# ROLE OF PESANTREN IN DA'WAH AND MEDIA LITERACY
## Mitigating COVID-19 Challenges in Lamongan

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## Abstract

*This study aims to explore the process of media literacy in the Karangasem Islamic Boarding School and Al-Ishlah Islamic Boarding School in Lamongan Regency, East Java, as an effort to mitigate the spread of Covid-19. In the context of the pandemic, pesantren plays an important role in increasing the awareness of students and the public about health protocols through the development of media literacy. The research method used is a qualitative approach with data collection techniques in the form of in-depth interviews, observations, and documentation. The results of the study show that the two Islamic boarding schools have implemented an effective media literacy program, in which the Karangasem Islamic Boarding School through the INFOKOM program and the Al-Ishlah Islamic Boarding School with their journalistic activities, have succeeded in equipping students with critical skills in accessing and evaluating information. This study concludes that media literacy in Islamic boarding schools not only contributes to improving students' understanding of Covid-19, but also serves as a means to disseminate accurate information to the public, thus playing a role in mitigating the spread of the virus. This finding is expected to be a model for other Islamic boarding schools in developing media literacy in the digital era, especially in the context of public health.*

**Keywords:** Media Literacy, Pesantren, Covid-19 Mitigation, Santri, East Java.

## A. Introduction

In Indonesia, the spread of the Covid-19 virus has shown a pattern similar to that of severely affected countries such as Italy and the United States. Since the beginning of the pandemic, Indonesia has recorded a significant number of positive cases, with data on May 11 showing 14,265 positive cases and 991 deaths (Rusdiana & Talib, 2020).[1] In an effort to overcome the spread of the virus, the Indonesia government enacted the policy of Large-Scale Social Restrictions (PSBB) and the Enforcement of Community Activity Restrictions (PPKM), which are regulated in the Regulation of the Minister of Health of the Republic of Indonesia No. 9 of 2020.[2] However, even though this policy is implemented, there are still community groups that lack discipline in complying with health protocols, which contributes to the emergence of new clusters, including in Islamic boarding schools.[3]

One of the prominent clusters is at the Islamic boarding school in Tasikmalaya, West Java, where around 400 students were confirmed positive for Covid-19. A similar cluster also occurred at a pesantren in Kuningan, West Java, with 550 students and teachers exposed to Covid-19.[4] In Central Java, Islamic boarding schools such as Darul Karim and Nurul Quran in Kulonprogo also reported an increase in positive cases. In addition, in East Java, the Al-Fatah Islamic boarding school in Magetan also experienced a surge in cases, where 31 students were declared reactive after undergoing a rapid test.[5] This phenomenon shows that religious communities, especially Islamic boarding schools, are vulnerable to the spread of the virus, which requires more attention from the government and the public to increase compliance with health protocols.

This condition is exacerbated by the lack of public awareness of the importance of complying with health protocols, which can be seen from the

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[1] Supardi Rusdiana and Chalid Talib, 'National Strategy and Policy on the Agricultural Sector During the Covid-19 Outbreak', *Soca Jurnal Sosial Ekonomi Pertanian* 14, no. 3 (2020): 572, https://doi.org/10.24843/soca.2020.v14.i03.p17.

[2] Nurhayati Nurhayati and Asih D. Setyawati, 'COVID-19 Status and Its Prevention Among Indonesian Adults', *The Journal of Palembang Nursing Studies* 1, no. 3 (2022), https://doi.org/10.55048/jpns.v1i3.17.

[3] Nurhayati and Setyawati.

[4] Nurhayati and Setyawati.

[5] Nurhayati and Setyawati.

behavior of people who still ignore the PSBB and PPKM rules. Research shows that active community participation in complying with health protocols is very important to break the chain of Covid-19 spread. Therefore, further efforts are needed to increase public awareness and discipline in carrying out the health policies that have been set by the government.

The spread of Covid-19 in Indonesia, especially in Islamic boarding schools, shows the need for active involvement of the religious community in breaking the chain of virus transmission. According to the report of the LaporCovid19 Team, there are 8,291 positive cases of Covid-19 in Islamic boarding schools, much higher than 1,142 cases in schools.[6] This figure reflects that Islamic boarding schools as religious educational institutions have their own challenges in implementing health protocols. Therefore, religious leaders and pesantren managers have a great responsibility to provide a proper understanding of Covid-19 and encourage compliance with the Large-Scale Social Restrictions (PSBB) policy.[7] Emile Durkheim, a prominent sociologist, emphasized the importance of the reciprocal relationship between religion and society.[8] In this context, religion plays a role in shaping people's understanding of the world, including understanding Covid-19.

Religious leaders can act as agents of change by providing accurate information and educating the public on preventive measures to be taken. One of the approaches that can be applied is media literacy, which is related to the ability of the community to access, process, and produce information through mass media (Wardhani, 2023).[9] Good media literacy will help the public to distinguish between true and false information, especially in the midst of the rampant hoax news related

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[6] Saepul S. Burhan, 'STRATEGI KOMUNIKASI PERPUSTAKAAN DALAM MENINGKATKAN LITERASI INFORMASI MAHASANTRI (On Process)', *Sahafa Journal of Islamic Communication* 4, no. 2 (2022), https://doi.org/10.21111/sjic.v4i2.7898.

[7] Acep Z. S. Mubarok, 'Prospek Nazhir Wakaf Global Berbasis Pesantren Di Era Digital', *Jurnal Bimas Islam* 13, no. 1 (2020): 23–50, https://doi.org/10.37302/jbi.v13i1.190.

[8] Mubarak Akbar and Mohammad R. Fahlevvi, 'Cegah Penyebaran Misinformasi Di Media Sosial Menggunakan Peralatan Dan Fitur Literasi Digital', *Renata* 1, no. 1 (2023): 15–20, https://doi.org/10.61124/1.renata.2.

