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# Massive Philanthropy as Marketing Competition in The New Normal Era During **Pandemic**

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Article Info	Abstract
Submit: 17 Sept 2020	This paper explains the philanthropic phenomenon that occurred in
Accepted: 28 Nov 2021	Indonesian people, especially the people of Cirebon City when the
<b>Publish:</b> 15 Des 2021	transmission of the covid-19 virus reached it's peak again in November 2020. Basically, the philanthropic movement in the Covid-19 pandemic era
Keywords:	emerged based on chaotic humanitarian attention and the uncertain
Philanthropy Movement;	economic stability of the country. This provides a stimulus to philanthropic
Humanity; Pandemic Era	activists to participate in social-humanitarian concerns and social-economic restoration. This type of research is qualitative with interview methods and
(cc) BY-SA Lisensi: cc-by-sa	online media documentation. This study concludes that the philanthropic movement should be based on humanitarian solidarity and religious normativity. However, several philanthropic activists in Cirebon City have used the opportunity of the COVID-19 pandemic moment as a personal economic recovery by using accurate marketing management wrapped in social philanthropy. This is a new motive that combines the humanitarian philanthropy movement with a marketing work system when COVID-19 as a natural disaster strikes with the aim of helping people as well as marketing their commodity products. The reason is that the demands for economic improvement during a pandemic require philanthropic activists to give and share as well as sell and promote.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Philanthropy is an important element in humanity (Lawrence | & Mark D, 2003In September 2020, the Indonesian Central Statistics Agency stated that the number of poor people in Indonesia increased by 10.19% compared to March 2020 which only increased by 0.97% or an increase of 27.55 million people from March 2020 which increased 1,13 million people. The increase in the number of poor people includes a 7.88% increase in the urban poor and a 13.20% increase in the rural poor for the month of September. Compared to March 2020, the urban poor increased by 7.38% and the rural population by 12.82%. (bps.go.id, 2021). The philanthropic movement became massive along with the emergence of the pandemic in Indonesia in March. One of the factors is the existence of information technology as an intermediary medium to encourage philanthropic activities. The invitation to philanthropy itself has been explained by religious texts with tantalizing rewards (Shihab, 2012). Religious texts sometimes have a significant impact on the true purpose of philanthropy which is not always categorized as piety through social media (Husein & Slama, 2018).

Several writings in philanthropic studies still discuss philanthropy as a religious normativity activity (Latief, 2010; Linge, 2015). The normative activity in question is to alleviate poverty caused by the structure of global capitalism which causes poverty disparities on a wide scale in the world (Baidhawy, 2009). One of the efforts and hopes made is channeling aid through philanthropic activities (Dijk & Holmén, 2017). Massive philanthropic actions show a state of economic disorganization. Already, philanthropic actions only discuss the concept of humanity and the spirit of religions, while philanthropic writing which is intended as a marketing target is a different perspective.

This paper specifically shows that the massive philanthropic activities during the pandemic are a strong humanitarian response (Warren F, 2006). Apart from humanitarian responses, philanthropic activities often occur as an economic empowerment for certain institutions to attract massive customers. This withdrawal of customers is carried out by distributing all basic necessities or cash to the poor (Golden & Garde, 2020). The neatly packaged distribution of philanthropic activists wants to give the impression that these philanthropic activists are purely based on the spirit of religion and humanity. This strategy is a form of marketing (Gielen & steenkamp, 2019) with digital media as a legitimate intermediary (Kwak, Ramamurthy, Nazareth, & Lee, 2018).

This paper is based on the argument that philanthropy is a necessity for those who are able to do it (Fuentenebro, 2020). The implementation itself is often colored with various motives and goals that are packed with this sense of humanity (Latief, 2013). Some of these goals cannot be interpreted as a religious and human spirit with social media intermediaries with several diction that inspire a massive invitation to philanthropy (Slama, 2018). Social media intermediaries are a golden bridge for marketing wrapped in philosophies as humanitarian actions (Wu, Jin, Monfort, & Hua, 2020).

