

Using Google Trends to Analyze Keywords ‘Ibadah Online’ and ‘Gereja Online’ in Indonesia

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Abstract—There has not been any research to observe the trend of Christian users in Indonesia in searching for YouTube content in carrying out their spiritual activities during the pandemic era. This research uses the data from Google trends to observe the use of the phrases ‘ibadah online’ (online spiritual activities) and ‘gereja online’ (online church) in the spiritual content search in YouTube. By applying descriptive analysis, the conclusion can be drawn that the Christian users in Indonesia have already had digital awareness in spirituality and have exchanged the expressions ‘ibadah online’ and ‘gereja online’ for common interest. **Research Contribution:** This research is relevant to the concept of church digitization and the role of the church in the era of technological disruption that complements the discipline of Ecclesiology. The results also show the digital awareness of Christians in Indonesia.

Keywords—online church; online worship; google trends; Christianity; Indonesia

I. INTRODUCTION

In the period of time of six months from January 2021 to July 2021, Indonesia became one of the countries with the highest number of cases of people infected by COVID 19 in today’s world pandemic era. The WHO website informed that up to August 2021, the Government of Indonesia has reported to that world health organization that there have been cumulatively 3,532,567 people confirmed positive of COVID-19. The total death number reported is 100,636 people, while the total number of recovered people is 2,907,920 [1]. Whether the data are accurate or not, a number of countries

have forbidden their citizens to visit Indonesia and placed our country in the list of the high risk Covid-19 countries. The website of the United States Government, for instance, up to July 2021, still forbade the American citizens to visit Indonesia due to the worsened pandemic situation in our country [2].

The high number of COVID-19 transmission cases in Indonesia in a certain period of time is caused by a new variant from India whose transmission rate is very high and the community’s indiscipline in applying the health protocol particularly in the social interaction in public space, work environment, their home, cultural activities, and religious activities. To address the matter, the Indonesian government has issued the restriction policy by applying PPKM (*Pemberlakuan Pembatasan Kegiatan Masyarakat – Application of Community Activity Restriction*) [3]. One of the restrictions is to forbid the meetings and activities held in worship places. The church as the center of spiritual activities of Christian followers has decided to change the spiritual activity meetings from onsite to online. The church activity form is altered into a digital form and is introduced to the congregation through various internet-based digital medial platforms, such as YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, and others. There is no other option for the church but to change its various forms of services into online forms. The research conducted by Sopacoly & Lattu stated that online Christianity has become a necessity in the contemporary technological disruptive era placing the church in a narrow option [4]. Specifically in his research, Dwiraharjo recommended the

church to do restructuring in a digital form as the response toward the situation and demand of change [5]. Similarly, the research of Silitonga proposed that the spiritual activities centralized in the church buildings have to be shifted to be done at home during the pandemic era [6]. Widjaja et al. in the research on spiritual activities at home tend to support the presence of church at home as the adaptive theological form of contemporary church existence [7]. It can be seen from various research reports that either empirically or methodologically a specific study on online spiritual activities and online church using a trend approach has never been conducted. In this case, there are two research gaps that would like to be answered through this research, namely the theoretical gap on the trend research and the method gap through the use of Google Trends.

This research would like to see how the trend is in the Christianity in Indonesia on the implementation of online spiritual activities and online church to read the responses of the Christian followers on the policy of PPKM due to the worsened pandemic situation, on one hand, and the disruption in digitalization, on the other.

II. METHOD

The research was conducted by digging out the primary data provided by Google Trends by determining a number of inclusive criteria to read the data that have been produced and to see the trend as in the research of Choi [8]. The inclusive criteria are as follows: (a) the period of time from January 2021 to July 2021. The period of time was chosen because it shows the phenomenon of the increasing number of COVID 19 transmission cases in Indonesia leading to the policy of PPKM so that all church activities have shifted into online activities; (b) the web search selected is YouTube. The reason is its existence that is popular as the platform providing the spiritual activity video content and it can be accessed online, freely, and it has a streaming option; (c) the trend category is people and society in Indonesia. There are two keywords whose trends will be observed, namely 'ibadah online' and 'gereja online'. Both of these keywords have been chosen because both have a similarity and are often exchanged in terms of their use by the seekers of information on spiritual activities in YouTube for the same definition. The data produced in the form of the Google Trend graphs and the search disparity map in five big cities in Indonesia. The analysis was conducted with data description by providing theoretical explanation toward the phenomena found in the data as described by Zaluchu [9].

III. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

A. Research Results

By applying the inclusive criteria to Google Trend, the search results toward the phrases 'ibadah online' and 'gereja online' have been obtained in a form of graphs as can be seen in the figure below. The phrase 'Ibadah online' is marked with a red line, while the phrase 'gereja online' is marked with a blue line.

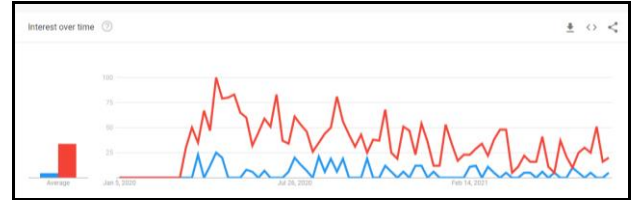


Figure 1. The Reading Result of Google Trend based on the Inclusive Criteria

Figure 1 shows that the rate of search using the keyword 'ibadah online' is higher and/or it is used more by the Christian users than the keyword 'gereja online'. Even though the trend shown by the search of the keyword 'ibadah online' in the period from January to June 2021 decreased, it remained constant in the last three months. The possibility is the Christian users have not had the pattern toward the content presented by YouTube. Similarly, the keyword 'gereja online' tended to be constant in the last three months, although its search position is lower than that of the keyword 'ibadah online'.

If we see from the distribution in 5 (five) big cities in Indonesia on those two keywords, there appears characteristic change. The figure below shows the distribution of the keyword search in 5 (five) big cities in Indonesia.

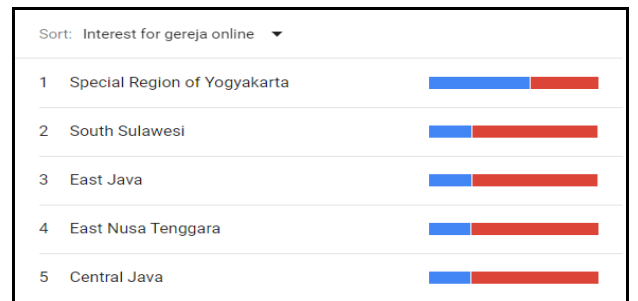


Figure 2. The distribution of interest users based on the keyword 'gereja online'

Figure 2 shows that D.I Yogyakarta has the most users using the keyword 'gereja online' (in blue color) compared with the keyword 'ibadah online' (in red color). The other four cities in the figure above show the characteristic of the Christian users mostly using the keyword 'ibadah online' (in red color) compared with the keyword 'gereja online' (in blue color), and they are users from South Sulawesi, East Java, East Nusa Tenggara, and Central Java.

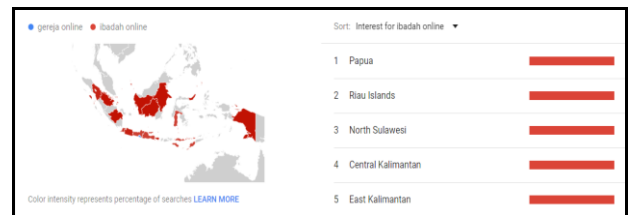


Figure 3. The distribution of interest users based on the keyword 'ibadah online'

Figure 3 shows the characteristic of Christian users using the keyword 'ibadah online'. Its distribution is in five big cities in Indonesia, which are Papua, the Riau Island, North Sulawesi, Central Kalimantan, and East Kalimantan. There is a different characteristic shown by the Christian users in those big cities in Indonesia. Figures 2 and 3 show that the use of the phrase 'ibadah online' is different from the use of the phrase 'gereja online' in the YouTube content search.

B. Discussion and Analysis

Referring to Figures 1, 2, and 3, we can see that the Christian users in Indonesia in the implementation of PPKM and in the response to the digital technological disruptive era use the term 'ibadah online' more than the term 'gereja online'. The term 'ibadah online' is considered more user-friendly for the majority of the Christian community in Indonesia. This can be explained by using the word-stock (vocabulary) approach of a language developing in a population. Altman stated that word-stock of a language is a complex dynamic system where the words can be made, developed, or even extinct. What is more dynamic is the short-term fluctuation in the use of words by individuals in a population [10]. Based on that, we can see that in the population of the Christian followers in Indonesia, the word 'ibadah' (spiritual activities) has been attached in the spiritual life and in spirituality so that it can be quickly connected with other concepts when in a population the empirical shifts occur based on a certain situation [11]. The vocabulary 'ibadah' all refers to spiritual activities conducted centrally in a church building. Nevertheless, along with the dynamic movement in the culture or social structure, the concept changes with the presence of online attributes. The fluctuation produces a new concept which is contrary to the previous concept so that it becomes more popular and is easily remembered. This is what causes the phrase 'ibadah online' to be attached in the mind of the Christian users as strongly as when the word 'ibadah' was understood as the contrast from a similar activity. The online spiritual activities (ibadah online) are finally understood as the conventional spiritual activities carried out online. In other words, the phrase popularity has encouraged the presence of the concept structure among the Christian followers in Indonesia.