[9] Michelia D. C. Wardhani, 'Meningkatkan Minat Baca Siswa Melalui Pembiasaan Program Literasi Di SDN 1 Wonokerto', 2023, https://doi.org/10.31219/osf.io/tx5ad.

to Covid-19. During the pandemic, media literacy skills are very important in selecting and sorting information. Proper information can guide the public in taking effective preventive measures, while misinformation can lead to an underestimation of the dangers of Covid-19.[10]

Pesantren, as an educational institution that utilizes mass media, including the internet, must ensure that students have adequate information literacy skills. Research shows that the information literacy process in Islamic boarding schools can be carried out through three stages: determining information needs, searching for information, and utilizing information.[11]

Although the means of information media in Islamic boarding schools are still limited, students have access to various Islamic literature that can support the development of their information literacy. In this context, it is important to see how the media literacy process in Islamic boarding schools can contribute to Covid-19 mitigation. Islamic boarding schools must adapt to the development of information and communication technology to increase students' understanding of Covid-19 and the preventive measures that must be taken. By utilizing digital media, pesantren can disseminate accurate and relevant information to students and the surrounding community.[12]

In addition, training and education on digital literacy can also help students to be more critical in responding to the information they receive.[13] Strengthening information literacy in Islamic boarding schools can also be done through collaboration with various parties, including the government and other educational institutions. By involving various stakeholders, pesantren can create more effective

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[10] I P. A. Apriliana, 'Generasi Milenial Cakap Digital; Penyuluhan Dan Pendampingan Remaja Di Kelurahan Bakunase Nusa Tenggara Timur', *Kelimutu Journal of Community Service* 3, no. 2 (2023): 30–36, https://doi.org/10.35508/kjcs.v3i2.12632.

[11] Muhamad A. Muhtadi, 'Peran Kurikulum Pendidikan Dalam Meningkatkan Literasi Informasi Dan Kritis Pada Era Digital Di Indonesia', *Jurnal Pendidikan West Science* 1, no. 10 (2023), https://doi.org/10.58812/jpdws.v1i10.715.

[12] Artamin Hairit, Roro K. N. Rahmawati, and Mufiqur Rahman, 'Kultur Bimbingan Dan Konseling Di Pesantren Nurul Huda Pakandangan', *Shine Jurnal Bimbingan Dan Konseling* 2, no. 1 (2021): 18–24, https://doi.org/10.36379/shine.v2i1.183.

[13] Oktafiani Oktafiani, 'Literasi Informasi Mahasiswa Oseanografi Universitas Diponegoro Dalam Memanfaatkan Jurnal Elektronik Untuk Laporan Praktikum', *Anuva Jurnal Kajian Budaya Perpustakaan Dan Informasi* 7, no. 2 (2023): 233–44, https://doi.org/10.14710/anuva.7.2.233-244.

and sustainable literacy programs.[14] This is in line with the government's efforts to improve digital literacy in society, especially in the pandemic era which requires rapid adaptation to technology.[15] The active involvement of religious leaders and pesantren managers in improving media and information literacy among students is very important. They must be role models in complying with health protocols and spreading correct information about Covid-19. Thus, pesantren can function as an educational center that not only teaches religious knowledge, but also provides a comprehensive understanding of public health issues.[16]

In the context of the spread of Covid-19 in Indonesia, Islamic boarding schools have an important role in mitigating the spread of the virus through the development of media literacy.[17] To prevent the spread of Covid-19, the local government, under the leadership of Regent H. Fadeli, launched the "Pesantren Tangguh" program which aims to prepare students to face learning in the new normal era.[18] Two Islamic boarding schools that are used as examples in this program are the Karangasem Islamic Boarding School in Paciran Village and the Al-Ishlah Islamic Boarding School in Sendang Agung Village, both of which have the potential to develop media literacy.

The Karangasem Islamic Boarding School has a special initiative in handling media literacy through a program called INFOKOM, while the Al-Ishlah Islamic Boarding School has a student press council and is active in journalistic

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[14] Muthia K. Insani and Siti H. N. Hafida, 'Analisis Kemampuan Literasi Informasi Siswa Pada Sistem Pembelajaran Daring Mata Pelajaran Geografi', *Geodika Jurnal Kajian Ilmu Dan Pendidikan Geografi* 5, no. 1 (2021): 23–32, https://doi.org/10.29408/geodika.v5i1.3146.

[15] Erriani Kristiyaningsih, 'Analisis Literasi Informasi Pustakawan Kementerian Pertanian Di Jawa Barat Dan DKI Jakarta', *Jurnal Perpustakaan Pertanian* 28, no. 1 (2020): 32, https://doi.org/10.21082/jpp.v28n1.2019.p32-37.

[16] Ach Sya'roni, 'Peran Pesantren Dalam Mengembangkan Literasi Digital Santri Di Forum Lingkar Pena (Flp) Darul Ulum Banyuanyar', *Al-Ulum Jurnal Pemikiran Dan Penelitian Ke Islaman* 10, no. 2 (2023): 105–19, https://doi.org/10.31102/alulum.10.2.2023.105-119.

[17] Kholilur Rahman, 'Santri MBKM (Merdeka Belajar-Kampus Merdeka) Program in Development Self-Student', *Al-Ta Lim* 30, no. 1 (2023): 24–34, https://doi.org/10.15548/jt.v30i1.800.

