

Social Resilience of the Baha'i Community During the COVID-19 Pandemic

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Abstract

This study aims to determine the condition of the Baha'i community in Palopo during the COVID-19 pandemic and the strategies practiced by the Baha'i community in Palopo to overcome the impact they felt during the COVID-19 pandemic. This research is qualitative research with an ethnographic approach. The research informants are the Baha'i community in Palopo City, the Ministry of Religion of Palopo City, the Population and Civil Registration Office of Palopo City, and the Palopo City Religious Communication Forum. Research data shows that the Baha'i community feels the impact of the pandemic in two aspects, namely (1) a decrease in income and employment and (2) psychological aspects in the form of stress due to physical distancing policies that limit interaction and congregational worship. For this impact, the Baha'i community uses several strategies, namely (1) family intimacy, (2) Social networks and trust relationships (3) technological adaptation and spiritual piety.

Keywords: Covid-19, Baha'i, Resilience

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui kondisi masyarakat Baha'i di Palopo selama masa pandemi covid-19 dan strategi yang dipraktikkan oleh masyarakat Baha'i di Palopo untuk mengatasi dampak yang mereka rasakan selama masa pandemic covid-19. Penelitian ini merupakan penelitian kualitatif dengan pendekatan etnografi. Adapun informan penelitian yaitu masyarakat Baha'i di Kota Palopo, Kementerian Agama Kota Palopo, Dinas Kependudukan dan Pencatatan Sipil Kota Palopo, serta Forum Komunikasi Umat Beragama Kota Palopo. Data Penelitian menunjukkan bahwa masyarakat Baha'i merasakan dampak pandemi dalam dua aspek yaitu (1) aspek ekonomi berupa berkurangnya pendapatan dan hilangnya lapangan pekerjaan (2) aspek psikologi berupa stress dikarenakan kebijakan physical distancing yang membatasi interaksi dan ibadah berjamaah. Untuk dampak tersebut masyarakat Baha'i menggunakan beberapa strategi yaitu (1) intimasi keluarga (2) Jaringan sosial dan hubungan kepercayaan (3) adaptasi teknologi (4) dan kesalehan spiritual.

Kata Kunci : Covid-19, Baha'i, Resilience

Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic has made all groups in society face the same vulnerabilities, thereby limiting access to life and hindering social integration. Vulnerability is a condition of inability experienced by an individual or group

of people to minimize the impact that may or will be caused by a hazard/disaster ¹. Among community groups, certain groups bear multiple vulnerabilities during the COVID-19 pandemic. Various vulnerabilities are experienced by individuals or groups of people in one aspect and several aspects. Groups of people with the potential to participate in multiple vulnerabilities often face discriminatory treatment or require special attention, which can be referred to as vulnerable groups. For example, black and Latino citizens get poor health services during the pandemic ² in the United States. In Indonesia, the violence experienced by women and children during the pandemic has also increased ³. One of the vulnerable groups that often escapes attention is the religious minority group.

In Indonesia, until 2020, the Government of Indonesia, through the Ministry of Religion, only recognized six (6) official religions: Islam, Protestantism, Catholicism, Hinduism, Buddhism and Confucianism. Adherents of the six official religions are obliged and entitled to civil service rights. Meanwhile, religions other than the six official religions are seen as not officially recognized religions and are often discriminated against by the civil service. Whereas in Indonesia, many religions have not received official recognition from the Government, one of which is the Baha'i Religion. The Baha'i belief entered Indonesia at the end of the 19th century, in 1878 to be precise, brought by traders from Persia and Turkey named Jamal Effendy and Mustafa Rumi in Sulawesi around 1878, which then spread to various other places ⁴.

