



**Fikrah: Jurnal Ilmu Aqidah dan Studi Keagamaan**

issn 2354-6174 eissn 2476-9649

Tersedia online di: [journal.iainkudus.ac.id/index.php/fikrah](http://journal.iainkudus.ac.id/index.php/fikrah)

Volume 10 Nomor 1 2022, (183-202)

DOI: 10.21043/fikrah.v8i1.12228

# The Response of the Muslim Community in Indonesia when Lockdown was Reimplemented

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## Abstrak

Meski kajian seputar dampak pandemi terhadap komunitas agama terus bermunculan secara global, namun studi mengenai respon komunitas agama di Indonesia masih belum tergal. Studi sebelumnya di Indonesia cenderung berfokus pada tema-tema berikut: respon terhadap kebijakan pemerintah, respon pemerintah terkait COVID-19, respon agama dan negara, dan respon masyarakat terhadap tingkat kecemasan akan risiko COVID-19. Penelitian ini menggabungkan data wawancara kualitatif. Tujuannya untuk memahami bagaimana para masyarakat Muslim dan pemimpinnya menanggapi saat Indonesia memberlakukan kembali kebijakan lockdown (PPKM). Temuan dalam tulisan ini adalah bahwa respon komunitas Muslim di Indonesia terhadap perubahan tata cara beribadah dan penutupan massal masjid-masjid di hampir setiap wilayah di Indonesia harus di kaji ulang.

Katakunci: Covid-19, Indonesian, lockdown, muslim.

## Abstract

Although studies on the impacts of the pandemic on religious communities continue to emerge globally, studies on the response of religious communities in Indonesia have not yet been explored. Previous studies in Indonesia tended to focus on the following themes: the response to religion and the state, the response to government policies, the government's to COVID-19, and the public's response to the level of anxiety about the risk COVID-19. This study combines qualitative interview data. The goal is to understand Muslim communities, and their leader responds when Indonesia re-imposes its lockdown policy (PPKM). The findings in this paper are that the response of the Muslim community in Indonesia to changes in worship procedures and the mass closure of mosques in almost every region in Indonesia must be reviewed.

Keywords: Covid-19, Indonesian, lockdown, muslim.

## Introduction

The fundamental problem in the COVID-19 pandemic crisis is a measure of the country's preparedness to face the pandemic threats by considering various steps to respond to the threat of a pandemic (Coccia, 2021). For months, the COVID-19 pandemic has hit Indonesia with a high mortality rate (Sparrow et al., 2020). The dire results have come despite ambitious and comprehensive response measures; at least on paper, the strict pattern of action has failed to mitigate the impact of this pandemic (Cabana et al., 2021). Then the situation was tense again when COVID-19 mutated from the novel Coronavirus (for example, the Delta and Kappa variants), which became an additional threat for the upcoming season in various countries (Stefan et al., 2021), including Indonesia, which was confirmed in June 2021 (Hasibuan, 2021). Therefore, this public health emergency requires more than just a health and medical care response, requiring the involvement of all citizens, targeted action from governments at all levels, and the implementation of multi-stakeholder policies (Bernard et al., 2021). Although the vaccination program is ongoing, which is the primary step in dealing with this pandemic (Erawan et al., 2021; Zaid & Pratondo, 2021), the Indonesian Government has again implemented a lockdown policy, or the original term is the implementation of restrictions on community activities (PPKM) in July 2021 (Miharja et al., 2021).