[18] Vita S. Nanda and Dasim Budimansyah, 'Strengthening of Digital Media Literacy-Based Character Education on Hoax News Spreading to Students (Case Study on Citizenship Education Learning in SMP Negeri 2 Bandung)', *Journal of International Conference Proceedings* 3, no. 1 (2020): 283–90, https://doi.org/10.32535/jicp.v2i4.804.

activities, including the publication of magazines and newspaper.[19] This activity not only aims to improve students' journalistic skills, but also to equip them with critical skills in dealing with circulating information, especially during a pandemic where hoax information can easily spread.[20] Thus, media literacy is an important tool in equipping students to understand and respond to information related to Covid-19 wisely. The media literacy process in these two Islamic boarding schools can be seen as an effort to mitigate the negative impact of misinformation and to increase student awareness about the importance of health protocols. According to research, strengthening media literacy among students can help them in accessing, analyzing, and evaluating the information they receive.[21] This is in line with the need to create a media-literate society, which is able to distinguish between valid and uninformed information, especially in the context of health.[22]

Furthermore, media literacy in Islamic boarding schools can help students to contribute to the dissemination of accurate information about Covid-19 in their communities. With the skills acquired through media literacy programs, students can play an active role in educating the surrounding community about the importance of maintaining health and complying with health protocols set by the government.[23] Therefore, this study aims to explore how the media literacy process at the Karangasem Islamic Boarding School and the Al-Ishlah Islamic Boarding School can contribute to Covid-19 mitigation efforts, as well as how these two

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[19] Ahmad F. Fadlillah, 'Designing a Media Literacy Training Curriculum Framework for Junior High School Teachers', *JTP - Jurnal Teknologi Pendidikan* 25, no. 3 (2023): 414–29, https://doi.org/10.21009/jtp.v25i3.38928.

[20] Iqra Bashir, Amara Malik, and Khalid Mahmood, 'Measuring Personal and Academic Differences in Students' Perceived Social Media Credibility', *Digital Library Perspectives* 38, no. 3 (2021): 251–62, https://doi.org/10.1108/dlp-06-2021-0048.

[21] Benjamin A. Lyons, 'Older Americans Are More Vulnerable to Prior Exposure Effects in News Evaluation', *HKS Misinfo Review*, 2023, https://doi.org/10.37016/mr-2020-118.

[22] Ulfa U. U. Urrosyidah, 'Pemberdayaan Santri Dalam Meningkatkan Kemandirian Pangan Oleh Kelompok Santri Tani Millenial Di Pondok Pesantren Al Ihya Ulumaddin Kabupaten Cilacap', *Icodev* 3, no. 1 (2022): 1–9, https://doi.org/10.24090/icodev.v3i1.6435.

[23] Nikola Lehotska, Zusana Tomaš, and Margita Vojtkulakova, 'Addressing Media Literacy Through an International Virtual Exchange: A Report of One ESL-EFL Collaboration', *Teaching English as a Second or Foreign Language--Tesl-Ej* 25, no. 4 (2022), https://doi.org/10.55593/ej25100a9.

Islamic boarding schools can be a model for other Islamic boarding schools in developing media literacy in the digital era (Insani et al., 2023).[24]

### B. Method

This research method will use a qualitative approach with data collection techniques that include in-depth interviews, observations, and documentation. In-depth interviews will be conducted with Islamic boarding school leaders, students, and media literacy program administrators at the Karangasem Islamic Boarding School and Al-Ishlah Islamic Boarding School. The purpose of this interview is to explore their understanding of the media literacy process applied in Islamic boarding schools and its impact on Covid-19 mitigation. Observations will be made to see firsthand the implementation of media literacy programs and activities related to Covid-19 prevention in the two Islamic boarding schools.[25]

In addition, documentation will include data collection related to media literacy activities that have been carried out, including training materials and publications produced by students. Data analysis will be carried out in a qualitative descriptive manner, where the researcher will identify the main themes that emerge from interviews and observations.[26] The data obtained will be compared with relevant literature to provide a broader context regarding the role of media literacy in Covid-19 mitigation in Islamic boarding schools. With this approach, it is hoped that the research can provide a comprehensive picture of how the media literacy process in Karangasem and Al-Ishlah Islamic Boarding Schools contributes to

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[24] Erikafatul Insani, Fathor Rozi, and Hasyim Asy'ari, 'Program MBKM Santri Sebagai Pondasi Penguatan Nilai Religius Di Era Society 5.0', *Tarbiyah Wa Ta Lim Jurnal Penelitian Pendidikan Dan Pembelajaran*, 2023, 59–69, https://doi.org/10.21093/twt.v10i1.5617.

[25] Siti H. Jumaah et al., 'Collaborative Governance Berbasis Pendekatan Penta Helix Stakeholder Dalam Mengatasi Pandemi Covid-19 Di Kabupaten Lombok Timur', *Thejournalish Social and Government* 3, no. 2 (2022): 130–38, https://doi.org/10.55314/tsg.v3i2.264.

[26] PUTRI D. PATNI and Dien Anshari, 'Peran Tokoh Agama Dalam Pencegahan COVID-19: Studi Literatur Review', *Jurnal Ilmiah Kesehatan* 21, no. 2 (2022), https://doi.org/10.33221/jikes.v21i2.1713.

increasing the awareness of students and the public about the importance of health protocols during the pandemic.[27]

## C. Result and Disscuss

Research related to the media literacy process as an effort to mitigate Covid-19 at the Karangasem Islamic boarding school and Al-ishlah Islamic boarding school was carried out through interviews with a number of Islamic boarding school health workers and a number of supervisors of literacy activities or Islamic boarding school journalistic activities. The first thing that is studied in the media literacy process is related to the purpose of literacy activities in Islamic boarding schools. Because this goal determines the direction of empowerment and literacy training in the two Islamic boarding schools, especially those related to Covid-19 mitigation.

The purpose of media literacy at Al-Ishlah Islamic boarding school is to support the talent and creativity of students in the field of journalism. According to Firdha, pesantren realizes that literacy is an important part of the world of education. Even the caregivers of the Karangasem Islamic boarding school are very enthusiastic about providing encouragement for the students to actively read and write as a means of becoming quality and useful human beings.[28] Meanwhile, the purpose of media literacy at the Karangasem Islamic boarding school is to equip students in the use of social media and access information from other media such as websites, newspapers or online news sites.

Not only that, through media literacy learning, the two pesantren try to build a critical attitude of students by training students to think critically. According to Agus Buchori, the way to train students to think critically is to urge Karangasem students not to easily share/*share* information received through *the watsapp group* before checking *and rechecking* first. If necessary, students can send news or videos

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[27] Lia Fitrianingrum, 'Evaluasi Kebijakan Penanganan Covid-19 Pemerintah Provinsi Jawa Barat', *Jpsi (Journal of Public Sector Innovations)* 6, no. 1 (2021): 39–50, https://doi.org/10.26740/jpsi.v6n1.p39-50.

