Women's Leadership in Open and Distance Higher Education: Lessons from the VUCA Era During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Eha Saleha[1], Yuli Tirtariandi El Anshori[2], Amud Sunarya[3], Vivi Indra Amelia Nasution[4]
[1234]**Universitas Terbuka, Indonesia**
Correspondent: amud@ecampus.ut.ac.id[1]

ABSTRACT: Little research on women's leadership in Open and Distance Higher Education, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic and times of uncertainty (VUCA), explores women's experiences of leading a distance learning institution from home. This study describes how women managers of learning and materials services and heads of administration led Universitas Terbuka from home in implementing the first lockdown phase in Indonesia in 2020. Data was collected narratively through in-depth interviews with four women about the conscious experiences of women leading the Jakarta and Serang regional offices of Universitas Terbuka. Leading from home requires extra energy for women at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. Family support, technology, and internet networks greatly affect the process of women's leadership at Universitas Terbuka. Work from home from office hours until late at night with commitment, proactive, trust, and ability to make decisions quickly with leadership and other staff through Microsoft Teams and Zoom. In addition, women leaders continue communicating and coordinating via WhatsApp groups, personal communication, and work email. The experience of working from home for women who lead open and distance higher education can be a positive picture behind the world's worrisome condition during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Keywords: VUCA, Women, Leadership, Open and Distance, Higher Education

INTRODUCTION

VUCA is closely related to the leadership that emerged after the Cold War era ended in 1987. Uncertainty, volatility, ambiguity, and complexity require contemporary leadership that can adapt and innovate quickly. The conditions of volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity occurred again when Covid-19 hit the world, and the burden on women increased 3-fold, especially for working women (Sari & Fikri Zufar, 2021, p. 13). Most of the work in society is not organized, and it causes women to experience a conflict between the demands of family members and work (Waerness, 1978, p. 225). In addition, working women who are forced to work from home must

negotiate patriarchal roles (Elfira et al., 2021) coupled with the strengthening of gender stereotypes despite emerging conceptions of good and inclusive leadership instead of traditionally feminine traits with female leaders. who experienced good appreciation during the pandemic (Johnson & Williams, 2020, p. 7). Even though women have had conflicts with domestic and public work during the pandemic, nature has made women strong (Naqvi, 2011), and women leaders have gotten a positive view from the public. According to Coscieme et al. (2020, p. 17), women can lead a society that upholds solidarity and equality during a pandemic so that they can build healthy and conflict-resistant communities. Research results also show that female leaders deal with COVID-19 problems better than their male counterparts, respond faster, and communicate more effectively about measures to deal with the pandemic (Aldrich & Lotito, 2020, p. 960). How women lead open, and distance universities is interesting to study, especially when the adaptation of the first lockdown implementation in Indonesia at Serang and Jakarta regional office of Universitas Terbuka. This is because, apart from the economy and health (Coscieme et al., 2020), the education sector also underwent serious changes during the pandemic (Onyema et al., 2020).

During the pandemic, everything felt heavy for the people and leaders of countries like Indonesia, which must implement a COVID-19 emergency, and regions must apply a local lockdown. However, public service activities it is regulated through the Indonesian government policy by issuing a regulation on Large-Scale Social Restrictions/Lockdown in Java and Bali starting in April 2020, followed by Restrictions on Micro-based Community Activities (PPKM Mikro), Thickening of Micro PPKM, Emergency PPKM, PPKM Level 3- 4 and until now the Covid-19 pandemic has not ended in Indonesia. Universitas Terbuka (UT), a public service institution led by a rector, issued a policy to prevent the transmission of the COVID-19 virus in the Universitas Terbuka environment number 1272/UN.31/KP/11.00/ 2020 on March 13, 2020. Arrangements for employee work and UT service activities in the context of preventing the spread of the virus Covid 19 number 13006/UN.31/KP.11/2020 dated March 13, 2020, which regulates the work of employees from home or Work Form Home (WFH) for male and female Universitas Terbuka employees starting March 18-31, 2020. As a woman, women leaders work from home during the COVID-19 pandemic and are working harder than usual (Sari & Fikri Zufar, 2021, p. 18) Starting from economic affairs, health, hygiene, and children's education. Leading an organization from home requires commitment and proactiveness, and female leaders work hard to balance the domestic and public workload from home. Two women who became managers of learning and materials and two heads of administration explained their efforts to lead open and distance universities from home in implementing the first phase of the 2020 lockdown in Jakarta and Banten province in Indonesia.

