



## Da'wah Strategy of West Java Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) With Health Message Content in Facing The Covid-19 Pandemic

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### ABSTRACT

*This research aims to discuss the da'wah strategy of the Islamic organization Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) of West Java in dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic. A lot of information about health is received by the congregation; some are true and some are not. Unfortunately, many residents and congregations are influenced by things that are not true, making them reluctant to be vaccinated. This research method is qualitative with in-depth interview techniques. This study concludes that the PWNU (Nahdlatul Ulama Regional Boards) da'wah strategy begins with the organization's view of COVID-19 which gave birth to NU's da'wah policy and its da'wah strategy. COVID-19 is a test that needs to be addressed and overcome properly. NU policy leads to actions to overcome the pandemic, which are synergized with the government and society by utilizing organizational resources to foster jam'iyah and congregational health. Da'wah is carried out by conveying religious messages combined with spiritual and mental health information to achieve physical health, accompanied by worship and good endeavor. In addition, reading the Qur'an can also bring happiness that affects physical endurance and health. Communication media are used to deliver da'wah messages from West Java NU, namely through mass media and social media, in which social media is more intensely used for da'wah than mass media. The implication of this research is that da'wah by Islamic organizations can still be carried out during a pandemic by using communication media, both social and mass media.*

**Keywords:** Nahdlatul Ulama; da'wah organization; covid-19.

### INTRODUCTION

Nahdhatul Ulama (NU) is a historic socio-religious organization in Indonesia. It was present in the midst of the nation's struggle for independence and took part in winning independence. Even after independence, NU strives to give substance to independence with positive

**Received:** April 2023. **Accepted:** May 2023. **Published:** June 2023.

activities. Since NU has strategic roles in this republic, the government always considers its thoughts to be listened to when setting policies. The same thing happened during the pandemic that plagued Indonesia when President Joko Widodo stated at the opening of the MUI National Conference that NU (and Muhammadiyah) should participate in socializing the COVID-19 vaccine.

During the COVID-19 pandemic in Indonesia, mass movement was restricted and isolated. The public was exposed to a lot of information about the limitations and restrictions on community movement, which influenced their perceptions. The public gradually became aware of the importance of restrictions to deal with COVID-19, so there was controversy when state officials were caught unmasked and continued to gather.

The "Macro-Scale Social Restriction" (PSBM) policy was implemented as the number of COVID positives continued to rise. When it was announced on March 2, 2020, there were two infected people. After 16 months, the number of infected people has reached more than 700,000 (July 17, 2021). The distribution of COVID-19-positive numbers in December 2020 was more than 5,000 people per day and then increased to around 50,000 people per day. The COVID-19 pandemic has become a frightening event, both due to mass media broadcasts and social media. The news and media information is counterproductive, and people are resistant to the stigma of COVID-19 for their families. Entering 2021, the pandemic conditions began to subside until May. However, at the end of July 2021, there was a second wave with death tolls above 1,000 per day.

A large mortality rate made the pandemic situation horrifying. As a religious organization respected by the government, we need to know the role of NU in dealing with the pandemic. This research aims to obtain data on the role of NU organizations, especially in West Java, in dealing with COVID-19, which includes policies, agendas, and evaluations. This research questions NU's da'wah strategy, including its views on COVID-19 and NU's da'wah policy, planning, and implementation during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Many researchers have studied major religious organizations in Indonesia, including Faisal Ismail in his journal entitled "*THE NAHDLATUL ULAMA: Its Early History and Contribution to the Establishment of Indonesian State*" (Ismail, 2011). Faisal's research states that Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) was born in a pesantren (Islamic boarding school)

culture where "traditional Islam" has been rooted and preserved. According to him, Nahdlatul Ulama declared its religious ideology as *'abl al-sunnah wa al-jama'ah*. There is also Brien, who, in his journal "*What Does the Rise of Digital Religion during COVID-19 Tell Us About Religion's Capacity to Adapt?*" mentions the great role of religious social organizations like NU and Muhammadiyah (Nashir, 2019) to advance Indonesia, including during the COVID-19 pandemic, so that people become healthy (Ma'arif, 2021; Brien, 2020).

