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The Religiosity of Students in the Time of the COVID-19 Pandemic

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Abstract

This study aims to identify and produce valid information about students' religiosity during the COVID-19 pandemic. The research used qualitative research and a case study approach to students during the pandemic at their respective homes. The research was conducted by collecting data and information from nine respondents: five parents and four students in their respective homes. The results uncovered several problems encountered by students when learning online. In this case, the mastery of general knowledge and religion decreased. It greatly affected students' religiosity during the pandemic, especially praying and reading the Qur'an. Their prayers were not done on time and were not regular. The activity of reading the Qur'an also because there was usually no one to accompany studying at home. Teachers only taught online learning so that students could not follow optimally. Therefore, parents' role greatly determines students' success in learning. For this reason, cooperation between teachers and parents is required in supporting the achievement of student learning outcomes.

Keywords: Religiosity, Students, Pandemic

A. Introduction

Data from the Indonesian Ministry of Health for 2020 revealed that the number of COVID-19 cases in Indonesia in May 2020 was 25216 people, and 1520 people died. This number is increasing. The COVID-19 pandemic is also a problem for the world

(antaranews.com 2020; cnbcindonesia.com 2020; republica.co.id 2020; and kompas.com 2020).

For this reason, the government is trying to suppress the COVID-19 virus spread by making a policy in the form of the Enforcement of Community Activity Restrictions (PPKM). It asks people to carry out activities from home, such as working from home (WFH) and learning from home. These steps are taken because they are deemed safer if people are isolated at home and can slow the spread of COVID-19 (Liang, 2020:1).

The changes due to COVID-19 have changed the work system from direct interaction to an online system, thus indirectly forcing employees to quickly adapt to the new system, especially in using applications at work. Accordingly, it makes employees feel burdened with their work more than usual. It is quite illogical for employees if the workload of WFH is not lighter than the way of working before the pandemic because it requires time management skills and external readiness, such as household environmental conditions (Vibriyanti, 2020:1).

Moreover, the workload on female employees is greater because aside from working, they must also play a role as mothers, accompanying children to replace teachers while their children study from home. It will be a formidable challenge for mothers who work in the formal sector because it must be done simultaneously. In addition, mothers must do other work at home, such as washing clothes to cleaning the house. These works will be even more difficult if all family members are at home. If this burden cannot be carried out properly, many working mothers will choose to stop working. However, it is different for single mothers since they have no choice but to keep working, considering their status as the backbone of the family.

The COVID-19 pandemic has also brought a new world for educational methods. The teaching and learning process previously carried out face-to-face has shifted to online learning. Online learning uses the internet network with accessibility, connectivity, flexibility, and the ability to bring up various types of learning interactions (Sadikin & Hamidah, 2020:21). David Sikirit, on the official UNICEF website, reported on the relationship between online learning and the role of parents in Indonesia and the obstacles faced in learning from this. David Sikirit stated that more than 60 million students in Indonesia were temporarily out of school due to COVID-19, affecting their education in an unprecedented way (UNICEF, 2020).

Education in schools has not been able to answer the anxiety of parents and the community. Particularly, many students still did not understand Islam well, especially Aqidah, worship, and the ability to read the Qur'an. Thus, the morals of students have not shown good behavior. There are also many juvenile delinquency cases where the perpetrator is still a student.

Incidents such as theft, free sex, liquor, and others are symptoms of moral degradation, which is a problem, especially in Islamic education. With the pandemic, the situation is even more worrying. Students who usually get direction and guidance from teachers at school become less focused when they must stay at home and study at home. The teacher's role in guiding students cannot be maximized because all educational service activities in schools are carried out online, and teacher and student interactions are carried out indirectly. The role of the teacher is also completely transferred to parents at home to assist students in learning science and carrying out worship practices (Yunianto, 2020:1).

In fact, Islamic education is essential to be instilled in early childhood because children will grow and develop remembering what was taught to them. Therefore, parents need to instill religious values in their children. Religiosity is the internalization of religious values in a person. This internalization is related to belief in religious teachings, both in the heart and in speech. This belief is then actualized in daily actions and behavior. Glock and Strak saw that the religiosity dimensions include the following: first, the dimension of ideological belief; second, the dimension of religious practice; third, the dimension of religious experience; fourth, the dimension of religious knowledge; fifth, the dimension of consequences (Djamaludin Ancok and Fuad Nashori Soroso, 2005:71).

Therefore, the role of parents in educating children is urgent. Ibn Qoyyim explained that some of the damage to children is triggered by the ignorance of parents. They do not teach the obligations and sunnah of religion to children. In addition, they also neglect children from a young age so that children do not benefit from themselves and do not benefit their parents when they reach old age (Al-Jauziyah, Ibnu Qoyyim 2009:1-2). Imam Al-Ghazali also said that when children are neglected in their early growth period, they will generally become people with bad morals, such as liars, envious, thieves, like to play against each other, like to beg, like to do useless things, like to laugh, and like to act crazy; all these can be avoided with a good education (Al-Jauziyah, Ibn Qoyyim 2009:1-2).