The VUCA era is a time when the world is changing so rapidly in all aspects of life due to various aspects and factors that are difficult to control, which results in many updates, innovations, and adjustments to multiple things quickly (Montana B, 2020). Leadership in higher education is a form of public sector leadership that combines technical performance according to the organization's internal and external vision and mission with the aim of public service (Wart, 2003, p. 221). In the future, public leadership in higher education can change university management from shared governance to shared leadership by building trust, decision-making, and proactive and strong affective commitment (Pearce, Wood, & Wassenaar, 2018, p. 641) in university operational management. The concept of shared leadership, written by Pearce & Sims (2000), is a process of

interactive and dynamic mutual influence among individuals in a group aimed at leading each other to achieve organizational goals. Share leadership, which is a post-heroic part, tends to be feminine according to Calvert & Ramsey (1992), Fine & Buzzanell (2012), Fletcher (1994), and Fondas (1997), where men and women have a desire to collaborate, have a sense of empathy, skills, community and vulnerability that is socio-culturally derived from women or known as feminism (Fletcher, 2004, p. 650). Promoting women's rights in a socio-cultural aspect is classified as liberal feminism (Fitriyah, 2024). Although not supported by their families, many working women can handle tasks and work because women tend to be attentive and well-organized, especially when handling various responsibilities (Naqvi, 2011, p. 304). This is because women leaders are connected to the workplace, relationships at work, and relationships with other women (Valerie & Carole, 2009, p. 67). According to Perdhana (2021), women have a higher graduation rate than men, which shows that women have quite high ambitions in reaching the peak of their careers in an organization or company. The scarcity of millennial female leaders and the lack of research on them are the causes of women's limited insight into their career success and how it affects others. Besides that, according to Ayu Fitriana and Cenni (2021), if we review leadership, it is often associated with only men being able to become leaders because, in ancient times, women had minimal insight and relatively little experience. However, as time goes by, many women have participated in building world civilization, and quite a few have even been recorded as having succeeded on the political stage by holding positions as ministers, regional heads, vice presidents, and even becoming president of a country.

Higher education is a neutral environment where men and women collaborate. However, the reality is that there is no gender-understanding development approach to the behavior and characteristics of male and female leaders, where masculinity dominates leadership characteristics and organizational management dynamics (Valerie & Carole, 2009). Although higher education with a new paradigm is virtual and the scope of services is global, using technology to serve registration and academic activities is open throughout the year. Learning can be done anywhere by students aged 18 years to unlimited. According to Saepudin, A. (2004), problematics and quality improvement for higher education are two important things that must be considered. The reality shows that so far, higher education has not been free from problems (problematics) related to three things, namely: (1) the still low equality in obtaining education, (2) the still low quality and relevance of education, and (3) the still weak management of education. Besides that, all universities must make changes, including changes in learning models. Based on the explanation, innovation in education is urgent and needs to be done by every human being concerned with developing education as a form of improvement towards better education in Indonesia (Kadi, T., & Awwaliyah, R., 2004) and explained that the transformation of national standards and higher education accreditation provides freedom or liberates universities in various aspects, where these universities can determine direction and policies while still referring to the quality standards that have been set (Limbong, A. M., & Asbari, M., 2024). Education is one of the most important things in human life. Every human being has the right to get a decent and equitable education. However, what happens in Indonesia is the education inequality for all Indonesian citizens (Fitri, S. F. N., 2021). All sectors in the world experience tremendous impact and ultimately jointly overcome in various ways so that transmission can be minimized, including in education, especially

higher education in Indonesia. Many efforts have been made to address the conditions and situations of teaching during the period and post-pandemic COVID-19 (Sumantyo, F. D. S., 2020).

METHOD

Research on women's leadership in open and distance universities from home using a phenomenological research design. This study explores and describes the conscious experiences of women who become managers and head administrations to filter life experiences or get the essence of the experience of leading open and remote universities from home during the first lockdown period of the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic in Indonesia. Research informants are two female learning and material managers, including a senior lecturer at UT Jakarta who is married and has two adult children, as well as a UT Serang manager who is a young lecturer who has worked for more than 10 years at UT, is married and has three children, 1 of them are toddlers. The head administration informant from UT Jakarta is an administrative staff who has only worked at UT Jakarta for 10 years, is married, and has two children under five, while the head administration of UT Serang has worked for more than 10 years. She is an ICT staff with married status and has two teenagers and one child.

