



## Changes in Catholic Communication Behaviour in the Post-Covid Era

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### ABSTRACT

This study aims to see changes in the Communication behavior of Catholics in new normal times as a result of online worship that was done when the covid outbreak occurred. Reference data taken sourced from Catholic church documents obtained by the researcher. The theory used as the foundation is the theory used in this research is S-O-R theory. This research uses Cresswell's perspective case study method. The cases obtained show the direction of the research results. The results showed that there were changes in the subjective Communication, collective Communication and liturgical Communication that occurred as a result of online worship that had been done. Based on the discussion in this study about changes in the behavior of Catholics in the new normal as the impact of online worship, the results obtained are that: First, there is a change in subjective or individualistic Communication behavior caused by online worship habits. The main reason is because by worshipping online the community has been accustomed to continuously staring at digital screens in a free state without any mental preparation. This is different from when carrying out worship as usual in the church which requires good mental preparation. Second, there is a change in collective Communication behavior caused by environmental influences which regard online worship as a new trend in the worship tradition. Changes in behavior that can result from environmental influences that regard online worship as a trend are the occurrence of a collective agreement that online worship is commonplace both among Catholics and other religious communities. Third, there are indications of changes in the liturgy Communication in terms of attitudes and worship procedures.

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## INTRODUCTION

The new normal or new normal has become a sign that the corona virus outbreak will end soon. So far, many changes in people's lives have been 'forced' to change in order to adapt to the emergency situation of this epidemic. These changes include in the field of education such as learning methods that now use online methods as a face-to-face instrument between teachers and students, the shift of buying and selling transactions to being completely online in the marketing business aspect and several other aspects. As for one aspect that also changes and cannot be separated from our observations is the aspect of religion or religiosity. In terms of worship, now religious people in this country have turned to virtual worship using live streaming. Even in predicting changes after this pandemic period, people will get used to virtual worship and these activities will also be identical to the new normal. According to infographic data from [katadata.co.id](http://katadata.co.id), for the Indonesian people themselves, there are several activities that are planned to be carried out after the end of this outbreak. According to data, 20.8% of the people have plans to express gratitude to God for the end of this epidemic. This percentage beats the number of people who want to carry out their activities as usual, namely 19.9%, the desire to travel or vacation with 15%, restore the family economy 2.2% and worship in places of worship with 3.2%. As seen in the infographic below:

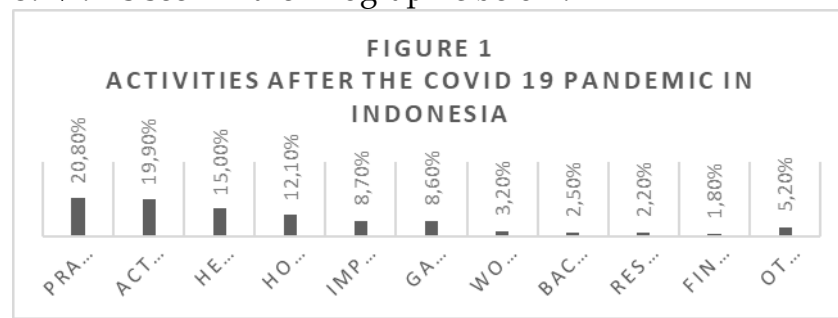


Figure 1. Activities after the Covid 19 Pandemic ini Indonesia

The thing highlighted from the data above is that the percentage of people who will be grateful to God after this pandemic is greater than people who will worship in places of worship with a ratio of 20.8% and 3.2%. This comparison shows that there is a concrete indication of expressing gratitude to God in the form of continuing virtual worship to replace worship in places of worship. Because if you want to thank God by worshipping in a place of worship, then this data will not be separated by different types of percentages.

Each religion certainly has an interpretation in the form of their respective teachings in relation to the development of communication and information technology as a condition or environment in which these religions now exist. The implementation of virtual worship as a form of expressing gratitude to God for the end of the corona outbreak, of course, intersects with the digital aspect, because the media used for virtual worship are gadgets such as computers and smartphones which are also a set of technologies for communicating and exchanging information. In the perspective of the teachings of the Catholic Church, as contained in the Document of the Catholic Church *Christus Vivit*, it is written that the view of the digital world is that:

“The digital world is a context for socio-political participation and active citizenship, and can facilitate the dissemination of independent information capable of effectively protecting the most vulnerable people, by exposing violations of their rights. In many countries, the web and social networks have become indispensable places to reach and involve young people, as well as in pastoral initiatives and activities”.