B. Discussion

The type of research used in this research was qualitative, with a subjective approach. The subjective approach explains the meaning of behavior by interpreting what people do. Then, the method used was qualitative to produce findings that cannot be achieved using statistical procedures or quantification (Ghoni et al., 2020). Qualitative methods are also used to obtain in-depth and meaningful data, i.e., actual and definite data (Syarif, 2014).

This study aims to describe the religiosity of students during the pandemic. Participants consisted of several respondents willing to share their experiences, both from children (students) and parents as children's educators at home.

The method of collecting data in this study was an interview. The researchers conducted interviews, both with parents and children at home. Interviews were conducted individually and in a relaxed atmosphere at the respondents' homes. The researchers then wrote and recorded the conversations during the interview. Interviews were carried out within one week.

The findings of this study are to describe the religiosity experience of students during a pandemic. The data obtained from the interviews were analyzed thematically. The systematization process started with coding, checking meaning, and providing an overview of social reality. The research data validity was obtained by the triangulation method, both source and technique triangulation. Triangulation can be seen from the data obtained through interviews in the form of transcripts, data sources, information data collection, and field notes (Inom et al., 2020).

The results showed varied responses from parents as educators at home. Subject A said that during a pandemic like this, it was very difficult for parents to take care of their children's tasks from school and parents' work matters. Meanwhile, subject B stated that the child's condition became irregular when online learning. Children were sometimes negligent in their worship and should be reminded to perform prayers. Furthermore, subject C added that during a pandemic like this, children should continue properly supervised learning and practicing religion. Subject D added that the COVID-19 pandemic had forced parents to think hard so that they could be both parents and teachers for their children at home. They should also be able to be an example and set a good example for their children. In addition, subject E admitted that as a parent, he should spend more time with his children, especially to assist them in learning from home.

Apart from the responses from parents, the researchers also gained responses from children as students, which were also quite varied. Subject F said that he felt less interacting with other people when he was at home, and he also played with gadgets too often. Furthermore, subject G revealed that he was bored with online learning. Learning activities were only in the form of working on assignments from the teacher. Subject H also stated that he felt dizzy with the tasks that always piled up every day. He then released his tiredness by playing. Meanwhile, subject I admitted that he felt lonely because there were no friends to play with as he used to in class, who always prayed together after studying and recited the Qur'an in the morning.

The nine respondents who had given their statements and opinions are explained and discussed below. First, the learning process from home forced students to study remotely with makeshift facilities and infrastructure in their homes. Second, students were not used to learning remotely because before, they always learned face to face with the teacher. They were also used to being at school to meet, play, joke with friends, and meet their teachers. Distance learning then required students to adapt to changing situations and conditions they had never experienced before. Third, another impact experienced by students was school holidays that had been too long, so they became bored and wanted to go to school as soon as possible. Fourth, the social spirit possessed by students decreased. When at school, they could interact and play with friends and interact with their teachers, but during the pandemic, they were only with their parents and siblings at home.

In this pandemic period, religious education is also a challenge for teachers. Teachers could only educate students from a distance. Unlike usual, where teachers directly provided examples, guided, and reminded students, the COVID-19 pandemic had greatly affected the religiosity of students, among others, related to their obligatory prayers, becoming not on time, because when they were at home, their parents worked, so no one reminded them.

In fact, the cultivation of religiosity in students is through example/modeling, as Sheikh Abdullah Nashih Ulwan said in his book *Tarbiyatul Aulad Fil Islam*. It is explained that this method is an effective and influential way to shape children's morals. Here, the educator is an example of a figure in the child's view. Abdullah Nashih Ulwan also asserted that children will slowly follow the behavior habits of the educator, consciously or unconsciously, and will even follow the mental, feelings, speech, and actions visibly or not and whether they know (Ulwan, 1992). Regarding this, Allah says in Q.S Al-Ahzab verse 21:

لَقَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِي رَسُولِ اللَّهِ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ لِّمَن كَانَ يَرْجُوا اللَّهَ وَالْيَوْمَ الْآخِرَ وَذَكَرَ اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا

Meaning: "Indeed, in the Messenger of Allah, you have an excellent example for whoever has hope in Allah and the Last Day and remembers Allah often."

When Aisyah *radhiyallahu 'anha* was asked about the character of the Prophet *sallallaahu 'alaihi wasallam*, Aisha replied, "His character is the Qur'an." Rasulullah *sallallaahu 'alaihi wasallam* is an example in all things for Muslims. Thus, as educators, parents should set an example for their children so that children will imitate the good habits of their parents (Yunianto, 2020).

During this COVID-19 pandemic, parents who replaced the teacher's duties should remind students to pray, recite the Qur'an, have a noble character, and be obedient to parents and others. Meanwhile, not all parents could accompany them continuously because they were also busy working. Also, the teacher reminded and controlled the activities through communication tools only. It was then influential on the religiosity of students. Therefore, parents' cooperation, support, and role are essential for students' success.

