

Interaction of Indonesian Muslims with the Qur'an at the Great Mosque of Baitul Makmur South Korea

Mahlulatul Mufidah, S.Ag.^{1,*}

^{1*}Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University Jakarta

Corresponding Author; E-mail: lula.mufiid@gmail.com^{1*}

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Abstract

South Korean citizens are still very unfamiliar with the presence of Islam, but in the midst of this isolation, Muslim citizens try to stay close to the Qur'an and carry out worship as a Muslim. As done at the Baitul Makmur Grand Mosque, Daegu City. Therefore, the author focuses this research on how the purpose, form, and practice of their interaction with the Qur'an. What they have learned from the Qur'an has an impact on their activities in living life in a Muslim minority country. In addition, there are also obstacles experienced by Muslim citizens in carrying out religious life, such as the absence of worship facilities in the work and lecture environment, limited time, few religious leaders, and a culture of life that is not in accordance with the teachings of Islam. This research is field research. The data collection method carried out is by means of interviews, observations, and documentation. In this study, the author uses a qualitative approach. The object of this research is Muslim citizens who are worshippers at the Baitul Makmur Grand Mosque which is divided into 3 groups, namely those who continuing their education, working and also getting married.

The results of this study, the author found that the interactions carried out by Muslim citizens have a great impact on their daily lives. Forms of interaction such as reading and studying, both individually and communally, have an impact on Muslim citizens. Activities carried out include reading selected surahs, tadarus Al-Qur'an, studying the Qur'an together which is carried out through routine activities of the mosque. The conclusion of the research conducted by the author includes: the purpose of Muslim citizens interacting with the Qur'an is to increase spiritual strength, as a guide, and an effort to study the Qur'an. The impact felt by Muslim citizens is the theological impact that regulates the relationship between humans and Allah, the psychological

impact that feels calm, and the social impact by trying to show the good side of Islam to the people of South Korea.

Keywords: Interaction, Indonesian Muslims, Al-Qur'an, Muslim Minorities.

Introduction

South Korea's Ministry of Safety and Public Administration said that as of December 31, 2022, the number of registered residents in South Korea reached 51.4 million people. According to the U.S. Department of State's 2016 Korea Statistical Information Service Census, about 56% of the population of South Korea is not affiliated with any religion or is not religious. Of the 44% of the population who embrace a religion, 45% are Protestant Christians, 35% are Buddhists, 18% are Roman Catholics, and 2% are in other categories (Won Buddhism, Confucianism, Jeongsando, Cheondogyo, Daejonggyo, Daesun Jinrihoe, Judaism, and Islam). However, in 2023 there will be changes, although not significant. About 52% is not affiliated with any religion, Christianity 32%, Buddhism 14%, and still 2% are in other categories. Based on other sources, namely data released by the Korea Muslim Federation in 2017, the number of Muslims reached 200,000 people, including foreigners and locals. Until now there is no latest data and information on the exact number of Indonesian Muslims in South Korea.

Muslims in South Korea are still dominated by immigrants from various countries such as Indonesia, Malaysia, Turkey and Pakistan. Meanwhile, Muslims from South Korea's indigenous population are still very minimal. The reasons for Muslim immigrants to stay in South Korea include continuing their education, working and also getting married. These three groups are the object of the author's research.

Living in a Muslim-majority country does not necessarily make us able to become a devout Muslim. Moreover, in Muslim minority countries, there are many temptations and difficulties that must be faced. However, in living this life, of course, we are guided by the Qur'an. The Qur'an is the words of Allah SWT., which contains instructions and sharia for humans to get the right path. The Qur'an functions as a source of Islamic teachings, as well as the basis for human guidance in thinking, doing and doing deeds.

The words of Allah SWT., in Qs. al-Isrā'/17: 9.

إِنَّ هَذَا الْقُرْآنَ يَهْدِي لِلَّتِي هِيَ أَقْوَمُ وَيُبَشِّرُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ الَّذِينَ يَعْمَلُونَ الصَّالِحَاتِ أَنَّ لَهُمْ أَجْرًا كَبِيرًا

It means: "Indeed, this Qur'an gives guidance to the straightest (path) and gives good news to the believers who do good deeds that for them there is a great reward." (Qs. al-Isrā'/17: 9)

Living in South Korea is certainly not easy for Muslims. First, racist acts because of different races and adherents from religious minorities. Second, there are few opportunities and facilities to worship. Third, difficulties in getting job opportunities starting from the placement of low positions such as labor, small salaries, unfair treatment, and even often found rough treatment experienced by foreign workers in factories. In addition to racist actions and difficulties in worship, of course, Muslims also face difficulties in terms of consuming daily food. There are a lot of food and beverage products that contain pork and alcohol. So it will be much safer if a Muslim cooks for daily eating purposes.

