

The Resilience of the Tablighi Jamaat During Covid-19 Period

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Abstract

The Covid-19 pandemic has not only shifted religious patterns but has also raised sentiments against certain groups in society. The cases that occurred was the Covid-19 cluster case from the Tablighi Jamaat after holding the Ijtima 'Ulama throughout Asia in Gowa, South Sulawesi. Participants who took part in these religious activities came from various regions, including Wonosobo Regency. Holding religious events by inviting large crowds during a pandemic is considered inappropriate. So, the activity became a new cluster for the spread of COVID-19 determined by the government. This study examines changes in the socio-religious life of the Tablighi Jamaat and community sentiment towards religious sects during the Covid-19 period in Wonosobo Regency, Central Java. This study uses qualitative research with interviews as a data collection technique. This study uses the dimensions of religious commitment from Charles Y Glock and Rodney Stark. This study found that the socio-religious life of the Tablighi Jamaat experienced a shift due to increasing public sentiment towards religious groups. Changes in group religious rituals adapt to social conditions even though they are contrary to religious beliefs and obedience. So that new ritual practices are carried out to survive the larger sentiment.

Keywords

Religious resilience, Tablighi Jamaat, Covid-19 pandemic

1. Introduction

Corona Virus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) has a significant impact on the social and economic life of the community (Stojkoski et al. 2020). Not only in the economic field, but the impact generated by COVID-19 also affects people's religious patterns. It can be seen from efforts to minimize worship activities that involve many people, including Hajj and Umrah (Yezli and Khan 2020). The impact of COVID-19 not only affects worship activities but also increases religious sentiment in society. In Nuurrianti Jalli's research, religious sentiments related to COVID-19 have emerged in Indonesia and Malaysia. Jalli provides accurate data through public responses on social media that have justified the Tablighi Jamaat as one of the spreads of the virus (Purnomo 1996) responsible for the spread of COVID-19 in Malaysia and Indonesia (Idris and Jalli 2020).

In Dan Ariely's view, the emergence of religious sentiments during a pandemic is a natural thing. According to him, this is due to the natural state of humans who unconsciously respond to dangerous situations that threaten themselves in crises (Ariely). The threat of being infected with SARS-Cov-2, which is the cause of COVID-19, can give rise to new models of racism and xenophobia in religious communities in Indonesia. This new racism and xenophobia are associated with specific religious sects (Abadi and Muthohirin 2020; Nath et al. 2021; Suharyanto et al. 2021). This kind of attitude is shown by the people of Keajar District, Wonosobo Regency, Central Java, towards the Tablighi Jamaat community.

Facing resistance and negative public sentiment towards members of the Tablighi Jamaat does not alienate them. It strengthens family ties and improves their worship practices. The increase in religiosity experienced by this community is part of the influence of religious beliefs on the actions of its adherents. This factor makes a minority community more obedient than a larger community, thus causing minority groups to show their existence increasingly (Sinding 2019).

In this context, this study aims to find changes in socio-religious behavior that occur in the Tablighi Jamaat community in Keajar District, Wonosobo Regency. This research is based on the argument that during the COVID-19 pandemic, a form of religious sentiment emerged that led to racism and xenophobia of a particular religious 'course'. This sentiment influences the religious behavior of the Tablighi Jamaat and affects their social fabric after the pandemic. The attitude of public sentiment towards this sect can be caused by awareness of differences and lack of knowledge about the spread of disease (epidemiology).

1.1. Objectives

Based on the above background, the problem in this study is how the socio-religious life of the Tablighi Jamaat in Keajar District, Wonosobo Regency, has changed after COVID-19. Besides that, this study also wants to examine how sentiment towards religious sects can occur in the people of Keajar District, Wonosobo Regency. After that, this study will also examine how the new habit model of the Keajar District community outside the Tablighi Jamaat community is.

2. Literature Review

Research on the impact of COVID-19 has been carried out by many researchers before. There are at least four trends in this study; First, research related to health aspects. Second, research related to socio-economic aspects. Third, research related to policies in the field of religion. Fourth, research linking COVID-19 with education in Indonesia. To maintain the relevance of the research of the four trends, the researcher will only mention research related to the theme, namely the relevance of COVID-19 in the field of religion.