In addition, Ilyas in his journal entitled "*Old Mosque in a Religious City: Masjid Jami' Tua Palopo as a Center of Da'wah Development*", Supriatna in his journal "*Aspects of the Psychological Well-being of Muslim Students in Bandung from the Perspective of Islamic Psychology during the Covid-19 Pandemic*", and the journal "*Digital Da'wah Communications for The Prosperous Justice Party During The Covid-19 Pandemic*" written by Muchtar are some of the research results that examine da'wah during the COVID-19 period (Ilyas, 2022; Supriatna, Septian & Alawiyah, 2021; Muchtar, 2021). However, among these journals, there has been no specific discussion regarding NU's da'wah steps in dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic. This is the novelty aspect of this article since the virus may still mutate (alpha, delta, and sigma), and there may be other viruses in the future.

This research used qualitative methods. Research materials were obtained through observations and interviews about routines while revealing the meanings of policies and their implementation in organizational actions, in addition to literature studies. The nature of this research is to conduct observations at the research site with a sociological approach by reading the signs found there. The type of observation carried out was "*observation without intervention*" (Shaugnessy & Zechmeister, 2009). Meanwhile, a document study was carried out on the organizational agenda of the NU Regional Executive Board (PW) related to the narrative of religion and state relations. Interviews were conducted with administrators and activists at the regional leadership (PW) on Jl. Galunggung, Bandung. This research describes the steps of the NU organization's da'wah in implementing a da'wah agenda containing health messages so that its congregation remains healthy during the COVID-19 pandemic. Likewise, for Nahdliyyin congregation affected by COVID-19, they can survive it safely and smoothly. The informants in this study were PWNU administrators who were interviewed in February-July 2021 in Bandung. Interview and observation data were then filtered and classified by theme

in order to obtain valid data, as outlined in this article.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### **Da'wah Strategy with Health Messages to Survive COVID-19**

Strategy is a general term for shaping the systematics that need to be created in organizational management. Strategy is basically the art and science of using and developing strengths to achieve predetermined goals (Chaniago, 2014). According to David, strategy is a shared means with long-term goals to be achieved (Faruq & Usman, 2014) to get superior communication (Ishak, 2011). Strategy is a precise step undertaken by a party to achieve its goals (Hilmi, 2009). Strategy is a term that is often associated with 'tactics', which can be interpreted as concerning the movement of organisms in response to external stimuli.

Conceptually, a strategy can be understood as an outline of a course of action to achieve a determined goal (Pimay, 2005). The COVID-19 pandemic requires persuasive communication to change attitudes and behaviors (Lendriyono, 2021) toward the COVID-19 vaccine (Rizal *et al.*, 2022). Strategy is a means of achieving organizational or individual goals by using the resources at hand. Islamic social organizations (Kusumaningtyas, 2021) such as Muhammadiyah and NU took real action (Achmad & Tanthowi [editor], 2000) in struggling to pioneer Indonesia's independence.

Improving the quality of work can be achieved by improving the quality of service content strategy built with high adaptability (Widodo, 2011) to achieve certain goals as a strategy, while communication is the main task of management (Griffin, 1991). Meanwhile, Susmann, *et al.* (2022) states that the COVID-19 mitigation strategy (Kusumaningtyas, 2021) by Islamic organizations that seek to use certain approaches or strategies (Rahvy, 2012; Kunovjanek & Wankmüller, 2020; Suherdiana, Ridwan & Fatoni, 2020) largely depends on persuading people to adopt behavioral changes (Fakhruroji, 2022). In several previous studies, Moradi & Zihagh (2022) found that there are factors that influence online consumers to adopt information.

Communication strategies are carried out in order to get results from appropriate communication activities. Ma'arif, *et al.* (2017) found that congregations were interested in taking part in recitations in Bandung for several reasons, namely, they were happy with and considered: (1) the content of da'wah and its delivery techniques; and (2) the figures, the content of da'wah, and the profile of the da'i (Ma'arif, *et al.*, 2019). In

addition, social media also has an influence on communication (Hanifawati et al., 2019; Halim, 2021).

Theories used in this research are the Theory of Organizational Culture (Wood, 2004) and Media Richness Theory (Alberts., et al., 2007; Dennis, 2010), while the problem formulation of this research includes two aspects, namely the problem of organizational views on COVID-19 and the meaning of the COVID-19 pandemic for organizations, which are then analyzed by Organizational Culture Theory.