However, as we know that the mercy of Allah SWT., will descend on those who believe in the existence of God, as well as believe and apply it in their daily lives. The grace given by Allah SWT., in the form of help, sustenance, health and so on for people who protect themselves from bad behavior. On the contrary, punishment will overshadow a person who disbelieves, is ungrateful and does not protect himself from a rotten and evil heart. The Qur'an is a blessing for the believers that can eliminate various kinds of diseases in the heart such as doubt, hypocrisy, polytheism and heresy. The Qur'an is also a blessing that leads to the desire to seek goodness.

As stated in Qs. al-Isrā'/17: 82.

وَنُنَزِّلُ مِنَ الْقُرْآنِ مَا هُوَ شِفَاءٌ وَرَحْمَةٌ لِّلْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَلَا يَزِيدُ الظَّالِمِينَ إِلَّا خَسَارًا

It means: "And We have sent down from the Qur'an (something) which is an antidote and mercy for those who believe, while for those who are unjust (the Qur'an) it will only add to the loss." (Qs. al-Isrā'/17: 82.)

The Qur'an is a guide and grace for Muslims everywhere, including in Muslim minority countries such as South Korea. However, the meaning of the Qur'an in life depends on the

individual Muslims themselves, as well as how the meaning is actualized in their daily lives. This is certainly influenced by several factors such as the form of individual interaction with the Qur'an, the intensity of individual interaction with the Qur'an, knowledge and understanding of the meaning or meaning of the Qur'an, and so on.

In addition to the above factors, the religious program at the author's research site, namely the Baitul Makmur Grand Mosque, also affects the pattern and form of interaction of worshippers with the Qur'an. PCI-NU and Fatayat NU South Korea, which are integrated with mosques, also take a role in supporting the spirit of religiosity of Indonesian citizens. Therefore, it is from this background that the author is interested in conducting deeper research.

Methodology

In this study, the author uses a qualitative approach with the nature of field research, which is a type of research that produces descriptive data in the form of written or oral words from the observed object which is carried out directly on the object being studied. Meanwhile, the method used is a descriptive form, which is a study that describes the interaction of Indonesian Muslims with the Qur'an at the Baitul Makmur Grand Mosque, Daegu City, South Korea. This research is included in field research, which is research conducted in a place or location that is chosen to research or investigate something that happens in that place. This research was carried out directly into the field to obtain the necessary information in order to obtain accurate results.

Results and Discussion

Purpose, Form, and Process of Interaction Practice

From the results of observations and interviews conducted, there are various interaction objectives obtained from the informants. The purpose of the interaction in question is the reason why the informants interact with the Qur'an, such as attending studies or independent worship activities. In this case, the author divides them into three groups, namely the group of informants who aim to increase spiritual strength, the group that aims to get life guidance and the group of informants who aim to meet social needs. The three groups also have their own arguments that strengthen their goals.

First, a group that aims to increase spiritual power. One of the informants who is a doctoral degree student, MIM explained that living in South Korea is certainly not as easy as in Indonesia. Unsupportive environmental influences sometimes keep humans away from religion. Therefore, religious activities such as holding recitation are needed to increase faith or spiritual strength in Muslim minority countries. According to him, studying the Qur'an can help him not to fall into bad things, as well as misunderstandings and plunge. "So with religious activities such as reciting (Qur'an), it makes me balance, between intellectual, spiritual, and emotional strength."

From the experience of other informants, PE also explained that with efforts to continue to interact with the Qur'an and learn it, it can support faith to remain firm and unwavering. Therefore, studying the Qur'an is needed to be a guide while living in a Muslim minority country such as South Korea. The same thing was conveyed by IF, according to him the Qur'an keeps him from being tempted by worldly things while living in South Korea.

Second, a group that aims to get life guidance. The Qur'an is a guide for those who are devout, in the Qur'an there is a guide to the right way of life towards devotion to Allah SWT. and the Qur'an will be a guide when read and practiced. In Qs. al-A'raf/7:52 Allah SWT., said:

وَلَقَدْ جِئْنَاهُمْ بِكِتَابٍ فَصَّلْنَاهُ عَلَىٰ عِلْمٍ هُدًى وَرَحْمَةً لِّقَوْمٍ يُؤْمِنُونَ

Meaning: Indeed, We have brought to them the Book (the Qur'an) which We have explained in detail on the basis of knowledge as guidance and mercy for those who believe. (Qs. al-A'raf/7: 52)

This is in line with the results found from several informants, namely making the Qur'an a guide to life which also explains the commandments and prohibitions in Islam. With the Qur'an, they feel a more purposeful life. Even one of the informants said that if humans are the vehicle of life, then the Qur'an is like a guidebook. Another informant also said that the Qur'an is considered a guide to life by the informant because it has laws that regulate life, containing the prohibitions and commands of Allah SWT.