This study investigates how COVID-19 and the imposed restrictions affect people's lives in the Muslim community in Indonesia. How their lives were affected during the lockdown, and how they responded. It comes from discussions about COVID-19 and the Muslim community in Indonesia to address the literature gap on Muslim life experiences from the global

pandemic in Indonesia. As for previous research, most of the COVID-19 research in Indonesia has only focused on responses to government policies, such as the research of Djalante et al. (2020); who said that the government's lack of preparedness in dealing with pandemics could be seen in the six building blocks of the health system ranging from health service delivery, workforce, information systems, access to essential medicines, financing the health system, and leadership and governance. The findings of (Roziqin et al. (2021) also said that the Indonesian government was slow to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic; this was reflected in several government policies that were ineffective in suppressing the number of COVID-19 cases. Mietzner (2020),

This study, criticized that the Indonesian government had given a poor response to COVID-19 because, at first, it ignored the threat. When it reacted, the crisis policy was piecemeal and confusing. This decline results from a specific process of democratic decline in the last decade. However, Hartanto & Siregar (2021); have different results; it has been confirmed that the Government of Indonesia is also responding to Covid-19 on time. Then another research came from Megatsari et al. (2020); regarding the public's response to the level of anxiety about the risk of contracting COVID-19. The results show that four variables that affect the psychosocial burden are the level of fear in Indonesian society. This involves age, gender, education, and occupation. Lastly, studies from Regus (2021); Regarding the religious response to COVID-19, it shows that as part of this response, religion controls and regulates the state, which is the object of regulation. In its Fatwa on COVID-19, MUI strongly encourages the government to take a firm political stance; thus, religion shows its presence as a "strong actor" in the production and reproduction of regulations. Of course, our research will be very different from previous studies because it will only focus on the response of the Muslim community in Indonesia regarding the imposed lockdown.

## Method

This research is qualitative. Suwendra (2018) said that qualitative research describes and analyzes perceptions, beliefs, attitudes, social activities, events, phenomena, and thoughts individually or in groups. Using techniques such as interviewing, observing, and documenting. Then this study combines interview data collected when Indonesia re-implemented the Lockdown policy (PPKM) to find out how Muslim communities and their

leader respond when Indonesia re-imposes its lockdown policy (PPKM). This interview is designed to study the response of Muslim community religious leaders regarding the COVID-19 lockdown. The focus is on comparing the islands of Sumatra and Java because the policies (Levels) applied in each region are different, which then investigates how they respond to this lockdown policy. The interview process coincided with the restrictions imposed.

The selection of interview participants came from religious leaders in large mosques on the islands of Sumatra and Java. We contacted 21 major mosques in Sumatra and Java to participate in our interviews. All were contacted via Email and WhatsApp; on 27 September 2021, they were asked to participate in an interview, ten mosques did not answer, and eleven mosques agreed to participate. Our interview participants are anonymous, although there is still a risk of being identified because we interviewed religious leaders with representatives from important mosques on the islands of Sumatra and Java, although this is highly unlikely. And we need to say that each mosque only sends one representative.

Table 1

Interviewees Number	Date	Level Lockdown	Method Used
Interviewees 1	2021-10-04	Level 3	Whatsapp Video Call
Interviewees 2	2021-10-04	Level 3	Whatsapp Video Call
Interviewees 3	2021-10-04	Level 3	Whatsapp Video Call
Interviewees 4	2021-10-06	Level 3	Microsoft Teams
Interviewees 5	2021-10-06	Level 3	Microsoft Teams
Interviewees 6	2021-10-07	Level 3	Whatsapp Video Call
Interviewees 7	2021-10-08	Level 3	Whatsapp Video Call
Interviewees 8	2021-10-11	Level 3	Microsoft Teams
Interviewees 9	2021-10-11	Level 3	Microsoft Teams
Interviewees 10	2021-10-12	Level 3	Whatsapp Video Call
Interviewees 11	2021-10-15	Level 3	Microsoft Teams

## Findings and Discussion

Our current literature review identified two themes that helped us better understand their responses, experiences, and views on the re-imposition of this lockdown, namely mosque closures and changes in worship practices. Here we describe their reactions to both of them.