[28] Wawancara Firdha Ning Fajrillah, Pembina Jurnalistik Pesantren Al-Ishlah, 1 November 2021, *via watsapp* pukul 19; 18 WIB.

received to Agus Buchori or other ustazah at the pesantren to track the truth.[29] Not much different from the Karangasem Islamic boarding school, Al-Ishlah Islamic boarding school also seeks to build a critical attitude of students through discussion activities. In *muhadlarah activities,* students are divided into several discussion groups with the division of duties as moderators, presenters and minutes. The habit of conducting discussions in pesantren can encourage students' critical power in responding to issues or events that occur in the community or pesantren environment. In addition to discussions, Al-Ishlah Islamic boarding schools also encourage students' interest in reading and writing. To achieve this goal, the pesantren provides comfortable library facilities, student discussion rooms and requires students to like to ask questions about every student activity. For example, in Covid-19 socialization activities at Islamic boarding schools.

During the pandemic, students are also trained to filter news, especially news about Covid-19. Medical personnel and supervisors of journalistic activities have several strategies to protect students from fake news/*hoaxes.* Agus Buchari has given an explanation to students regarding the characteristics of *hoaxes.* According to Agus, valid news is news that comes from a clear website, there are sources in the news, news titles do not rely on *clickbait*, actual and balanced. For example, in accessing Covid-19 news, Agus recommends to students to access the Covid-19 task force (covid19.go.id) website and not from other sites whose truth is still in doubt. Meanwhile, at the Al-Ishlah Islamic boarding school, to prevent *hoaxes* among students, counseling is carried out by Islamic boarding school medical personnel. During counseling, students are directed to be able to distinguish between facts, *hoaxes* and myths. Students are also directed to access news on the WHO or CDC website. According to Firdha, to prevent *hoaxes* in Islamic boarding schools both in general or related to Covid-19 is to coordinate between students and dormitory coaches or coaches from each room. Students are always accustomed to *sharing* information and are urged not to easily believe information that is not clear about the truth. Students must have the ability to validate information. Namely by

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[29] Interview with Agus Buchori, Journalism Coach of the Karangasem Islamic Boarding School, November 1, 2021, via *watsapp* at 18/29 WIB.

studying the knowledge correctly and if you don't know the knowledge, then you have to ask the expert. Being good at determining sources of information to explore the issues needed is also one of the keys to protecting students from *hoaxes*. For example, when they want to know the news of Covid-19, they must ask medical personnel or when they want to know about Islam, they must ask the religious teacher at the Islamic boarding school.

Even though while in the pesantren, students rarely use social media, but students still have to be aware of information from the internet or *watsapp groups*. For this reason, media literacy learning in Islamic boarding schools is carried out to empower students to be media literate. By being media literate, students can have the ability to develop critical awareness and at the peak be able to produce information independently and even make alternative media. According to Thoman, the approach that can be taken to achieve an empowered media audience is through education that encourages increased competence which is referred to as the "Empowerment Spiral". The empowerment spiral includes four processes, including: (1) awareness development by involving the group in several activities, (2) analysis, which provides opportunities for the group to understand how an issue arises, (3) reflection, which invites the group to look deeper into a media issue and (4) action, which provides opportunities for the group to formulate constructive ideas that provide changes in the habit of consuming information and making choices on television or *social media*. Furthermore, the media literacy process at the Karangasem Islamic boarding school and Al-Ishlah Islamic boarding school will be explained through *the empowerment spiral method* in an effort to mitigate Covid-19.

### 1. Media Awareness Development Process

The process of developing awareness is the initial stage for the audience in understand and criticize the contents of the mass media. The awareness stage is the most basic and *urgent* stage because it determines how the audience will act on an issue. There are several ways that can be used to provide awareness to communities or individuals. One of them is by involving the community in several activities, such as film reviews or newspapers. In the context of Covid-19 mitigation, the

pesantren has made several efforts to provide awareness to students regarding the dangers of Covid-19 and how the mass media works.

Before making awareness of the dangers of Covid-19 to students, it must first be seen how the pesantren views Covid-19. One of them is the view related to the emergence of statements "more afraid of God than Covid-19" by some Muslim groups in responding to the Covid-19 pandemic. According to Dina, the statement was wrong because the person who made the statement did not understand the concept of destiny and effort well.[30] Comparing the fear of God with the fear of the plague is an inappropriate comparison. The comparison seems to state that if someone is afraid or strives to fight the pandemic, it is the same as not being afraid of God. Even though God Himself tells humans to avoid disease. The task of humans is to strive to maintain the safety of themselves and others when an outbreak occurs in an area.

The same view was also expressed by Nasrudin, a religion teacher at the Karangasem Islamic boarding school. According to Nasrudin, the statement "more afraid of God than Covid-19" emerged based on people's doubts at the beginning of the pandemic.[31] These doubts are triggered by news that is still mixed in the mass media, either through television, newspapers or social media. Nasrudin believes that humans must indeed fear God more than others. But then humans are not resigned to the outbreak or deliberately endanger themselves by ignoring health protocols.

The process of awareness of students about the dangers of Covid-19 at the Al-Ishlah Islamic boarding school is carried out in several ways. ***First***, conducting socialization related to Covid-19 which aims to educate students about the outline of Covid-19, the dangers of Covid-19 and how to prevent it. Socialization was carried out using mass media such as posters, newspapers produced independently by students and *madin* (wall magazines) of Islamic boarding schools. As Dina said, the medical personnel of the Al-Ishlah Islamic boarding school are very aggressive

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[30] Interview, Dr. Rosydina Robi'a Qolbi, December 31, 2021, via *watsapp.*

[31] Interview, Nasrudin, Religion Teacher of the Karangasem Islamic Boarding School, January 8, 2022, at the Madrasah Diniyah Office of the Karangasem Islamic Boarding School, at 09.30 WIB.

in conducting socialization during the pandemic.[32] Socialization was carried out in the field by gathering all students based on their respective classes. At the beginning of the socialization, the pesantren did not know how to keep their distance because during the early days of the pandemic students were only in the pesantren and did not have contact with the outside world, so the pesantren only carried out the concept *of self-quarantine.* During the socialization activity, the medical personnel also tested the students' knowledge of Covid-19. So that if there is incorrect knowledge or information, the extension officers will correct and provide more valid information. Especially for students from among students who can access youtube. Students from among students are more active in asking questions when they are counseling, for example related to the issue of Covid-19 as a conspiracy of the global elite. The medical personnel also directed students to access certain websites such as WHO, CDC, IDAI, IDI, Ministry of Health, PAPDI and other doctors' association websites to obtain valid information related to Covid-19.