In the Qur'an, the commands and prohibitions that must be obeyed by every Muslim are explained. As conveyed by one of the students at one of the universities in Daegu City, according to him, the Qur'an is a guide to know the correct procedure for worship. "Studying the Qur'an is

important because we live in this world with the goal of worshiping Allah SWT. So the Qur'an is one of the guidelines for how to worship."

Third, the group of informants who aim to meet social needs. One of the informants admitted that social interaction was one of his goals to attend the recitation program held by the mosque, chatting with fellow Muslims especially with fellow Indonesian citizens. "Every weekend there is a program at the mosque, so it is an opportunity to meet Indonesian people. Then if there is lunch together. So I want the weekend time to be spent interacting with the people of Indonesia in South Korea."

Besides to the purpose of interaction, of course, there are various forms of interaction carried out by informants. The existence of a routine program held by the Baitul Makmur Grand Mosque also helps Indonesian citizens to stay close to the Qur'an. From the observations made by the author, Indonesian citizens prefer to carry out religious activities together. This can strengthen ukhuwah between fellow Muslims, especially when in a Muslim minority country such as South Korea. The author also divides it into two groups, namely reading and studying.

First, the informants read the Qur'an both individually and communally. Some informants routinely recite selected surahs on certain nights, such as surah Qs. al-Fātiḥah/1, Qs. al-Kahf/18, Qs. Yāsīn/36, Qs. al-Mulk/67, Qs. al-Wāq'ah/56. This is based on the belief that reading the selected letters can get benefits from each letter. For example, reading surah al-Kahfi, consciously or not, his heart feels calm when he has read this surah. The recitation of surah al-Kahfi also aims to protect oneself from the slander of the Dajjal in the last days. Another example is the recitation of surah al-Wāq'ah which is widely believed to be a useful surah to avoid poverty and difficulties as well as to facilitate the earning of livelihood. Many scholars advocate reciting surah al-Wāq'ah over and over again.

In addition, many informants also do tadarus al-Qur'an, reading from the beginning of the surah, namely al-Fātiḥah to the last surah an-Nās. One of the informants explained that he felt that by reciting the Qur'an it could be a testament so that his prayers and wishes would be granted by Allah SWT. Tadarus al-Qur'an which is carried out in mosques is also usually accompanied by reciting salawat, such as barzanji, diba'i, simtudduror, burdah, etc. Another advantage of reading the Qur'an is that there are informants who previously could not read the Qur'an and then became more fluent after participating in the recitation program at the mosque.

Second, after the author has analyzed, the informants who study the Qur'an individually use two methods, namely reading translations and listening to lectures. The informant who reads this translation certainly has the Qur'an with an Indonesian Language translation. As the one of the information does, she reads the translation of the Qur'an with the aim of understanding the instructions that Allah has given. This is also done by other informants, according to her the Qur'an is a guideline for life for those who really understand its contents. Therefore, she also read the translation of the Qur'an.

Moreover, since there are few religious leaders in South Korea, many of the informants use digital media as access to increase religious knowledge. MS said that currently to learn related to religious science, there is no need to meet with direct teachers. In an era with technological advances like today, it is very possible to learn through digital media. According to him, the most important thing is caution when receiving information. "We learn religious science, we don't have to meet the person directly. It can be on a cell phone, the important thing is that if people want to learn, it must be from the heart, it must be intentional."

Of course, there are also studies that are carried out communally in mosques because mosques are information centres for Koreans who want to learn Islam. Some mosques in South Korea provide free reading materials for those who want to learn Islam. In the Great Mosque of Baitul Makmur itself, there are many forms of study, such as weekly, monthly with other mosques, and annual events of all mosques in South Korea.

Impact of Interaction

Interaction with the Qur'an has an impact that includes theological, psychological, and social aspects. Theologically, the Qur'an serves as a guide to worship that brings us closer to Allah and forms the foundation of the beliefs of Muslims. The Qur'an is also a guideline for life, providing guidance on the afterlife, and motivating Muslims to live their lives in accordance with His teachings. The importance of reading the Qur'an as an act of worship becomes clear in shaping religious understanding, strengthening spirituality, and guiding the daily behaviours of Muslims. This is as conveyed by one of the informants, that knowing the content of the Qur'an can be a guide for Muslims towards the last day. Regarding having life limits, another informant explained that by learning what is commanded in the Qur'an, you can protect yourself from vices. "Learning what the Qur'an commands is very important as a boundary."