### Response of the Muslim Community in Indonesia to Changes in Worship Procedures

*“We are late in tackling COVID-19; we should have implemented a total lockdown. There is no need to be afraid about the economy. It is proven that several countries have succeeded in tackling COVID-19 with a total lockdown for only some time rather than continuously; even after nearly two years of pouring funds big for less effective policies, it is better to sacrifice significant funds for a full lockdown policy in just a few months even though the economy is temporarily down. However, I believe that if the spread is at 0%, then we will be able to rise again beyond some countries that still have to fight against COVID-19 with policies that are full of responsibility.” (Interviewees 7)*

The pandemic has had a profound impact on the psyche and health of individuals and nations universally. Naturally, many individuals, families, and communities have experienced shock, trauma, fear, existential anxiety, and grief (Pawar, 2020). In Indonesia, initially, with the number of victims infected with COVID-19 continuing to increase, the Government immediately responded by imposing a lockdown, restricting mass social activities, then implementing stringent health protocols (Syuhada et al., 2021). The first research in Indonesia of how the community is a reaction to COVID-19 show that in the early stages of the outbreak, it was clear that the Government's skepticism and hesitation, or even denial of a potential pandemic occurring in Indonesia, had an immediate impact and distanced the public from the perception of favorable risks to counteract pandemic. This is coupled with relatively low awareness and training about the pandemic, although some socialization has been facilitated, for example, by the Ministry of Health in the past (Djalante et al., 2020).

In response to this, the study of Roziqin et al. (2021) shows that several government policies are ineffective in reducing the number of COVID-19 cases. Because this type of policy is more top-down. The community becomes the target group of the procedure and is less acceptable to them. This means

that in the case of handling COVID-19 in Indonesia, the community can determine the success or failure of taking COVID-19. The policy crisis at the beginning of handling COVID-19 has caused public negligence. In addition, in responding to COVID-19, policymakers need to pay attention to the characteristics of the community and be involved in all stages of the policy to increase the level of acceptance in the community. Therefore, to maintain public trust, the government must carry out its duties in a timely and effective manner by adequately managing the demands of citizens (Hartanto & Siregar, 2021). And one of the policies that reap the pros and cons is the MUI fatwa Number 14 of 2020 regarding the implementation of worship during the covid-19 outbreak.

*“The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in many changes, including changes to the worship procedure in congregational prayers. However, this is excluded in the community at several mosques on the island of Sumatra. The continued activity of several mosques for congregational prayers proves the community's rejection of legal changes, both in the form of circulars of local government regulations and MUI fatwas. The function of law as a tool to change people's behaviour is not practical, so there is resistance to legal changes, and legal changes to the MUI fatwa do not necessarily change the behaviour of the people here in congregational prayers.” (Interview 9) This convinces us that the difference results from the changing situation caused by COVID-19. Still, most of the Muslim community in Sumatra does not fully comply with the regulation.*

“The procedure for maintaining distance in prayer is undoubtedly contrary to the Shari'a that the Prophet has recommended. There is no opinion of scholars in any book I read that allows space in worship. So there needs to be honesty by the congregation. For those who feel sick, it is enough to worship at home. However, it is still carried out according to Islamic law for the implementation of worship in the mosque. In the mosque, the worshipers have maintained their cleanliness and health. Especially before prayer, we have cleaned ourselves and maintained ablution. Regarding not carrying out religious activities at the mosque, in my opinion, it depends on the urgency and conditions in the area where the mosque is located. If it is in the red zone, then there is no problem not carrying out religious activities. Still, if it is in a relatively safe area, of course, the symbols of Islam in religious activities must be carried out. Keep going because broadcasting the religion of Allah is one of the musts as a Muslim. For this reason, there is a need for honesty and transparency of data related to the number of people exposed to COVID-19 in

each area by the government to be a fair reference in organizing religious activities of any religion in Indonesia.” (Interviewees 7)

The opinion above is almost the same as the Fatwa that the MUI has issued; in points 4 and 5, it has been said that "If he is in an area with a high or very high transmission potential based on the provisions of the authorities, he may leave Friday prayers. And replace it with the midday prayer at the residence, and leave the congregation for the five daily prayers/rawatib, Tarawih, and Eid in the mosque or other public places. And if he is in an area with low transmission potential based on the provisions of the competent authority, he is still obliged to do so. carry out worship obligations as usual and must take care of themselves so as not to be exposed to the Coronavirus, such as not direct physical contact (shaking, hugging, kissing hands), bringing your prayer rug, and frequently washing hands with soap."

