



## Multicultural Islamic Education in Encouraging Spirit of the Elderly

Triana Rosalina Noor<sup>1</sup>, Yaqub Cikusin<sup>2</sup>, Muhammad Hanief<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Islamic College of Annajah Indonesia Mandiri, Sidoarjo-Indonesia

<sup>2,3</sup>Islamic University of Malang-Indonesia

**ABSTRACT:** This study aims to reveal Multicultural Islamic Education in encouraging the spirit of the elderly in terms of enthusiasm and optimism, the power to fight frustration and group spirit through the existence of Multicultural Islamic Education. This qualitative research with a phenomenological approach was conducted at Griya Werdha Surabaya-Indonesia. The data were collected using in-depth interviews, observations and documents involving seven Muslim elderly people and three representatives of the leadership taken purposively.

The results of this study indicate that it has an impact on three aspects of the spirit of the elderly. In the aspect of enthusiasm and optimism, the elderly have a deeper spiritual closeness to God which has a positive impact on the elderly to have good behavior towards fellow elderly in their daily lives. In the aspect of strength against frustration, the elderly no longer blame themselves or those around them for the conditions that befell them. For the aspect of the spirit of the elderly to group, the elderly are encouraged to interact with one another and live a harmonious life in their daily lives.

**KEYWORDS:** Elderly, Islamic Multicultural Education, Spirit.

### INTRODUCTION

The aging process brings changes to human psychological conditions, such as the emergence of feelings of loneliness, loss, feelings of rejection, feelings of being disliked or even being indifferent in life. Socio-economic and cultural changes such as experiencing financial difficulties are not uncommon in the elderly (Poedjibudojo *et al.*, 2018). In the end, the elderly must begin to adjust to new roles in the environment (Mujahidullah, 2012). This adjustment is important in order to maintain the mental health of the elderly (Santrock, 2018).

Referring to the RI Law No. 13 of 1998 that the elderly is someone aged 60 years and over (RI, 1998). Age 60 years is the age that is considered as the boundary line between middle age (productive age) and old age (non-productive age), so that someone aged 60 years and over will be grouped into elderly age (Pudjibudojo *et al.*, 2018).

Minister of Social Affairs Regulation No. 19 of 2012 states that local/city governments or the community are allowed to provide social services for the elderly, which are carried out both inside and outside the orphanage (Ministry of Social Affairs RI, 2012). Social services for the elderly are quite diverse, one of which is the Griya Werda.

Griya Werda is designed to provide comfort for its residents through stimulating programs including religious mental development, social emotional development, physical strength and useful skill activities in filling their days while living there (Syamsuddin & Santi, 2018) and becoming a comfortable place. for the elderly to be able to live calmly and have a healthy mentality (Pae, 2017). Griya Werdha is also a place that can provide education to the elderly as a solution to the problems of decline experienced by the elderly (Noor & Inayati, 2021).

Griya Werda Jambangan Surabaya is a nursing home that has all the facilities and activities specially designed for the elderly. The elderly who live in the orphanage are invited to actively participate in the programmed activities. Managers prepare a number of activities such as religious activities, skill development, sports and other supporting activities so that the elderly remain enthusiastic about living their lives. This activity is given to fulfill the physical and spiritual needs of the elderly without exception (W/SIS/GWS/25-2-2020).

This activity is carried out as a means of establishing social relations between the elderly. This is because the elderly cannot be separated from living side by side with other elderly people as fellow residents with various social and economic backgrounds. The existence of differences in culture, traditions, characters and habits of the elderly before living in Griya Werda also affects the process of social interaction of the elderly (W/RAT/GWS/17-11-2021). Therefore, the provision of understanding about how to live a calm life without conflict, mutual help and tolerance is often expressed as the themes of religious activities being held (W/BAD/GWS/25-6-2020).