### **METHOD**

Research on philanthropic activities during the Covid-19 pandemic is empirical in nature, namely qualitative based on the distribution of pamphlets via online media. Online media were selected randomly based on focus and coverage that met the research criteria, namely in the form of a donation invitation pamphlet, news on donation activities during the pandemic period. Several philanthropic objects are eagerly awaiting a helping hand to resolve the economic difficulties experienced during the pandemic. The obstacles they experience are based on their previous experience of never having experienced a similar incident which was most concerning before the pandemic. A pandemic is the perfect moment for philanthropic activists to distribute the aid he has been waiting for. However, behind the philanthropic movement there are several personal motives and goals that are built up by humanity. Thus, the object of philanthropic connoisseurs does not really pay attention to the various goals and motives of philanthropy, because they are not relevant to the circumstances being experienced.

Data obtained from online media mapping has been confirmed to several retail market owners and online stores as participants. Participants are limited to philanthropic actors who have a pure humanitarian background and several employees who work as aid distributors and salespeople who use the pandemic as the right moment to boost their sales targets. Five individuals were selected for in-depth interviews. The selection of these individuals takes into account the variant of pure philanthropic activists because of the humanity and marketing enthusiasm wrapped in philanthropy. Individual variants are selected taking into account age which is relevant to the use of gadgets as marketing mediators and philanthropy.

The data collection process uses the interview method as a basis for formulating questions. Open-ended questions include four data fields. First, data related to the involvement of individual roles in philanthropic activities. Second, encouragement and

motivation which are factors in the sustainability of philanthropy. Third, information media as marketing intermediaries and philanthropic solicitation. Fourth, the involvement and response of the surrounding community to these philanthropic activities.

The study took place from November 2020 to December 2020 when the pandemic took place and the transmission curve data peaked after a brief decline. It takes Cirebon City as the locus of research. At the same time, humanity becomes a priority that cannot be avoided, besides Health is the responsibility of the government and shared awareness. Humanitarian activities have become a trend and the center of attention of several philanthropic activists. Individuals who participate in the research are interviewed for their awareness and willingness of time. Questions are asked one by one openly in an atmosphere outside of philanthropic activities. Some of the interviews were via WhatsApp message. Asked for availability, practitioners of philanthropy provide information related to the motivation and concept of the sustainability of philanthropy during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Online news mapping data and interview data are classified thematically to reinforce the storyline of the progress of philanthropy, from concept, motivation to the effectiveness of marketing success. Data classification is carried out not only on a thematic basis but also considering the aspects covered in it. The context of the marketing experience and philanthropic activities is analyzed one by one based on its continued succession.

The data were analyzed through three stages: data restatement, data description, and data interpretation. Restatement is carried out by referring to interview excerpts from the student's point of view. Data descriptions are carried out to show patterns or trends in data regarding the typology of motivation for philanthropic activities during the pandemic. The process of interpretation is carried out by paying attention to the individual, social and institutional context which is the basis of the motives for the philanthropic movement. The three stages of analysis form the basis for drawing conclusions (inference). Data sourced from philanthropic actors serve as comparisons that mutually reinforce data sourced from online news.

### **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

### 1. Philanthropy as Responsive to Humanity

Almost all religious traditions have always identified themselves as a teaching that has a commitment and concern to help the weak and poor, as well as Abrahamic religions such as Judaism, Christianity, and Islam and Eastern religions (Latief, 2013). The commitment made is conceptual social generosity to be implemented (Al-Makassary, 2005). This social generosity also relates to civil society (Triwibowo, 2006) in which the people or society make changes and create important moments which will become the history of the formation of a philosophical culture that is responsive to humanity (Donkers, van Diepen, & Franses, 2017). A strong commitment will be the foundation for the sustainability of philanthropic activities (van Dijk, Van Herk, & Prins, 2019).