There are several trends in research linking COVID-19 to religion. Some of them linked COVID-19 with religious teachings, for example, Eman Supriatna (Supriatna); Ayyub Subandi and Saifullah bin Anshor (Subandi and Anshor); Andri Kurniawan (Kurniawan et al.); Muhammad Yusram (Yusram Azan). The study sought to find a correlation of Islamic teachings matched to the conditions of society preventing the spread of COVID-19. Other studies tend to relate the response of religious leaders in providing advice to the community to prevent COVID-19. This kind of research was conducted by Siti Khodijah Nurul Aula (Nurul 2020); Abraham Tefbana, and Djoys Anneke Rantung (Tefbana 2020).

Another trend in viewing the COVID-19 phenomenon in the religious area is Yono (Yono 2020); Nur Fitriyana (Fitriyana 2020); Hudzaifah Achmad Qotadah (Qotadah 2020). The study concluded that COVID-19 brought changes to the worship behavior of the Muslim community in Indonesia. In fact, in Nur Fitriyana's conclusion, these changes make people have more faith in God. Meanwhile, research directly related to the object of this research was carried out by Mohammad Dahlan with the title Tablighi Jamaat Response to the Fatwa of the Indonesian Ulema Council on Covid-19. (Dahlan 2020) . The Da'wah of the Tablighi Jamaat and its Effect on the Spread of Covid-19 (Mustautina 2020).

The pattern of changes in religious behavior after the COVID-19 period and resistance from the surrounding community became the focus of this research. This focus is also a differentiator from previous studies. By reviewing the changes in religious behavior of the Tablighi Jamaat in Keajar District, Wonosobo Regency, this research has never been discussed by previous researchers.

The change in religious behavior after the pandemic shown by the Tablighi Jamaat is a form of commitment to religiosity that comes from applying the organization's teachings. Belief in the truth of the arguments used affects all forms of activity. Anything else that can reduce or even eliminate the belief will be considered a form of resistance. To deal with this pressure does not appear protective measures on behalf of the organization will be taken (O'Dear 8 1985; Kembauw et al. 2021). Therefore, the theoretical concept used in this study is the theory of religious commitment introduced by Charles Y. Glock and Rodney Stark.

Religious commitment requires a person always to be consistent in implementing specific religious values, beliefs, and teachings and applying them in all forms of daily actions (Worthington 2003). This commitment influences religious actions that are raised to maintain religious values following their beliefs and teachings.

In the view of Glock and Stark, religious commitment can be viewed from several dimensions; dimensions of religious beliefs, dimensions of religious practice, dimensions of appreciation, dimensions of religious knowledge, and consequential dimensions. Religious beliefs are religious beliefs that are believed and become the essential basis of all forms of action. This dimension will give birth to religious behavior. This appreciation of religious behavior will give birth to a religious experience. At the same time, the dimension of knowledge is an action taken by religious

adherents to explore their teachings. These four dimensions are directly related to religion. The different thing that a person raises in his religious commitment is the consequential dimension. This dimension is the behavior of adherents of a religion resulting from religious understanding, belief, and experience. This behavior arises from external religious factors, which are the response of religious adherents to the external reality not contained in religion (Paloutzian).

3. Method

This research was conducted in Kejajar District, Wonosobo Regency, Central Java. This research location was chosen for several reasons. The Tablighi Jamaat community participates in the Ijtima 'Ulama event in Gowa, people outside the Tablighi Jamaat carry out resistance, and there is a new pattern of diversity shown by the Tablighi Jamaat (Table 1).

Table 1. Research Focus

Description of Research Focus	Information Gathering Techniques
the socio-religious life of the Tabligh Congregation in Kejajar District, Wonosobo Regency, has changed after COVID-19.	Interviews and literature review
Sentiment towards religious sects can occur in the people of Kejajar District, Wonosobo Regency	Observations and interviews
a new habit model for the people of Kejajar District outside the Jamaah Tabligh community	Observations and interviews

This research uses qualitative methods with field study research techniques. This technique is used because it can freely observe, understand and engage with the object of research so that the behavior shown by the research object can be recorded clearly (Bailey 2007).

4. Data Collection

Sources of data in this study were obtained based on two sources; primary data sources and secondary data sources. Primary data sources were obtained through interviews with in-depth interview techniques to several informants who were directly involved in the process experienced by the Tablighi Jamaat. In addition, data sources are also obtained through direct observation techniques by involving researchers in the daily activities of the research object and documentation, which includes notes or documents directly related to the research object. Meanwhile, secondary data sources are data sources that strengthen primary data in the form of documents, related research results, and all forms of data that assist the primary data analysis process (Figure 1).