Although the Baha'i religion has spread in Indonesia, the Baha'i religion was originally considered a forbidden religion. On August 15, 1962, President Soekarno issued Presidential Decree (Keppres) Number 264 of 1962 concerning the Prohibition of the Organization of the Democratic League, Rotary Club, Divine Life Society, Vrijmetselaren-Loge (Loge Agung Indonesia), Moral Rearmament Movement, Ancient Mystical Organization Of Rosi Crucians (Amorc), And Baha'i Organizations. The Presidential Decree contains a ban on

¹ R. Rijanta, D.R. Hizbaron, and M. Baiquni, *Modal Sosial Dalam Manajemen Bencana* (Yogyakarta: Gadjah Mada University Press, 2014).

² Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, "Double Jeopardy: COVID-19 and Behavioral Health Disparities for Black and Latino Communities in the U.S.," *Kaiser Family Foundation*, 2020.

³ Sali Susiana, "Kekerasan Dalam Rumah Tangga Pada Masa Pandemi Covid-19," *Jurnal Harkat: Media Komunikasi Gender* 16, no. 1 (2020): 66-76, <http://journal.uinjkt.ac.id/index.php/psga/article/view/16020/pdf>.

⁴ Nuhrison M Nuh, "Analisis Kebijakan Pemerintah Terhadap Penganut Agama Baha'i Di Kabupaten Pati, Provinsi Jawa Tengah," *Jurnal Multikultural & Multireligius* 14, no. 3 (2015).

seven organizations, including Baha'i. During the time of President Abdurrahman Wahid, the Presidential Decree was revoked by Presidential Decree No. 69 of 2000 concerning Revocation of Presidential Decree No. 264 of 1962 concerning the Prohibition of the Organization of the Democratic League, Rotary Club, Divine Life Society, Vrijmetselaren-Loge (Indonesian Supreme Lodge), Moral Rearmament Movement, Ancient Mystical Organization Of Rosi Crucians (Amorc), and Baha'i Organizations. The consideration is that the formation of social and religious organizations is the basic right of every Indonesian citizen, and the prohibition against organizations, as referred to in Presidential Decree No. 264 of 1962, is seen as no longer in line with democratic principles. It is also reinforced by research from Nuhrison M. Nuh ⁵, which concluded that the Baha'i religion is independent and not part/sect of Islam. The teachings of the Baha'i religion have characteristics different from those of Islam. It also has implications for worship procedures, which, although at first glance, have similarities with Islamic religious worship procedures (prayer, fasting, and others), they are completely different in practice.

Research on the existence of the Baha'i religion in Indonesia has not been found. As for the research that discusses the Baha'i Religion, it is only limited to fulfilling the civil rights of adherents of Minority Religions, including the Baha'i Religion and aspects of their religious teachings; no one has discussed in detail the condition of the Baha'i Religion group when facing difficult situations, in terms of this is the Covid-19 pandemic—one of the areas where adherents of the Baha'i religion are in Palopo City. Based on the results of interviews ⁶with one of the followers of the Baha'i belief in Palopo, 13 Heads of Families (KK) adhere to the Baha'i Religion. However, what is interesting is that families who adhere to the Baha'i Religion as a minority group in Palopo City can deal with the impact of Covid 19 ⁷.

Interestingly, amid a pandemic and also as a minority group, adherents of the Baha'i Religion were able to survive the existing conditions. The Baha'i religion, as one of the minority religions in Indonesia and once considered a heretical sect in Islam, can become one of the minority groups that can survive

⁵ Nuh.

⁶Interview with Deswita (Family of the Baha'i Religion in Palopo City), December 13, 2020

⁷Interview with Deswita (Family of the Baha'i Religion in Palopo City, December 13, 2020

the COVID-19 pandemic. According to data from the SETARA Institute ⁸, there were 23 cases where minority religious groups experienced discrimination and intolerance during the pandemic. Among these cases were the sealing of a house of worship in Singaparna and the sealing of a funeral for a family belonging to a local religion in Kuningan ⁹. Followers of the Baha'i belief in Palopo can still worship without discrimination. In addition, during the COVID-19 pandemic, families who adhered to the Baha'i Religion were also never recorded as filing for divorce, even though during the COVID-19 pandemic, families were very vulnerable to experiencing internal conflicts. Drastic changes that occur due to COVID-19 often stress family members, which can potentially cause problems that can trigger family problems.

