Gerontology concept: Toward ego integrity through Taman Pendidikan Al-Quran (TPA) in order to second demographic bonus 2035

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Abstract

This research aims to know the role of Taman Pendidikan Al-Qur'an (TPA) in the achievement of ego integrity in the elderly in order to welcome demographic bonus 2035. The number of elderly is expected to increase to 41 million people in the year 2035, as well as more than 80 million people by 2050. This phenomenon is called a second demographic bonus. A large number of elderly could benefit countries and vice versa can be detrimental to the country depending on the State in preparation to deal with it. In the development of elderly at the age of 60 years and over, integrity is one of developmental stages in Ericson Theory when not achieved then will arise despair that impacts the lack of well-being of elderly psychologically. Gerontology is the study of the elderly problem so that the problems of the elderly that may arise can be avoided. TPA is a means for the achievement of ego integrity in the elderly. TPA is informal education, learning how to recite Al-Quran with implementing Islamic values. This study uses qualitative methods with observations and interviews on the subject of 3 female elderly victims of the eruption of Mount Merapi in Yogyakarta which currently follows the TPA activities. TPA played role in the achievement of the ego integrity of the elderly. The results of this research are to assist the elderly reach the TPA ego integrity. The elderly who have ego integrity can assist the efforts of the Government in the face of demographic bonus both as keeping the economy of the country in order to remain stable and can play an active role in the local community.

Keywords: TPA, Ego Integrity, Elderly, Gerontology, Second Demographic Bonus

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INTRODUCTION

According to government data, the number of the elderly at the present time has reached 18 million people and is expected to increase to 41 million in 2035 and more than 80 million people in 2050 (Haryanto 2015). The life expectancy will be above the age of 70 years so that the population of the elderly in Indonesia not only will exceed the number of toddlers (under five years), but could rank the fourth in the world after China, India, and America (Stiabudhi and Hardywinoto 2005). The second demographic dividend is when the number of the elderly has begun to be out of control. Such large number of the elderly will potentially bring many benefits if they are resilient, healthy and productive. However, making the elderly remain healthy, strong and productive requires a lot of preparation and support from various parties, namely by improving the quality of nutrition, sanitation, and healthy environment (Haryanto 2015).

Erikson said that the elderly who have ego integrity will accept their life condition as it is, meaning that they can accept the end of life itself, feel a deep meaning of life, be responsible and feel that their lives are successful (Stiabudhi and Hardywinoto 2005). The late adulthood theory of Erikson is about the elderly, starting from the age of 60 years until the end of life, and it is called ego integrity versus despair where ego integrity is a sense of ego integrity and sustainability; the ability to maintain a sense of ego, and the ability to not lose physical and intellectual strength (Feist and Feist 2014). Individual ego integrity will arise if individuals have a strong ego identity and have experienced the intimacy and experience of looking after other people or other things, and wisdom is the result of ego integrity turmoil and despair which become the elderly strength, where individuals have an active interest with no desire. With a mature wisdom, individuals maintain their ego integrity even though their physical and mental abilities have declined. Meanwhile, despair is hopeless, which to the elderly is manifested as...
disgust, depression, disgust at the attitude of others or other attitudes not showing any acceptance of the lack of their lives (Feist and Feist 2014). Elderly is the age where grandparents look after their grandchildren and other community members. Although the elderly experience a decline in physical and cognitive ability, they can still be productive and creative in different ways which may not be done when they were young (Feist and Feist 2014). Based on interviews with 10 elderly informants in the slope of Merapi Mountain before eruption, they said that they have not known how to read the Quran since they were a child until they grew old, and how to take a prayer properly. This indirectly indicates that the informants are less aware of the values of Islamic teaching.

When experiencing the eruption of Merapi, the informants were still in a healthy state and did not have any disease history; they only experienced hearing and vision loss and fatigue. The informants were forced to live at temporary houses which were quite far from their place of origin. Their social life is the same as before the catastrophic eruption where between elderly there is nothing problematic. However, they felt restless, anxious, and sad because they lost possessions, houses and livestock. A research conducted by Chatijah (Birohmatika and Diana 2012) about the mental health condition in Badung District, Bali, Indonesia showed that the elderly people in the area complain of having sleep disorders and not being able to perform their daily activities.