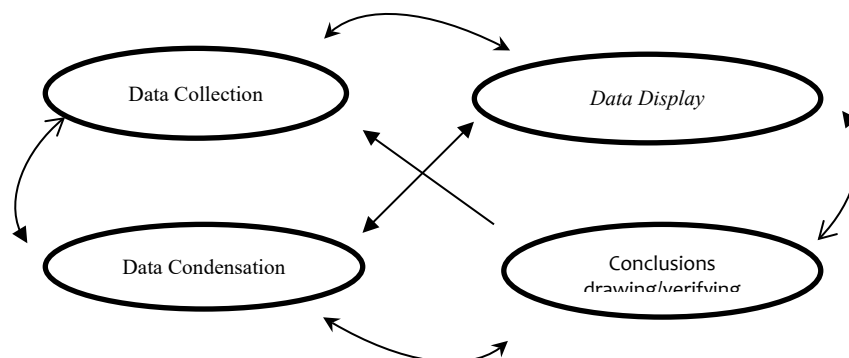


Figure 1. Interactive Model

The data analysis technique was carried out using four steps. The first step is to perform data reduction. Data reduction is used to find out patterns of change to map the data obtained efficiently. The second step is the process of displaying data. Data display is done by sorting the data followed by the third step, namely the process of understanding the data and drawing conclusions (Miles and Huberman 16).

5. Result and Discussion

Each individual's religious commitment has a different level. Charles Y Glock and Rodney Stark explain five dimensions in seeing a person's religious commitment. The five dimensions can describe how a person commits to religion and its teachings, including for adherents of the Tablighi Jamaat. One of these five dimensions that are the focus of this research is the dimension of religious rituals seen from before and after the Covid-19 hit and made the Tablighi Jamaat group one of the clusters that had been horrendous.

The author divides the research into two parts to discuss ritual dimensions, namely ritual, and obedience. Rituals are explained by how the rituals are taught in groups and performed with many people. Obedience is a practice that is recommended to be done by the group but is done independently. These two ritual practices or worship are the central teachings of the Tablighi Jamaat group, which their followers usually carry out.

5.1. Congregational Ritual (Macro)

The results of the study found several facts that the Tablighi Jamaat made changes and adaptations in religious practices in response to community discrimination as shown in the following Table 2:

Table 2. Change and Adaptation of Religious Practices in Responding to Community Discrimination

Ritual	Before Pandemic	After Pandemic
<i>Khuruj</i> (the method of preaching the Tablighi Jamaat by moving and having a certain period of time)	Routine	Remove
<i>Jaulah</i> (Inviting people to do good thing, usually door-to-door)	Routine	Remove
<i>Ta'lim</i> (Reading the Book of <i>Fadhail Amal</i> , a main book for the Tablighi Jamaat)	Routine	Held secretly

Restrictions on religious activities were reduced in accordance with the direction of the central Tablighi Jamaat. The Tablighi Jamaat does not fight against community resistance, instead it is getting stronger by establishing solidarity among other members of the Tablighi Jamaat, such as: Raising funds for members of the Tablighi Jamaat and families who are self-isolating and Providing moral support.

For the Tablighi Jamaat, several religious activities such as *Khuruj*, *Jaulah*, *Ta'lim* become routine and usually done. Before the Covid-19 Pandemic struck, this activity was carried out openly and attended by many people. However, during the pandemic, this activity was carried out with only a few people attending. In addition to being given public attention because they have been stigmatized as a Covid-19 cluster, it is also to follow the government's directives.

At the beginning of the pandemic starting to enter Wonosobo, several people who had just returned from Goa to participate in *Ijtima Ulama* were taken to the hospital because they were suspected of being infected Coronavirus. Even though there was a refusal, They still followed the directions of medical officers by being isolated in the hospital. However, even in the hospital, members of the Tablighi Jamaat still carry out the activities taught in the group, such as *Ta'lim*. As Mohson said:

'Yes, there (hospitals) have their practices. Yes, there used to be a room with four ordinary *Ta'lim* people. and talk (Interview with Muhson, Tablighi Jamaat). Besides, Meeting in the community has also changed, such as limiting meetings *Jaulah* (Study of religion) and reducing the intensity of activities. *Jaulah* (study of religion), usually done once a week, is done once a month to adapt to the environment and situations. A statement by another Tablighi Jamaat reinforces this: The Tablighi Jamaat from top to bottom followed the government's advice. So on January 13, 2020, there will be a deliberation at the *Muttaqin Ansor Mosque* in Jakarta. Those who may attend are limited to one time, and all use the health protocol (Interview with Asnawi, Tablighi Jamaat).