When the first case of Covid-19 was announced in Indonesia, all Al-Ishlah students were still in the pesantren. When schools and other Islamic boarding schools began to be closed, Al-Ishlah Islamic boarding schools were not able to take their students on holiday, so self-quarantine efforts were carried out through several methods such as tightening permits, namely students were not allowed to go home for any reason and prohibited visiting permits. The medical personnel also began to prepare health protocols in the pesantren environment, namely building a semi-permanent handwashing station at the gate, distributing masks to students (activating the convection part of the pesantren as well as collaborating with tailors in Sendangagung village) and distributing *hand sanitizers* to all students even though the price was very expensive.

***Second**,* conducting a campaign to prevent the spread of Covid-19 in the pesantren environment. In addition to socialization, another effort made by Al-Ishlah Islamic boarding school is to carry out a 3M campaign (Wear masks, wash hands and maintain distance and crowds) in the form of posters and Islamic

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[32] Interview, Dr. Rosydina Robi'a Qolbi, November 19, 2021, via *watsapp* at 16:00 WIB.

boarding school regulations. During the pandemic, the Al-Ishlah Islamic boarding school issued several proclamations or policies. Among them are the rules for returning students, the rules for returning students to the cottage and the rules for a new life or *new normal* at the pesantren. Such as requiring students to comply with health protocols so that students who violate health protocols get punishments such as running, *pushing up* and cleaning the pesantren area.

**Third,** issuing *a lockdown policy.* Namely prohibiting visits for guardians of students during the pandemic. The *lockdwon* policy is certainly felt heavy by students and guardians. In normal times (before the pandemic), parents and students can freely meet at least once a week. But during the pandemic they should not see each other for months until vacation time. So it is not uncommon for there to be guardians of students who violate the rules by continuing to visit or send goods such as food. The pesantren then broadcasts on @ppalishlah Instagram account through the IGTV feature. In the broadcast, the caregiver, KH. Muhammad Dawam Saleh gave an affirmation and explanation to the guardians of the students, that the *lockdown policy* of the pesantren by prohibiting visits was based on the consideration of the benefits and *madharat* obtained. The caregiver realizes that if the visit is still carried out, it can trigger students to crowd and there is direct contact between students and the outside community. In fact, the pesantren has tried to limit direct contact between students and the community in order to prevent and break the chain of Covid-19 transmission. For this reason, the caregiver expects the willingness of the student's guardian to be sincere and patient with the regulations that have been set.

**Fourth,** optimizing social media and pesantren websites as a medium for Covid-19 counseling to students, guardians of students and the general public. The pesantren also uses social media such as *the watsapp group* (which is coordinated by a *musyrif/musyrifah*) to educate student guardians regarding the dangers of Covid-19 and carry out the *student screening process*. When screening students are carried out and the results show that there are symptoms of Covid-19 such as anosmia (loss of sense of taste), the *musyrif/musyrifah* will inform the guardians of the students about the condition of the students who experience symptoms of

Covid-19 so that parents can be more vigilant. Because during the return period of students, the pesantren continues to monitor the condition of students through *the watsapp* group by providing guidelines or sheets on how to self-isolate and how to prevent Covid-19 in the home environment. Thus, the pesantren is not only aware of the dangers of Covid-19 for students but also the community in general.

At the Karangasem Islamic boarding school, the process of developing media awareness is also carried out through several strategies, which include; ***First,*** using *the watsapp group* and *the* pesantren website as a medium of awareness for students related to the dangers of Covid-19. According to Latif, *watsapp group* is an effective medium for socialization.[33] So Latif always sends various information related to Covid-19 through the *watsapp group* which consists of pesantren caregivers, all Karangasem pesantren employees and dormitory coaches. The information disseminated was in the form of texts, brochures, pamphlets, health appeal letters and posters. The information received by the members of the *watsapp* group was then conveyed to the students. Latif also uses *Instagram* and *FB* of Islamic boarding schools to educate and raise awareness to students and the wider community regarding the dangers of Covid-19.

In addition to the *watsapp group*, the Karangasem Islamic boarding school also optimizes the function of *the* pesantren website as a medium of information about Covid-19. Even during the pandemic, the pesantren website added a special column for Covid-19. In the Covid-19 column, the pesantren issued PPC-19 (Covid-19 Prevention Protocol) in welcoming the arrival of students back to the boarding school. PPC-19 contains SOPs for the arrival of students, requirements for returning to the pesantren for new and old students, as well as mandatory luggage equipment for old and new students. In the Covid-19 column *of the* Karangasem Islamic boarding school website, the guardians of the students also commented to ask more deeply about the technicalities that have not been understood. All regulations in the SOP also refer to the Lamongan regent's regulations and based on the results of the internal meeting of the Karangasem Islamic boarding school. The SOP for Islamic

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[33] Interview, Dr. Latif, Karangasem Islamic Boarding School Medical Team, January 5, 2022, at PKU Karangasem Paciran Lamongan, at 10.40 WIB.

boarding schools is strictly enforced on students. Even students are always urged not to use goods alternately. Islamic boarding schools are known for their culture of mutual cooperation and high culture of collectivity. Students are accustomed to socializing, namely helping each other and eliminating differences in social classes. So that students are used to sharing goods or using goods in turn. Not only food items such as plates and spoons but also clothes such as clothes, sandals or makeup equipment such as combs and eyeliners. On the one hand, this habit brings benefits because it can train the social sensitivity of students, but on the other hand, it is also dangerous because it is prone to disease transmission. As in the context of Covid-19, which is a virus that easily spreads through *droplets* or saliva splashes when sneezing, so the collective attitude of students must be limited during the pandemic.