The elderly feel unhappy because of a lot of unmet needs and feel sad and worry about their environment. The elderly were unhappy because many needs were not fulfilled; they also felt sad and worried about their environment. Such problems can be minimized by integrating and internalizing their faith and religious teachings in their daily life. In other words, if the elderly are willing to explore the meaning of religious life, they might be able to face their problems peacefully without experiencing any psychological disorders (Birohmatika and Diana 2012). In addition, there were facilities and facilitators assisting the informants in learning how to read the Qur’an and exploring more about the religion. A very important factor supporting the informants in learning the Quran is a very high spirit from the informants even though they are unable to read the Qur’an properly.

The objectives and hopes of the informants in attending TPA (Quran class) are to be able to read the Qur’an fluently; to get peace, happiness, good health, and tranquility; to be given sustenance for life and preparation for death in order to live well in this world and hereafter. Through the learning of the Quran in TPA, the informants could memorize short surat like Al-Fatihah, Al-Ikhlas, daily prayers and five-time prayers. In addition, TPA serves not only as a means to study religion but also as a means of socializing. The informants felt some differences after attending TPA, such as feeling more peaceful and more content, having a lot of friends, being fond of reading, and having better understanding about the religion.

TPA is a class of learning the Qur’an where the students are taught to be able to read and write the letters of the Qur’an. Besides, TPA is also a place where the values of Islam are taught, such as sincerity, patience, gratitude, trust, etc. A study conducted by Krause showed that religion is associated with a sense of wellbeing and life satisfaction in the elderly age (Santrock 2012). The elderly who could earn the appreciation of the meaning of life from religion perspective could gain a higher self-esteem, life satisfaction and optimism (Santrock 2012). Religion can fulfill some psychological needs of the elderly, help deal with the impending death, develop appreciation of the meaning and importance of life, and accept any declines which are unavoidable because of age Daaleman, Perera, & Stundenski, Mcfarland (Santrock 2012).

Based on the above explanation, the researchers tried to describe the religious experience in shaping the integrity of the elderly who attended TPA, Huntap, Sleman, Yogyakarta. The researchers were interested in knowing the extent of the ego integrity of the elderly who attended TPA.

**LITERATURE REVIEW**

**Gerontology Concept**

Gerontology is derived from the Greek words Geros which means elderly and logos which means science. Gerontology can be defined as a branch of science which studies the aging process and the problems experienced by the elderly as well as the consequences of the aging process on the lives of the elderly and a group of community (Dewi 2012). Gerontology is the study of the problems of the elderly whose aim is to make the elderly and their families prosperous (Stiabudhi and Hardwyinoto 2005). Gerontology is also the study of physiological, psychological, social, cultural and economic changes in the process of aging (Yusuf 2007).
Elderly

Elderly is seen as a period of decline, in which the elderly experience some deterioration which occurs in them both physically and psychologically. The elderly live and interpret their elderly period in different ways. Some of the elderly people are able to see the significance of being old in the context of human existence, which is a period of life which provides the elderly some opportunities to grow and have a desire to do something which is meaningful to others (Sulandari, Martyastanti, and Mutaqwarohmah 2009).

Present Study

A research conducted by (Indriana, Desiningrum, and Kristiana 2011) states that there is no one who is not religious who falls under the category of being well-adjusted. This means that elderly people with a high level of religiosity in all its dimensions will be more adaptive, including in all activities and social relationships so that they will achieve social welfare. Religion can fulfill several psychological needs which are important in the elderly, to help them face death, gain and maintain a sense of being meaningful in their lives, as well as accept any kinds of loss which are unavoidable in the elderly (Indriana et al. 2011) showed that religious activities are significantly correlated with a high good-adjustment in the elderly.

Second Demographic Dividend

The demographic dividend is an abundant number of productive population in the working age (15-64 years) which constitutes about 60 percent, or reaches 160-180 million people in 2020, while the remaining 30 percent of people who are not productive (aged 0-14 years as well as 65 years and over) which will occur in 2020-2030 (Konadi and Iba 2011). In the perspective of demographic economics, demographic dividend is an economic benefit due to a growing number of productive populations so as to spur investment and economic growth. Many countries could become rich by successfully utilizing the opportunity related to demographic dividend to boost per capita income so as to achieve public welfare (Jati 2015).