The West Java regional board, through its media center, seeks to neutralize various hoaxes and disinformation. Messages are appreciated and then reviewed internally. If the message brings *maslahat* (goodness), then it is disseminated to the public by classifying its congregation according to age classification, for example, adult groups through Facebook and YouTube; teenage or youth groups through Instagram; and children's groups through Tiktok and Helo. This is done so that the organization's management can properly greet its congregation during the COVID-19 Pandemic.

The author uses Organizational Culture Theory, which departs from the view that culture is a system or shared values recognized by the community. Culture is a set of rules, values, ideologies, and habits that encompass and, thus, dictate complex groups. Geertz observed that culture is not singular but has multiple faces in different social groups. He claimed that cultures are ways of life that are sustained through stories, rituals, and other symbolic activities that continuously vitalize and uphold shared meaning among members. Among the scholars who pay attention to this matter is Anderson (Wood, 2004). According to Pepper, organizational culture can be seen in its communication (Pepper, 1995), both verbal and non-verbal, while according to Wahyuni, the state is very close to the culture of the religious people who inhabit its territory (Wahyuni, 2017), so that religion becomes the strongest emotional stimulus (Harris, 2009) in society.

Communication messages are the delivery of messages by an organization, both 'inward' and 'outward' (DeVito, 1986). 'Inward' communication is communicating with staff and members related to their duties, while 'outward' communication is serving the public or related parties, including the superior-subordinate relationship. Organizational communication plays a role in moving the wheels of the organization through policies and work programs. Communication between managers

and subordinates is known as communication and leadership style (Rubin, Palmgreen & Philip, 2009).

Verbal and non-verbal communication occurs in the organization (Wood, 2004), as well as interpersonal communication among its members, where members communicate with each other (Verderber and Verderber, 1998). According to Biaggi, public relations use the media to communicate with its stakeholders. On the other hand, Whetmore argues that appearance is the most important thing, while content is a secondary aspect, and organizations are no exception. Here it can be seen that organizational communication media have started using mass media and social media (online). Therefore, the issue of the challenges of the television world faces a new information order.

Communication is conveying the right information (to tell the truth), while mainstream media, such as mass media, are strict in selecting information. This is in contrast to online media (social media), which is very loose in selecting information since information can be disseminated by anyone without any effort to filter. As a result, a lot of incorrect information, such as hoax news and disinformation, is widespread in online media. Apart from being a medium of information, communication is also a central task of management. The 21st century is a digital era that can change communication patterns from mass media to "non-mass media" so that terms such as non-governmental organizations, social work (Healy, 2008), philanthropy (Latief & Muttaqien, 2015), and charity organizations (Kirst-Ashman, Karen K., & Hull, 2009) appear. Lussier states that in contemporary times, organizations experience reengineering, downsizing, and high-involvement organizations (Lussier, 2001).

### **View of NU on the COVID-19 Pandemic**

The NU community, especially those in the West Java region, views COVID-19 as a plague that can befall all humans, including Muslims. NU views the COVID-19 pandemic as similar to the Tha'un disease that occurred during the Prophet's companions and after him, namely the Khulafa' al-Rashidin period. The plague is a calamity that has befallen previous communities, both in the period of the Prophet's companions and afterward. The pandemic is Sunnatullah, which can occur anytime and anywhere. According to NU, the COVID-19 pandemic is seen as a test and calamity that needs to be faced with maqashid al-syari'ah. The COVID-19 pandemic needs to be confronted and handled properly so that all people,

including Muslims can get through it well. Departing from this view, NU created the work agenda and strategy to achieve it.

In PWNU's appreciation, the COVID-19 pandemic is a disaster that can befall all humans and must be faced by various elements, either locally or nationally. In fulfilling various elements of community, nationality, and statehood, PWNU focuses on existing agendas appropriately, namely by evaluating various activities that have been carried out by various PWNU exponents.

NU congregants mostly live in rural areas with an average education of middle-to lower-class. Many of them work as farmers, fishermen, laborers, and in other jobs that do not earn high incomes. It is said that their social status is closely related to the pesantren of their Kyai (religious leader) who live in rural areas. NU is more of a congregation-based organization (*jam'iyyah*); thus, its approach to the congregation requires a unique one that considers cultural aspects.