However, it cannot immediately implement the MUI Fatwa provisions above. Prayer services carried out by some Muslim communities in Indonesia in the congregation are in the spotlight. They sometimes become a subject of debate during the Covid-19 pandemic, especially Friday prayers and the five daily prayers. The worship guidance related to the prayer ritual teaches that its implementation is carried out in the congregation. On the other hand, to prevent the spread of the Covid-19 outbreak, which is increasingly widespread, all people are encouraged to maintain physical distance and avoid large crowds. And prayer is an activity that can cause large groups if it is done in the congregation (Nurhayati & Nasution, 2020).

The paradoxical situation and condition between the demands for preventing the spread of Covid-19 on the one hand and the guidance of congregational prayers, on the other hand, is a severe challenge for the stakeholders. Therefore, religious leaders and organizations, such as MUI, NU, and Muhammadiyah, also participate according to their capacity to provide enlightenment to the public regarding the implementation of worship during the pandemic (Zaenurrosyid et al., 2021).

Prayers at home are considered "less complete" than mosques' congregational prayers. Satisfaction with worship in the congregation has an impact on three typologies of community arguments during the pandemic, including: 1) Congregational prayer becomes a routine so hard to leave; 2) Ignoring the prohibition for congregational prayers in the mosque; 3) Choose a mosque that performs prayers according to health protocols (Interviewees

11). Can conclude that the Muslim community in Indonesia themselves is very dynamic in responding to problems of worship and other religious activities during the Covid-19 pandemic. Social dynamics in the situation of worship can be grouped into three types: first, the model of worship in an emergency. Obedient and obedient people carry out this model of devotion to the appeal of the government and religious organizations by avoiding worship activities that can cause crowds. Therefore, during a specific period, this community group abolishes Friday prayers and replaces them with dhuhur and congregational prayers in their respective homes. It temporarily stops all social, religious and social activities. Second, the worship model adapts to new habits. This model of worship is carried out by community groups who continue to hold Friday prayers, five daily prayers in congregation in mosques, and religious and social activities but adhere to strict health protocols. Third, the worship model as usual. This worship model is carried out by community groups who do not care about the pandemic and ignore health protocols in worship and other religious activities. This last group wants this change in worship procedures to be reviewed.

### **Response of the Muslim Community in Indonesia to the Mass Closure of Mosques**

We describe where religious leaders in Indonesia discussed the reassessment of mosque closures and changes in worship practices. From a spiritual perspective, these mosque closure measures affect almost all Islamic ritual acts, particularly congregational prayers and other worship activities, regardless of the concentration on the impact of the pandemic on prayer rituals (Shabana, 2021).

*“It would be nice not to recommend not carrying out activities at the mosque. If they comply with the health protocols, it is enough for them to prevent the spread of COVID-19.” (Interviewees 3).*

*“I think this policy has its pros and cons. The good thing is to reduce the transmission rate of COVID-19, but the bad thing is that the mosque is deserted, recitation activities and assemblies are canceled; of course, this is one of the causes of the decline in the Muslim spirit in worship.” (Interviewees 9).*

*“Good, although it is somewhat disturbing, returning to the goal is that in our lives, there is an obligation to take care of ourselves and not harm others as long as we take care not to get infected and those who are*



*affected do not transmit the current disease due to the nature of their indifference to the MUI's appeal." (Interviewees 9).*