***Second,*** holding an El-Saka Literacy program and film/video analysis. Some of the films and videos dissected include; a film that reviews Black Hole, a short video titled *62 Minutes of Operation Burning of the Sarinah Bus Stop* and a short video titled UNFOLD: Bajing Loncat-Highway Robbers of the Sumatra Route Indonesia. Through video analysis activities, students are able to understand how the mass media works and understand the performance of a journalist. In the film analysis activity, students not only watch but also actively ask questions and give responses. The Karangasem Islamic Boarding School also has El-Saka Literacy activities every Saturday and Sunday night. El-Saka literacy aims to develop students' writing skills to become contributors to writing on blogs managed by Islamic boarding schools. Rusydan as one of the coaches of El-Saka Literacy activities always applies three teaching methods, namely lectures, *brainstorming* and assignments. The assignment in question is to be a reporter to write news related to activities at the pesantren. Thus, students can write news correctly and are able to report events in Islamic boarding schools independently without going through conventional media reporters.

Based on observations made by researchers, the El-Saka Literacy activity for female students every Saturday and Sunday night took place effectively. The training started at 20.00 WIB and ended at 21.30 WIB at the computer laboratory of SMA Muhammadiyah Karangasem Paciran. The students who participated in the

activity amounted to approximately 13 students. Each student operates one computer connected to the internet. At the beginning of the training, Agus Buchari will deliver  a *review* of the material in the previous week and check the students' duties such as making news related to El-Saka Literacy activities. The students' assignments are displayed on the LCD screen available in the room to be read and corrected together. So that students can know directly where the mistakes are and how to improve them. After conducting the *review*, Agus will publish the student's writing on the blog or *the* pesantren website in the student's work column.

***Third,*** the Covid-19 team consisting of Karangasem students. The team members consisted of coaches and administrators of OPPK (Karangasem Islamic Boarding School Organization) who were 6th grade students.  This team consists of 3 female students and 3 male students. The Covid-19 student cluster team is tasked with seeing and monitoring the health of the students, especially if there are students who experience symptoms of Covid-19. The teams were also equipped with complete PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) such as clothes and temperature measuring devices to protect against exposure to the virus. Although the Karangasem Islamic boarding school already has a PKU to facilitate the health of students, during the pandemic and supporting facilities as a resilient Islamic boarding school, the Karangasem Islamic boarding school established a POSKESTREN which is located not far from the main gate of the boarding school. The function of POSKESTREN is to facilitate students who have health complaints or who look symptomatic and lead to Covid-19.

### 2.  The Process of Analyzing Mass Media Messages

After the students are aware of the dangers of Covid-19 and are aware of how the mass media works, the next stage is to provide training to the students to conduct media analysis. Media analysis is a process to show the audience how an issue arises or is raised by the media. Media analysis aims to equip the audience in understanding the context of the content comprehensively. The audience is trained to understand the logic of opinion formation by the mass media. Thus, the audience can be more skeptical when concluding a narrative

story or fact shown by the media. As well as media analysis of the issue of Covid-19 and *hoaxes* related to the pandemic.

Preventing the spread of *hoaxes* among Islamic boarding schools has its facilities and challenges. According to Dina, this convenience is due to the lack of access to social media for students. Social media itself is the mass media with the highest number of *hoaxes* throughout the pandemic. Based on Kominfo records, there were approximately 1,028 *hoaxes* related to Covid-19 spread on social media and internet sites in the range of August 2020.[34] So that the lack of access to social media by students brings its own advantages. Because while at the Islamic boarding school, students get information related to Covid-19 through newspapers, limited access to the internet and counseling carried out by the medical team of the Al-Ishlah Islamic boarding school. However, to ward off *hoaxes* among Islamic boarding schools has certain challenges. The number of students at the Al-Ishlah Islamic boarding school which reached thousands caused the Islamic boarding school to have difficulty in controlling. So that to overcome this, the pesantren uses a coach or coordinator of each room in countering or filtering information. If it is known that students receive *hoaxes* , the dormitory supervisor is expected to be able to correct the wrong information. For example, the emergence of *hoaxes* about the existence of herbal medicine that is claimed to be a Covid-19 drug even though the herbal medicine only functions to increase the body's immunity. The dormitory coaches are also expected to intensively discuss or *share* information with students related to Covid-19. Every Thursday night after the maghrib prayer, the coaches will have a discussion with the students in each room.

To ward off deviant issues related to Covid-19, Doctor Dina as the head of the Al-Ishlah Islamic boarding school clinic always provides *real data* in the field. From this data, students are expected to be able to analyze between

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[34] Binti Mufarida, *Kominfo noted that as many as 1,028 hoaxes were spread related to Covid-19*, https://kominfo.go.id/content/detail/28536/kominfo-mencatat-sebanyak-1028-hoaks-tersebar-terkait-covid-19/0/sorotan_media, accessed on January 1, 2021.

*hoaxes* and facts. For example, data on positive cases of Covid-19 in East Java and in Lamongan, data on patients who died from Covid-19 and conveying the condition of hospitals in Indonesia *up-to-date*. Through the presentation of these data, it is hoped that students will become more confident that Covid-19 is purely a health issue and it is the responsibility of all students to prevent the transmission of Covid-19 in the pesantren environment. According to Zahid, another way to provide teaching to students in conducting media analysis is through learning media validity. Namely, to get students used to not only reading or hearing information from one source and not easily concluding the news before verifying. One of them is by asking directly to the source of authority, namely the pesantren medical team or doctors related to the Covid-19 issue.