Besides due to the presence of the concept structure, a word (an expression) becomes popular because it becomes a trend in a population. The more often the members of a population use an expression in the public space, the more increase significantly the expression use trend is. Richards et al. in their research on trends and understanding on vocabulary in the students in the middle to lower classees of French language show that students turned out to be able to make significant progress in the receptive and productive vocabulary [12]. If the research result is applied in this current study, then the expression 'ibadah online' can be concluded to have become a general expression that is receptive and productive

among the Christian community in Indonesia compared with the expression 'gereja online'.

Theologically, it can be explained that the church as part of Christ in the world is the gathering place of the believers who are summoned to go outside [13]. Its existence in the world normatively, besides bringing the world in the common good [14], also has the mission to establish the kingdom of God so that all over the world can be saved [15]. Based on the concept, there will be difficulties emerging in imagining a church carrying out its mission in its existence as the online church. That happens because the term *online* is not a characteristic explaining or following the existence of the church definitively. Online is the term referring to a system or a network involving internet [16]. According to Jun, the use of the term 'gereja online' refers more to how the church responds to digitalization and repositions itself through internet-based services [17]. This means only the implementation form that is changed. The essence and calling in the world remain the same [18]. If so, a question rises as why Indonesian users prefer to use the expression 'ibadah online' to the expression 'gereja online'?

Returning to the study conducted by Altman, the words and concepts are actually related dynamically in a population [10]. In this perspective, it can be seen that the Christian users in Indonesia have already had a new paradigm shifting from the conventional church concept that what is called by the church is a building that becomes the center for spiritual activities and the gathering place for believers. In that conventional paradigm, the physical presence becomes one of the important indicators to describe the church and all of its activities. Therefore, with the presence of the terminology 'gereja online' the church conceptual paradigm develops, and it is understood that the church is not only about the building and physical gathering [19]. The church form has experienced transformation into various digital platforms that have changed, expanded, or added new concepts in the Christian epistemology on the existence of the church. Such change is not an easy thing to do, particularly by the congregation that have grown in the conventional understanding on the concept of the church. However, disruption toward digitalization as referred to by Kasali [20] gives no option to everybody, including for anyone in the domain of spirituality and religion, but to adapt and follow the shift.

Even though there are two opposing differences between the term 'ibadah online' and the term 'gereja online' in the relation with the church epistemology concept, the use of the keyword 'ibadah online' refers more to the concept of doing spiritual activities related to the church, while the keyword 'gereja online' refers more to the church form [21]. In the first definition, doing spiritual activities related to the church leads to spiritual activities themselves, while the second definition refers more to the form of existence. Whether we realize it or not, the church cannot be seen in the dialectics of forms and activities [22]. Both of those are attached as the church characteristics in the world. Although the Christian followers

as the users use the terminology *'ibadah online'* or *'gereja online'*, actually the intention and goal remain the same. The use of these two terms for the same understanding is similar, namely that the church has experienced digital transformation. The different characteristics from the users accessing YouTube are possibly influenced by what they understand about the online concept from the life of doing spiritual activities related to the church during the pandemic era. In spite of it, it is seen that the different characteristics actually have a similar concept. In other words, the search of YouTube using the keywords *'ibadah online'* and *'gereja online'* has shown the digital-based religious awareness among the Christian followers in Indonesia.

IV. CONCLUSION

The church and its various forms of services, particularly in the implementation of spiritual activities, have experienced a shift significantly from a conventional form that is centralized and building-oriented to become an internet-based digital form. To reach out all followers online, various church services use YouTube as the platform providing online and streaming digital video content. Awareness toward the shift is seen from the behavior of the Christian users in Indonesia showing the pattern in doing the search of spiritual digital content, in this case the online spiritual activities, using two main keywords, namely *'ibadah online'* and *'gereja online'*. It is proven from the data shown by Google Trends the high number of the YouTube content search using those two keywords that can be alternatively exchanged for the same interest. This shows that there is awareness on the new paradigm of the church and on various forms of its services toward digitalization. The church is no longer viewed in a building form but viewed as its essence as the body of Christ in the world that can be connected online. This is a new truth in the Christian theology on the church in the 5.0 community era.

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