However, Adioetomo (Jati 2015) stated that this brings a negative effect as well, namely a soaring number of old populations, while the transition of young age into productive age is not yet perfect. Regarding the current situation, Indonesia is expected to reach the peak of “demographic dividend” in 2017 until 2019 in the first wave and in 2020 until 2030 in the second wave of demographic dividend. This means that the composition of the population in the productive age 15-64 years reaches the maximum point, compared to that of the non-productive age 0-14 years as well as 65 years and over. This results in an increase in the number of potential labor force. However, it should also be emphasized that the demographic dividend will not bring any significant impact if the state only has minimal investment in human resources (human capital investment). Therefore, the demographic dividend can also turn into a wave of mass unemployment which will eventually increase the burden of the state budget (Jati 2015).

METHODOLOGY

This study used a qualitative method. According to Poerwandari (Birohmatika and Diana 2012), to get a deeper and more specific understanding of the phenomenon and to understand human beings with all their complexity as an informative creature, qualitative approach is the most appropriate method to use. The nature of this research was descriptive, in which the study is a deep description related to the process being researched or related to situations (Idrus 2007). The data were collected through interview and observation. These techniques were considered appropriate for the data collection because the informants were only a few people and in specific cases. The interviews in this research used structured interviews with open-standardized interview guidelines which were prepared and consulted with experts, who in this case were lecturers. The observations were in the form of participant observation. The interviews started with early interviews of 10 elderly people who attended the Quran classes in TPA, Huntap village, Sleman, Yogyakarta. It was then followed with follow-up interviews with three informants to dig deeper information related to ego integrity.
RESULTS

The results of the interviews and observations with the three informants indicate that each informant can achieve ego integrity. The first informant whom we interviewed was 75 years old who had no history of diseases, lived with children and grandchildren since the husband had already passed away. The activities of the informant were taking care of the grandchildren, cleaning the house and attending TPA. The informant did not feel burdened when raising her children and she felt that she had successfully raised them. The informant only wished to always remain healthy because she was already so happy and felt loved by her family. She was also grateful for what God has given to her. In addition, she also had self-acceptance by willingly reading the Qur’an even though she no longer had clear vision and could not pronounce the Arabic alphabets correctly according to the tajwid. Taking a prayer was what she did to prepare for the impending death.

The second informant was 74 years old who lived with grandchildren. She said that she faced difficulties when raising her children, but she was also pleased at the same time. She never regretted in the upbringing of the children because she felt that all her children had become successful. She worked by collecting woods in the forest and sometimes by making tempe. Although she felt that she no longer had as many daily activities as she used to, she remained happy that she did not feel like returning to the past. She could accept and feel grateful for her life. She expressed her gratefulness by taking a prayer and reading the Quran in TPA. She hoped that her children and grandchildren will get ease in earning money and in studying. However, she had an aspiration which she had not realized, but she was not burdened by it. She had a health history of high blood pressure, but she never complained and when the disease relapsed, she went to get treatment. She prepared for her death by worshipping and not feeling anxious when the death comes.

The third informant was 73 years old. She lived with her husband and had 8 children. Informant felt success in educating children, although educating children was not easy, but the informant enjoyed doing that. Informant also had to give advice to interviewer to be a child who could return the favor, and devoted to parents. She does daily activity with planting and caring chicken. She said that she has no specific expertise that is different from her friends, but she feels satisfied with her life. She hopes to be able to perform the Hajj. In the study informant has very high spirit in reading the Qur’an. She said that she knew how to read the Koran in TPA. In addition, she did not forget to prepare for her death to pray hard way.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The results of the follow-up interviews and observations of the three informants who were 73-75 years old showed that they were successful in raising their children, they had no regrets in raising the children, remaining productive and hard-working, feeling loved by their families, accepting and feeling happy with their lives, and being grateful for their lives. These things make the three informants feel satisfied with their lives, never complain, and also not feel like returning to their youth. They express their gratefulness by applying what is taught in TPA, such as praying, reading the Quran, reciting dzikir, and taking a prayer. They also express their acceptance on the impending death, and make preparations for this by worshipping. One of them even gave advices to the researchers on how to become a child who could return the favor of parents. Finally, they all feel that their lives have been in accordance with what they want.