Here, it can be seen that there is support from the perspective of the Catholic Church for Catholics in utilizing the positive things that can be obtained from various media and technologies that are reflected in digitalization for the benefit of reaching young people and also in pastoral activities. In addition, from the perspective of a scholar and clergyman of the Catholic Church named Reymond Pandapotan Sianturi, it was explained that:

“Service work in a virtual context that is a symbol of a communication culture that is coated with internet media technology, both as self-expression and self-designation in the digital era and as a sign of the church’s concern for the “Anxiety” of digital society”.

From this perspective, it can be seen how the digital world and its devices have become increasingly familiar with aspects of service work which are the driving force for creativity and innovation in developing ministry work, of course, by following the rules and norms that are agreed upon in the church. This study will look at how changes in behaviour occur in Catholics and in what aspects these changes occur. Virtual worship certainly has various impacts on society, especially for Catholics. The impact of this virtual worship was carried over to the new normal period after the corona outbreak. The focus and purpose of this research is to see changes in behaviour that occur in Catholics during the new normal period as a result of virtual worship that has been carried out since the emergence of the protocol for prohibiting gatherings due to the corona outbreak.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

In this study the model used is the S-O-R (Stimulus, Organism, Response) model. S-O-R theory stands for Stimulus-Organism Response from Hosland, Janis, & Kelley in 1953. The material object is a human whose soul includes components; attitude, opinion, behaviour, cognition, affection and conation. According to this model, the organism produces a certain behaviour, if there are certain stimulus conditions, the effect is a special reaction to a special stimulus, so one can expect and estimate the suitability between the message and the communicant's reaction. The basic assumption of this model is that the mass media has a directed, immediate and direct effect on the communicant. This S-O-R model shows that communication is an action-reaction process. This means that this model assumes that verbal words, non-verbal cues, certain symbols will stimulate other people to respond in a certain way (Effendy, 2015).

This S-O-R pattern can take place positively or negatively, for example if someone smiles, they will smile in return this is a positive reaction, but if a smile is returned with their face turned away, then this is a negative reaction. So, the elements of this model are (Hosland et al., in Effendy, 2015): 1. Message (Stimulus, S), 2. Communicate (Organism, O), 3. Effect (Response, R). In the process of changing attitudes, it appears that attitudes can change only if the stimulus that hits them exceeds the original. Prof. Dr. Mar'at in his book "Human Attitude, Change and Measurement", cites the opinion of Hovland, Janis, & Kelley which states that in examining new attitudes there are three important variables, namely attention, understanding and acceptance. The response or change in attitude depends on the process of the individual. The stimulus which is the message conveyed to the communicant can be accepted or rejected, the communication that occurs can work if the communicant pays attention to the stimulus conveyed to him. Until the process of the communicant thinks about it so that understanding and acceptance arises or maybe vice versa. Attitude changes can occur in the form of cognitive, affective or behavioral changes. The linkages of the S-O-R model in this study are (Effendy, 2015):

1. The stimulus in question is the message conveyed.
2. The organization in question is employees.
3. The response in question is the effect of communication.

Hosland et al., (Suhariyanto, 2010) said that the process of changing behaviour is essentially the same as the learning process. The process of changing behaviour describes the learning process in individuals consisting of:

- Stimulus (stimulus) given to the organism can be accepted or rejected. If the stimulus is not accepted or rejected, it means that the stimulus is not effective in influencing the individual's attention and stops here, but if the stimulus is received by the organism, it means that there is attention from the individual and the stimulus is effective.
- If the stimulus has received the attention of the organism (received) then someone understands this stimulus is continued to the next process.
- After that the organism processes the stimulus so that there is a willingness to act for the stimulus it has received (behave).
- Finally, with the support of facilities and encouragement from the environment, the stimulus has an effect on the action of the individual (behaviour change).

Furthermore, this theory says that behaviour can change only if the stimulus (stimulus) given actually exceeds the original stimulus. Stimulus that can exceed the original stimulus means that the stimulus given must be able to convince the organism, the reinforcement factor plays an important role. The stimulus or message conveyed to the communicant may be accepted or may be rejected. Communication will take place if there is attention from the communicant. The next process the communicant understands. This communicative ability continues the next process. After the communicant

processes it and accepts it, then there is a willingness to change attitudes. This theory is based on the assumption that the cause of behaviour change depends on the quality of the stimulus that communicates with the organism. This means that the quality of communication sources (sources), for example credibility, leadership, style of speech determines the success of changing the behaviour of a person, group or community (Hosland et al., in Wowor, 2013).