In Indonesia, during the second lockdown, we have witnessed an unprecedented impact on Muslims, including the closure of mosques and madrasas, the absence of Friday prayers, and others. Religious leaders have played an essential role in translating theological rules into practical guidelines, most of which have been embraced in the Muslim community. One of them is the Majelis Tarjih Muhammadiyah which issued a religious fatwa regarding procedures for worship during the COVID-19 pandemic. This religious fatwa is Muhammadiyah's response to prevent the transmission of COVID-19 in places of worship (mosques). Many religious rituals involve crowds of people in Islam that usually require handshakes and other physical contacts, such as the five daily prayers, *tabligh Akbar*, Friday prayers, and funeral prayers (Suyadi et al., 2020). The Fatwa Commission of the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) has also issued Fatwa Number 14 of 2020. The fatwa explains the implementation of worship in the COVID-19 pandemic to ensure safety and prevent the spread of disease among Muslims (Djalante et al., 2020). Therefore, this religious fatwa of Muhammadiyah Ulama and the Indonesian Ulema Council should affect the closure of many mosques in Indonesia (Suyadi et al., 2020).

Regarding the closure of mosques in Indonesia during the lockdown, (Interviewee 9) responded, "I am very concerned. I wonder why only schools/universities and places of worship are closed during the lockdown, while shopping, entertainment, and tourism are still open."

We observe that this is a crisis related to the lockdown. In that case, it is very unfair considering the closure of mosques, but offices, markets, airports, and public transportation can still operate even up to 70% capacity (Nachrawi et al., 2021). Because, although restrictions on worship activities cause crowds, mosques can still be used for congregational worship on a limited basis (Nurfauzi, 2021).

Almost all of the informants agreed that closing the mosque was not an acceptable and even disturbing policy. They even firmly believe that in prayer, by doing ablution before carrying out worship activities, it is enough that we are clean. Then also, if we continue to comply with health protocols, it is enough to suppress the spread of COVID-19.

However, the history of mass religious gatherings would, of course, pose a significant public health risk in the context of the potential spread of COVID-19 (Mubarak & Zin, 2020). This certainly raises concerns, as stated by Ismail et al. (2020), that in worship: "Traditions such as shaking hands, touching the Koran, and using prayer mats, for example, can put people at risk of contracting COVID-19. But in the UK, despite the lockdown, more than 500 mosques under the leadership of the leading National Council of Ulama "Wifaqul Ulama" have signed a letter addressed to Prime Minister Boris Johnson requesting that congregational prayers in mosques be allowed to continue during the lockdown (Al-Astewani, 2021).

In the context of making regulations, religion acts as the subject of regulation maker and control. Regus (2021), in his study, found unique conditions that were different from the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as the emergence of dynamics in the relationship between religion and the state in regulating religion. Therefore, the study shows that dynamics and tensions have also colored the process of religious regulation in Indonesia during the pandemic, which sparked a fierce debate among the community and Muslim community leaders in Indonesia on the controversial and sensitive topic of mosque closures (Al-Astewani, 2021).

Then one informant was also worried about the procedure for keeping a distance in worship, arguing that prayers must be carried out according to the Shari'a. However, there must be honesty from the congregation when the body is sick, if not to go to the mosque first. To support this opinion, there is a hadith of the Prophet that talks about straightening and tightening the prayer rows, Imam Nawawi in *Riyadhus Sholihin* talks about fifteen hadiths in the chapter title *The Virtue of the First Row and Commands to Perfect the First Row, Straighten and Close it*, one of which is contained in the Hadith. Second: "Anas RA said, Rasulullah SAW said, "Straighten your rows because straight rows include the perfection of prayer" (Narrated by Bukhari and Muslim).

So it is clear that most informants think that closing the mosque is not the right solution. Although, the number of infections continues to increase. They also don't care about the slanted news on social media that continues to broadcast about the increasing transmission of the virus. This means that their level of anxiety has also decreased, very different from what happened in the early pandemic period in March-June 2020. Because, as time goes on, people will realize by themselves that the most widely distributed content so far is misleading, fake content, and inappropriate content. In addition,

personal opinions are also the most common source of COVID-19 misinformation in the early period of the pandemic (Yustitia & Ashrianto, 2020). Therefore, the government must strictly control media and social networks (Torales et al., 2020).