West Java can be culturally classified into two parts, namely inland communities and coastal communities. Inland communities geographically exist in urban areas, but they also exist in rural or remote areas, where these remote areas often do not have electricity. It is in these remote areas that some NU kyai nurture and protect the lives of people whose geographical position keeps them away from urban life, which is identical to the glamor of the world. On the other hand, during the pandemic, they also ignored and violated various protocols without being noticed by the authorities, who had the right to take action against such residents in the village as they were not Satpol PP (Public Order Enforcers Police) or TNI-police.

Entering the Emergency PPMB period of July 3-20, 2021, it is hoped that this country can reduce the number of people infected with and becoming victims of COVID-19. The high number of patients seems to be due to the fact that people are not disciplined enough to follow health protocols in their daily lives, so even when they are infected by the COVID-19 virus, they still do not want to immediately go to the hospital.

### **Policy and Strategy of NU's Da'wah in the COVID-19 Era**

NU is a congregation-based social-religious (non-profit) organization. It serves the community based on religious values practiced in the social sphere. Religion teaches its people to preserve the soul, religion, property, mind, and offspring in accordance with *maqashid al-shari'ah*. The fiqh rule is the main consideration for the fatwa that the emergency situation makes



things that were originally Sunnah Muakkad or Fardlu change into different laws.

The NU organization emphasizes that the COVID-19 pandemic is a disaster that befalls humanity. Therefore, it is necessary to carry out policies and steps to strengthen the organization and nourish the community. Through organizational consolidation and constructive messages, the NU congregation follows the policies outlined by the government regarding health protocols for those with comorbidities. Therefore, for the time being, Muslims are not encouraged to perform congregational prayers at the mosque. Friday prayers at the mosque are replaced with Dhuhr prayers at home, and other policies apply in emergency conditions.

The da'wah strategy of the West Java Region NU organization is a directed and measurable step in order to achieve the policies or goals that have been outlined by the NU organization during the COVID-19 pandemic. NU's da'wah policy outlines that da'wah is an effort to disseminate Islamic teachings and practice them in the lives of the congregation or NU residents. Islam is disseminated at all times according to the capacity of the organization. PWNU has permanent and growing potential; from time to time, it experiences significant growth. The da'wah strategy is classified by PWNU into two things, namely amaliyah and information.

The charity of NU congregations and functionaries continues, despite being in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. The existence of a pandemic disaster that befalls Muslims does not intend to stop all acts of worship but is adjusted to the emergency conditions being faced, namely that in certain conditions, direct face-to-face restrictions are made so that the virus does not widely spread.

### **Implementation of the NU Da'wah Agenda**

PWNU outlined an agenda for tackling the COVID-19 pandemic organizationally by activating autonomous bodies within existing institutions at various levels. NU activates pesantren, or Islamic boarding schools, and institutions in its jam'iyah, including the al-Ma'arif institution, which has barely echoed. There is an impression that NU education only revolves around pesantren, even though many madrasas have been successfully established by this organization, starting from the elementary, Tsanawiyah, and Aliyah levels. Education in the NU environment is led by NU kyai in various regions. However, due to NU's proximity to political



parties since the first election in 1955, education within NU has been somewhat neglected due to the busyness of NU activists in the political sphere.

The COVID-19 pandemic is quite serious and crucial to be addressed immediately. One of the right solutions for dealing with this pandemic is to harmonize science and prayer, as well as faith and immunity. Scientifically, people can be encouraged to maintain their immunity, either by consuming protein and quality food, resting, exercising, having fun, not being stressed by the news of COVID-19, or other efforts that are medically recommended. In addition, strengthening faith is very important to do, either by praying a lot, worshiping with *khusyu'*, and making other efforts to get closer to Allah, because, in fact, the wisdom behind the lowering of calamities is so that we do *taqarrub* to Him.

Talking about the distribution permit of important vaccines from BPOM, such as AstraZeneca, which, according to viral information, contains pork, NU believes that the vaccine can be used in emergency conditions. AstraZeneca is considered a safe vaccine with an efficacy of 72% for the community to achieve herd immunity. The vaccination has only reached 25 million of the 180 million targets, and currently, 50 million people have been vaccinated (The President of the Republic of Indonesia, TVone, 19/7/2021).

PWNU West Java's agenda is to always guide the community to work well, which has resulted in the One Pesantren One Product (OPOP) award from the Governor of West Java, Ridwan Kamil. OPOP is an award from the Governor of West Java for its citizens who provide their best work, and 6 out of 10 OPOP winners in 2019/2020 are companies owned by activists from NU. The requirement to win OPOP is the existence of a running and formal business. There are many NU citizens who are brilliantly active in their fields. The recipient areas of the West Java Governor's OPOP are Purwakarta (printing), Sukabumi (calligraphy), Garut (sheep/goats), Pangandaran (agriculture), and Bandung (food/culinary).