In response to this, the manager of Griya Werdha Jambangan Surabaya made Multicultural Islamic Education a means of developing social attitudes and the spirit of life for the elderly. Managers not only teach normative concepts in the teachings of Islam, but also package the values of Islamic teachings in a multicultural frame. Multicultural Islamic Education is a process of human empowerment that is free, but also bound by an agreement to build harmony together. Providing opportunities for the development of a multicultural society must be demonstrated through the willingness of each social subject to develop themselves, acknowledge and appreciate what others have achieved (Hasan, 2016). The concept of Multicultural Islamic Education is based on the view of cultural pluralism, namely a view which states that every individual or group in a society must still respect the existing culture. Multicultural Islamic Religious Education is a process of transmitting values, knowledge, attitudes and behaviors that are directed to individuals in society in order to respect each other's ethnic, cultural and regional differences.

Multicultural Islamic Education is carried out to provide understanding to the elderly regarding how to live side by side in peace and maintain harmony among fellow residents. Religious and spiritual needs are important psychological needs for the elderly. These needs will not only help the elderly in preparing for death but also help the social interaction of the elderly in carrying out life. When the elderly experience various declines in their psychological aspects, religious education will help the elderly to be closer to Allah SWT and socially. This is in line with some of their worldly needs starting to end (Jalaluddin, 2012, p. 111). In addition, these needs also help the elderly to be able to accept their condition, which is already starting to age and experiencing decreased function while remaining enthusiastic (Santrock, 2018).

Spirit is a mental, moral and emotional strength that forms one's identity which functions as a driving force to carry out daily activities (APA, 2015). Spirit becomes a fundamental part of one's activities so that it leads to the development of human potential and power by generating, animate, fostering a high level of desire and togetherness in carrying out their activities.

Enthusiasm is also defined as a willingness to feel that allows a person to work to produce more and better work results. Passion becomes a person's desire and sincerity to do his job well and be disciplined to achieve maximum results. There is a share of feelings and the desire to be active from one's self (Azwar, 2016).

Based on the concept of spirit proposed by Maier (1964) that spirit contains elements of enthusiasm and optimism, the power to fight frustration and group spirit. Enthusiasm can be manifested in terms of encouragement, interest, involvement, pleasure, effort and firmness of opinion (Rosenshine & Furst, 1971, p. 46). It is also indirectly related to high motivation. Individuals who have enthusiasm in their lives mean that these individuals have the drive to do their best work. Optimism is a condition that describes a group situation that does not lose its direction when faced with difficulties, there is perseverance, full of confidence and mutual encouragement between individuals. Individuals who have high spirits will not easily give up in the face of various difficulties that arise in their lives. The individual has the energy and confidence to see the future well, it can improve a person's quality to survive (Majorsy, 2007).

Conditions against frustration describe how individuals who have a high spirit to have an optimistic attitude when encountering difficulties in their work and life goals. When goals are not achieved, individuals will experience disappointment (Nelson, 2009). The group spirit describes the relationship between individuals and others. With the spirit of the group, individuals will help each other and not compete with each other to bring down. Success in others counts as group success. There is a process of comparing feelings, opinions and behavior with the group, so that all information obtained in the group will be used and applied in him (Bordens and Horowitz, 2008).

## METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach with a phenomenological type, which describes a person's general meaning of his life experiences in certain situations (Cresswell, 2015). The subjects of this study were three management representatives and seven elderly people who lived in Griya Werda Jambangan Surabaya. The selection of research informants was carried out by purposive sampling, namely with the criteria of Muslim elderly aged over 60 years, able to communicate well, classified as active in religious activities carried out by the manager of Griya Werda Jambangan Surabaya.

The data collection technique used by the researcher is using in-depth interviews, participant observation and document studies (Cresswell, 2015). Data that has been obtained from research subjects for further analysis singly. Researchers synthesize data into categories, themes and patterns from the data that has been collected (Ghony & Almanshur, 2017). The researcher examines the data collected by using the Cresswell phenomenological data analysis technique (Cresswell, 2015).



## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### *Enthusiasm and optimism*

Enthusiasm and optimism include how the elderly view themselves, their lives and their destiny. The elderly said that he now sees life as more valuable and is grateful for what he has obtained so far (W/S3/GWS/24-11-2021). The elderly are optimistic about the prayers that are said, because they involve the hopes and desires of the elderly for themselves, their families and those around them. A number of other wishes include the wish for a long life, a healthy body, lots of fortune, lots of worship, ease of suffering, meeting or gathering with family or friends, and living a safe and blessed life. Expectations for a long life and a healthy body are expressed for other purposes, namely using the remaining life to do a lot of worship (W/S1/GWS/14-11-2021).

Based on empirical data in the field, the elderly have enthusiasm and optimism in getting the happiness of life while living their days at Griya Werda Jambangan Surabaya. The elderly accept and interpret life by not blaming the situation, surrender to Allah SWT by routinely carrying out worship and activities as they should. Optimism is accompanied by ownership of the spirit and purpose of life for a better future and having positive relationships such as good adjustment, being able to interact socially and feeling happy that his life is going well. This can be done because the elderly have a driving factor that influences them to act. The existence of religiosity factors, a positive relationship with the environment, having a purpose in life, and an optimistic attitude encourage the elderly to rise from adversity (Noor, 2021). This shows that the support of the social environment is very important in providing support to the elderly for the spirit of living life in order to achieve successful elderly (Suardiman, 2016).

Enthusiasm can be manifested in the form of encouragement, interest, involvement, pleasure, striving for effort and firm stance (Rosenshine and Furst, 1971). Meanwhile, optimism is the energy and confidence to look at the future well, it can improve a person's quality to survive (Majorsy, 2007). Optimism is a positive and realistic way of thinking in looking at a problem. Positive thinking means trying to get the best out of the worst. Optimistic people recover quickly from temporary despair. Optimistic individuals are people who always think positively, and have a level of success that never gives up in facing problems, and they approach their problems with their own mindset (Seligman, 2006).

Enthusiasm and optimism are some of the many components of positive psychology that are usually associated with positive emotions and behavior and lead to the impact of good social relationships, free from stress and individual health (Daraei and Ghaderi, 2012).

Optimism is a commendable value and behavior that must be possessed by a Muslim. Optimism is an attitude that always has hope in the face of everything, as opposed to despair, that is, there is no will of heart and body to seek to believe in the grace of God. People who have an optimistic attitude will put their trust in Allah and continue to be kind to Him (Al-Hamd, 2002). Enthusiasm and optimism contain positive expectations in dealing with all things or problems. As a Muslim, you have become enthusiastic in completing work and giving strength in dealing with a problem. Islam strongly encourages its people to always be optimistic in living the destiny of life. This applies to all human beings, including the elderly.

### *Strength to fight frustration*

Frustration is a condition of psychological instability where there is a mismatch between expectations and reality so that there are needs that cannot be met. Frustration referred to in this context is a condition experienced by the elderly living in Griya Werda Jambangan Surabaya, namely the existence of psychological disorders caused by anxiety, loneliness, feeling of isolation, physical helplessness and so on.

Most of the elderly experience fear, anxiety, confusion and worry that one of them will come of death. Anxiety experienced by the elderly living in Griya Werda can be related to the arrival of death itself, whether it is the fear of the pain of dying or the fear of the torment of the grave that accompanies death. The elderly realized that death seemed to be near and was only counting the days. They hope that when the time of death arrives it can take place naturally and calmly. Besides that, he also hopes that the death experienced is not difficult, does not go through a long illness process, and hopes husnul khotimah (W/S3/GWS/24-11-2021 and W/S6/GWS/25-10-2021).