Then responding to the psychosocial burden, Megatsari et al. (2020) analyzed the level of public anxiety (psychosocial burden) during the COVID-19 pandemic in Indonesia. The results of his study showed that someone older experienced less stress. The age group of 20-29 years has 4,330 times the chance of experiencing higher anxiety than the age group of 50 years. At the same time, the 40-49-year-old group has a 2,322 times higher chance of experiencing anxiety than the 50-year-old group. Male respondents have a lower probability of experiencing moderate to high pressure than women. Respondents with secondary and subordinate education have 3,117 times more likely to experience higher anxiety than respondents with higher education levels. The same result was also found by Elvira et al. (2021) that among 1,205 women and 824 men, their findings show that male gender, age in the 15-24 year range, and having a bachelor's degree or professional qualification have a strong relationship with psychological distress during a pandemic.

The closure of mosques is another essential signal or sign of the seriousness of the virus, which the government has identified as important. Therefore, the government decided to close it (Hassan et al., 2021). However, (Interviewees 3) said: "A person's faith will be affected if he does not worship in the mosque because the mosque is a place of worship that is very glorified and can have a very significant positive impact on our faith."

*"Yes, it will affect faith because if the rules applied are not in line with the rules of the Shari'a. Especially for the rules of the Shari'a, which are mandatory and absolute. However, some laws that are sunnah, let alone permissible, may be tolerated depending on the situation and condition in the area related to COVID-19" (Interviewees 7). "Yes, because the mosque is a place of worship (the house of Allah), the place for assemblies of knowledge (the gardens of heaven)" (Interviewees 8). "Therefore, it will be essential to heed and prosper the mosque, because when in the mosque the heart feels peaceful and comfortable when in the mosque." (Interviewees 11) "I am not affected, but it cannot be denied that if for a long time the mosque is closed and cannot carry out worship there, of course, this is a different reason for the decline in the spirit of Muslims in prayer, especially those whose prayers are "still hollow," because if a person's status is of course still at this stage, he will feel lazy when performing prayers." (Interviewees 9)*

Participants described how they interpreted these changes concerning their beliefs, and as such, they did not feel they were making unacceptable compromises, which might have affected their compliance. That is, obedience in prayer is the essential thing that must be done by a Muslim, especially for those whose faith is in decline. Therefore, regardless of the ups and downs of one's faith, *istiqamah* in worship will be very important to maintain consistency in prayer. To confirm this, Dahlan et al. (2020), in their empirical study, found that during the COVID-19 outbreak, the congregation in Bengkulu, Indonesia had high consistency in maintaining personal safety in carrying out mosque worship. The main factor is because the pilgrims have a deep awareness of carrying out Islamic religious orders.

However, the informants also explained that praying at the mosque could still be temporarily suspended, depending on the conditions in each region. The next question that the researcher asks is whether the pandemic can be considered a valid and justifiable reason not to worship at the mosque?

*"It's legal, as long as the area is by very critical and severe conditions in the spread of COVID-19 (black zone) (Interviewees 10 and 11). It can be considered true if somewhere the virus has spread (Interviewees 2). Yes, for personal safety, because in the past there was also a kind of plague that occurred at the time of the Prophet, the Messenger of Allah ordered not to come to places affected by the plague (Interviewees 5). Including a valid reason because preventing harm is prioritized over bringing benefit (Interviewees 3). It could be because we only understand the global pandemic that is hitting the earth, and we don't know whether behind the fatwa there are other hidden intentions such as politics" (Interviewees 9).*

Six informants firmly ensured that the pandemic could be considered a valid and justifiable reason not to worship at the mosque by referring to areas in the red zone or even the black zone; this could be used as a valid reason. Because preventing harm is more important than bringing benefit. This is the actual rule in the *fiqh* guide (Abd Razak, 2019). Then in line with what Imam Izzuddin Abdul Aziz bin Abdul Salam, a well-known Islamic scholar from the Imam Ash-Shafi'i school, who specializes in *Fiqh*, *Usul Al-Fiqh*, *Tafsir*, and Arabic literary studies said, argued that all Sharia principles and teachings are *maslahah* because they operate based on *Al-Amar Bil-Ma'ruf Wa-Nahi 'Anil Munkar* (Ishak, 2019). Therefore, most of the fatwas and statements issued in connection with the Coronavirus outbreak are concentrated on its impact on the implementation of congregational prayers in mosques. Since one of the main objectives of Sharia is to protect life, the fatwa emphasizes that all

