

Islamic Religion Role to Maintain the Community Health during the COVID-19 Pandemic: the Efforts of Realizing Integrated New Normal

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ABSTRACT

Abstrak: dikhotomi ilmu umum dan agama mempengaruhi cara pemerintah dan masyarakat dalam menghadapi permasalahan pandemic Virus Covid-19. Masalah Covid-19 sekarang ini bukan sekedar masalah kesehatan, namun sudah meluas menjadi masalah politik, ekonomi dan agama. Terlepas dari manakah Virus itu muncul dan dari sisi mana orang akan memberikan komentar, menjadi tugas bersama antara pemerintah, masyarakat dan organisasi keagamaan untuk bersatu padu mencari jalan keluar dari permasalahan ini. Penelitian ini menggunakan Metode penelitian literature (*libaray research*) dengan content dan reflektif analitis. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kehidupan normal baru (*new normal*) atau istilah lain yang menggambarkan pola hidup pasca pandemic untuk berdamai dengan covid-19 akan mencapai dasar dan akar dari masalah jika dilaksanakan secara integratif. Yaitu melibatkan pedekatan berbagai ilmu yang didalamnya ada ilmu umum dan ilmu agama, agar betul betul dapat menyelesaikan persoalan Covid-19 dan tidak menimbulkan masalah baru.

Abstract. The dichotomy of common and religious science influences the government and community to manage COVID-19 virus pandemic problems. COVID-19 problems do not only deal with health problems but also include political, economic, and religious problems. Despite the virus' origin and the community's comments, the government, community, and religious organizations unite to find solutions to the problems. This research applied literature research or library research with analytical and reflective contents. The results showed that normal life or a new normal era, applied to describe the behavioral pattern after the pandemic, could reach the core and the roots of the problems with integrated implementation. The applied approach should include various science, such as common and religious science, to solve COVID-19 problems and to prevent new problem emergence.

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INTRODUCTION

The efforts of freeing from the COVID-19 virus require collaborative efforts from the government and the community. In this case, the government seemed not to be focused and accurate in applying policies and predicting the COVID-19 virus spread (Engkus et al., 2020). The focus is important to influence the effectiveness of managing the virus.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, community life could not run properly. Many parties had different arguments and behaviors toward behavioral, job, and religious patterns. These matters led to various claims or declarations (Rusyana et al., 2020). Moeslems also have various arguments and debates about the religious teaching practices for praying, worshiping, and behaving to prevent COVID-19 spread by maintaining the Islamic sharia conditions (Arifin et al., 2020). The community of a village or social media group would be broken because of the debates to show their religious teaching devotion. For example, two mosques located near different managerial systems would have different realizations. One of them would remain to promote Friday Praying, Five-Time Praying, and *tarawih* while the other mosque obeyed the government recommendation to sever the COVID-19 spread by not promoting religious activities at the mosque. The community perceptions turned into two understandings: science and religious understanding (Safitri, 2020). The survey of Campaign Managerial results, Change.org, Indonesia, Dhenok Pratiwi, found that the public behaviors of respondents to pray at home reached 93.6%. The other percentage, 6.1%, preferred to pray at worship places (Kompas Cyber Media, 2020).

These debates brought them into a 'truth-claim' situation. This situation indicates a situation of an individual group with the assumption that the group has the correct arguments by promoting the government's recommendation collectively. This argument and promotion included praying and having religious activities at home as the efforts to sever COVID-19 spread (Dahlan, 2010). On the other hand, the other group might perceive the government's recommendation as an incorrect decision. Thus, the group remained praying and having religious activities at the worshiping places, for example praying based on the sharia. They argued that this behavior could maintain religious harmony, *hifdu ad-din* (Al-Buthy, 1987). The group did not realize that the behavior could raise the virus spread, *fath adz-dzari'ah*.

The conditions showed the influence of religious teaching experiences by different sharia understandings on heightened anxiety and disunity. This atmosphere could break the people's unity and waste energy to manage and prevent COVID-19. Thus, in this context, the raising question is - how does the religious role

A. When Religions and Science Suspect Each Other

The COVID-19 pandemic has gained various medical explanations, starting from its definition and management (Alodokter, 2020). On various media, both unofficial printed and electronic media, specifically WhatsApp, Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook, many communities compete to find information and explain about COVID-19 to other individuals from their perspectives (Alodokter, 2020). They, with access to health experts, commented about the pandemic from health perspectives (Bisnis.com, 2020). On the other, those with political access shared the information and description politically. Those with economic access commented on the pandemic from an economic perspective (Bisnis.com, 2022). The same thing happened to those with religious access. They shared their comments from religious aspects. All individuals shared their perspectives based on specific aspects along with the consequences.

The common people were also active to get and share information. Some of them shared the information without any intention. The others wanted to show their existence by sharing news on social media or sharing their political knowledge and influence.