COVID-19 prompted NU to focus on the "Digital Da'wah" (DD) agenda given its enormous potential. This digital da'wah cannot be carried out personally or in groups but must be synergized. PWNU's digital media is handled by the Media Center, which is the largest Islamic web in Indonesia with 12 million visitors per month. Meanwhile, NU Online Jabar (owned by PWNU), which is part of PBNU Online (owned by the central NU, which has existed since 2016), has only been reorganized since August

2020 with visitors of 200 thousand people/month.

Cultural theory is used to analyze NU because this organization is identical to its different social groups. NU has a strong culture that follows the culture of its congregation. Religious social organizations initiate the application of Islamic teachings, both in the textual and contextual realms. NU is more cultural and gentle in applying sharia (Islamic fiqh). NU, as a non-profit organization, seeks to guide and foster its congregation and the wider community to survive COVID-19 because ignoring the reality of the pandemic will result in even more victims.

West Java, especially Greater Bandung, is a region with a strong Priangan (Sundanese) culture characterized by: dominant family ties, subtle language, and a gentle (not blunt) but firm attitude. What is conveyed verbally may be different from what is in the mind, and what is in the mind is often unspoken. They do this to avoid open conflict.

NU is aware that the current condition of the state is a joint consensus of the founding fathers that needs to be maintained and filled with religious values. The selection of themes for NU's da'wah messages remains within a religious frame that is in harmony with Indonesian identity. The messages conveyed by the organization guide, foster, and motivate the people to achieve peace and progress in the lives of the community and nation. The themes of NU's da'wah messages are self-development for pious deeds, happy living, and health issues. PWNU deliberately reproduces positive messages so that they can soothe the congregation and the public.

NU prefers to create positive messages and is not reactive in countering outside news unless the information directly offends PWNU, in which case PWNU tries to straighten it out in a wise and prudent way. PWNU, in this case, the Media Center, seeks to reproduce positive messages and disseminate them through social media so that the minds of the congregation will be filled with positive and constructive messages. However, until now, the PWNU Media Center has only been able to produce 10–15 messages every day.

In this pandemic era, a lot of material about health has been successfully delivered by NU scholars. This is done by pointing to the meaning of the Qur'an and al-Hadith using the rules of Ushul Fiqh and Fiqh. Islam is understood by referring to various literatures by previous scholars so that it is more dominant with religious messages. In dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic, both internal and external, NU's messages

are related to health and proper implementation of worship, including the Friday prayer policy, which is not held in the mosque but is replaced by congregational prayers in their respective places during an emergency.

However, NU consists of many lines with quite broad and diverse layers, ranging from cities to remote areas, as well as Sufistic, fiqh-oriented, and fringe religious styles that coincide with 'groups far from Muslims'. Young NU figures such as Ulil Abshar Abdala, Gus Muwafis, Gus Miftah, and Gus Baha, to name a few, have their own da'wah techniques with very grounded, non-textual messages. Among them are those who tend to be liberal, intellectual, or have other styles. Thus, this religious style is mutually symbiotic with the content of the da'wah message delivered.

NU seeks to emphasize aspects of substantial goodness by considering the essence of goodness and mercy in Islam. NU takes a flexible path, a wasathiyah Islam. The messages delivered touch on what needs to be saved. Before delivering the da'wah, NU first looks at the conditions in each region. NU's religious messages in various regions are flexible enough that the congregation feels as if they are not in a pandemic era. If you listen carefully, NU's messages mention very little about COVID-19 specifically. Material on COVID-19 prevention is only delivered once or twice, and that can be listened to again on online shows such as Youtube, Google, and the like.

The message from West Java NU focuses more on religious teachings that make the body healthy, namely the habit of reading the Qur'an, praying tahajjud, praying at the mosque, doing the sunnah fast, giving donations and alms, helping other people who are in trouble, and doing charity for kindness and friendship. Carrying out religious teachings properly will bring excellent health, both physically and spiritually. These things make NU's message on par with Western-style health prescriptions. NU doesn't really encourage someone to isolate themselves during the COVID-19 pandemic; it suggests doing it as needed. The Islamic teachings of *ablussunnah wal-jamaah al-nahdliyyah* which are implemented in combination with science and technology are very relevant to the modern world in a compatible manner.

