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Realizing the Meaningfulness of Orphanage Youth Life

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Abstract

This research contains an analysis of the meaningfulness of life for adolescents living in orphanages. The meaning of life is obtained based on the results of observations and interviews with adolescents at the Hayat Orphanage in Padangsidimpuan City. According to the theory, the adolescents studied in this study are late-stage adolescents. The steps in this study are collecting data through observation and interview techniques, identifying and classifying problems, analyzing the data, offering solutions, and then drawing conclusions. The results of this study are useful as guidelines for providing services and assistance to develop meaningful lives for adolescents in orphanages.

Keywords: Realizing, the Meaning of Life, Youth.

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is one of the countries with the largest number of orphanages in the world. Martin (2007) states that the number of orphanages throughout Indonesia is approximately 5,250 to 8,610. This figure is a very large one and allows Indonesia to become the country with the largest number of orphanages in the world. At the end of 2009, the humanitarian organization Save the Children, in collaboration with UNICEF, conducted research on children living in orphanages and found that out of five hundred thousand orphans, only 6% were orphans, and 94% became residents of orphanages for reasons of poverty because their parents were not able to provide adequately so that their children were placed in orphanages (Yuniana: 2016).

Orphanages in Indonesia have existed since the colonial period, more specifically on October 17, 1832, when Walter Henry Medhurst founded the Parapattan Orphan Asylum Orphanage. The establishment of the orphanage at that time was inseparable from the fate of Indo-European children who were not recognized by European fathers and ignored by Indonesian mothers; in the end, they were abandoned and only lived by begging (Sthevens, 2004: 158).

Philosophically, the orphanage is regarded as a viable option for rescuing neglected children and meeting their individual and social needs. According to the Association of Laws and Regulations on Child Protection (2002), Law of the Republic of Indonesia No.4 of 1979, Article 2 Paragraph 1, it is clear that every child has the right to receive welfare, care, and guidance based on affection both within his family and in special care for normal growth and development. In order to fulfill the mandate of the law, the government and the community jointly set up an orphanage. According to Wawan (2010: 48),

orphanages can be established by the government or the community with the aim of helping or providing assistance to individuals or community groups in an effort to make ends meet.

Even though orphanages cannot completely replace the role of parents or the family environment, they have demonstrated a genuine contribution in caring for and caring for orphanage children. Pilapil's (2015) research concluded that orphanage children in the Philippines consider themselves happy despite the fact that they lack many important things in their lives, namely family. With courage, positive judgment, strong and realistic beliefs, and a supportive environment, they are able to achieve satisfaction in life. Different results were mentioned by Khan and Jahan (2015), who concluded that orphanage children tend to live empty lives and have meaningless lives.

This sense of meaningless life is concrete evidence of the many problems faced by orphanage youths that prevent them from having a happier life. This reality, according to Prabadewi (2014), is due to many factors that make them feel emotional isolation, so they tend to show a quiet, passive attitude, are less responsive to others, feel inferior, and are more defensive in relationships. This thesis is in line with the results of interviews with several adolescents from the Hayat Orphanage in Padangsidimpuan City, showing that there are three main reasons that hinder them from realizing a more meaningful life: congenital causes before being in the orphanage (traumatic), shaken by the process of biological and psychological growth (transition), and the causes found in the orphanage (environment). So, in this context, the reality of adolescents living in orphanages is a complex reality that requires serious management from various parties, especially in creating a more meaningful life for adolescents in orphanages.

Every individual's activities are motivated by a meaningful life. Therefore, no activity is carried out unless the activity is measurable and leads to the goals of each individual's life. Thus, the desire to live meaningfully is not just wishful thinking; it will be felt by the individual concerned. According to Frankl (2004), individuals who feel life is meaningful will live their daily lives with enthusiasm and passion and are far from feelings of emptiness. Their daily tasks and work are a source of satisfaction and pleasure in themselves, so they are carried out with enthusiasm and responsibility.

In Islamic theory, this is referred to as "king" (hope), which is an optimistic mental attitude toward obtaining divine gifts and favors provided for his pious servants (al-Ghazl, 1985). According to Ibnu Qoyim (2004), "the king" is characterized by three things: love for what is expected, fear of losing hope, and trying to achieve what is expected. Raja is different from tamanni (dream), meaning that the king has a laudable trait while wishful thinking is a despicable trait (an-Naisbr, 2000). Verily, those who expect (the king's) mercy from Allah prove it by faith, emigration, and jihad. (Q.S. al-Baqarah: 218) While wishful thinking (tamani) is a characteristic of a weak person who is not accompanied by action (H.R.: Tirmidz),

Based on the explanation above, the researcher interested in knowing the meaning of the lives of adolescents at the Hayat Orphanage and offering solutions to improve them. This study uses a spiritual approach that is based on the concept of the meaningfulness of life developed by Ibn Miskaiwaih and Ibn Qoyim. According to both of them, the focus of a meaningful life is when individuals are able to

live their lives in balance between material happiness and spiritual happiness, worldly happiness and happiness hereafter, body and mind happiness (Ibnu Miskawaih, 1985; Ibnu Qoyim, 2004). While the happiness in question is not determined by ownership but rather individual attitudes toward accepting reality, People who feel sufficient will be given enough for him (HR. Bukhari and Muslims).