The Tablighi Jamaat implements this restriction in the regions and high-ranking officials and the Tablighi Jamaat in urban areas. The existing structure within the Tablighi Jamaat is quite good, where the Tablighi Jamaat in the regions follows the central direction in acting as stated below: The village is not allowed. The Tablighi Jamaat only follows (Tablighi Jamaat elites), does not carry out. (Interview with Abdur Rosyid, Tablighi Jamaat).

The response given by the Tablighi Jamaat to be non-frontal is undoubtedly quite interesting because, at a similar moment, several groups of other religious organizations acted arrogantly by continuing to visit closed mosques and even holding large-scale meetings. It is, of course, under the structural approach taken by the central Tablighi Jamaat, which ordered Tablighi Jamaat in the regions to follow the government's directives not to hold religious gatherings during the pandemic.

In addition, the practice that characterizes the Tablighi Jamaat is visiting residents after Asr. It is done as a door-to-door da'wah intended to convey the understanding of the Tablighi Jamaat to the broader community. However, during the pandemic, this was also abolished. As explained by one of the Tablighi Jamaat in Wonosobo: Yes, come to their house, explain the Fadilah (the religious values in Tablighi Jamaah) in deliberation, who will be visited even more thorough, have the data, these are people who are already active in the mosque. Because we are farmers, we do not have to be painstaking. (Interview with Asnawi, Tablighi Jamaat).

The door-to-door da'wah carried out by the Tablighi congregation to the community has indeed become entrenched. Da'wah with a model like this is proof enough to invite people to participate in Tablighi Jamaat activities at the local prayer room or mosque. However, during the pandemic, this is not done. The Tablighi Jamaat is considered a cluster for the spread of Covid-19. It is also because the community limits who comes to their house. In order to maintain this condition, it had to be abolished. If this activity continues, it is limited to the homes of members who are already included in the Tablighi Jamaat group.

The phenomenon of the Tablighi Jamaat being shunned by the public cannot be separated from the Tablighi Jamaat itself, who was desperate to hold an Ijma' Ulama amid the hectic news regarding Covid-19 that entered Indonesia. Moreover, the activity was attended not only by the Tablighi Jamaat in Indonesia but also by various countries such as Malaysia, Thailand, India, etc. However, after the occurrence and community alignments with the Tablighi Jamaat group, this strengthened the closeness between group members. As described below: Yes, support each other, talk about how to meet situations like this. Consoling each other, giving compensation. (Interview with Abdur Rosyid, Tablighi Jamaat).

In addition to the Tablighi Jamaat holding limited meetings, they also made a donation movement, especially for members taken to the hospital for isolation. Covid isolation has reached one month, and of course, there is no income for the family at home. So they took the initiative to donate to the family members who are in the hospital.

5.2. Obedience (Micro Ritual)

Obedience is part of the ritualistic in the view of Charles Y Glock and Rodney Stark. In this view, we see that obedience can be seen from how the worship ritual is carried out. In contrast to macro rituals, the obedience referred to here is more about personal worship to get closer to God or his beliefs. The level of faith of the Tablighi Jamaat after going through this phenomenon can be explained as follows in Table 3:

Table 3. Congregational Faith (Macro)

Dimention	Before Pandemic
Dimensions of Religious Faith	We came to Goa to achieve the pleasure of Allah and the Messenger of Allah, so if we die here we will be Syahid
Dimensions of Appreciation	The practices given by Mrs. Nyai Magelang I practice. That's what I do. Given to calm the mind.
Dimensions of Religious Knowledge	Believing Covid as a conspiracy Sickness comes from Allah and only Allah heals
Consequential Dimension	Moving to the mosque. Reducing religious activities

In the context of the Tablighi Jamaat, it is necessary to look at how members of the Tablighi Jamaat worship and the reasons behind the worship, especially in the pre-pandemic context and its changes when the pandemic hits. The Wonosobo Tablighi Jamaat has its own beliefs to follow the Ijtima 'Ulama in Goa which is very far away because it is a different island, so it requires more effort to reach Goa. As well as the reasons stated by Muhson below: Anyone wants to meet a great Ulama. All people there (Ijtima Ulama event) are Saleh (obedient people) (Interview with Muhson, member of the Tablighi Jamaat).