Data was collected during a pandemic by following health protocols, so there was limited time and distance when conducting direct interviews. However, in-depth information about female leaders working from home was obtained. Interviews were also conducted by telephone and chat via WhatsApp with informants when the pandemic was peaking in Indonesia. In addition, researchers made observations on discussions in the UT regional office group WhatsApp and communications made through social media. Field data in the form of audio interviews have been converted into verbatim. At the same time, screenshots of communication via WhatsApp group UT Serang and UT Jakarta regional offices are condensed and analyzed. Data is present based on the category of leadership process from home, which consists of commitment, proactive, trust, and decision-making of women's leadership. Another aspect affecting female leaders is working from home during lockdown during the first phase of the Covid-19 pandemic.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Adaptation and Preparation Working from Home

During the first phase of the lockdown in Indonesia, four women who led the regional offices of the Jakarta and Serang Universitas Terbuka expressed concern when the COVID-19 pandemic spread across Indonesia. However, as a leader in a regional office, they must be able to adjust to the conditions that occur in the environment and comply with the regulations in force in Indonesia and Universitas Terbuka so that she is committed to working professionally even in a pandemic condition. UT Jakarta's head administration revealed that immediately after the Jakarta local lockdown regulations and the issuance of the Universitas Terbuka rector's regulation, UT Jakarta arranged for employees and leaders who had to work from home. Meanwhile, the head of administration at UT Serang regulates and distributes 50 percent of employees and leaders who work from the office (WFO) and employees who work from home (WFH). Anticipating UT

activities that need to be implemented immediately during the lockdown, staff and leaders take turns entering the office in a picket schedule approved by the UT director. The division of employees' work, regardless of gender, male or female, can be achieved by publishing a regional office work schedule. The UT WhatsApp group informed the schedule so that employees and leaders know they will take turns running office pickets and working from home. Picket staff who attend the UT office are asked to report attendance and return via face print, and fingerprints are prohibited to prevent transmission of COVID-19 at the regional office.

After the implementation of the division of labor, the head administration reminds the leadership and staff in the regional office whats app group or through the person in charge of attendance to ask staff both WFH and WFO to send their location as proof of attendance and from work through share location (share loc) via whats app regional group office. The head administration then asked the leadership and staff to make a work report during WFH with a detailed description of the activities, such as the date, implementation, and status of completed or unfinished activities from home. Work commitment of top leadership, female leaders, and staff by showing self-discipline towards the duties and functions of serving students, especially on time when entering at 08.00 AM and finishing working hours at 4.30 PM by sharing location. The head administration then records the time shared in the WhatsApp app group and observes the presence of staff who ask to stay at home or do not share locations. Then, the head administration gives warnings according to available regulations.

Starting to work from home, the head of administration and manager of learning and material monitors messages via WhatsApp app group regional office, WhatsApp app unit group, personal WhatsApp, email, or messages through the comments column on social media owned by UT Jakarta, such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and the Jakarta website .ut.ac.id. Meanwhile, UT Serang's social media is connected to Instagram, Facebook, and the website Serang.ut.ac.id. Then, the head administration provides information about the transfer of regional office services, which includes online services via WhatsApp, Instagram, and Facebook. This follows a circular from Universitas Terbuka's public relations on March 15, 2020, which announced student services being transferred via online services through WhatsApp, email, and telephone to regional unit offices or faculties. In addition, announcements about postponing face-to-face tutorials for the first two weeks, changing the face-to-face learning system to become a tutorial via the web (tuweb), and postponing the online exam system (SUO) and face-to-face exams.

The Head of Administration also followed up on the rector's circular by asking staff and leaders to install the Microsoft Team application for meetings. Meanwhile, the coordination, discussion, and dissemination of internal regional office policies are carried out via WhatsApp for the Serang regional office unit, UT-Serang. In contrast, the Jakarta regional office is named Operational UT Jakarta. According to government regulations, employees and leaders of UT Serang and UT Jakarta carry out routine office work from home by accessing the office computer network with a team viewer. Furthermore, staff and leaders from home carried out socialization and promoted the Universitas Terbuka learning from home through social media such as WhatsApp, Instagram, and Facebook for staff and unit leaders.

According to the head of administration, to make it easier for leaders and staff to work from home to access several UT internal applications during the lockdown, the central UT made access