necessary precautions to achieve this goal must be taken. Under these circumstances, Friday prayers and congregational prayers can be postponed to limit the spread of the disease. In support of this view, the statement cites two Hadith of the Prophet, which indicate that Friday prayers and congregational prayers can be postponed for specific reasons. The first hadith deals with circumstances in which going to the mosque become difficult or highly uncomfortable, such as situations involving heavy rain, illness, or concerns over one's safety, property, or family. The second hadith indicates that one should not attend congregational prayers if his presence harms others or becomes a source of discomfort, as is understood from reports suggesting that one should not participate in congregational prayers in the mosque after eating certain foods (Shabana, 2021).

Furthermore, in commenting on what has been said (Informant 9), there is a political element behind the fatwa. Indeed, the dynamics of the role of the Indonesian Ulema Council cannot be separated from the dynamics that occur in the life of the nation and state. Changes in the situation and conditions amid the life of the Indonesian people significantly affect the consideration of the fatwa that must be issued. The socio-political situation of Indonesia also has a significant influence on the style and strategy of the MUI in carrying out its duties as a protector of the people (Muzakki, 2021). Widigdo & Hamid (2018), in their study of the MUI fatwa controversy, said that it is true the fatwa MUI has social and political implications. However, it should be widely known that a fatwa is not an ordinary statement from a typical child but is the decision of a learned and respected scholar who has religious authority. As a result, the implications and efficacy of fatwas become dominant in influencing polemics in society and even some acts of violence in the Islamic community. Therefore, despite its unique adherents and counter-productive responses in this time of the pandemic, religious fatwas should be seen as a solution and not a problem (Djalante et al., 2020).

Five other informants said that the pandemic cannot be considered a valid and unjustifiable reason not to worship at the mosque but still return to the zone in the area.

*"It's not allowed to make excuses. Because prayer is still obligatory, although differently according to the situation and conditions (Interviewees 4). No, depending on the place and region, if the area is included in the red zone category, it is better not to worship at the mosque (Interviewees 6). Not for people in a safe zone, have kept their bodies clean*

*and healthy, especially for obligatory prayers, that is why every citizen must be honest about their body health; there is no need to force themselves when they are sick (Interviewees 7). No, the reward for praying at the mosque is 27 degrees. The congregation who come to the mosque are holy people; the intention of the mosque is only to worship, we pray in the mosque for only 10-15 minutes, not all day." (Interviewees 8).*

Nevertheless (Interviewees 7) said: "There is also a need for honesty and transparency in collecting data on residents exposed to COVID-19 in various regions". Therefore, it becomes very important, and in response to this Hyung-Ju et al. (2020) reported that in South Korea, there was a delay regarding the reporting of data on people infected with COVID-19, so the result of this delay may have contributed to the occurrence of many COVID-19 cases in the country.

Then one informant stated that this still could not be considered a valid reason. Because even though the place is in the red zone, our intention to go to the mosque is to worship, people who come to the mosque are also in a holy and clean condition, besides praying in addition to carrying out strict health protocols, worshipping at the mosque is also done briefly, not all day. And a crucial point in performing prayers in the mosque is to get 27 degrees of reward. This is following the hadith of Nafi' from Abdullah bin Umar that the Messenger of Allah said: "Prayer in congregation is greater than praying alone by 27 degrees" (Narrated by Imam Bukhari). In addition to being worth a reward of 27 degrees greater, congregational prayer can also be a way of forgiveness of sins for someone (Johari et al., 2013). More on health protocols in worship, Ramayanti et al. (2021), in their study of COVID-19 health protocols and religious activities related to knowledge, attitudes, and compliance, that (53.7%) worshipers have good knowledge, while (51%) have good perspectives. The results showed a relationship between knowledge and attitude of gene Z with adherence to the use of masks, keeping distance, and washing hands.