Meeting great 'Ulama is a passion for the Tablighi Jamaat. How scholars gather and pray together gives an extraordinary sensation and is an experience that does not happen often. Of course, members of the Tablighi Jamaat do not want to waste this to attend the grand event in early 2020, even though most people know that the Covid-19 Pandemic phenomenon is being discussed by the media and the majority of the Indonesian population. Slightly different as stated by Mr. Asnawi regarding his reasons for attending the Ijma 'Ulama in Goa as stated below: So, it was previously explained by Mr. Muslihudin from Jakarta. So bismillah, because it has been decided, there is not only 1 billion or 2 billion prepared. Then at that time, Mr. Muslihudin said, 'we have come to Goa to achieve the pleasure of Allah and the Messenger of Allah, so if we die here, we will be martyred.'. (Interview with Asnawi, a Tablighi congregation).

Obedience and belief in religious doctrines conveyed in the group make their followers more confident in what they are doing. It further fosters the commitment of members to continue to strive to follow the group's values. This dimension affects the individual's commitment to feel belonging to the group, which is realized by practicing the group's teachings. In this case, by coming to the great Ijtima 'Ulama amid massive epidemic information in the community.

After the return of the Wonosobo Tablighi Jamaat, they were immediately faced with an unfavorable situation. The majority of the community was excited about the Covid-19 issue, while the Tablighi Jamaat held a big event that eventually disbanded. The news about this cluster of Covid-19 spreads made the people in Wonosobo excited and stigmatized the Tablighi Jamaat who had just returned from Goa. In addition, the government also carried out examinations and brought some members of the Tablighi congregation to be isolated in the hospital. This stigmatization makes the Tablighi Jamaat seem alienated in the public community. The isolation by the community makes the Tablighi Jamaat respond. The form of the response is as stated by one of the wives of the Tablighi Jamaat: I do nothing but practice deeds, asking Allah because people are being shunned. Day and night, I only ask Allah as much as I can. Alhamdulillah, Allah gave me understanding. I only asked Allah, not to humans. Surrender. My only goal is Allah. I also do the practice given by Bu Nyai (a woman who leads an Islamic boarding) from Magelang. This practice is to clear my mind. (Interview with Supriyati, a wife of Tablighi congregation).

This resignation is a form of response to the exclusion of the Tablighi Jamaat family. This response is in line with the teachings of the Tablighi Jamaat, which leaves all problems to Allah, the creator. So when trials come, the response is to strengthen the practices.

The change of a person to become more religious is the level of a person's spirituality based on the experiences he has gone through. The teachings or practices of the Tablighi Jamaat group provide an alternative for a person to respond to phenomena that occur to him. It happened to the family of the Tablighi Jamaat, who was isolated in the hospital, and to the Tablighi Jamaat, who was isolated. As explained below: There, there are only implementing programs (Worship), reciting the Quran and Ta'lim. At home, The father (her husband) only recites a few pages of the Quran. Nevertheless, there (hospital) can Khatam (finish recite Quran) Al Quran 3 times. There the Ta'lim program continues. Even being quarantined adds to his knowledge. (Interview with Supriyati. Tablighi Jamaat's wife).

Besides, because they are not allowed to be visited in the hospital, and their activities are limited, worship activities are an alternative activity that can make them feel calm so that the intensity of worship increases. Besides worship, it is also an escape from the Tablighi Jamaat for what happened to them.

This attitude towards the antipathetic reaction of the community also increases the idea of making religious practice a possible solution. It is supported by directives from the management or central leadership of the Tablighi Jamaat as stated below: Now the Syuro (Principals of the Tablighi Jamaat) are not stopping preaching but being told to strengthen their practices. Like an engine, clean up first when it subsides and then move again. (interview with Asnawi, Tablighi Jamaat).