through the website https://wfh.ut.ac.id (picture 1) for financial applications through manisku.keuangan.ut.ac.id, student registration through sia.ut.ac.id, and srs.ut.ac.id. As for student services, such as checking graduation or graduation announcements through the Serang.ut.ac.id and Jakarta.ut.ac.id pages, letters via Serang.ut.ac.id/sikancil as well as other applications that support leader and staff to work from home.
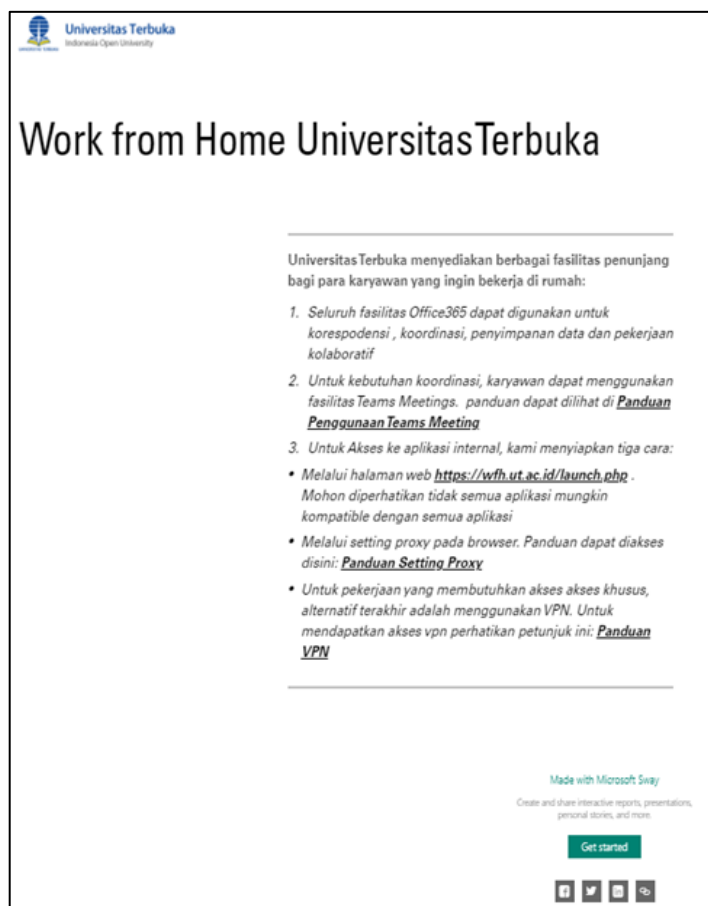

Figure 1. UT Website For Leaders And Staff Working From Home
Source: fh.ut.ac.id, 2021

Head of administration and managing human resources (HR) regional office personnel, goods, and services, as well as financial planning. However, UT's head of administration carries out other functions such as administration, housekeeping, and management of unit state property, correspondence and filing, cooperation documents and certificates, socialization and promotion, and financial management entrusted to the staff in charge. UT Jakarta's head administration informed the unit staff who already knew their duties and functions, which became a routine before the Covid 19 pandemic. However, it is only currently changing the location of work from home and the form of the service to be online, but for some services, it is postponed until the situation is stable enough. The head administration also proposes and prepares a budget for purchasing staff masks and hand sanitizer, setting up a sink, and measuring temperature. The process of purchasing and supplying goods is given to the treasurer and eight administration unit staff.

Furthermore, the head of administration and the proactive learning and materials manager conducted a trial of Zoom and Teams for the general meeting of leaders and staff and asked the staff to make a video to disseminate the Universitas Terbuka promotion on March 16, 2021. On March 17, 2021, the Head of Administration asked the regional office Information and Communication Technology (ICT) team to make announcements related to activities at the regional office and COVID-19 to be informed to students, working groups, and the general public. The draft announcement made by the ICT team is then shared with the regional office WhatsApp group for joint corrections. Then, it is decided to print or distribute together a proactive form of staff to carry out work from home during the COVID-19 pandemic. UT Jakarta's head administration said that since the COVID-19 pandemic, many decisions have been made via chat and telephone via WhatsApp group leadership and regional office.

Women's Challenge to Lead Regional Office from Home

Working from home is not easy for leaders who have children and toddlers. Head of administration at UT Jakarta said that since the COVID-19 pandemic, apart from office workers who work from home, children who go to school also have to learn from home. As a mother, this is an additional job to get her children used to adapting to online learning in a pandemic. In addition, mothers and wives should ensure the health of family members so that they are not exposed to the Covid-19 virus. The Head of administration, UT Serang, said that the children initially liked to study from home at the beginning of the pandemic because both parents were often at home and worked from home. UT Jakarta's administration head said that when he was at home with toddlers on weekdays, it was very difficult to focus on work; this related to children who always asked for their parent's attention. Therefore, the head of the UT Jakarta administration asked the husband to care for the children apart from the household assistant. Sometimes, when a partner goes out, the UT Jakarta administration head cannot work optimally and waits for the child to fall asleep at night to finish office work. However, the UT Jakarta administration head and UT Serang administration had tried to adjust the office hours at home. They tried to complete the work according to schedule despite the many distractions from the children. So, according to the head of UT Serang administration, the office is better for working than at home because homework and children break the concentration of work and thoughts of women who act as mothers, wives, and other social environments, as stated by the head of UT Serang administration while working at home:

"Trying to do office work according to office hours and finish the work scheduled for today, even if working at home, is more of a distraction because, as a mother, it is impossible to ignore children or homework during WFH."