Meanwhile, at the Karangasem Islamic boarding school, the pesantren conducts media learning to provide direction to students in conducting media analysis. In media learning, Agus Buchari and Rusydan provided several materials related to the technical writing of news, articles or opinions and also provided knowledge about the character of social media. Agus Buchari always urges Karangasem students not to easily believe the news on social media. Because news spread through social media is very easy to manipulate. Especially news spread through *watsapp* and *facebook groups.* Rusydan also reminded students that when receiving information related to the pandemic from junior high school, high school or family *watsapp* groups , students must recheck. Namely by comparing this information with channels managed by the government related to Covid-19 pandemic information.

Rusydan emphasized to the students not to respond to news that is allegedly untrue, causing the students to make decisions that should not be made.[35] Rusydan also gave students an understanding of the four functions of mass media including *to inform, to educate, to entertain, and social control*. In addition, Agus Buchori in one of the media training sessions also explained the

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[35] Interview, Rusysdan Fauzi Fuadi, Journalism Coach of the Karangasem Islamic Boarding School, December 13, 2021, via *watsapp* at 07 o'clock; 13 WIB.

importance of the media that affects the news. Because the media can manipulate news to gain business profits alone, for example by building business issues as religious issues. So that students are trained to be more critical and careful about the news. Agus Buchari also often reminds students to always *tabayyun* to the information received as explained by QS Al-Hujurat verse 6 which commands to research or *tabayyun* to the news brought by the wicked.

### 3. Reflection Process

The reflection process is a stage of media literacy that leads to action. At the reflection stage, the audience is invited to look more deeply at an issue and begin to question what should be done about the media issues that have been identified. In the process of reflection, the audience considers the message, media, and technological tools in their thoughts and actions in daily life so that the audience is able to be socially responsible.

In the reflection process, there are several ways carried out by the pesantren. At the Al-Ishlah Islamic boarding school, the method is in the form of giving briefings in the form of discussions, especially for junior high school students who are still labile and easily imitate the news that is trending on social media. According to Firdha, Aliyah level students are better able to choose and sort information appropriately than junior high school students who still need a lot of direction and monitoring in accessing information in the mass media, especially social media.[36] The same opinion was also expressed by Zahid. According to Zahid, students still need assistance in accessing information, so Zahid always reminds students that information in the mass media is not something that must be obeyed. If students feel that they have irregularities with the information received, then they must dare to refute the news, either in the form of writing opinions or articles. In the context of Covid-19, the role of

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[36] Interview, Firdha Ning Fajrillah, Journalism Coach of Al-Ishlah Islamic Boarding School, December 28, 2021, via *watsapp* at 19 o'clock; 18 WIB.

the extension worker is very decisive in the formation of the student's thinking system towards the Covid-19 issue.

The Karangasem Islamic Boarding School also has several efforts in directing students to reflect on the information they read and hear. The Karangasem Islamic Boarding School has formed a Covid-19 task force team consisting of students. The task of this team is to monitor the condition of students during the pandemic, report to the PKU Karangasem or doctors if there are students with symptoms of Covid-19, screen teachers and employees of the pesantren, check the temperature and maintain *the sterilization of* the pesantren environment. The formation of the Covid-19 task force team from students aims to make it easier for the pesantren to monitor and prevent Covid-19, both monitoring the condition of students or monitoring information flow.

As in the case of the discovery of symptoms of anosmia or numbness in 12 Karangasem students which led to Covid-19. The student Covid-19 task force team then reported the case at PKU Karangasem for a rapid test. The results of the rapid test showed that two students were positive and the other students were only symptomatic. Students who are positive are sent home to recover and relieve symptoms, while other students are required to self-isolate in the space that has been provided. During the self-isolation period at home, the pesantren continues to monitor with the guardians of the students through *the watsapp*. The Covid-19 task force team also monitors the information received by students, namely filtering or filtering information to ward off *Covid-19 hoaxes* in the pesantren environment. In addition, it also coordinates with the medical team and the ranks of PKU Karangasem doctors.

The Covid-19 task force team of the Karangasem Islamic boarding school consists not only of students or male coaches but also students and female coaches. This is a form of women's involvement in preventing Covid-19 in the pesantren environment. The *asatizah* always teach students how to wash their hands properly, sneeze etiquette, how to wear masks appropriately and design pamphlets and posters that are installed in the pesantren area. Women's duties in Covid-19 mitigation are not only as complementary but also as leaders. At

the Al-Ishlah Islamic boarding school, women are appointed as chairmen or coordinators for Covid-19 prevention. According to Azam, women's involvement in Covid-19 prevention is urgently needed.[37]

Meanwhile, according to Rusydan, the way to train students to reflect on information is through discussion. In the discussion, Rusydan used three methods to train students to think critically in responding to an issue. The first method is a lecture, which is to provide material or present an issue to students accompanied by detailed explanations and simple examples to help students understand the material more easily and comprehensively. The next method is *brainstorming,* which is to encourage students to be active in discussions by asking for students' views or ideas on a news. For example, news about PSBB which is only strictly enforced in big cities or news about the increasing Covid-19 death rate. The next method is assignment. Students are assigned to conduct reportage related to activities at the pesantren. The assignment aims to familiarize students with writing and making narratives from the activities that have been covered. From this discussion activity, students will get views on the Covid-19 issue to decide on actions in responding to Covid-19. Namely, being more disciplined in complying with health protocols in order to maintain mutual comfort and safety or on the contrary underestimate Covid-19 and be indifferent by violating the health protocols that have been set.

## 4. Action Process

The last stage in the media literacy process is the emergence of action. At this stage, the community or audience is given the opportunity to formulate constructive ideas that will bring changes to the way the media is done. Namely changes in mass media consumption, including regulating viewing habits and determining the classification of spectacles. If during the process of media

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[37] Interview, Azzam Mushoffa, January 4, 2022, via *watsapp* at 12 o'clock; 27 WIB. *"The coordination of the asatizah is very good to overcome Covid-19. For example, when some symptoms are found in students, there is already a special team from the ustazah who records every day. Then it was immediately reported to the clinic and the clinic was immediately responded to so that it could be treated immediately. If indeed the situation leads to Covid-19, then either quarantine or be referred to a hospital that has more potential to handle Covid-19."*

literacy of students reaches this stage, then it can be said that the literacy process carried out by the pesantren has been successful.

