RAISING STUDENTS’ RELIGIOUS SENSITIVITY DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC THROUGH DISTANCE ISLAMIC EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

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Abstract
Students are the intellectual generation who will perform the future social transformation. Thus, it is necessary to provide them with Islamic Education as a foundation and initial step in carrying out their role. Even though living in the Covid-19 pandemic era, students feel that the presence of muallims who intensively guide and motivate them to deepen their religious knowledge bring them a good influence. This research has two aims: to know the process of Islamic Education Development and to determine the influence of Islamic Education Development on the students’ religious sensitivity. In conducting the research, the researchers employ a mixed method, i.e., qualitative, and quantitative methods. By quantitative, this research takes 168 respondents of new students of the academic year 2020/2021 who have conducted an online Islamic Education Development program during the Covid-19 pandemic. The respondents are taken with random sampling by distributing questionnaires through Google Forms. The results of the questionnaires were inputted into excel tables and processed with linear regression in SPSS 25. By qualitative, the researchers conduct naturalistic observation interviews with students and muallims. The results show a significant influence of the Islamic Education Development program (variable X) on the students’ religious sensitivity (variable Y) as much as 81.7%. In comparison, the rest, 18.3%, are influenced by other factors outside the variable X. The Islamic Education Development program during the Covid-19 pandemic is an internalization of religious values effectively and efficiently. Besides, this internalization is a way to achieve the University of Islam Indonesia’s goal, namely, to create students who will disseminate the Islamic message of Rahmatan lilálamin.

Keywords: Coaching, Islamic Education, Students’ religiosity, Covid-19 Pandemic

A. Introduction

Higher education is a formal institution that functions to internalize knowledge to students. Students are trained in a predetermined period and designed through a
curriculum based on the shared vision and mission. The success of learning in higher education institutions becomes the benchmark in shaping the students' character. Each university has its graduate qualifications according to the written indicators mentioned in its curriculum. These qualifications give direction to the policy-making and the expectation that the graduates can build a civilization in society.

University of Islam Indonesia (UII) is a higher education institution that represents Islamic values. This university's primary mission is to create ulil albab graduates who can disseminate Islam's message, Rabmatan lil’alamin. One of the university's attempts to accomplish this mission during the Covid-19 pandemic is to conduct the Islamic Education Development program as a form of Islamic values internalization to the freshman of the academic year 2020. This program provides a distinctive feature so that UII's students will not dichotomize religion and science with its motto "berilmu amaliyah dan beramal ilmiyah." (charitable science, scientific charity)

The Directorate of Education and Development of Islamic Religion organized an Islamic Education Development program to internalize Islamic values of faith, worship, and morals. This program is expected to motivate the first-year to study at UII in the spirit of Islamic values. Therefore, the Directorate of Education and Development of Islamic Religion organizes the program in an integrated, directed, and systematic manner.

To run the program, the Directorate of Education and Development of Islamic Religion recruited muallims. Muallim is an individual with the characteristics of educator, guide, and possessing a noble personality. The muallim works intensively as students' mentors. The academic year of 2020 is the first momentum of the first-year to deepen Islamic values through online distance learning. Muallim serves as a bridge between students and the university's mission.

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Students are the agent of change and the future leaders. To fulfill those roles, they should continuously enhance their capacity and capability to be excellent individuals who can benefit society, religion, and nation\(^3\). It is a real challenge for the first-year to adjust to a new life at university, especially with the unexpected situation of the Covid-19 pandemic. The first-year students who need intensive assistance can work online to grow and nurture motivation and religious values as the primary foundation in entering a new chapter of university life.

The research aims to find out how the Islamic Education Development program's process is conducted and its effect on the religious sensitivity of the first-year during the Covid-19 pandemic. Students need to get the general knowledge of the religion and get the motivation to disseminate the message of Islamic *Rahmatan lil'ailmin* and become *ulil albab* individuals who can perform *dakwah amar ma'ruf nabi munkar* as mentioned by Allah in Ali Imron verse 110.