Social resilience during a pandemic is the key for a group to survive the crisis, including adherents of the Baha'i religion. Through social resilience, social integration can be created. This social integration is exclusive within one group and inclusive, where each group can integrate with other groups. It is hoped that the results of this research can serve as an example of best practice for every community group, especially minority groups, in dealing with the crisis.

Method

This qualitative research uses data collection techniques through participant-observation techniques, Focus Group Discussions (FGD), and in-depth interviews directly with informants ¹⁰. The main informants in this study were adherents of the Baha'i religion and supporting informants in this study, namely people who live around followers of the Baha'i faith, parties from the Ministry of Religion, the Office of Population and Civil Registry of the City of Palopo, and the Forum for Religious Communication (FKUB) of Palopo City.

⁸ Setara Institute, "Pandemi Lahan Subur Diskriminasi Dan Intoleransi," *Setara Institute* (Jakarta, 2021), <https://setara-institute.org/pandemi-lahan-subur-diskriminasi-dan-intoleransi/>.

⁹ Knowledge Sector Initiative (KSI), "Agama Punya Peran Dalam Penanganan Dampak Pandemi," 2021, <https://www.ksi-indonesia.org/id/wawasan/detail/2509-agama-punya-peran-dalam-penanganan-dampak-pandemi>.

¹⁰ Sugiyono, *Metode Penelitian Kuantitatif Kualitatif Dan R & D* (Bandung: Alfabeta, 2010).

Result and Discussion

A. Baha'i Religion in Palopo City

Judulnya The Baha'i religion is a religion that originates from the teachings of Baha'ullah, whose name was originally Mirza Husein Ali Muhammad, born in Iran in 1819 AD, Mankind. Followers of the Baha'i religion believe that Bahauallah came as a consummate of various religions and then merged to become one religion. The Baha'i belief entered Indonesia in 1878 AD, brought by Jamal Efendi and Mustafa Rumi ¹¹. Initially, the Baha'i religion spread in Java, especially East Java, then expanded to other areas, including Palopo.

In Palopo City, according to the chairman of the Local Spiritual Council (MRS), Mr. Rubangi, the Baha'i religion was first brought by transmigrants from East Java around the 1980s named Mr. Sukemi. Mr. Sukemi came to Palopo with no intention of spreading the teachings of the Baha'i religion. Still, due to the transmigration policy at that time and the problems his family was experiencing in Banyuwangi, Mr. Sukemi's family finally moved to the Luwu area. Pak Sukemi chose Palopo City because Pak Sukemi frequently followed his in-laws back and forth to South Sulawesi, to be precise, in the North Luwu area. When he first arrived in Palopo, Pak Sukemi lived in Latuppa and worked as a grass cutter. Mr. Sukemi's wife and their children then followed Mr. Sukemi to Palopo. Then, Pak Sukemi met Hadi, Mispan, and Roken, who were also Baha'i and worked at the same place as Pak Sukemi. Pak Sukemi's family, with Hadi, Mispan, and Roken, often gather together because they feel the same fate as immigrants. They also often celebrate Baha'i religious holidays together. Over time, adherents of the Baha'i Religion in Palopo City are increasing due to the arrival of transmigrants from Java who are also Baha'i.

Initially, the Baha'i religion in Palopo City was declared a heretical sect. In 2009, the Palopo City MUI stated that the Baha'i belief was a deviant sect and violated the provisions of Islamic teachings ¹². Even Mr. Sukemi and his family, who initially lived in Latuppa and then moved to Songka, had received threats that residents would burn their houses down. Mrs. Subita, the wife of Mr. Sukemi, said that residents often pelted her house because they were considered to be spreading heretical sects. However, this did not make Pak Sukemi's family grudge against the residents. According to Ms. Subita, this was

¹¹ Nuhri M Nuh et al., *BAHA'I, SIKH, TAO: Penguatan Identitas Dan Perjuangan Hak-Hak Sipil*, ed. Kustini (Jakarta: Puslitbang Kehidupan Keagamaan Badan Litbang dan Diklat Kementerian Agama RI, 2015); Nuh, "Analisis Kebijakan Pemerintah Terhadap Penganut Agama Baha'i Di Kabupaten Pati, Provinsi Jawa Tengah."