Moreover, advice is needed because humans tend to be often negligent. Giving advice will open the soul and heart. Because of advice, many people then become good, return to the right path, regret their sins, and shed tears of repentance to Allah. Accordingly, parents should not get tired of advising their children. Allah narrates Luqman when advising his son in QS. Luqman verse 13:

وَإِذْ قَالَ لُقْمَانُ لِابْنِهِ وَهُوَ يَعِظُهُ يَا بُنَيَّ لَا تُشْرِكْ بِاللَّهِ إِنَّ الشِّرْكَ لَظُلْمٌ عَظِيمٌ وَإِذْ قَالَ لُقْمَانُ لِابْنِهِ وَهُوَ يَعِظُهُ يَا بُنَيَّ لَا تُشْرِكْ بِاللَّهِ إِنَّ الشِّرْكَ لَظُلْمٌ عَظِيمٌ

Meaning: And 'remember' when Luqmân said to his son while advising him, "O my dear son! Never associate 'anything' with Allah 'in worship', for associating 'others with Him' is truly the worst of all wrongs."

Further, without education and advice from parents, children's lives will definitely feel empty. When children had online assignments, they sometimes forgot their assignments and chose to play outside until they forgot the time to pray, memorize, and recite the Qur'an at home. The task of parents here is to remind and advise their children. The role of parents is crucial to saving children from falling into negative things. In times of a pandemic like this, parents should also always remind and advise their children so that children can become better in their daily lives. The pandemic is not an excuse for them to be lazing at home but provides many lessons for humans to improve their respective religiosity.

Several main character values must be developed based on the concept and guidelines for strengthening character education (PPK). One of the character values developed is religiosity. Religiosity reflects one's faith in God Almighty, which can be proven by the behavior of carrying out the teachings of the religion adopted, respecting differences, upholding tolerance, and living in harmony and peace. This religiosity value includes three dimensions: the individual's relationship with God (*habluminallah*), the individual with others (*habluminannas*), and the individual with the universe (environment).

In this case, the school is the most appropriate educational place for the process of general knowledge education and the cultivation of religiosity so that children will have a deep understanding and broad insight through education. Meanwhile, education at home with busy parents and limited knowledge makes the instilled education less effective (Raqqiqin et al., 2021). In addition, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the learning provided by teachers to students was not optimal because it could not be exemplified directly. It was different with parents who were always at home, who were always cared for by children so that indirectly, children would imitate what parents do in everyday life related to their attitudes, words, actions, and worship. Therefore, parents must be more careful and aware of themselves to be good role models for their children and their future.

Another problem experienced by parents when learning was done from home, among others, is the added cost of buying internet packages, thereby increasing the parents' expenses. In addition, parents needed to take more time to accompany their children when studying from home. They also should study again and help assist children in doing school assignments. Distance learning also requires parents to master modern technology and learn again from parents who did not understand what today's technology is. On the other hand, parents, who still had to work and a duty to accompany their children when learning online, took it out on their teachers. However, some parents also became aware and appreciated that with their experience, teaching just one child was very difficult, especially if the teacher had to teach every day with many students in one class.

Moreover, online distance learning requires teachers to adapt to new changes, likely affecting students in terms of general knowledge and religion. Another impact of this pandemic experienced by teachers and students is that they were bored because they could not interact face-to-face as usual. Thus, the COVID-19 pandemic makes parents have to divide their time well, so their children can study and carry out worship well.

C. Conclusion

Learning from home requires students to study remotely with makeshift facilities and infrastructure in their respective homes. However, sometimes, the facilities and infrastructure in their homes are inadequate because some students still cannot access online learning facilities. Not only that, but online costs are also a responsibility for them. Therefore, parents must be able to work hard to fulfill the facilities and infrastructure properly. Parents must also be teachers and good figures, so their children can imitate them.

Students are also not used to participating in remote learning. Thus, they must be required to learn to adapt to changes that occur suddenly. In this case, the ability of participants to understand the subject matter was greatly influenced by changes in the learning process from face-to-face to online learning.

Likewise, the religious practice of students has changed. Before, teachers directly provided examples, guided, and reminded them to pray, recite the Koran, have good morals, and others. However, the COVID-19 pandemic requires parents to replace the role of teachers at home. Teachers at schools can only remind and encourage students to do school assignments, including their daily worship activities, through communication tools such as mobile phones. These learning activities were deemed less effective because teachers could not directly observe the development of their students. The impact of less effective learning is not only on the mastery of the students' material but also on students' religiosity. Therefore, parents' cooperation, support, and role are vital for students' success.

Several problems were experienced by parents when learning was done from home. First, financial spending increased. Parents needed to prepare some funds for purchasing internet packages. Second, parents must take more time to accompany their sons and daughters when studying online from home between their busy schedules and completing their respective jobs. Sometimes, they had to study again and help with their children's chores. Third, distance learning also requires parents to master technology. Parents who have not mastered mass technology are required to master the technology so as not to miss school information.

Therefore, teachers and parents must establish good cooperation so that communication or interaction continues and supervise students properly and run smoothly. Teachers must also provide good solutions for parents and students, also not forgetting to provide support. If there are problems related to learning materials and religion, parents must be able to communicate them to the teacher. Learners must also be able to adapt learning from home to online learning and carry it out responsibly.

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