METHODS

This study uses a qualitative approach, namely, research that emphasizes analysis and description. With this approach, researchers get a comprehensive picture of what teenagers are feeling, describe the problems encountered by orphanage youth, and offer solutions to overcome these problems, especially those related to the meaningfulness of life, by using two data sources, namely primary and secondary data. The primary data consists of the orphanage, the manager of the orphanage, and the community around the orphanage, while the secondary data comes from library materials. The techniques used in data collection are observation and interviews.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

There are three main problems for adolescents in orphanages, especially the one in Padangsidimpuan City: traumatic, transitional, and environmental conditions.

1. Traumatic

Teenagers who live in orphanages have different backgrounds. Apart from economic factors or parents dying, not a few teenagers live in orphanages due to disharmony in families which results in children lacking affection, being abused. The Central Statistics Agency (BPS) noted that in 2016 the number of divorces and divorces in Indonesia reached 365,633 or equal to 19.9% of 1.8 million incidents. This was also reinforced by the statement of the Religious Courts of the Supreme Court which stated that the divorce rate for Indonesian families continued to experience a very significant increase.

Because the divorce has ramifications for children's mental health, it is not uncommon for children to experience trauma and be haunted by events prior to living in the orphanage. Based on data from the National Commission for Child Protection (in Suara Karya Online, 2012), from the beginning to the middle of 2012, there were 20 cases of suicide in children aged 13–17 years, of which eight cases of suicide were caused by family disharmony. Referring to a 2007 study conducted by the United States Department of Health and Human Services (Bruskas, 2008), it shows that more than half of the children in orphanages may experience at least one or more mental disorders, and 63% of them are victims of neglect.

It was also discovered in the context of the Hayat Orphanage that teenagers with a sad history were always haunted by the past and bitter memories with their biological parents. They live in an orphanage abandoned by their divorced parents, and then each of them has a new family. According to his confession, before the divorce, his parents were not only arguing but also engaging in physical play, which he witnessed firsthand. These events always haunt him and make him sad.

2. Biological and Psychological Changes (transition)

Adolescence is a transitional period marked by physical, emotional, and psychological changes. Psychologists state that adolescence can be said to be the most critical period of the stages of life development that humans go through. because adolescents undergo so many physical and psychological changes during this time. Under these conditions, adolescents usually do not want to be labeled as children, but they also cannot be labeled as adults due to the various levels of readiness they possess (Hasmi, 2001). In addition to changes in the body, adolescents are also faced with emotional and mental changes. Emotional and mental changes make teenagers lack self-confidence so that they become shy, easily sad, worried, and confused.

On the other hand, every change that occurs in adolescents can cause conflict and uncertainty in the souls of the adolescents themselves, so that they easily deviate from social rules and norms that apply in society. Therefore, this period is called the "strum and drug period," which makes the emotional turmoil that is felt start to boil and makes the emotions within oneself difficult to control (Zulkifli, 2006). The events above are passed by every teenager, including teenagers who live in orphanages. This condition causes the minds of orphanage adolescents to become increasingly burdened and out of control.

Based on the results of interviews with orphanage caregivers, it was found that adolescents at the high school level tend to be more controlled. That is, adolescents at the high school level who have entered the final adolescent phase are generally in psychological and psychosocial crisis. Erikson (Turner & Helms, 1983) calls it an "identity crisis," which is a state of inability to locate what is accurate and meaningful within oneself as an identity.

3. Orphanage Environment

Based on the Regulation of the Minister of Social Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia No. 30/HUK/2011 concerning National Standards for Child Caregiver for Child Welfare Institutions, which refers to the findings of two studies, which conclude, among others: 1). Children's orphanages function more as institutions that provide access to education for children than as the last alternative institution for caring for children who cannot be cared for by their parents or family. 2). Orphanage administrators do not have sufficient knowledge about the situation of the children who should be cared for in the orphanage and the care that children should ideally receive.

The Ministerial Regulation emphasizes the main tasks of social institutions such as orphanages. That is, not only as a place of refuge from neglect, but an orphanage must be a place for children to receive love, moral education, warmth, attention and so on. This will not happen unless the orphanage is managed by professional people in a professional way and is made to be like a household that is built on the basis of care and affection.Based on the three reasons stated above, it is possible to conclude that orphanage adolescents face a variety of problems that are manifestations of negative emotions. Therefore, naturally depressed adolescents face various risks that threaten their psychological

development. Such conditions trigger negative behavior in adolescents so that they cannot find a meaningful life. Adriana Feder (in Reich et al., 2010) states that most people are very vulnerable to traumatic events in their lives, and most others carry a persistent stress burden all the time. To avoid stress and depression, orphanage youth must have resilience in order to rise from these psychological pressures, and this can be realized through a spiritual approach.