¹² Nuh Et Al., *BAHA'I, SIKH, TAO: Penguatan Identitas Dan Perjuangan Hak-Hak Sipil*.

a learning process. Despite receiving various threats, the Baha'i community in Kota continues to establish communication with residents and blend in with society. Gradually, the people of Palopo City began to accept the Baha'i people. The Baha'i community and residents around their neighborhood visit each other alternately during the celebration of their respective religious days.

Baha'i adherents in Palopo and its surroundings then grew in number due to marriages among Baha'i people and the arrival of their families from the village. Until the end of 2020, according to Destya, the number of Baha'i people in Palopo is 40. Every Baha'i who changes domicile is required to report to the Local Spiritual Council (Majelis Rohani Setempat).

B. The Impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic on the Baha'i Community in Palopo

The Covid-19 pandemic has changed lives. The use of masks, physical distancing, and virtual interaction are real examples of how life has changed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In Indonesia, all groups of people have been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, not only the health impact but also social, psychological, and especially economic. One of the community groups that has also been affected by the Covid-19 pandemic is the Baha'i community. COVID-19 has greatly impacted all levels of society, including the Baha'i community. The Baha'i community, as a minority group in Indonesia, tends to be at greater risk than other groups. It is due to their status in society, which tends to be in a disadvantageous position from various aspects, ranging from economic, psychological, social, health, and environmental¹³.

1. Reduced income and loss of jobs

Covid-19 has shaken the lives of all people. The community has felt various impacts, and the most affected community groups are those in vulnerable groups, one of which is the minority group of Baha'i people. The Baha'i community in Palopo, who mostly work in the informal sector, admits that almost all feel the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. One of the Baha'i people interviewed, Mr. Rubangi, said it had been nearly a year since he had worked selling tofu, tempeh, and soybean water at the Palopo Central Market.

The lockdown policy for several months in Palopo City caused the Palopo Central Market to close. After the central market reopens, it doesn't necessarily make visitors come back. Fear of Covid-19 and reduced public income have drastically reduced visitors to the Central Market. In fact, according to Mr. Rubangi, his income from this profession is recognized as sufficient to help meet his family's needs. The loss of jobs, while the increase

¹³ OHCHR, "Covid-19 and Minority Rights: Overview and Promising Practices," 2020.

in household expenditure items, namely internet access, was acknowledged by Mr. Rubangi as very burdensome.

In line with Mr. Rubangi, Mr. Munadi also said that his income from repairing electronic goods during the COVID-19 pandemic was greatly reduced. Before the Pandemic, Mr. Munadi admitted that his shop was busy with 15-20 people who wanted to repair their electronics, such as fans and televisions. But the number of people who came during the pandemic didn't decrease much. Not infrequently, no one person comes to the shop. Munadi admitted that this had shaken up his family's economy. The following is an excerpt from the researcher's interview with Mr. Munadi. The same thing was also expressed by Ruth Meilianna Ngadi and Yanti Astrelina Purba,¹⁴ where people engaged in the trade in the goods and services sector tend to experience the worst losses compared to other industries. This sector relies on crowds, and practicing physical distancing is difficult¹⁵.