With knowledge, attitude, and absolute compliance with the provisions of the health protocol, causing all informants to agree not to worry about being infected with COVID-19 when carrying out worship at the mosque, they said:

*"I'm not too worried because in worship I strictly adhere to health protocols and in several places, we have implemented health protocols well, and we also go to the mosque in a state of ablution (clean)" (Interviewees 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 10, 11). "Therefore, the possibility of being*

*exposed to COVID-19 is also minimal, especially since our intention to go to the mosque is to worship Allah SWT, the creator of all creatures" (Interviewees 9). "Then when I have tried to maintain personal hygiene, use masks, vaccinate and maintain physical health. Everything returns to Allah, so for self-protection, apart from trying, of course, one must also ask Allah through worship to carry out His Shari'a. If I have tried, and have prayed to Him but still get COVID-19, then I don't need to be upset. I have to keep trying to recover and surrender with Allah's decree" (Interviewees 7)*

This attitude is known as *tawakkal*, *tawakkal* is an emotional religious commitment and a consciously held religious discipline. Moreover, whenever we face any situation, we do as much as possible to change it (Huda et al., 2019). As emphasized in the Qur'an, "Verily Allah will not change the condition of a people until they change the condition of themselves" (Surah Ar Ra'd: 11). Therefore, whatever the situation, we must do our part and leave the results to God. Simply put, when facing a difficult situation, we should remember God at all times and seek His support. By placing our trust in God, we are sure that whatever He has set for us is the best, even though it turns out to be the opposite of what we expect. As a result, we must be content with Allah's decrees and accept that whatever is decreed is best for us, even if the benefits are not visible. This *tawakkal* encourages us to depend on God (Huda et al., 2019).

## **Conclusion**

With the re-enactment of the lockdown (PPKM), the policy is prohibited from carrying out religious activities. These regulations were deemed too burdensome for them; they affirmed conclusively that the closing of mosques and changes in worship procedures should be reviewed. This is based on differences of opinion between them. The group that agrees believes that what is determined by the MUI must be found to benefit the people. The group who disagreed thought that the recommendation not to carry out a series of congregational prayers in the mosque or not to perform Friday prayers was considered an inappropriate decision and action. So that when the authorities then follow the fatwa in the form of a policy or specific rules to keep a distance and not carry out worship that has the potential to create crowds, some people still refuse or insist on opposing the policy. However, we must address that this difference of opinion also refers to the Qur'an and hadith, so that referring to one of these opinions is still permissible. Then to

respond to this, the author would like to provide input to the MUI to provide an alternative fatwa for people who still want to perform Friday prayers by using the qoul-qoul ulama scattered in fiqh books of hadiths that allow Friday prayers to be carried out even though it is less than 40 people, even four people, five people and so on.

This is one of the first studies to explore with members of the Muslim community in Indonesia about their responses and experiences with COVID-19 and the re-lockdown. This is a study of understanding and response. Our research adds an opportunity to explore other influences, such as cultural practices, economic issues, structural aspects of the environment, and more in a broader description of responses, experiences, beliefs, and views.

This study only presents a limited understanding of the specifics of experience and how their experiences and responses relate to COVID-19. Focusing on faith as an aspect of self-identity shaped their knowledge and response to the pandemic and the re-imposed lockdowns.

We can only describe the experiences and responses of those who wished to take part in the research. As a result, our study results may not represent all sections of the Muslim community, being an opportunistic sample recruited by word of mouth, links to community leaders, and social media. Apart from the various obstacles encountered in the data collection process. We believe the barriers to research participation were partly due to a lack of familiarity with informants or trust in research as a process. Therefore, further research is essential to capture different experiences involving more informants. Given that this study was conducted in the period of the second wave of the pandemic, public experiences and responses to the risks associated with the spread of the virus in religious activities may have shifted over time.

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