These responses were dichotomized (Safitri, 2020). Based on the science aspect, the responses led to conflicts among people with different understandings of the diseases. The science authority, explained by health science experts, explained that COVID-19 is a flu-type virus. Thus, the virus easily transmits from the droplet and infects other people directly from the air (Alodokter, 2020). This feature requires the implementation of a health protocol to sever the transmission. The primary COVID-19 virus protocols included social distancing, wearing masks, and washing hands. The implementation of the health protocol influenced the community life factors from various sectors. From the business and government sectors, they applied for Work From Home, WFH, to support the primary protocol - keeping the social distance and the social mobility restriction with various terms, programs such as PSBB (Media Indonesia.com, 2020) and Jogo Tonggo (Pemerintah Provinsi Jawa Tengah, 2020).

The consequence of health protocol on religious life brought various excellent government policies upon the consideration of health experts and religious organizations. They shared the policies that claimed the community was prohibited to promote their religious activities at worship places. For Muslims, this policy was announced by the Indonesian Ulema Council and Muhammadiyah. The religious organization structurally issued some formal policies based on government regulation and health expert consideration. In this situation, the government recommended Muslims pray at home, starting praying five times, *tarawih*, and *id al fitri*. The same matter also happened for large-scale religious activities (Menko Polhukam, 2020).

All formal activities from the government and religious organizations brought some consequences to the community. The government had mandated the traffic police, civil service supervisor, and organizational community to keep order in the community. This mandate was useful to limit community mobility by preventing public crowds (Kakorlantas, 2020). On the other hand, the religious organizational policies brought some consequences on the implementation of religious activities at worship places. Individuals agreed with the health expert's logic would close all activities at mosques. However, those who disagreed with the expert logic, they would deny with religious logic. These individuals began to suspect scientific logic because they thought the policies restricted individuals to pray at mosques, the houses of Allah. These individuals believed that getting closer to Allah, by promoting praying at mosques, would improve immunity. They began to suspect science because they thought the policies and the reasons were full of political and economic interests to separate the religious people from God. For the individuals, this situation weakened the life of religious people.

The religious understanding patterns were dichotomized into *burhani* and *bayani* approaches. *Burhani* approach refers to science-oriented understanding (Ahmad, 2020). The *burhani* understanding perceives anything, including the pandemic, always comes from the original cause. This matter could be thought of logically. On the other hand, *bayani* perceives anything, including the pandemic, will not bring any bad things, *madharat*, for humans because of the Grant of Allah SWT. Thus, they will pray to gain the Grant of Allah SWT (Ahmad, 2020).

This situation lasted for 5 months, from January to May. Unfortunately, on May 2020, COVID-19 cases did not decline. The trend increased. The health field suspected that the community did not obey the health protocol and became the primary factor of pandemic management failure. This matter worsened the pandemic time. Explicitly, the health field demanded anyone obey the policies and protocols to keep their distance, wear a mask, and wash their hands with soaps. Any negligence on these requirements would worsen the disease. One of the doers was a Muslim that did not apply the government's recommendation. The suspicion of science led to the diversity pattern.

This situation, suspecting each other between health science and religious logic, became a repeated problem that appeared in different countries (Hidayatullah, 2019). Therefore, this situation had to be managed to prevent lower productivity and disunity in national and social life. The situation put all parties at disadvantage and weakened the nation and the religion.

The Integrated New Normal Life

The new normal life offered by the government had not provided an adequate solution based on science aspect. In this case, science included health, economics, politic, biology, physics, chemical sciences, etc. The offered new normal life without considering the religious life does not provide the most basic solution. This matter became the temporal and fragile solution to maintain social, national, and religious life. This reality could explain the reason for the second wave of COVID-19 pandemic fear. Without a basic solution for all human life aspects, including physical and spiritual aspects, the solution would be only a partial solution.

The integrated new normal between science and religion science is the alternative to solving pandemic problems comprehensively. The integration is important because the problems deal with health, economic, political, social, cultural, and religious problems (Rifa'I et al., 2020). The government must involve religious experts to discuss the essence of diseases both from science and religion. Thus, they could find physical medicine for patients and spiritual care for the community behaviors to have improved immunity. The awareness of religious people in Indonesia should begin from the internal aspect and belief to behave healthily with the health standard. This awareness and practice could cure the physics and improve immunity. On the other hand, immunity with denial of the community will only lead to chaos.

Therefore, the new normal should be integrated to realize community, national, and religious strength and a strong and healthy community.

CONCLUSION

The dichotomy of common and religious science influences the government and community to manage COVID-19 virus pandemic problems. Despite the virus' origin and the community comment, the government, community, and religious organizations unite to find the solutions to the problems. New Normal life, as a term offered by the government, was useful to live harmoniously during this COVID-19. However, the realization did not reach the root of the problems. COVID-19 does not only deal with health problems but also economic, political, and religious problems. Therefore, a new normal implementation should be

integrated by involving various disciplines to manage COVID-19 problems and prevent new problem emergences.

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