The existence of the philanthropic movement has experienced a very long history, in which the interference of government agencies that regulate philanthropic regulations (Fauzia, 2016) on how to develop institutions engaged in this field. Similar to religious institutions that manage waqf which comes from personal sources and aims for social benefit (Yuristiadhi, 2020). Social welfare which is generally based on a religious spirit is a concept that must be used by philanthropic and humanitarian activists. Maslahat or not in philanthropy does not become an academic problem in terms of religion, what is prioritized is the goal of philanthropy itself according to religious normativity (Machsun, 2020).

The breakthrough in the philanthropic movement during the Covid-19 pandemic is an encouragement that is believed to have a material impact that has been issued, and there is even a competition in the amount of alms given, either in nominal or progress (Krasteva & Yildirim, 2016). This phenomenon is not free from the public's stigma against philanthropy as a religious command that is highly recommended for those who are able to fulfill it. Such understanding, the majority occurs among literalist groups who do not pay much attention to the context that occurs (Wahid, 2015). Prejudice circulating among the public is only in the form of a conclusion that philanthropic stigma funds cannot be acquired as a practice outside the order of worship.

Digital challenges and digital opportunities are steps that cannot be overlooked, which is something interesting when combined with philanthropy as a marketing movement and a decreased sales target (Rahwan, Hauser, Kochanowska, & Fasolo, 2018) due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Branding a product with a fiantropy concept combined with digitization and big data (Buhalis & Volchek, 2020) as a stepping stone for sales targets. Digitalization or digital philanthropization is a feasibility that must be felt by youth who are active as digital volunteers who spend the majority of their time in front of the screen (Halim, 2018).

Media as a facility that can be enjoyed by all groups who have reach, is not a burden that must be carried. Mediation is a bright prospect in recruiting religious groups with the aim of attracting interested people (Lengauer, 2018) as well as consumers. This has become the Center of attention in itself to increase the target of participating in philanthropic action in the form of alms (Brown, Meer, & Williams, 2017) with a spirit of humanity. The stepping stones used in digital marketing are felt to be less than optimal if there are no complements and sweeteners that can attract customers. Philanthropy in the form of alms is the right choice if it is associated with marketing targets during the Covid-19 pandemic with very slim possibilities. The combination of philanthropy and product marketing is a choice between several options along with the economic crush of the Covid-19 pandemic (Cretterz, Hayek, & Zaccour, 2019).

Donation will have a more socialist and humanist moral impact even though the purpose of the donation is sometimes individually politicized (Lee, 2015). The efficiency of the donation is covered with advertisements to achieve individual goals that are sure to attract a wider audience (Burton, Gore, & Sturgeon, 2012). Network after network is built so that the purpose of charity is achieved (Dam, 2020). Study after study shows that donation is an activity that cannot be dismissed just like that (Waltz, 2012), although the roles and objectives are different, it still has a significant impact on humanity and economic progress (Core & Donaldson, 2010).

## 2. Massive philanthropy in Cirebon City, Indonesia

Massive philanthropy during the pandemic has become the prima donna for some people with a human spirit. The majority, philanthropic activists are very enthusiastic and have even become a new job and lifestyle for the digital era hit by the Covid-19 pandemic. The change in the structure of the philanthropic culture has made fialntropy only a cover for some of the motives of these philanthropic activists and activists.