You are the best of peoples ever raised up for mankind; you enjoin Al-Ma'ruf (all that Islam has ordained) and forbid Al-Munkar (all that Islam has forbidden), and you believe in Allah. And had the People of the Scripture (Jews and Christians) believed, it would have been better for them; among them are some who have faith, but most of them are Fasiqun (rebellious).

The Islamic Education Development program's main achievement is that the students can grow the awareness that the role of humankind in this world is to pray to Allah and to preach. Thus, they will be entitled as the best human being in front of Allah\(^4\). Therefore, UII tries to give the best attempt to conduct the Islamic Education Development program despite the pandemic. It is done considering the importance of internalization of Islamic values because the essence of education is creating individuals who can make use of their capacity for the welfare of the people.

### B. Literature Review


Kowalczyk et al. believe that the Covid-19 pandemic influences religion and faith. Amid the pandemic, numerous places of worship are closed. However, the study illustrates that 67 respondents stated that religion is the proper medium to deal with the pandemic. Interestingly, 73% of the respondents revealed that the pandemic had made their faith grow more robust.

Meanwhile, Pajarianto describes the relationship between religion, teacher, and parents toward the children's stress level during online learning. From the sample given to the respondents, it was found that religion was considered to a significant role in reducing the stress level of the children. In contrast, the role of teacher and parents were in the following position. It means that religion is a vital component in reducing the stress level of children.

Purandina and Winaya, in their study on distance learning during the pandemic, argue that this type of learning may foster character values in the students. They define character values as the values of religion, discipline, creativity, and independence. According to their research, this justification describes that students foster those values because the atmosphere of the family acts as a medium to encourage the students to achieve them.

Munjiat, who discusses the implementation of religious education at schools during the Covid-19 pandemic, argues that scoring for Islamic Religious education at schools mainly becomes cognitive oriented, ignoring the relationship between this subject and other subject has no relevance to social and cultural changes. During the Covid-19 pandemic, the perceptions have changed. The orientation of religious

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education becomes more practical, is connected to other subjects of study, and is close to cultural values in the society\textsuperscript{8}.

Syatar et al. state that there must be moderation in carrying out religious life during the Covid-19 pandemic. In their opinion, health should be the factor to prioritize; therefore, mosques should not conduct any religious rituals that generate crowds, such as Jum'ah prayer. However, this perception change requires further education so that religious activities do not neglect health values\textsuperscript{9}.

Aula highlights the role of religious leaders in breaking the Covid-19 chains. She explains that Indonesian society places religious leaders as role models in their life. As an implication, religious leaders are urgently needed to minimize the confusion and psychological burden resulting from social and economic difficulties during the pandemic. Furthermore, the religious leaders are also needed to act as information centers to deliver valid information on Covid-19. Thus, the patron-client relationship during the Covid-19 pandemic was influential to the effort of chains-breaking of Covid-19\textsuperscript{10}.

Besides, Ichsan et al. (2020) examine the relationship between Covid-19 pandemic and Higher-Order Thinking Skills (HOTS) in solving students' problems and pro-environmental behavior. The result of their research shows that online learning is more oriented on personal task completion. Nearly half of the respondents are content with their learning during the pandemic. Meanwhile, a quarter of the respondents admits that the learning process is not sufficient. Uniquely, nearly 80 percent of respondents admit that distance learning during the


pandemic is close to the environment. Students' tasks are drawn closer to the social condition of their surrounding community\textsuperscript{11}.

Concerning the religious behavior during the pandemic, Indriya explains that people had undergone a similar situation, infectious disease outbreak during the Prophet Muhammad's era. Responding to that situation, Islam teaches the people to possess four main characteristics. The first is to make the best efforts to avoid the disease by taking good care of the health, in this case, is by practicing a quarantine. The second key is patience. The demand to be patient when dealing with a hard time is repeatedly mentioned in Quran and Hadith. The next is persistence endeavor in facing the trials and obstacles in life. The last one is to say the prayer to Allah, hoping that the pandemic would soon over.

In addition to the previous study on Islamic education, more specifically on Islamic character education through school transformation, according to his research in a madrasah in Sambas, Suriadi emphasizes three points: changing curriculum and learning culture student management, and educator's management. During the distance learning during the pandemic, curriculum transformation positively impacted both teachers and students\textsuperscript{12}.