Creating a Meaningful Life with a Spiritual Approach

The meaning of life is individual awareness toward achieving the ultimate goal by properly realizing a distinctive human function. It is called unique because, basically, humans consist of two substances, namely the body and the spirit. When the rights and obligations of these two substances are properly fulfilled, the individual forms a healthy soul, and at the same time, a sa'adah life will be created (Ibnu Miskawaih, 1985). According to Ibn Qayim (2004), there are three types of *sa'adah* (happiness): The first is *sa'adah kharijiyyah* (external happiness), namely happiness that is lent and will later disappear when it is taken back by the owner. The model of this kind of happiness is something like wealth and position. Second, *sa'adah bodiiyah* (bodily/internal happiness) exists as a result of a healthy body and a good and harmonious body structure. This happiness is better than the first, but in fact, it is a happiness that is outside the soul as well. The three types of *sa'adah hakikiyah* (essential happiness) are inner and outer happiness. It is happiness that grows because of useful knowledge that can give birth to good deeds. This happiness will accompany every moment between the aspects of this world and the hereafter. So every soul is fostered or educated in its morals so that it achieves true happiness and becomes an individual who lives happily in this world and the hereafter.

Although the concepts of *sa'adah* described above by Ibn Miskawaih and Ibn Qoyim differ slightly, they share the same focus of study, which is that a happy individual is one who is able to live his life in balance, between material happiness and spiritual happiness, worldly happiness and hereafter happiness, bodily happiness, and happiness of the spirit and heart.

Meanwhile, in an effort to increase the meaning of life, adolescents must have full awareness of the reality of life, which rotates between two possibilities, namely those that are in accordance with expectations and those that are not in accordance with expectations. Therefore, in the face of adversity, individuals are only given two choices: keep moving forward with all the consequences or retreat. Individuals who choose to go forward are individuals who will walk towards a solution, while individuals who choose to retreat are individuals who will never arrive at a solution. Rasulullah SAW gave the advice that "the best worship is to wait patiently for happy results to come." And actually, results will only be obtained when something is done, when something is sacrificed, because results are impossible for someone who always avoids them.

Al-Qarni (2004: 119) states that the time for people who suffer feels very long; therefore, be careful in dealing with suffering. The attitude that should be adopted is that if the situation is very critical, then hope that there is a light and a way out that appears. Allah says, "And whoever fears

Allah, surely Allah will make it easy for him in matters." (QS. Ath-Thalaq: 4). Know that there is always ease in every difficulty. Rasulullah SAW said, "And know that victory comes after patience, and ease comes after difficulties."

In psychology, this is called "resilience," namely the ability of individuals to overcome, go through, and return to their original condition after experiencing difficulties (Reivich and Shatte, 2002). Meanwhile, according to Riley and Masten (2005), it is a pattern of adaptation that is positive in the face of adversity. The individual's ability to control thoughts, negative emotions, and anxiety in dealing with various difficult situations keeps him able to realize happiness in life. Keye and Pidgeon (2013) stated that resilience is when individuals are able to maintain psychological stability in the face of adversity so they can bounce back from adversity, frustration, and misfortune. According to Everall (2006), the existence of resilience will turn problems into challenges, failures into successes, and helplessness into strengths. Resilient youth have goals, hopes, and plans for the future, as well as a combination of perseverance and ambition in achieving the desired results.

To create a healthy teenager, he must always think positively, have a passion for life, have hope for life, be active in doing things, and believe wholeheartedly that tomorrow is a mystery that doesn't need to be thought about too much. Because the true source of happiness in life is not ownership, which only produces fleeting pleasures, but rather happiness in the heart, which begins with thoughts that are always positive and forward-thinking. Following are some of the principles of spirituality that can be adopted by orphanage youth in order to increase the meaning of life:

Peace of soul

Humans are creatures that are composed of two elements of life, namely physical elements and spiritual elements (Al-Ghazali, 1999: 14). These two elements must receive equal attention because the physical and spiritual are two elements that complement and perfect each other. But even so, the spiritual element is the most important in determining happiness and peace. Allah SWT said: "Remember, only by remembering Allah does the heart become peaceful" (QS. Ar-Ra'd: 28). This verse explains that the soul is the source of peace and serenity.