The Manager of learning and materials at UT Serang agrees with the Head of Administration at UT Serang about coordinating and working better at the office than at home. Even though the learning and materials manager at UT Serang has children and toddlers, he says he has no problems caring for housework and office work. This is due to the children's caretakers, caregivers, and partners' support while working from home. The UT Serang administration head explained the positive side during the COVID-19 pandemic: spouses worked from home so they could share in taking care of their children, especially when children had to go to school online or study from home, as stated by the UT Jakarta head administration below:

"If our children share, thank God the husband still wants to hold on. He still wants to help, especially now that he is WFH. Therefore, when the child goes online or studies, he is at home. Thank God, but I am later confused about whether it will start to enter. Again, I am confused also."

The manager of learning and materials at UT Serang emphasized that working from home can still be done by connecting laptops and office computers through the team viewer related to several jobs and applications that can only be opened and accessed from the office internet network. So office work can still be completed on time even though many system and policy changes occurred during the Covid-19 pandemic, especially regarding tutorials, grades, and applications that were sometimes disconnected from the network. It is not much different from the learning and materials manager at UT Serang and the learning and materials manager at UT Jakarta, who said that he prefers to work in the office than at home because, since the pandemic, there has been more work and has been done until the evening. Especially if there are problems related to tutorials, grades, or applications related to learning and materials, the Manager of Learning and Materials at UT Jakarta said:

"I was before Covid, I like to be at the office, want to stay at night, it is okay, I will sleep well when I get home, I do not like to bring work to the home, I am afraid that home affairs will be neglected. I work at home and have something left behind; I did not want it to be like that at first, but only when this COVID did not. It could not even bother this COVID because the work was done until 10 pm and was not finished. Is this work or what it should be if, at the office? The portion of work is clear, but I do not even know the hours at home. It is a matter of grades; the grades keep having problems".

Although working hours at home are not limited and more flexible according to the needs and priorities of completing work at the regional office, work is often completed in the middle of the night. Even though they still have to work from home, sometimes the learning and material managers of UT Serang and UT Jakarta and the heads of administration of UT Jakarta and UT Serang go to the office to work or solve problems in activities in the unit. The four female leaders agreed that the presence of children is not a serious problem, especially with the support of a partner, but rather a sense of responsibility as a mother when working at home.

Managers of learning and materials at UT Jakarta and UT Serang can carry out their duties and functions as leaders while working from home, namely carrying out student group administrator coaching and activities to develop the talents and interests of students (including sports and entrepreneurship). Also, distributing teaching materials, coordinating preparation, monitoring, and evaluation of tutorials, practice, practicum, and guidance as well as scientific work, conducting socialization, providing tutorials for tutors/supervisors, carrying out self-study training for new students, and carrying out coursework. While at home, coordination and communication with the leadership and staff of the learning and materials unit is intense. Even though the learning and materials manager is the brains of planning the website schedule for the Faculty of Education and Teacher Training, students of the Faculty of Science and Technology who major in agriculture and other faculty students are accustomed to taking face-to-face classes. 636 classes for UT-Serang students and 1385 classes for UT Jakarta students in the first semester of 2020 transfer to online classes using the teams.microsoft.com website to be known as tutorials via the website (Tuweb). The learning and materials manager conducts socialization to inform how to access student absenteeism, grade entries, and tutorial reports via tutorial.ut.ac.id. The learning and materials

manager asked the regional office staff and ICT to take part in the web tutorial training, which will be held April 11 until 16 May 2020 by adjusting the schedule so as not to clash with the regional office online system exam and outside the regional office, which will be held in district/city schools. The learning and material manager of UT Jakarta and UT Serang explained that after the web tutorial planning was generally completed, it would be distributed to the staff or person in charge via email or WhatsApp to make scheduling and absences for students and tutors complete with classes and times as shown in the interview results below:

"We designed the entire schedule so that would go wrong. Then, we give staff (responsible persons) a chance to make a detailed hourly and class schedule, complete with student and tutor absences. All of the coordinators (managers) make it, but if we have to make the design, we must also be the coordinator because we coordinate with the tutor".