Meanwhile, Zhafira et al. illustrate students' perception during distant learning in the Faculty of Economics, University of Teuku Umar\textsuperscript{13}. There were several platforms in the learning process, such as WhatsApp, Google Classroom, Zoom Meeting, Google Meet, e-mail, and Edmodo. Among those applications, WhatsApp was the platform preferred by half of the respondents, followed by Google Classroom (37\%) and Zoom meeting (19 \%). Therefore, this paper will focus its discussion on the process of the Islamic Education Development program in UII,

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the role of DPPAI and the muállim in the program, and whether the online program makes any difference to students.

C. Research Method

This research applied both qualitative and quantitative. The quantitative method was applied to determine the first purpose of this research, i.e., the Islamic Education Development program's influence on the student religiosity during the pandemic by implementing linear regression. Meanwhile, a qualitative method was applied to describe the process of the program. As the researchers were directly involved in the Islamic Education Development program at the University of Islam Indonesia, a qualitative naturalistic approach was applied to this research. This research was initiated by the problems that occurred during the program (phenomenology). Meanwhile, this research is quantitative as it is based on the natural setting, the human instrument, grounded theory, inductive data analysis, and priority on the process.

This research subjects were the Directorate of Islamic Education and Development, Islamic Education Lecturers, Muállim, and batch 2020 students as respondents in filling out the questionnaire. The object of this research was the process of the Islamic Education Development program at the University of Islam Indonesia during the Covid-19 pandemic. The data collection process was conducted through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. There were three types of observation conducted in this research: participatory observation, unstructured observation, and group observation. The researchers conducted an in-depth interview with the board of Directorate of Islamic Education and Development (DPPAI), Islamic Education Lecturers, Muállim, and first-year students. The documentations are sourced from meeting notes, daily notes, photographs, Ulil Albab's curriculum, journal, curriculum archives, and other related notes. The research also aimed at describing the influence of the Islamic Education Development program on students’ religious sensitivity. Hence, a quantitative approach was applied by distributing questionnaires with random sampling to the
students who participated in the Islamic Education Development program. The data are then analyzed using linear regression with IBM SPSS Statistics 25.

D. Research Result

The research respondents are 168 first-year students of the 2020/2021 academic year who participated in the online Islamic Education Development program during the Covid-19 pandemic. The respondents were chosen with a random sampling technique by distributing questionnaires through Google Forms. The questionnaires' results were put into an excel table to be processed with linear regression in SPSS 25. Islamic Education Development program serves as variable X and students' religious sensitivity as variable Y, as shown in Table 4.1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 4.1</th>
<th>Variables Entered/Removed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Model</td>
<td>Variables Entered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Islamic Education Development b</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. Dependent Variable: Students' religious sensitivity
b. All requested variables entered.

Table 4.1 shows that the independent variable is Islamic Education Development, and the dependent variable is Students' Religious Sensitivity.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 4.2</th>
<th>Model Summary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Model</td>
<td>R</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>.904 a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. Predictors: (Constant), Islamic Education Development
Table 4.2 describes that the coefficient of determination shows an influence from the independent variable to the dependent variable as much as $R^2 = 0.817$ or $81.7\%$, while the other ($18.3\%$) is influenced by other factors than the variable X.

Table 4.3

**ANOVA**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>Df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Regression</td>
<td>2469.614</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2469.614</td>
<td>743.307</td>
<td>.000b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residual</td>
<td>551.529</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>3.322</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>3021.143</td>
<td>167</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. Dependent Variable: Students' Religious Sensitivity

b. Predictors: (Constant), Islamic Education Development

Table 4.3 on ANOVA shows a significant influence of variable X (Islamic Education Development) to variable Y (Students' Religious Sensitivity). It is proven by $F$ counting as 743.307 with a significance level of $0.000 < 0.05$. Thus, the regression model can predict the variable if there is an influence between variables X and Y.