Islam is the majority religion in Indonesia, with a figure of more than 86.6%. Islamic teachings are able to unite with Indonesianness because they are implemented with wisdom and peace. This is in accordance with the understanding held by the majority of Indonesians, which emphasizes peace and diversity. Islam in Indonesia becomes the largest religion in the

world; therefore, Muslims must be healthy by combining Islamic teachings with human efforts in the medical field, including implementing health protocols, increasing immunity by consuming protein, sunbathing, getting enough exercise, resting, getting entertainment, feeling happy, and not stressing so that the body does not get sick.

The implementation of NU's agenda in da'wah is clearly seen in the use of organizational communication media for da'wah. Regional-level NU organizations (PWNU) use mainstream media and new media to get closer to their congregations. The mainstream media in question are books, where many books have been successfully written by NU figures and published by PWNU publishers. As for newspapers, NU does not yet have an independent newspaper, but NU figures often write their opinions in newspapers in West Java or on online sites.

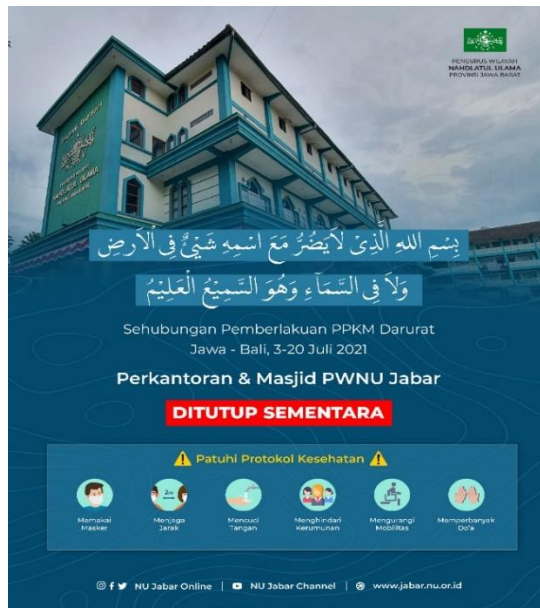
The "Digital Da'wah" (DD) agenda has great potential, but it cannot be carried out individually or in groups; it must be synergized. At the central level, NU has an online PBNU website, which is the largest Islamic website in Indonesia with 12 million visitors per month. As for the West Java regional level, PWNU has digital media handled by the Media Center. NU Online Jabar (owned by PWNU) is part of PBNU Online, which has just been reorganized since August 2020 and has 200.000 visitors per month. The Media Center is a sub-domain of the social media field that has its own editor.

The large functional structure of the PWNU with a very large congregation population—for Indonesia, it is estimated at around 90 million (source: PB NU)—makes it a slow-moving organization. To serve the community, NU has used priority scales for decades in program development or when responding to a problem. The large structure and congregation make PWNU busy with its own agenda, so it is unable to serve its entire congregation intensely; they also lack time to greet the congregation.

Media functioned to bridge the connection problem between exponents within NU. Due to this lack of communication, relations became somewhat loose between the Jamaah and its organizational leaders. PWNU activates its various organizational institutions, starting from its branches and sub-branches to the activation of the autonomous body right up to its institutions. In addition, NU has activated various Islamic boarding schools and educational institutions led by Kyai in various regions. Kyai, who have absorbed regional NU thoughts, convey their

knowledge to various lines of community life.

Through the Media Center, NU regional administrators in West Java profile their congregation according to their stage of age maturity; for example, the adult group is greeted via Facebook and Youtube channels; youth or youth groups through Instagram accounts; and children's groups on Tiktok accounts. All of this was done to greet the congregation in an interesting way during the COVID-19 pandemic. NU regional administrators realize that PWNu's productivity is not yet high since the arrangement of the Media Center is still relatively new.



Source: NU's Official Social Media

Picture 1.

### West Java Nu's Campaign of Covid-19

As previously explained, most NU congregations live in rural areas; their average education is low or medium; they are farmers and fishermen, laborers, and do regular or odd jobs. Their social status is closely related to the pesantren of their Kyai who live in rural pesantren. NU is more of a congregation-based organization (*jam'iyah*); therefore, the approach to the congregation is also carried out in a special way by considering its culture.