From a psychological perspective, reading the Qur'an provides calmness, copes with stress, and improves mental well-being. Research conducted by a psychiatrist named Dr. al-Qadhi has been corroborated by a study presented at a North American Islamic medicine conference in 1984. In the report submitted at the conference, it was stated that the Qur'an has been proven to provide up to 97% tranquillity to those who listen to it. The impact of listening to the Qur'an reading involves reducing the level of depression and sadness, providing peace of mind, and protection against various diseases. Dr. al-Qadhi conducted this research with the support of the latest electronic equipment to measure blood pressure, heart rate, muscle resistance, and skin resistance to electrical currents. This was also confirmed by the informants who felt calm after reading the Qur'an.

Meanwhile, from a social perspective, interaction with the Qur'an forms ethical and moral norms in society and strengthens social bonds in the Muslim community. Reading the Qur'an can form morality and ethics in society. The values contained in the Qur'an, such as justice, honesty, and compassion, can be the foundation for good social behavior. This can create a society that is more aware of religious norms, generate positive social interactions, and reduce harmful behavior. One of the informants revealed that he wanted to show the good side of Islam to the people of South Korea, in accordance with the guidance and recommendations in the Qur'an. This is expected to remove the bad stigma of local residents against the existence of Muslims.

Holistically, these interactions not only shape religious beliefs, but also contribute positively to the well-being of individuals and shape social character and behavior. The closeness between a human being to the Qur'an and all its interactions will trigger a blessing value. Similarly, when a servant is close to his Lord, it will be easier to get the opportunity for blessings from Allah the Giver of Blessings. For example, in the evidence of the blessings of the Qur'an, which can be felt, the more benefits and uses are obtained and inexhaustible when studied by humans, both Muslims themselves and non-Muslims.

Implications in Religiosity

The study of the Qur'an can be a tool to educate and explain Islamic values to non-Muslims, open up space for interfaith dialogue, and encourage tolerance in a heterogeneous society. However, at the same time, it can create a deeper awareness and understanding of Islamic

religious norms within a cultural and legal framework that may be different. Overall, understanding the Qur'an in Muslim minority countries can contribute to the formation of religious identity, interfaith relations, and harmony in diverse societies.

"Because in Korea it is rare for people to know Islam, and the sentiment may be that in some parts of the world it is still sensitive to Islam. So, I have more pressure to always show that Muslims are also good." The challenge is certainly not easy, how does a Muslim educate the people of South Korea regarding their views on Islam.

In addition, the lack of Dai is also a challenge that has a wide impact on the development of Islam in South Korea. Although they are proficient in Korean, they still lack understanding of Korean culture. The results of his activities are not so prominent when compared to Christian missions that visit every house to spread Christianity. Usually, as soon as they come to Korea, they immediately learn Korean language and culture. They already know that the Korean people have sympathy for foreigners who can speak Korean.

Da'wah is centered on the understanding of inviting humans to do good and avoid evil. The invitation is carried out in a gentle and soothing way, the invitation is carried out with the aim of upholding the Islamic religion and the running of the Islamic system in the lives of individuals, families and communities.

Conclusion

The author concludes that even though Indonesian Muslims live in Muslim minority countries and have various challenges and obstacles, it turns out that they still try to interact with the Qur'an. These things are not an obstacle for them to continue to try to get closer to the Qur'an. Interaction is carried out by reading selected surahs at certain times. The selected surahs are al-Fāṭiḥah, Yasin, al-Kahfi, al-Wāq'ah, and al-Mulk. They read it on Friday night, Friday, or ordinary days after performing the obligatory prayer. In addition, Muslim citizens also perform tadarus al-Qur'an. They also regularly participate in mosque activities to study the Qur'an and listen to related lectures online. The purpose of their interaction is to increase spiritual strength, use the Qur'an as a guide, and interact socially with fellow Muslim citizens.

Moreover, Indonesian Muslims who interact with the Qur'an also have implications in religious life in South Korea, of course, living in a Muslim minority country there are many things that intersect. Indonesian Muslims explained that there are still sentiments with Islam in South Korea.

These causes Muslim citizens to strive to behave well so that it becomes a reflection of Islam and can be accepted by local residents. Apart from that, it is faith that allows them to survive until now. Their steadfastness in believing, reading, practicing the Qur'an to spread through the da'wah carried out. This is solely their attempt to survive in the Muslim minority country and to introduce Islam in the country of ginseng.

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