Even though some Baha'i people admit their income has been much reduced due to the pandemic, they have even lost jobs. However, most Baha'i people who work as gardeners realize that COVID-19 has not impacted their economy much. Mr. Imam Syafi'i, who is one of the farmers, said that COVID-19 did not have an impact on their income. The family consumes garden produce, such as salak fruit, oranges, and cassava. In contrast, others are sold and still sell well in the market. In line with Mr. Imam Syafi'I, Ms. Subita, a farmer, revealed that she can still make ends meet from farming. However, it does not significantly impact people who work as farmers. The plantation and agriculture sectors tend not to feel the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic¹⁶. It is certainly interesting when people in other countries who also work as farmers face the pandemic's significant effects¹⁷. The location of farmers in Indonesia who tend to be in rural or suburban areas and are farmers with their

¹⁴ Ruth Ngadi Meliana and Yanti Astrelina Purba, "Dampak Pandemi Covid-19 Terhadap Phk Dan Pendapatan Pekerja Di Indonesia," *Jurnal Kependudukan Indonesia* 2902 (2020): 43, <https://doi.org/10.14203/jki.v0i0.576>.

¹⁵ Wibowo Hadiwardoyo, "Kerugian Ekonomi Nasional Akibat Pandemi Covid-19," *Baskara: Journal of Business and Entrepreneurship* 2, no. 2 (2020): 83-92, <https://doi.org/10.24853/baskara.2.2.83-92>.

¹⁶ Ngadi Meliana and Purba, "Dampak Pandemi Covid-19 Terhadap Phk Dan Pendapatan Pekerja Di Indonesia."

¹⁷ T. W. Schultz, *Transforming Traditional Agriculture* (Yale University Press, 1964); Alejandro de la Fuente, Hanan G. Jacoby, and Kotchikpa Gabriel Lawin, "Impact of the West African Ebola Epidemic on Agricultural Production and Rural Welfare: Evidence from Liberia," *Poverty and Equity Global Practice*, 2019, <https://doi.org/10.1596/1813-9450-8880>.

land are important factors in this condition ¹⁸. They can allocate more time for farming. This allocation can be made because the land for agriculture and gardening is theirs. It has made the Baha'i people in Palopo not feel the economic impact of COVID-19 because most of the Baha'i people in Palopo work as farmers.

2. Emergence of Stress

Most Baha'i people work in the informal sector, so their working hours are more flexible. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, Baha'i people always spent the afternoon gathering and interacting with one another. However, government instructions regarding physical distancing greatly reduce interactions between fellow Baha'is and the surrounding community.

The location of the houses, which are close to each other and not limited by fences, does not necessarily make people gather to talk. The artisan activity that used to be routinely held by the Baha'i community with the surrounding community is no longer taking place. As a result, there is a feeling of stress in some Baha'i communities, especially for those who are old. The feeling of pressure due to reduced interaction with neighbors is increasing due to the absence of congregational worship. The older age group tends to experience stress and anxiety due to significant changes during this pandemic. The existence of instructions to do activities from home raises concern because interaction with the environment becomes very limited ¹⁹. Limited interaction, while they cannot access technology and the internet, also adds stress ²⁰. This condition is interesting because several studies have found that stress levels in older people are lower than in young people in difficult situations ²¹. The anxiety and stress experienced by the Baha'i community are closely related to the fear of loneliness and loneliness in old age.

¹⁸ Arika Bagus P et al., "Melindungi Pekerja Rentan Di Masa (Dan Pasca) Pandemi Covid-19," *Journal of Chemical Information and Modeling* 53, no. 9 (2020): 1689–99.

¹⁹ Mark É. Czeisler et al., "COVID-19: Public Compliance with and Public Support for Stay-at-Home Mitigation Strategies," *BMC Public Health*, 2020, 1–28, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1101/2020.04.22.20076141>.

²⁰ Ann Pearman et al., "Age Differences in Risk and Resilience Factors in COVID-19-Related Stress," *The Journals of Gerontology. Series B, Psychological Sciences and Social Sciences* 76, no. 2 (2021): e38–44, <https://doi.org/10.1093/geronb/gbaa120>.