As is known, Griya Werda Jambangan Surabaya has prepared activities, especially religious activities. This religious activity has a role in shaping the attitudes, mentality and understanding of the religious life of the elderly to be carried out in daily life in the Griya Werda Jambangan environment. This religious activity has a positive impact on the elderly who need peace, especially for the elderly who experience death anxiety. The impact is that the elderly feel calm when they get tausiyah from the ustadz. The elderly who initially felt anxious, often complained, and despaired became more able to accept the situation and live patiently and



sincerely full of gratitude (W/S7/GWS/15-11-2021). The emergence of a sense of brotherhood is also felt to be growing after participating in activities initiated by the mental guidance sector, apart from being a means of adding religious knowledge (W/S1/GWS/24-11-2021 and (W/S2/GWS/13-11-2021).

The existence of the fulfillment of spiritual and religious needs that are constantly repeated in order to raise awareness that life is worship, not just a ritual but also to do good to others. This goal becomes a motivation for the elderly in living life and becomes a guide in their religious life (Daradjat, 2009). Therefore, all activities given to the elderly are aimed at getting closer to Allah SWT, obeying all instructions and avoiding all His prohibitions so that in addition to fulfilling religious obligations, they can also calm and reassure the soul (Suardiman, 2016).

Thus the motivation received by the elderly makes them submissive and obedient to Islamic laws which are the meaning of Islam. So it is clear, understanding religion and carrying out religious laws makes people closer to God, especially the elderly so as to make them have inner peace and live life with motivation, interpret life more positively and to help the elderly to be diligent and put their trust in Allah SWT, without forgetting good relationships towards each other.

### ***Group spirit***

The spirit of the elderly in groups referred to in this context is the encouragement of the elderly to establish social interactions and gather with other elderly people. This is because as they age, the focus of the elderly will shift to the need for rest and draw closer to Allah SWT. However, the life of the elderly cannot be separated from their social relations. The elderly still need to communicate and socialize with other elderly people, and so are the conditions that occur in the elderly at Griya Werda Jambangan Surabaya.

The interaction between the elderly, both between Muslims and non-Muslims, is getting better. The elderly are more able to be patient with other elderly behavior patterns that may be uncomfortable. The elderly also respect the beliefs and rituals of worship of the non-Muslim elderly so that they can reduce disagreements. The interaction between Muslim and non-Muslim elderly is not related to religious matters, but is related to everyday matters. Elderly interact and make friends regardless of religion (W/S2/GWS/13-11-2021).

In addition, the manager has also prepared positive activities so that the elderly can meet each other and carry out activities together. The goal is to develop a sense of tolerance and good cooperation among the elderly and also between the elderly and the management. Social interaction in the form of jointly carrying out religious activities, gymnastics, artistic activities and others. This makes the elderly become closer to each other thereby reducing the feeling of loneliness in them and their enthusiasm for life will increase. This is because, loneliness is a psychological disorder that is often experienced by the elderly so that it makes it difficult to maintain social relationships (Pettigrew and Roberts, 2008).

### ***Multicultural Islamic Education in Stimulating the Spirit of the Elderly***

Human life is the reality of the form of togetherness among social beings. As is known, humans are social creatures who in everyday life show the nature of mutual processes of interaction between them.

By nature, humans absolutely have a need and have the nature to interact with each other so that it is said that humans, the environment, and their lives are an interrelated link. This means that the elderly and managers must be able to interact and have good cooperation in order to achieve common goals by helping each other in the Griya Werda Jambangan Surabaya environment.

The role of religion is as a healing therapy for mental disorders. The role of religion in everyday life can fortify people from falling into mental disorders and can also restore mental health for people who are restless and anxious so that they remain enthusiastic about living life. The closer a person is to Allah SWT, the more worship he has, the more peaceful his soul will be, and able to face disappointments and difficulties in life. And vice versa, the farther people are from religion, the more difficult it will be to find inner peace (Daradjat, 2018)

Multicultural Islamic Religious Education plays an important role not only in the growth of belief and trust in the existence of a Creator that should be owned by an elderly, but also teaches the elderly to continue to interact with fellow human beings. The impact is an attitude of surrender to the power of Allah SWT which leads to positive attitudes such as happiness, pleasure, satisfaction and a sense of security when in their environment. The multicultural Islamic education that is delivered to the elderly in the form of advice, opinions or instructions is able to cure diseases that attack their souls. Religious education will encourage a person to fulfill needs that are not only transcendental spiritual but also basic needs as social beings in the environment (Baharuddin, 2007).