The words of the Syuro (Principals of the Tablighi Jamaat), worship becomes a medicine or a solution that can be done. By following the directions of the great leaders of the Tablighi Jamaat to increase charity according to the solutions carried out by the Tablighi Jamaat. Amid these uncertain conditions, the Tablighi Jamaat chose a safe response by staying silent and reducing movement. It is to maintain conduciveness in the community, not to cause tremendous opposition to the Tablighi Jamaat community. It is undeniable that public resistance to the Tablighi Jamaat does exist. As stated by one of the pilgrims below: Until I was not allowed to enter the mosque, I moved to another mosque for up to 2 months because my prayer rug was sprayed with disinfectant (This means rejection). Why only my prayer mat? After two months, I met the imam (Chairman of the Mushola). Pak Imam, I have two months. I want to ask for time to meet with residents to say something. It is strange how come it is like this. (Interview with Abdur Rosyid. Tablighi Jamaat).

Another adaptation of this phenomenon is to change places of worship. The solid intention for worship does not fade even though the surrounding community is shunned. However, finding other places of worship that allow Tablighi Jamaat to worship freely is not easy. Especially with the label pinned by residents as a covid-19 cluster. However, this is a response to the community that confronted the existence of the Tablighi Jamaat. The temporary relocation of places of worship is also a form of ritual to get closer to Allah by carrying out the practices taught in the Tablighi Jamaat group. It is recommended that women pray at home while men in the prayer room or the mosque (Interview with Abdur Rosyid. Tablighi Jamaat). It is what underlies the Tablighi Jamaat to continue to carry out worship according to the guidance they believe. So the response to changing places of worship is a better solution than praying at home. It is inseparable from the values always accepted during the study that men are strongly encouraged to pray in the prayer room or mosque. It was done even though other worshippers opposed the old place of worship.

5.3. Proposed Improvements

This study of the Tablighi Jamaat is a discourse in the sociology of religion and socio-religious movements which is quite interesting to study. Many religious phenomena occur that lead to fanaticism and radicalism, so this study of the Tablighi Jamaat is an interesting example of how a community group adapts from the alignment of other majority groups which are expected to be studied so as not to create a religious extremist group.

6. Conclusion

The impact of holding the Ijma Ulama during the pandemic has brought the Tablighi Jamaat into a religious organization that many people talk about. During the pandemic, it is not allowed to hold events that invite many people. However, the Tablighi Jamaat carried out Ijma' Ulama activities, which followers of Tablighi Jamaat attended throughout Indonesia and from various countries such as India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Malaysia, and Thailand. Even though the reason for the event has been prepared, the community cannot tolerate it. Thus, the Tabligh congregation who returned from Goa, South Sulawesi, as the location for the Ijma 'Ulama event was considered a cluster of covid, which was considered disturbing by the general public. It resulted in sentiment by the community towards the Tablighi Jamaat group. The increasing public sentiment towards the Tablighi Jamaat group during the Covid-19 pandemic requires adaptation in the Tablighi Jamaat group. These adaptations include the dimensions of religious rituals (Macro) and the dimensions of ritual obedience (Micro). These two dimensions can be explained as follows:

Some Tablighi Jamaat followers were labeled as a cluster of the Covid-19 spread when they returned to their place of origin. Neighbors and the surrounding community began to stay away because of the COVID-19 cluster label carried by people who had just returned from Goa, South Sulawesi, where the Ijma' Ulama was held. It does the practice of worshiping the Tablighi Jamaat to be opposed by the community. It is feared that Tablighi Jemaah will transmit the virus to the community. So that, some community resistance was carried out, such as spraying the prayer mat of one of the Tablighi Jamaat, avoiding, alienating, and stigmatizing the Tablighi Jamaat and their families.

The form of adaptation carried out is by reducing communal activities among the Tablighi Jamaat, such as congregational prayers, Jaulah, Khuruj, and other religious activities. It is to keep away from the potential for more significant community resistance. Through the common fate of being shunned by the community, the Tablighi Jamaat group becomes more solid. Support each other, such as donating to the Tablighi Jamaat family, who is currently in isolation in the hospital, comforting and strengthening each other, and praying for each other. Tablighi Jamaat's internal relations are getting closer because they feel they are experiencing the same problem.

Tablighi Jamaat, who has positive signs of Covid-19, should be isolated in the hospital. While in the hospital, religious practices such as Ta'lim, Reciting Al-Quran, and other forms of religious practice increased compared to worship in

the days before isolation. It is the same with family at home. By getting alined from the community, the thing to do is surrender to God and continue to pray for protection and help from God. In addition, due to the limitation of movement in public spaces, it is possible to do more praying to Allah and perform religious rituals more intensely. When society shuns him and his family, it creates a deep sense of despair. The Tablighi Jamaat family increasingly believes in the power of God. It is where obedience increases.

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