²¹ Ellen E. Lee et al., "High Prevalence and Adverse Health Effects of Loneliness in Community-Dwelling Adults across the Lifespan," *Int Psychogeriatr* 31, no. 10 (2019): 1447–62, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1041610218002120>; Paul M. Dietze et al., "Mental Health, Substance Use, and Suicidal Ideation During the COVID-19," *Addictive Behaviors* 29, no. 32 (2020): 1049–57, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.addbeh.2020.106754> <http://dx.doi.org/10.1038/s41380-020-00880-7>.

C. Strategy of the Baha'i Community in Facing the Covid-19 Pandemic

Reviewing the differences between your results or findings and previous studies is recommended. The discussion is the most important part of your article.

Since the COVID-19 pandemic broke out, many negative impacts have been felt for all levels and groups of society. Even so, the Baha'i people in Palopo have their strategies to deal with the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic that they are experiencing with various limitations. Minority groups tend to develop strategies to survive in difficult times. The Baha'i community in Palopo also has several methods to deal with the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.

1. Build Family Emotional Intimacy

Most Baha'i people in Palopo work in the informal sector as farmers, and only a small number are non-farmers. Those who are not farmers feel the significant economic impact of this pandemic. One of the Baha'i people, Mr. Rubangi, worked as a tofu and tempeh trader. The existence of a physical distancing policy has made Mr. Rubangi's business lose money. To survive during the Pandemic, Mr. Rubangi finally chose to change professions. The decision to switch jobs was obtained from discussions with his wife and children. Mr. Rubangi decided to discuss with his family to find the best solution because this concerns his family's life. Routine communication between family members creates emotional intimacy for each family member²². The built emotional intimacy makes the family conducive and harmonious, so this becomes a strong foundation for the Baha'i family to survive in difficult times²³, including during the pandemic. While many other minority groups feel very difficult with this condition, especially women²⁴ and children²⁵, this is not the case for Baha'i families.

²² Anna Durnová and Elaheh Mohammadi, "Intimacy, Home, and Emotions in the Era of the Pandemic," *Sociology Compass* 15, no. 4 (2021): 1-10, <https://doi.org/10.1111/soc4.12852>.

²³ Abdurrohman Kasdi and Saifudin, "Resilience of Muslim Families in the Pandemic Era: Indonesian Millennial Muslim Community's Response Against COVID-19," *Journal of Emergency Management* 17, no. 1 (2019): 1, <https://doi.org/10.5055/jem.2019.0400>.

²⁴ Atnike Nova Sigiro, Abby Gina, and Dewi Komalasari, "Portrait of the Impact of the Implementation of Large-Scale Social Distancing during Covid-19 Pandemic towards Women and Marginalized Groups through the Perspective of Intersectional Feminism," *Jurnal Perempuan, Untuk Pencerahan Dan Kesetaraan* 25, no. 4 (2020): 71-84.

²⁵ Laura Acosta and Maria Marta Santillán, "THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON CHILDREN'S EDUCATION," 2021; Laura Acosta and Maria Marta Santillán, "The Impact of COVID-19 on Children's Lives," *Save the Children International*, vol. 3732267, 2020.

The Baha'i community considers that everyone, men and women, both young and old, have the same rights and obligations, including in expressing opinions. Every decision taken by parents must get the approval of the child. When there are problems in the family, children must also be involved in finding solutions. Communication in deliberations makes children feel valued, so conflicts between parents and children in Baha'i families rarely occur. It is, of course, interesting because cases of violence against women and children during the pandemic increased²⁶.

The economic conditions experienced by several Baha'i families in Palopo were resolved through deliberations to find the best solution. Deliberation represents equality of status and voice for each member to build a collective agreement²⁷. Through deliberation, each family member learns to understand each other's opinions²⁸. The deliberation and intimacy that is built create a strong family bond and prevent conflicts between family members²⁹. A strong sense of kinship makes every family member feel happier, even in difficult times³⁰. A sense of kinship also provides resilience and self-satisfaction to better deal with uncertain situations³¹. It is because each family member can help not only in the economic aspect but also in other aspects³².