The learning and materials units at UT Serang and UT Jakarta have five staff members who are still young, so it is very easy to coordinate and catch up on time to complete the schedule for tutorial activities and distribution of teaching materials. Even though the coordination is done from home, only through the UT Serang learning and material group whats app or the UT Serang regional office group whats app. In addition, the learning and materials manager assesses that his staff has responsibilities, which are socializing at the beginning of the semester. Not all activities are handled by the manager, such as distributing modules handed over to staff who are used to managing the distribution of thousands of UT modules for students. However, with the pandemic, many modules have been sent directly from the central UT to the student's address, not through the regional office. Likewise, regional office student activities are handed over to staff planning, implementing, and reporting activities, which are widely shared through the UT Serang Whats app group. Tuweb monitoring can also be done online through Microsoft Teams, and coordination with regional office staff can be done via WhatsApp. Suppose there are problems with students having difficulty accessing Tuweb classes, tutors who do not show up on time, and tutors who teach not following the tutorial program unit. In that case, the manager can immediately reprimand or fix problems that occur immediately before the Tuweb runs the following week. The UT Jakarta learning and materials manager said that since the COVID-19 pandemic, decision-making or discussions were better and more comfortable because they used the Microsoft team for preparatory meetings. This is because online meetings are simpler than coming to the regional office, where there is a risk of exposure to the COVID-19 virus.

Women working from home during the pandemic can handle work remotely by intensely coordinating and communicating with leaders and staff, students, pokjar administrators, partners, and UT Center. The Head of the UT Serang administration explained that the influence of technology is very strong when working from home to serve students, starting from online registration, online tutorials, administrative needs, and other activities. According to the UT Serang administration head during the pandemic, she tried to use firmness but with softer feelings. She maintained good relations with fellow staff and leaders to avoid feelings of stress and conflict and maintain immunity against Covid likewise. The UT Jakarta learning and materials manager stated that he always tries to be positive and has high empathy if there are staff who have not completed assignments on time or have symptoms similar to Covid 19. Even the UT Serang learning and materials's manager sometimes takes over work that is not completed by sick staff. Low direct interaction with office staff avoids discrimination and gender bias among office staff and leaders. However, working from home for women leaders requires commitment, proactive, decision-

making, and trust. However, family, technology, and internet networks still affect the leadership process of women working from home during the first phase of the COVID-19 pandemic in Indonesia.

Women who become leaders in open and distance universities experience work experiences that are not much different from women who work in other public organizations. However, what distinguishes it is that students and the services provided by the Universitas Terbuka are student registration services to graduation remotely using technology, and many services are carried out online as written by Inglis, A., Ling, P., & Joosten. (1999) About the new paradigm of higher education. Even though the COVID-19 pandemic hit, and regional offices had to close, leaders and staff had to take turns working from home and office, women leaders could still work and provide services directly and via social media to directors, students, partners, and administrators. pokjar and society in general, such as the concept of technical performance of public sector leadership from Wart (2003).

Women leaders in regional offices, such as learning and materials managers and head administration, carry out their duties and functions to assist directors by the regulations of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology Number 16 of 2017 concerning the organization and work procedures of Universitas Terbuka. The learning and materials manager and the head of administration play an important leadership role in the regional office, more so in technical, administrative, and decision-making. The leadership of head administration and learning and material managers at UT Serang and UT Jakarta is per the shared leadership concept: affective commitment, proactive, trust, and creative decision-making (Pearce et al., 2018, p. 642) in higher education. Women who work from home have shown to be disciplined to work from home even though they work from morning until late at night. The commitment of the head of administration and the manager of learning and materials is also shown by working from the office even though the schedule is working from home. Apart from that, the UT Serang and UT Jakarta staff also showed commitment to comply with the leadership's instructions to stay home and complete work on time.

Even though she works from home, the woman, who is the head of administration and the manager of learning and materials, looks more proactive in managing the office. In addition, women leaders complete planning and communicate in the UT Whats app group to respond to and resolve problems and activities that take place at the regional office and become the foundation of networks in social interactions because women are more personal and facilitative in taking turns in discussions (Bass & Bass, 2008, p. 1269). Decision-making in the regional office since work from home is adjusted to the type of activity to be carried out, some policies and decisions are decided jointly through general meetings via teams, zoom, and WhatsApp groups. However, several policies were also decided among regional office leaders only through the leader's whats app group. Trust is also given to staff in completing work and activities from home with instructions and orders (Pearce & Sims, 2002, p. 173) personally or delivered in WhatsApp app groups. Meanwhile, the division of labor in the regional office has adjusted to the number and ability of the staff to complete the work. Some of the work of the head of administration and learning and material manager is delegated to the staff or person in charge, either via the regional office group WhatsApp or personal email of staff working from home.