Table 4.4

**Coefficients**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Unstandardized Coefficients</th>
<th>Standardized Coefficients</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Std. Error</td>
<td>Beta</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 (Constant)</td>
<td>6.97</td>
<td>1.155</td>
<td>-.603</td>
<td>.547</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Islamic Education</td>
<td>.887</td>
<td>.033</td>
<td>.904</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>27.2</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. Dependent Variable: Students' Religious Sensitivity
Table 4.4 shows that the output of this section provides an overview of constant value (a) as much as 6.97, while the regression coefficient value (b) is 0.887 so that the regression equation can be determined as:

\[ Y = a + bX \]
\[ Y = 6.97 + 0.887X \]

The equation above can be interpreted that:
- A constant value of 6.97 means that the student's religious sensitivity variable's consistent value is 6.97.
- The regression coefficient X is 0.887, which means that there is an increase of 1% of students' religious sensitivity value so that there is a positive effect of variable X on Y.

E. Discussion

The research result above shows that the Islamic Education Development program influences the students' religious sensitivity. It is proven by the significance level of $0.000 < 0.05$. Thus, according to Kowalcyk's study on the relation between religion and the Covid-19 pandemic, it indicated that religion is the right medium in dealing with the pandemic.

Islamic Education Development program is an effort conducted by educators (muállim) in a systematic and structured manner to internalize the students' Islamic values; therefore, they can foster a sense of religiosity. This program requires an effective and efficient strategy. It also involves several main components, namely muállim, students, curriculum, motivation, and evaluation.

The observation shows that the University of Islam Indonesia has conducted an online Islamic Education Development program during the Covid-19 pandemic. The process of fostering Islamic values involves an Islamic educator called muállim, who has competence according to Regulation No.14/2005, namely pedagogical competence, personality competence, social competence, and professional competence.
All mu'allim should possess useful pedagogical competence or mastery of Islamic material, i.e., aqidah, ibadah, and akhlak. The Mu'allim is said to have personality competence when he/she can always be a good example (uswatu hasanah). Also, mu'allim should have social competence, as he/she can understand the students' situation and condition during the pandemic. Hence, he/she can spread good vibes and motivation to the students. Finally, mu'allim should have professional competence, which means that he/she can master methods and strategies to instill the in-depth values of Islamic education to the student. The competencies will be the benchmarks of the program.

UII's mission is to generate devoted, ethical, and skillful Muslim scholars. Devoted means that there is a religious sensitivity to conduct good deeds and avoid harmful deeds. The result of studying at university is that the students should possess beneficial values to empower the community. Before returning to society, students take up knowledge and religious values during their study in the university. For that reason, UII equips its students with the integration of science and religion. The internalization process of those values is initiated and conducted by DPPAI.

One of the duties of DPPAI is to formulate a religious development program within Islam Indonesia's university. In this research, the researchers focused on the Islamic Education Development program for the first-year students. They become the main target of the development program to recognize and understand the vision and mission of UII. This policy direction is derived into DPPAI's vision and mission as followed.

The vision of the Directorate of Islamic Education and Development (DPPAI) is to uphold the aqidah Islamiyah and akhlaqul karimah in the

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social life inside and outside the campus. The mission of DPPAI is to conduct Islamic study and Islamiyah da'wah and conduct religious education that leads to the realization of religious sensitivity inside and outside the campus.\(^{17}\)

Religious awareness is the main gate in cultivating Islamic values. Therefore, the process of internalization of the values should be done holistically. Here, all the academic components are directly engaged in it. Spiritual coaching can be done in stages, starting from the basic to advanced Islam. In optimizing the internalization process, the students are grouped into three different levels, i.e., primary, intermediate, and advanced, based on the pretest they took before the program. Besides, the aim and orientation of the DPPAI are as follows.

Studying, preaching, and practicing religious education fairly and comprehensively inside and outside the University of Islam Indonesia lead to the making of a well-planned and comprehensive system. It then realized into a form of lecturing, coaching, and da'wah training as the embodiment of UII and DPPAI's vision and mission. Furthermore, this effort is strengthened internally by coordinating, monitoring, assessing, and administering the activities that support the creation of Islamic atmosphere inside and outside the campus.\(^{18}\)

Various systematic and impactful activities enliven the creation of the Islamic atmosphere in Universitas Islam Indonesia. The religious activities in this university become the spirit for the students to study. Students should enhance their capacity and capability. Possessing religious sensitivity is the foundation for them to be religious scholars.