The constructive action in question can be in the form of rejecting certain broadcasts because they are considered to violate broadcasting norms, spreading *hoaxes* and providing misleading information. The form of media literacy action at the Al-Ishlah Islamic boarding school is not in the form of refusing broadcasts but through the creation of student discipline in implementing health protocols both in the pesantren environment and the community. Al-Ishlah students have realized the dangers of Covid-19 and trained themselves to distinguish between *hoaxes* and facts and reflect on information. In the end, the students decided to implement health protocols in a disciplined manner in order to break the chain of Covid-19 transmission. Due to limited access to mass media, students have become more disciplined in consuming mass media. While at the pesantren, students can only access the Jawa Pos newspaper, the Radar Bojonegoro newspaper and the internet on a scheduled basis. According to Firdha, if there is news or images that are not appropriate on the newspaper page, the dormitory management will censor the newspaper page. For example, in the *show and celebrity column* in the Jawa Pos newspaper which is considered not in accordance with the value of the pesantren. The coaches also always remind students to avoid unhelpful shows, for example avoiding soap operas or gossip broadcasts. From the caregiver side, it has encouraged students to *update* the latest issues by getting used to reading information, both from newspapers, magazines, newsletters, general books and from internet sites.

To discipline students in complying with health protocols, Doctor Dina as a doctor at the Al-Ishlah Islamic boarding school not only put up banners, banners and provide counseling, but also provided rules. So that students who violate the rules of health protocols will get sanctions. Another way is to set an example from all teachers, pesantren employees and dormitory coaches in complying with health protocols.

The exemplary method is very effectively applied to the pesantren environment. Especially the character of the students who are known *tawadlu'* and obey the leadership of the kyai. So that the exemplary method is very appropriate to be used to discipline students in complying with health protocols. Exemplary is an act that should be imitated or exemplified. In the Qur'an, exemplary is termed as *uswah*. However, the example of students certainly comes from various information that has been read, filtered and analyzed so that they arrive at the confidence to protect themselves from the dangers of Covid-19.

Meanwhile, the form of media literacy action at the Karangasem Islamic boarding school is to regulate the classification of student spectacles while at home by collaborating with student guardians. As long as the students are at home, the parents are responsible for controlling the students' media activities. As students when in Islamic boarding schools are monitored in accessing media by teachers or dormitory coaches. According to Latif, today's students cannot help but interact with the mass media, especially social media. So that the efforts made are to continue to allow students to access mass media while at home such as social media and television, but also to minimize the negative impact of mass media on students. Especially when online learning was in the early days of the pandemic. It is feared that students at home only play online games through gadgets and leave learning, which is actually much more important and is the main goal for the students to be sent home.

In addition, according to Rusydan, students must be equipped with the ability to choose and sort news correctly so that students can respond to Covid-19 through appropriate actions. In choosing information, students must avoid news that only seeks sensations, ignore news elements such as factual, actual and balanced and avoid information that invites confusion in thinking. Rusydan always emphasized to the students that not all news from the mass media is worthy of consumption. If students have been able to sort information well, they can independently classify spectacles based on hobbies and the need to develop their potential.

A.  **Conclusion**

The media literacy process in an effort to mitigate Covid-19 at Al-Ishlah Islamic boarding schools and Karangasem Islamic boarding schools runs through four stages, namely awareness, analysis, reflection and action stages. At each stage, each pesantren has a certain way but is not much different. Pesantren equips students with the ability to analyze *hoaxes*, utilizing mass media such as banners, posters, social media such as Instagram and pesantren websites as a medium to socialize and raise awareness of the dangers of Covid-19 to students. The exemplary method is also a method that is able to strengthen the discipline of students to comply with health protocols in the pesantren environment. The most important thing is the emergence of constructive actions carried out by the two pesantren in the form of discipline in implementing health protocols supported by pesantren regulations and classification arrangements for student spectacles, especially during the Covid-19 pandemic.

In addition, the use of *Watsapp Group* is not only a medium for sharing information, but also a means of monitoring student health during the pandemic. The two pesantren also optimize the pesantren journalism institution that has been formed with the aim of improving the media literacy skills of students. Both Islamic boarding schools also produce Islamic boarding school information media that are managed and consumed by students and the wider community. Information media products produced by Al-Ishlah Islamic boarding schools and Karangasem Islamic boarding schools are in the form of magazines, newspapers, books, Islamic boarding school blogs and *e-magazines*

D.  **Conclusion**

Social change as a result of technology and modernization has shaped the phenomenon of adolescent moral decadence. The phenomenon of moral decadence makes Islam experience a crisis of regeneration of the ummah as the successor of the prophet's struggle. One of the practical steps to overcome the moral decadance

of adolescents is the work of the pesantren world as a religious-based character formation institution. As an Islamic institution, the optimization of pesantren education is not only in the form of general materials in the learning process, but also prioritizes the cultivation of religious teachings that are not only limited to the cognitive realm, but also enter the level of ethics, morals, and behavior. The process of forming a prophetic or prophetic character in Islamic boarding schools will make a significant contribution to efforts to improve life in the future. The Prophet PBUH as a role model has given uswah hasanah which covers all the life orders of Muslims that can be manifested through education, communication, behavior, and social interaction.

The concept of prophetic communication in the MBS Jetis pesantren environment is oriented towards the value of humanization, the value of liberation, and the value of transcendence. These three concepts are well actualized through the interaction and communication relationship between kyai and students, between caregivers and students and realized by the daily habits of MBS Jetis students in accordance with prophetic or prophetic principles. The optimization of character formation in the field of MBS Jetis Islamic boarding school education has been carried out by maximizing a clear and planned curriculum institution as well as the effectiveness of communication and habituation based on sharia and the sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad (saw).

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