The workload at home, taking care of children all the time, coupled with children in online schools, also maintains the health of family members. Leading an open and distance university from home is not easy. It requires extra energy during the COVID-19 pandemic for women leaders who serve as heads of administration and managers of learning and materials. This is in line with the research findings of Sari & Fikri (2021, p. 13) and Jains (and, p. 31). However, leading a university from home can still be carried out with family support, the convenience of technology, good communication, and an internet network that supports smooth work from home. Work culture influences shared leadership (Pearce & Sims, 2000, p. 132) but does not prevent women from leading open and remote universities during the Covid-19 pandemic. Although women leaders are always connected to the environment and work (Valerie & Carole, 2009, p. 67) Technology has an impact on teaching infrastructure, resources, and stakeholder relations in the digital era (Sheninger, 2019, p. 3) Especially during a pandemic of many services, public organizations go online.

CONCLUSION

Leading higher education from home, women leaders such as the head of administration, UT learning and material manager, and Serang-Jakarta staff demonstrate commitment, are proactive, and can make decisions quickly with the leadership and other staff. Commitment to work is shown by the head of administration and learning and material managers who want to work from home even though they work from morning until late at night by connecting office computers and laptops at home using the team viewers application and trusting subordinates in completing work, delegating work to staff, and overseeing activities at the regional office. Decision-making is carried out with the leadership and staff through Microsoft Teams meetings, and several decisions have been made at the regional office leadership level. Women can work from home with intense communication and coordination with other staff and leaders, family support, technology, and a good internet network.

Remote colleges from home during the COVID-19 pandemic, but this study shows that female leaders could adapt, innovate, and lead with high commitment even in a pandemic and facing uncertainty.

REFERENCE

Aldrich, A. S., & Lotito, N. J. (2020). Pandemic Performance: Women Leaders in the COVID-19 Crisis. *Politics and Gender*, *16*(4), 960–967. https://doi.org/10.1017/S1743923X20000549

Bass, B. M., & Bass, R. (2008). *The Bass Handbook of Leadership, a Theory, Research, and Managerial Applications* (4th ed.). New York: Free Press.

Coscieme, L., Fioramonti, L., Mortensen, L. F., Pickett, K. E., Kubiszewski, I., Lovins, H., … Wilkinson, R. (2020). Women in power: Female leadership and public health outcomes during the COVID-19 pandemic. *MedRxiv*, 2020.07.13.20152397. Retrieved from https://doi.org/10.1101/2020.07.13.20152397

Elfira, M., Wibawarta, B., Esther, R., & Febriand, F. (2021). Working From Home: Women Between Public and Domestic Spheres After the Outbreak of Covid-19. *International Review of Humanities Studies*, *6*(1), 375–389. https://doi.org/10.7454/irhs.v6i1.326

Fine, M. G., & Buzzanell, P. M. (2012). Walking the High Wire: Leadership Theorizing, Daily Acts, and Tensions. In *Rethinking Organizational ampnumx0026; Managerial Communication from Feminist Perspectives Rethinking organizational ampnumx0026; managerial communication from feminist perspectives*. https://doi.org/10.4135/9781452225494.n6

Fitriana, A., & Cenni, C. (2021, March). Perempuan dan kepemimpinan. In *Prosiding Seminar Nasional IAHN-TP Palangka Raya* (No. 1, pp. 247-256). https://doi.org/10.33363/sn.v0i1.65

Fitri, S. F. N. (2021). Problematika kualitas pendidikan di indonesia. Jurnal Pendidikan Tambusai, 5(1), 1617-1620. https://jptam.org/index.php/jptam/article/view/1148

Fitriyah, A. (2024). Sexist Utterance and Gender Stereotyping in the Novel Queen Alexine: Sara Mills' CDA Approach. *PAROLE: Journal of Linguistics and Education, 13*(2), 1-13. https://doi.org/10.14710/parole.v13i2.1-13

Fletcher, J. K. (1994). Castrating the Female Advantage: Feminist Standpoint Research and Management Science. *Journal of Management Inquiry*. https://doi.org/10.1177/105649269431012

Fondas, N. (1997). Feminization unveiled: Management qualities in contemporary writings. *Academy of Management Review*, 257–282. https://doi.org/10.5465/AMR.1997.9707180266

Inglis, A. & Ling, P. & Joosten, V. (1999). *Delivering digital management of the transition to knowledge media*. London: Kogan Page.

Jain, P. (n.d.). Women Leadership in Indian Higher Education Sector The Realities Challenges and Future Direction Post.

