recitations because of difficulties in using technology. The presenters also should pay keen attention to their audience if the *tabligh* is done online, to maintain audience interaction and enthusiasm. The positive impact is that online *tabligh* allowed the community to attend the recitation easily and more efficiently without accommodation and travel costs. *Tabligh* activities also provide accurate information to enlighten the community about what steps to take in dealing with all the problems related to the pandemic. The public was assisted in being selective about the information it accepted and in avoiding the spread of misinformation. 'Aisyiyah also continues to provide support both morally and materially to the bereaved families of cadres who died due to COVID-19.

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