Among the roles of DPPAI in conducting the Islamic Education Development program during the Covid-19 pandemic are Islamic Basic Values Cultivation, Islamic Basic Leadership Training, and Quranic Self-Development. All of them were conducted online. Furthermore, the program is a mandatory program for all new students. As part of the orientation program for the first-year students, this program

\(^{17}\) DPPAI, ‘Visi Misi Dan Strategi’ <https://dppai.uii.ac.id/> [accessed 9 February 2021].

\(^{18}\) DPPAI.
was carried out using premeditated and comprehensive principles. However, some obstacles occurred during this online program; one of them was the unstable internet connection.

The presence of the muällim as the first-year students' guide had contributed to the students' condition during the Covid-19 pandemic. The efforts of DPPAI in internalizing religious development programs were strengthened by the role and the attitude of the muällim, who monitored ten students in each group. The intensive communication of the muällim to the students served as the primary bridge of the Islamic Education Development program for the 2020 students.

The muällim's existence left impressions on the first-year students. One of them is giving the feeling of peace. In this case, it means that the students consider the muällim as a reliable person who can always motivate their daily life and religious life. Also, muällim could monitor students' worship, such as prayer, reciting Quran, and memorizing Quran. It is a momentum to internalize Islamic values to the students since the early semester. Under the guidance and motivation of the muällim, the first-year students can improve their religious motivation.

The students feel the caring personality of the muällim. It is proven that when the students did not attend the meeting, the muällim contacted them. This caring attitude becomes a strength that keeps the students participating in the program thoroughly, although students do not get any credit from joining this program. Reza Aditya, one of the muällim, stated that the first-year students during the Covid-19 pandemic need intensive assistance. Reza played his role as a muällim sincerely, and he felt happy when he could provide useful knowledge to the new students. He always started the ta'lim by giving motivation. Reza and his group used Zoom meetings for their ta'lim because this media is more communicative. Reza shared his knowledge about aqidah, ibadah, and akhlaq to the first-year students during the program.

Marshelina, a 2020 Accounting department's student, conveyed a deep impression and gratitude to the muällim. The muällim had spent some time teaching and guiding her always to remember and get closer to Allah. She hoped that the
muállim would always remember her, although the program had already ended. She felt delighted because of the assistance of the muállim during the online Islamic Education Development program. It is an indicator that the muállim has contributed to maintaining the student's mental health during the Covid-19 pandemic19.

Maya, a 2020 Management department student, expressed her gratitude for the presence of the muállim in her life. She has never met the muállim in person, but the muállim’s presence has changed her into a better person. From 168 respondents who participated in the program stated that 93% of the muállim changes them to have a better personality. It becomes an indicator of the formation of devoted scholars. The role of muállim during the Covid-19 pandemic has become a force in religious coaching for first-year students. Muállims acts as the bridge for the first-year students to explore, explore, and finally get motivated to study online. Muállim can build intensive communication with the students. Thus, it provides enlightenment for students to become better individuals.

F. Conclusion

The result of this research shows that there is a significant influence of the Islamic Education Development program (variable X) on the students' religious sensitivity (variable Y) as much as 81.7%. In comparison, the rest, 18.3%, are influenced by other than variable X. It means that the online Islamic Education Development program during the Covid-19 pandemic indeed influences the students' religious sensitivity. The students feel the role of muállim as a close person who intensively communicates and guides the students to deepen their religious knowledge. Muállim acts as a bridge for students to upgrade their religious knowledge through online learning (online ta’lim). The coaching program's strategy is conducted in a holistic, integrated, and systematic manner, referring to the vision and mission of DPPAI. The Islamic Education Development program should be continuously

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19 Marshelina, Pernyataan Mahasiswa. 28 January 2021
conducted. It encourages the students to enhance their capacity and capability to become a better person who can disseminate *Islam Rahmatan lil’alamin* principle.

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