The Covid-19 pandemic has changed the typology of the philanthropic movement from normative to practical visionary. Philanthropy is not only about giving money, basic foodstuffs to those in need, but also philanthropy becomes trending when it is disseminated through the digitization of Instagram, Facebook, WhatsApp or other social media. Changes in the philanthropic tradition when the state's condition worsened, forcing activists to find the typology of philanthropy to be an economic value. The conception of philanthropy is a volunteer activity with a purely humanitarian purpose. This conception shifts along with the motives that emerge from these seven philanthropic goals. The general conception of philanthropy as seen from the experience described by *informant X001*:

When I attended several recitations, the ustadz explained that helping each other is an obligation that cannot be avoided by those of us who are economically capable. I am very happy because giving something even though it is only 5 kg of rice and several other basic necessities, has been very helpful and pleasing to me. Then I saved a thousand a day so it wouldn't burden my man to help people around who were affected by the Covid-19 pandemic. I also asked my friends to be willing to save and set aside their money to participate in the one thousand a day program that I formed. *Alhamdulillah*, it turns out that the response of my friends I invited was very enthusiastic and volunteered, and even invited some of their relatives to participate in easing the burden on the people around them through a thousand a day (informant X001, 23 years old, private employee)

Case of *informant X002* even participated in a one thousand a day program by setting aside his salary as an honorary teacher. He said that:

"I am very happy to participate in this one thousand heart program and my parents did not give negative comments because they considered wasting my minimal salary as an honorary teacher just to help other people, even though I myself actually belong to a minimalist economy and really need it. Moreover, my honorary salary was cut due to the impact of the pandemic which was experienced by the foundation that organized the elementary school where I taught. Yes, even though the salary is a percentage cut, it doesn't discourage me from helping others because God will definitely replace more". (informant X002, 25 years old, Private SDIT Honorary Teacher in Cirebon)

The existing motives tend to be normative, namely the religious spirit with the suggestion of helping each other. This is as experienced by *informant X001* in delivering a thousand programs a day and received responses from some of his close relatives such as *informant X002*. This is because a strong religious spirit has been embedded in each of us.

Economic limitations have not made the spirit of philanthropy decline, even though the pandemic has forced tighter and more orderly financial arrangements. At least the data show 3 main motivations in philanthropy. *First*, religious motivation. *Second*, humanitarian motives. *Third*, marketing motivation with philanthropy as a sweetener and attracting as many customers as possible.

In a situation of economic pressure affected by the pandemic, it has not diminished the human mentality of philanthropic activists. Some of the existing variables show that the state of the outbreak is a very important moment with the spirit of religious encouragement, as was done by *informant X001* and *informant X002*. Both individuals do not pay attention to tertiary needs and even secondary to their lives. Some of the right steps have been implemented by *informant X001* and *informant X002* such as saving a thousand a day for the needs of helping fellow individuals affected by the Covid-19 pandemic. This step of saving is not burdensome, judged from a nominal point of view that it is meaningless if it is rejected for secondary and even tertiary needs. However, if

it is collected continuously, the nominal that is considered meaningless becomes meaningful for those who need a helping hand.

The assumption of fialntropy which aims at humanity with a religious spirit becomes an opportunity in marketing merchandise. As described by one employee of a company:

"Since the corona outbreak appeared, sales of our merchandise and products have decreased dramatically, especially when the moment of this outbreak reached its peak of contagion. Back in November 2020. Yes, one of our tactics is to pick up the ball by giving more discounts than usual, we have also provided some basic food assistance. -Our staples and food products for those affected by the pandemic. We do this as a booster so that the resale results go up and run as usual. Yes, there are also endorsements through friends who are often active in philanthropic activities. To do this, give some needs which will be allocated for compensation, then brochures and product samples are included as part of the marketing form". (X003, 24 years old, employee of a food company in Cirebon)

The perception of philanthropy as an afterlife field is irrelevant if it is associated with a marketing strategy that uses this pandemic moment as a starting point and hopes for normal resale. This is as is done by *informant X003*.

## 3. Motives of Massive Philanthropy in The New Era During Pandemic

This research shows that the difference in perspective and stigma on philanthropy as a spirit of humanity and religion becomes indisputable when it is related to marketing management and sales targets of a product. The affected middle and lower social class really expect a helping hand, especially in the form of life support materials. The nature and motive of aid is not the primary subject's concern.