2. Building Social Networks and Trust Relationships

Not all Baha'i people choose to change their profession due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Some Baha'i people choose to be in debt. As did Mr. Munadi and Mrs. Mutmainnah. Mr. Munadi admitted that his income during the Pandemic period from the repair of electronic goods was greatly reduced. To overcome this, Mr. Munadi borrowed money from his family, who are also

²⁶ UNFPA, "Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Family Planning and Ending Gender-Based Violence, Female Genital Mutilation and Child Marriage," Interim Technical Note, 2020, https://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/resource-pdf/COVID-19_impact_brief_for_UNFPA_24_April_2020_1.pdf.

²⁷ Niels Mulder, *Mysticism in Java: Ideology in Indonesia* (Yogyakarta: Kanisius, 2005).

²⁸ Franz Magnis-Suseno, *Javanese Ethics and World-View: The Javanese Idea of the Good Life* (Jakarta: Gramedia Pustaka Utama, 1997).

²⁹ Marko S Hermawan and Mark K Loo, "The Construction of Kekeluargaan as an Indonesia's Organizational Culture," *Jurnal Humaniora* 31, no. 1 (2019): 1, <https://doi.org/10.22146/jh.v31i1.42851>.

³⁰ Alberto Alesina and Paola Giuliano, "The Power of the Family," *Journal of Economic Growth* 15, no. 2 (2010): 93-125, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10887-010-9052-z>.

³¹ Blerina Kellezi et al., "Enemy of the People': Family Identity as Social Cure and Curse Dynamics in Contexts of Human Rights Violations," *European Journal of Social Psychology*, no. November 2019 (2021): 1-17, <https://doi.org/10.1002/ejsp.2750>.

³² Deepta Chopra et al., "Are Women Not 'Working'? Interactions between Childcare and Women's Economic Engagement," vol. 2020, 2020.

members of the Baha'i community. Ibu Mutmainnah also relies on her family relationships with other members of the Baha'i community to be able to borrow money. The Baha'i people in Palopo are very close to their group members. When one family is in trouble, other Baha'i families will help.

This social network then creates trust among members of the Baha'i family³³. This trust can be seen in the financial assistance given to members who are in trouble. Borrowing money from other family members is used to survive during the pandemic. This belief does not appear suddenly but is present because of long-standing actor relationships³⁴ and the existence of a common identity³⁵. This social network and trust strengthen cooperation so the Baha'i community can survive³⁶.

The high solidarity in the Baha'i community, built from a relationship of trust among the Baha'i community, means that none of their members experience significant economic difficulties. Indebtedness to fellow Baha'i people is one of the efforts to survive during this pandemic.

Social networks are not only established exclusively among adherents of the Baha'i religion. Followers of the Baha'i faith in Palopo tend to be friendly to neighbors and the surrounding community. Subita's narrative stated that a monthly *arisan* is held between the Baha'i religious group living in the Songka neighborhood and neighbors who incidentally are Muslim and Christian. Through this *arisan*, bad prejudices from neighbors can disappear and change into a harmonious relationship.

3. Technology Adaptation

Since the COVID-19 pandemic hit Indonesia, all community social activities, including those of the Baha'i community, have been limited. Due to physical distancing rules and restrictions on activities involving crowds, the Baha'i community's routine meetings have been eliminated. Not only were meetings between members of the Baha'i community eliminated, but interaction with neighbors was greatly reduced. This condition creates a sense

³³ Budhi Cahyono et al., "PERAN MODAL SOSIAL DALAM PENGEMBANGAN JARINGAN USAHA KECIL MENENGAH (Studi Kasus Pada Rumah Makan Padang)," *Pendidikan Ilmu Pengetahuan Sosial* 59, no. 1 (2018): 26, <https://doi.org/10.1017/CB09781107415324.004>.