Individuals who have a calm soul tend to be happier than individuals who do not have peace of mind. Because actually, the mood of the soul affects the physical atmosphere. This is in accordance with what was mentioned by Rasulullah SAW, that in fact, the soul determines the body. "Know that in the human body there is a lump of flesh; if a lump of meat is good, then the whole (members) of his body will be good, and if a lump of meat is bad, then the whole body (members) will be bad. And know that that lump of flesh is the heart." (According to al-Bukhari and Muslims). Therefore, according to Ghazali, a healthy human being is one who achieves the purity of his soul, such that his life is always controlled by his soul and spiritual impulses and is not alienated from the context of his society (Ghazali, 1999: 4).

Rational

As creatures that move, develop, and carry out transformations, humans are faced with three situations: those that have passed, are ongoing, and will come. When individuals think and behave rationally, they will keep themselves busy with useful activities and avoid useless ones. Because history will not repeat itself, individuals who are rational will not dwell on the past. He is more focused on dealing with the current situation and how the future can be better. In an expression, it is stated, "Never return to the days (time) that have passed."

In the face of a difficult situation, a person who thinks rationally can look beyond the emotions he or she is feeling at the moment and act wisely. He will not succumb to emotions or let go of past issues. Individuals who engage in rational thinking use all available information and past experience, both heard and other information, as a model for selecting the best option in the future.

When the individual is aware that the past will not be repeated and the present will pass so quickly, then he will be realistic. Because a realistic and clear future orientation will actually help individuals to be more optimistic and have internal control over their future, Al-Qarni (2004: 382) mentions that people in the past, when faced with difficult situations, always had a positive attitude. Because even though they face difficulties, there is always good to be achieved, bad to be avoided, and convenience to be obtained at the end of time.

Smart

Intelligence is a special gift possessed by humans, while other creatures have limited intelligence. Humans can understand all of life's phenomena in depth, can learn from an incident and take lessons and lessons from it, become more civilized, and wiser; all of this is possible because humans have intelligence that can be used as a tool in living their lives.

Apart from being unlimited, human intelligence consists of three different elements and has their own functions, as mentioned by Ghazali: intellectual intelligence (IQ), emotional intelligence (EQ), and spiritual intelligence (SQ). Hakim (2018) Ghazali does not directly mention intellectual intelligence, emotional intelligence, or spiritual intelligence, both in the form of expressions and definitively. However, it clearly demonstrated the various types of big ideas, ideas, and thoughts about the three intelligences.

If intellectual intelligence is the ability to solve problems (Zohar and Marshall, 2004: 62) and emotional intelligence is a positive physiological and psychological reaction, then spiritual intelligence is the ability to apply and realize spiritual resources and qualities to improve functioning and well-being (Arman, 2007). That is, people who hone these three intelligences will never feel anxious or even worried about something that hasn't happened yet. Al-Qarni (2004: 504) mentions that worry cannot eliminate your suffering in the slightest. Worrying and worrying are mental games; it hasn't happened or hasn't happened in a long time.

Never Give Up and Persistence

Individuals who have an unyielding attitude are not people who never fail or fall. When he falls, he moves back and tries to get out of the slump. An unyielding mentality is a winning mentality, not wanting to stay silent or looking for excuses to justify failure. An unyielding mentality is different from a loser who starts blaming circumstances for failure. The loser will tell himself several reasons that justify his negative attitude. Al-Ghazali (2020: 115) says that "whoever plants, he will reap." Whoever walks will arrive, whoever seeks will find, and the search will only be successful if he has sincerity (is persistent).

Persistence (mujahadah) is another term for never giving up, which is a commendable attitude of the former pious. In the context of an orphanage, being persistent means staying enthusiastic, staying optimistic, and not being discouraged by the current realities of life. He believes in the power of Allah SWT, who is able to change the fate of a person from the lowest to the noblest, from the poorest to the richest, from the most respected to the least respected. With this belief, the individual is always optimistic and wants to do positive things in life. Allah said, "Then, when you have made up your mind, put your trust in Allah" (QS. Ali Imran: 159).

CONCLUSION

The results of this study indicate that there are three main problems faced by orphanage adolescents, namely, congenital causes before being in the orphanage (traumatic), shaken by the process of biological and psychological growth (transition), and causes found in the orphanage (environment). These three main problems have proven to have prevented orphanage youth from living a more fulfilling life, so they tend to have a negative attitude. In the opinion of researchers, this problem can be overcome by teenagers through their understanding of the concept of meaningful life by Ibnu Miskawaih and Ibnu Qoyim, which is formulated in four points: peace of mind, being rational, being smart, and never giving up or being persistent in doing things.

There are two limitations in this article. The first is that the sample is too narrow, so it cannot be used as a parameter for all adolescents in orphanages. The two solutions focus only on adolescents, while among the problems that trigger the negative attitude of orphanage youth is the orphanage environment itself. Therefore, the researcher suggests to future researchers that they study the professional aspect of managing orphanages in accordance with the mandate of the law.

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