Research on philanthropy during the Covid-19 pandemic has shown that the lower classes affected by the Covid-19 outbreak desperately need help, even though some of them refuse because they feel they are getting intervened as oppressed classes (Tuğal, 2016). The involvement of public figures (Palmer, 2019) is the main composition, as happened in North Europe and America in the twentieth century (Littler, 2015). The involvement of NGOs as non-government institutions is a major component in philanthropy, as is the case in China (YAN, HUANG, FOSTER, & TESTER, 2007). The spirit of Islamism has also become a spice when the economic downturn experienced by the middle to lower classes during the Covid-19 pandemic (Zencirci, 2020).

The role of non-government institutions as volunteers with the task of caring for the welfare of a country from adversity and poverty is an agent of welfare and moral cultivation (Pusceddu, 2020). Apart from being a government volunteer, sometimes they also participate in providing education to children about the importance of charity, as is happening in Malaysia (Urbonavičius & Adomavičiūtė, 2015). These roles were helped by the presence of the media as the second initiator and the philanthropic succession, this happened in 18th and 19th century Sweden (Sjögren, 2016).

Philanthropic motives after experiencing digital have become various (Filo, Funk, & O'Brien, 2011), such as buying a product or activity that generates support through several traditional events, which are categorized as philanthropy (Faulkner & Romaniuk, 2019). Even giving charity and doing business can be done together, and it has become a trending topic (Schram, 2010). Motives other than humanity are common knowledge

and become a global competition for popularity through charitable activities (Littler, 2008).

The cause of its massive philanthropy can also be influenced by the spirit of the political party movement (Kaya, 2015). However, this is not a major factor (Nguyen, 2015), because the cause of massive philanthropy is not just the emergence of the Covid-19 pandemic (Bunds, Brandon-Lai, & Armstrong, 2016; Hitman, 2019; Lim & Moufahim, 2015). In the end, philanthropy, which originally had humanitarian motives, changed completely (Cordery, Smith, & Berger, 2017; Miller, 2012; Mulder & Joireman, 2016) and did not rule out humanity. Competitions in philanthropy (Chen, 2020; Pelsmacker, Dens, & Meulenaer, 2020) are interesting as a response and interest so that the future of philanthropy can be maintained (Gilchrist, 2020).

### CONCLUSION

It turns out that philanthropy during the Covid-19 pandemic, which has been understood as humanitarian action, no longer has this meaning. The findings of this study (in contrast to previous findings) indicate that the issue of philanthropy is running into a shift in patterns where philanthropic activists use the moment of the COVID-19 pandemic for two purposes, namely providing humanitarian aid and promoting their merchandise. In addition, there are also some philanthropic activists who distribute their merchandise that is not sold on certain days such as food and the like to the public. The covid-19 pandemic factor has triggered a massive philanthropic movement as well as marketing competition that does not only occur in Indonesia. Those who come from economically weak groups and are affected by the Covid-19 pandemic do not look carefully at the motives behind the philanthropy movement, it is because of the economic pressure that really needs a helping hand from philanthropic activists.

Philanthropy explanations in the pandemic era can be an access to economic stability and human balance, not only as a way for mobility and opportunities for the weak economic groups to achieve prosperity but also to reproduce and revive the economy of the upper classes economies. This was triggered by a shift in philanthropic motives. The colors of philanthropic motifs naturally develop along with changing times and the crushes caused by natural disasters. This study is limited to changing the perspective and motives of philanthropy as humanitarian action and economic stability. The role of philanthropic activists is very central in the economic stability of a country that has been hit hard by the Covid-19 pandemic. In line with that, further research is needed involving philanthropic activists and philanthropic enthusiasts who are in line with accommodating the experiences and problems faced by people affected by the Covid-19 natural disaster pandemic in addition to organizing a stable economic and humanitarian awakening. In this way, comprehensive troubleshooting is possible.

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