The use of religious education as a method of generating faith in Allah SWT and motivating to do good behavior in society not only empowers cognitive, affective and psychomotor abilities, but also exemplifies. This example is related to providing examples related to values, rules and behavior that are in accordance with religion through the behavior of one person or several people. This is important because this behavior will create a religious climate and environment in his life (Hasan, 2009).

These conditions indicate that the contribution of Multicultural Islamic Religious Education is to help individuals know, recognize and understand their own circumstances according to their nature, because in certain circumstances it can happen to individuals who do not know their true self. In other words, that Islamic Religious Education reminds individuals of their nature. In addition, it helps individuals accept their situation as it is, the good and bad aspects (Daradjat, 2018).

The activities programmed by the manager involve the active participation of the elderly and are carried out in the same place, so that they will always meet even every day. The impact is that the elderly will be very close to the manager and other fellow elderly and have become one family. The elderly do not hesitate to tell their complaints, problems they are experiencing and ask for solutions to the management. The existence of these activities will bring positive benefits for the elderly, namely being a means of gathering and staying in touch with fellow elderly people, making new friends, and sharing knowledge with other elderly people (Sulandari, Wijayanti and Pornamasari, 2016).

In principle, group interactions that are built through giving each other motivation aim to make the elderly still be able to live life side by side together. A sense of belonging to one another, where when one individual is having difficulty being helped by another individual. The process of cooperation that is built is not only providing motivation as part of moral strengthening, but other collaborations also take place. Such actions take place because they feel belonging between them. When the feeling of feeling extra helps others who are in need, then there is a sense of complementarity between them. This happens because in principle they feel that all of them are not in the same fate as living life together with the families around them. Elderly interacting and grouping with other elderly is a form of interaction that is carried out because it has certain goals. In principle, this goal is a form of mutual need to complement each other (Sobur, 2003).

This interaction process occurs because each of them feels that when they are faced with shortcomings, those who have excess will help. This condition is in line with the spirit of Multicultural Islamic Education to create harmony by making differences as a tool to develop oneself into a more obedient person and not out of nature. Being able to coexist with the diversity that exists in the environment, but still being able to live peacefully both within the group internally and externally from other groups (Syamsudin, 2020).

## CONCLUSION

Multicultural Islamic Education teaches about how to relate to Allah SWT and fellow human beings. The multicultural Islamic education provided has an impact on three aspects of the spirit of the elderly. In the aspect of enthusiasm and optimism of the elderly, it is shown through the enthusiasm and optimism of the elderly in fulfilling their vertical relationship to Allah SWT and fulfilling their horizontal social needs in daily life. The elderly have a deeper spiritual closeness to God which has a positive impact on the elderly to have good behavior towards fellow elderly in their daily lives. In the aspect of strength against frustration, it is shown by the ability of the elderly to accept their own existence and destiny which is lived with patience and gratitude. The elderly no longer blame themselves or those around them for the conditions that befell them and have to live in Griya Werda so that they now feel calmer in living the rest of their life without excessive anxiety, fear and feelings of stress and so on. The spirit of the elderly to group, is shown by the active participation of the elderly in activities that involve other elderly people. The elderly interact with one another and lead a harmonious life in their daily life.

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Cite this Article: Triana Rosalina Noor, Yaqub Cikusin, Muhammad Hanief (2022). Multicultural Islamic Education in Encouraging Spirit of the Elderly. *International Journal of Current Science Research and Review*, 5(8), 2816-2821