West Java PWNU is struggling in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic with partners from various institutions outside the organization. They need to establish communication with various parties in West Java, both government and non-government institutions. Government agencies are institutions that represent the legislative, executive, and judicial; while non-government includes functional institutions, both official and unofficial.

When the COVID-19 pandemic hit Indonesia, PWNU tried to overcome this problem through its various organizational potentials. Organizations communicate internally and externally, as well as vertically and horizontally. Messages are designed and disseminated to other parties, and information from outside is carefully filtered.

In West Java, many NU members are trying to follow NU traditions by being loose and not rigid. When the number of COVID-19 patients began to level off in May 2020, rural areas did not feel the pandemic as much, so NU members took it as normal.

As part of modern society, NU uses communication media and information technology intensely. The organization communicates face-to-face (human communication) and through media (mediated communication), whether print, electronic, or digital, where online communication is a relatively new media that are widely used these days.

Routine activities in the use of organizational communication media within PWNU during the COVID-19 pandemic era are carried out according to the potential and culture of the organization. PWNU uses the media to communicate inward and outward with the aim of serving its congregation in fostering the wheels of the organization and religious life, and communicating outward with various partners. The message to be conveyed when using communication media is about worship and health. PWNU uses social media as the main media for fostering public health in the COVID-19 era in West Java.

The internet greatly helps the smooth running of PWNU's work for disseminating policies, information, and various other steps. The findings of this study essentially lead to a standardized pattern of using communication media. Social media is very useful for accelerating and strengthening the distribution of information, dissemination of policies, and implementation of this organization's actions to its congregation.

PWNU's main consideration in choosing communication media is based on age, media, and message type. Instagram, Facebook, Youtube,

and Line became the main focus of communication media for the West Java PWNU organization. Television, books, magazines, newspapers, and movie theaters are not the main media of West Java PWNU communication because the NU congregation is not accustomed to using these mass media.

In this millennial era, PWNU uses internet-based social media. The NU website is seen as the main repository of information. The community is guided and fostered by Islamic organizations in various aspects of life, and the NU organization contains congregants who have relatively different cultures according to their respective socio-demographic conditions. NU is more of a congregation-based organization (*jam'iyyah*), hence the approach to the congregation is distinctive with cultural considerations.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

The steps taken by West Java PWNU in dealing with the spread of COVID-19 are quite effective; this can be a very valuable experience in dealing with similar conditions in the future. A pandemic is *Sunnatullah* that can occur at any time. A pandemic needs to be faced and handled properly so that humanity and Muslims can survive it. PWNU utilizes all the potential of its organization and human resources to deliver messages.

PWNU Jabar's steps are based on the meaning of the COVID-19 pandemic, which is seen as carrying human meaning, and this problem must be faced nationally. NU outlines that COVID-19 is real and must be overcome organizationally by cooperating well with others within the framework of *ahlussunnah wal-jamaah al-nahdliyyah*. The number of casualties must be a concern for those studying religion and making it a reference for the norms of Muslim life. The understanding of *Ahlussunnah wal-jamaah al-nahdliyyah* makes PWNU synergize and support the government in tackling COVID-19. NU conducts various religious studies based on the Qur'an, al-Sunnah, and the legacy books (*al-Kutub al-Turats*) of scholars that were studied intensely.

The da'wah communication strategy of the West Java Region NU organization begins with a view of COVID-19, NU's da'wah policy, planning, and implementation during the pandemic. NU views COVID-19 as a test and disaster that needs to be faced with *maqashid al-shari'ah* to save humanity, especially NU members. NU's da'wah contains a health



message to survive COVID-19, where the congregation is asked to combine spiritual and mental health to achieve intellectual and physical health through worship, business deeds, and diligently reading the Qur'an.

The implication of this research is the hope that PWNU's steps can be emulated by other religious social organizations in the future, especially in serving its congregation in the form of majlis taklim, majlis dzikir/wirid, and worship, as well as work organizations that support the wider community at the 'grassroots' level. In addition, this research is expected to be an inspiration to develop a da'wah strategy; in addition to da'wah bil-lisan there must be da'wah bi al-Hal (da'wah bil-hal). Here, NU uses a da'wah strategy by optimizing PWNU communication media, which contains messages of worship, health, and work to survive the COVID-19 pandemic without being provoked by haters and hoaxes.

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