These three informants still actively participate in TPA. Regarding TPA, they have the same experience i.e. it is their first time attending TPA in their lifetime to learn to read and memorize the Quran and study Islam. This is because there was no one who taught the Qur’an in their past neighborhood. Unlike Huntap (the housing provided by the government for the victims of Merapi eruption), there are facilities and facilitators assisting the informants in learning to read the Qur’an and study religion.

Due to the existence of TPA, the three informants are able to know the purpose of life. TPA facilitates the informants to make their lives more meaningful, prosperous and happy. It can be seen from the results of the first interviews, i.e. the reason why the informants attend TPA is to obtain tranquility, happiness, and health; to be given sustenance; and to prepare for the wellbeing in the world and the hereafter. (Indriana et al. 2011) says that religious activity is significantly associated with a higher good-adjustment in the elderly. All religious people
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fall into the category of being well-adjusted. This means that the elderly with a high level of religiosity in all its dimensions are more adaptive, including in all activities and social relations. Therefore, these elderly will achieve social welfare.

Religion can fulfill several psychological needs which are important in the elderly, help them face death, gain and maintain a sense of being meaningful in their lives. This theory supports the result of this research in which the activities of TPA can make the elderly reach the stage of ego integrity.

According to Erikson and Kivnick (Papalia, Olds, and Feldman 2008), the highest achievement in the elderly is their ego integrity which is an achievement which is based on the reflection of one’s way of life. The eighth and last stage of the human life span is ego integrity versus despair; the elderly need to evaluate, accept their lives, and accept death. The results of the seven previous stages: the elderly try to achieve a feeling of coherence and ego integrity rather than feeling of despair because of the inability to do anything which is different from the past. People who are successful in these last tasks will gain a sense of meaningfulness of their lives in a higher social level (Papalia et al. 2008).

Based on the theory of ego integrity, it can be concluded that the three informants have ego integrity. This achievement is inseparable from the role of TPA as a facility for the elderly to learn the Quran and the religion of Islam which can improve the religiosity of the elderly. Such religiosity makes the elderly reach the stage of ego integrity because after learning in TPA, the elderly may reflect on their lives, have a purpose and meaning in life, feel more peaceful, grateful, happy in their daily productivity, and prepare for the impending death. All those things are the characteristics of the elderly who achieve ego integrity.

Ego integrity achieved by the elderly can cope with the second demographic dividend which will be faced by Indonesia in 2035. In the second demographic dividend, there is an increasing number of the elderly people. This is the biggest job of the current and future government regarding how to create programs which can make its population more productive so that they can become a driving force of development, especially for the elderly. The elderly who have despair cannot be productive, and eventually only become a burden for the state. Some of the forms of the burden are: the government should allocate substantial funds for the welfare of the elderly in which the funds can actually be allocated for more useful sectors, such as education, technology, and industry. Another negative impact is that they will experience a change in their social roles in the society. This may possibly lead to discrimination and isolation by the surrounding environment to the elderly. The elderly with despair also tend to experience a change in psychosocial aspects and emotional instability, such as getting more easily offended and irritable (sensitive), controlling and prohibiting because of having fear of losing (possessive).

Besides, this research is expected to contribute to the development of science, especially in psychology, and to provide information and insights related to the elderly, particularly on improving the ego integrity of the elderly as an attempt to deal with the second demographic dividend.

The conclusion of this research is that the TPA can help elderly in achieving ego integrity, based on research (Indriana et al. 2011) said that religious activities are associated significantly with high adaptability in the elderly. People with high religiosity entered the category of well-adjusted that can help elderly to be more adaptive to activities and included in all social fields, so that older people can achieve the social welfare. So the high religiosity can make the elderly obtain social welfare, with a prosperous elderly then the ego integrity is achieved. With the ego integrity of the elderly will become a productive age and can help the country’s economy in the face of second demographic bonus. However, it will not be realized if the elderly get no support facilities to help elderly gain prosperity.

REFERENCES