## **METHODOLOGY**

This study uses qualitative research methods using a case study approach, which according to Cresswell. The case study as meant by Cresswell is a research strategy in which the researcher carefully investigates a program, event, activity, process, or group of individuals. In this study, researchers will carefully investigate changes in the behavior of the Catholic community during the new normal period as a result of online worship.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

### **Catholic Church View**

Basically, when talking about changes in the behaviour of Catholics in the new normal period, which are caused by online worship activities, it is inseparable from the Catholic Church's own views on digitalization and the development of information communication technology. The Catholic Church itself in one of its characteristics, namely 'one' among other characteristics, namely holy and apostolic, has the meaning that the catholic church is in one leadership that overshadows the church as a whole. The shade of the church leadership or commonly referred to as the head of the Church led by the Pope. Therefore, taking the view of the church is the same as taking the view of the Pope as the leader of the Catholic Church. In addition to the views given by the Pope, the Catholic Church itself has what is called the Magisterium of the Church or what is also known as the Teaching Power of the Church. This of course refers to the church authorities in matters of teaching church teachings whose task is to interpret the truths of the church's faith. Therefore, in this study, especially in the view of the catholic church, the researchers did not respond directly to represent the church's teachings regarding online worship, but the researchers cited several church documents related to digitalization and the development of information technology. This is important because it has closeness and causality to the development of the church during the pandemic to the new normal which is all related to this.

The Catholic Church has taken a positive approach to the internet and cyberspace. Quoting Pope Pius XII in the encyclical *Miranda Prorsus* (1957), Pope Paul VI wrote in his Pastoral Instruction on social communication *Communio et Progression* that "the Church sees the media, which, according to her will, unites people in fraternity and helps them work together. with His plan of salvation for mankind. The Church views that the virtual world finds its starting point in the communion of love of the Triune God, which reaches humans through the event of the Incarnation.

Pope Francis also said the same thing. In his message on the 48th day of Social Communications (2014), Pope Francis stated, "The digital world can be an environment rich in humanity; a network is not a string of wires, but a connection of people. Only people who go out of their way in communication can be a true point of reference for others. Keeping the doors of churches open also means keeping them open in a digital environment, so that people, whatever their circumstances in life, can enter, and thus the gospel can go out to meet everyone. We are called to show that the Church is everyone's home.

From the view of the church documents and the response of the pope as the supreme leader of the Catholic Church, a common thread can be drawn that the Catholic Church is actually very open to what is called digitalization and the development of information communication technology. However, the thing that is emphasized here is how the relationship between human beings can be well established in a preaching tone. The Catholic Church also sees that communication and information media actually work together with the Catholic Church's goal of proclaiming salvation for all human beings wherever they are. In relation to online worship, the meaning of 'unifying' has been emphasized. However, the changes that arise from its use are also inevitable because humans are not only creatures of faith, but also have a social side which of course is dynamic or continues to move and develop. The question is whether with the changes that will occur, the Catholic community will continue to interpret what is referred to as "Unifying" or will it shift according to the impact of this digitalization.

### **Subjective Communication Behaviour Change**

Based on the Indonesian government's decision to reduce the number of patients exposed to the corona, by prohibiting direct interaction between people in various places, of course it has an impact on the religious life of Catholics. The coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic has caused the Catholic Church to decide to hold Mass online or through a live video broadcast on YouTube. This online mass is a way to support the government's efforts to prohibit gatherings and keep a distance from other people, in order to prevent the spread of Covid-19.

But what happened after this pandemic ended, in this case, was during the new normal period, of course something changed with regard to the participation of religious people. Online worship as it is known has an impact. The positive impact is that people who are also religious people can avoid direct interactions that might accelerate transmission from one infected person to another when carrying out religious activities in the same room. The negative impact is that religious people will lose the form of direct participation in worship which has made the atmosphere in the church meaningful.

Changes in people's participation behaviour, which in this case subjective changes can be seen in the facts in several regions in Indonesia. One of these areas is East Nusa Tenggara, where due to the corona outbreak, at Easter celebrations a few weeks ago, Catholics were encouraged to worship from their homes and listen to the news via radio [15]. Here the participation of the people seems to have changed from a direct sense of togetherness to being very limited. This limitation for some individuals who have high inner

appreciation may not feel a difference, but for other individuals who need togetherness in person, online worship will feel a little different.

In an atmosphere of togetherness in the church, there is actually a participation that is more than just watching something like shows, news, or entertainment. The participation of Catholics when worshipping in the church cannot be equated with the participation that occurs during online worship. The benchmark for the difference between the two is the form of individual participation of the people. The form of individual participation can be seen the difference with the form of direct participation because staring at a cellophane or computer screen in online worship is not the same as looking at each other between the priest as a worship leader and the people present. This difference will be felt by each Catholic depending on how they interpret the worship that takes place; whether just looking at or watching what is going on, or looking with a deeper meaning.