Johnson, C., & Williams, B. (2020). Gender and Political Leadership in a Time of COVID. *Politics & Gender*, *16*(4), 943–950. https://doi.org/10.1017/S1743923X2000029X

Kadi, T., & Awwaliyah, R. (2017). Inovasi pendidikan: Upaya penyelesaian problematika pendidikan di Indonesia. Jurnal Islam Nusantara, 1(2). https://doi.org/10.33852/jurnalin.v1i2.32

L Calvert, & Ramsey, V. J. (1992). *Bringing Women's Voice to Research on Women in Management: A Feminist Perspective*. Journal of Management Inquiry.

Limbong, A. M., & Asbari, M. (2024). Transformasi Standar Nasional dan Akreditasi Pendidikan Tinggi. Journal of Information Systems and Management (JISMA), 3(1), 101-105. https://doi.org/10.4444/jisma.v3i1.905

Mohanta, B., Nanda, P. K., & Patnaik, S. (2019). *Management of v.u.c.a. (volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity) using machine learning techniques in industry 4.0 paradigm. Studies in Big Data*, 1-24. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-25778-1_1

Naqvi, F. (2011). Perspectives of indian women managers in the public sector. *Indian Journal of Gender Studies*. https://doi.org/10.1177/097152151101800301

Onyema, E. M., Eucheria, N. C., Obafemi, F. A., Sen, S., Atonye, F. G., Sharma, Aa., & Alsayed, A. O. (2020). Impact of Coronavirus Pandemic on Education. *Journal of Education and Practice*, *11*(13), 108–121. https://doi.org/10.7176/jep/11-13-12

Pearce, C. L., & Sims, H. P. (2000). Shared leadership: Toward a multi-level leadership theory. *Advances in Interdisciplinary Studies of Work Teams*, *7*(February), 115–139. https://doi.org/10.1016/S1572-0977(00)07008-4

Pearce, C. L., & Sims, H. P. (2002). Vertical versus shared leadership as predictors of the effectiveness of change management teams: An examination of aversive, directive, transactional, transformational, and empowering leader behaviors. *Group Dynamics*, *6*(2), 172–197. https://doi.org/10.1037/1089-2699.6.2.172

Pearce, C. L., Wood, B. G., & Wassenaar, C. L. (2018). The Future of Leadership in Public Universities: Is Shared Leadership the Answer? *Public Administration Review*, *78*(4), 640–644. https://doi.org/10.1111/puar.12938

Perdhana, M. S. (2021). Studi Fenomenologi : Perspektif Kepemimpinan dari Sudut Pandang Pemimpin Wanita Milenial. *SEIKO : Journal of Management & Business*, *5*(c), 24–39. https://doi.org/10.37531/sejaman.v5i1.1362

Saepudin, A. (2004). Problematika Dan Strategi Peningkatan Mutu Pendidikan Tinggi Di Indonesia. Jurnal Teknodik, 068-086. https://doi.org/10.32550/teknodik.v4i15.476

Sari, E. K., & Fikri Zufar, B. N. (2021). Perempuan Pencari Nafkah Selama Pandemi Covid-19. *Al-Mada: Jurnal Agama, Sosial, Dan Budaya*, *4*(1), 13–29. https://doi.org/10.31538/almada.v4i1.1106

Sheninger, E. (2019). *Digital Leadership, Changing Paradigm For Changing Time, Second Edition*. California: Corwin Sage Company.

Simatupang, E., & Yuhertiana, I. (2021). Merdeka belajar kampus merdeka terhadap perubahan paradigma pembelajaran pada pendidikan tinggi: Sebuah tinjauan literatur. Jurnal Bisnis, Manajemen, Dan Ekonomi, 2(2), 30-38. https://doi.org/10.47747/jbme.v2i2.230

Sumantyo, F. D. S. (2020). Pendidikan Tinggi di masa dan pasca Covid-19. Jurnal Kajian Ilmiah, 1(1), 81-92. https://doi.org/10.31599/jki.v1i1.266

Valerie, S., & Carole, E. (2009). *Women Leadership. Palgrave Macmillan, New York* (Vol. 84). Retrieved

from http://ir.obihiro.ac.jp/dspace/handle/10322/3933

Waerness, K. (1978). The Invisible Welfare State: Women's Work at Home. *Acta Sociologica*, *21*(1_suppl), 193–207. https://doi.org/10.1177/000169937802101s12

Wart, M. Van. (2003a). Public-Sector Leadership Theory: An Assessment, *63*(2), 214–228.

Wart, M. Van. (2003b). Public-Sector Leadership Theory: An Assessment. *Public Administration Review*. https://doi.org/10.1111/1540-6210.00281