Changes in the behaviour of Catholic community participation in worship caused by online worship habits during the COVID-19 pandemic can occur and continue even during the new normal period. The main reason is because by worshipping online the community has been accustomed to continuously staring at digital screens in a free state without any mental preparation. This is different from when carrying out worship as usual in the church which requires good mental preparation. Actually, this change depends on each individual or is subjective in line with Weber's view in his theory of behaviour change.

### **Collective Communication Behaviour Change**

In contrast to subjective behaviour change as described by Max Weber, behaviour change in this section is more the influence of environmental factors. Online worship carried out by the Catholic community during the pandemic has become a separate trend among the community. Online worship services are becoming a global trend, because citizens must stay at home under new rules in various countries to prevent the spread of the new corona virus. Worship services in these churches are broadcast live via the internet, and some are video recordings that can be watched and followed by members of the congregation in worship.

Changes in behaviour that can result from environmental influences that regard online worship as a trend are the occurrence of a collective agreement that online worship is commonplace both among Catholics and other religious communities. Online worship with all the conveniences that have been felt mixed with the general agreement of the community, will produce what is called approval. This is in line with what is in social psychology theory that environmental influences can form a mindset that supports a group's shared view of something. The impact that can be generated from an agreement on online worship as a trend is that even in normal times, these activities will continue among religious communities.

Changes in collective behaviour that exist and have an impact on the sustainability of online worship have been seen in one of the R & D survey results about the percentage of people who have an opinion agreeing to hold

online worship. From an online survey involving 2741 respondents from all over Indonesia, the majority of respondents (95.5%) agreed to the practice of online worship. The interesting thing is that the results of this survey are seen in the times when the new normal begins. Of course, with the large number of respondents and the percentage of existing approvals, it can be indicated that there will be a change in collective perspective that will allow online worship activities to continue even during the new normal period.

### **Changes in Liturgical Communication Behaviour**

The liturgy, which is a fully official public service in the Catholic Church, gives the Church its own uniqueness in presenting the face of God in the world. With the Liturgy, the Church affirms that God works through signs, enters into human limitations and allows Himself to be understood. Thus, the Liturgy is a translation of Christian theology of the Incarnation, a great step taken by God to enter human history and live among us. That is why the liturgy is a sacrament/sign of God's presence in the world according to Catholic belief.

Popularly, the liturgy is often understood as a public ceremony or ritual of the Church. What is meant here is that the liturgy is often only interpreted in general terms such as regarding the rites of worship, liturgical officers, prayer equipment, etc. This popular understanding gives nuance or emphasis on the role of humans in the liturgy. The liturgy is actually the work of God and man. Human work here is not an addition to God's work, but our participation or participation (Humans) in God's work of salvation. That's why then the liturgy is interpreted as the work of the Church which is the body of Christ with Christ as the Head of the Church (Beautiful Sacred Liturgy).

Through this understanding, it can be seen that what is related to the liturgy in the catholic church is about the theological understanding of the signs of salvation given by God to humans and also the procedures and equipment of worship in the rituals of catholic worship. This change in liturgy can occur as a result of online worship activities. Liturgical procedures that are usually carried out well according to church teachings when worshipping in church will change drastically differently when religious communities carry out worship from home or from the office. The situation at home when worshipping online can be different from the situation that occurs in the church as part of the liturgy from the point of view of attitude in worship. This change will occur during the new normal period as a result of online worship activities carried out during the covid outbreak crisis.

Evidence that strengthens the changes in the liturgy and some procedures for worship caused by online worship is when the blessing to the people after worship that has been carried out in the church directly from the priest to the people, is now changed through online blessing. Here, the changes that occur also depend on the appreciation of the people who receive the blessing. Meanwhile, other changes occur when people who usually worship with careful and neat preparation in dressing at church, now with online worship, any clothes can be worn and not all people have matured self-preparation both physically and mentally.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the discussion in this study about changes in the behaviour of Catholics in the new normal as the impact of online worship, the results obtained are that: First, there is a change in subjective or individualistic Communication behaviour caused by online worship habits. The main reason is because by worshipping online the community has been accustomed to continuously staring at digital screens in a free state without any mental preparation. This is different from when carrying out worship as usual in the church which requires good mental preparation. Second, there is a change in collective Communication behaviour caused by environmental influences which regard online worship as a new trend in the worship tradition. Changes in behaviour that can result from environmental influences that regard online worship as a trend are the occurrence of a collective agreement that online worship is commonplace both among Catholics and other religious communities. Third, there are indications of changes in the liturgy Communication in terms of attitudes and worship procedures.

## FURTHER STUDY

This research still has limitations so further research is still needed on this topic "Changes in Catholic Communication Behaviour in the Post-Covid Era".

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