³⁴ Damsar, *Sosiologi Ekonomi (Edisi Revisi)* (Jakarta: PT Raja Grafindo Persada, 2002).

³⁵ Tri Uswatun Hasanah, Nurhadi Nurhadi, and Abdul Rahman, "Modal Sosial Dan Strategi Kelangsungan Usaha Sektor Informal Pedagang Kaki Lima Pada Era Pandemi COVID-19," *SOCIA: Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Sosial* 17, no. 2 (2021), <https://doi.org/10.21831/socia.v17i2.35754>.

³⁶ Encup Supriatna and Avid Leonardo Sari, "The Vulnerability and Social Resilience of Indonesian Society in Facing the COVID-19 Pandemic," *AYER Journal* 27, no. 2 (2020): 19–29, <http://ayerjournal.com/index.php/ayer/article/view/54>.

of stress for the Baha'i community, especially older people. The Baha'i community, as a minority group, tends to be in a digital divide ³⁷. This is because their economic activities tend not to require Internet use ³⁸. In addition, their income tends to be low and only enough to meet primary needs, such as food and shelter, making them not prioritize buying cell phones and internet access ³⁹.

Internet use among parents has increased rapidly in the Pandemic era ⁴⁰. This is because the internet for those who are elderly is used as a tool and becomes an important support for establishing connectivity and survival so that they can be connected with their families and acquaintances so that stress during the pandemic can be reduced ⁴¹. Older and advanced Baha'i people have difficulty communicating virtually during the pandemic. Their activities, especially work, do not require internet access. Most of the Baha'i community is aged 40 years and over, experiencing difficulties compared to the young Baha'i community.

The difficulties experienced by the Baha'i community in accessing the internet were overcome through group study. The Baha'i community is young and able to use the internet, teaching those who don't know how to use the internet. Usually, one young person teaches 3-5 people who are old. Even though they are old, they are still eager to learn. This learning process is not done only once but is repeated until everyone knows how to use the internet continuously. At first, the older Baha'i community admitted they were not used to this condition. They also learn to adapt to technological developments. Now, the Baha'i community is more active in conducting virtual meetings via video

³⁷ Robert W. Farlie, "Is There A Digital Divide: Ethnic and Racial Differences in Access to Technology and Possible Explanations," *Latino Policy Institute and California Policy Research Center*, vol. 95064, 2003, <http://scholar.google.com/scholar?hl=en&btnG=Search&q=intitle:No+Title#0>.

³⁸ Amy L. Gonzales, "Disadvantaged Minorities' Use of the Internet to Expand Their Social Networks," *Communication Research* 44, no. 4 (2017): 467-86, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0093650214565925>.

³⁹ J. Gabriel Domínguez Castillo et al., "Reducing the Digital Divide in Vulnerable Communities in Southeastern Mexico," *Publicaciones de La Facultad de Educacion y Humanidades Del Campus de Melilla* 49, no. 2 (2019): 133-49, <https://doi.org/10.30827/publicaciones.v49i2.9305>.

⁴⁰ Anna Stiina Wallinheimo and Simon L. Evans, "More Frequent Internet Use during the Covid-19 Pandemic Associates with Enhanced Quality of Life and Lower Depression Scores in Middle-Aged and Older Adults," *Healthcare (Switzerland)* 9, no. 4 (2021), <https://doi.org/10.3390/healthcare9040393>.

⁴¹ Galit Nimrod, "Changes in Internet Use When Coping With Stress: Older Adults During the COVID-19 Pandemic," *The American Journal of Geriatric Psychiatry* 28, no. 10 (2020):102024.

calls using Zoom, Google Meet, or WhatsApp applications. The Baha'i holiday, Naw-Ruz Day, is also carried out virtually. Even though it is done virtually, the implementation can run quietly and solemnly. It is acknowledged that virtual meetings create a new expenditure, namely internet access. However, this is not considered an obstacle because maintaining interaction and communication with other families is more valuable.

4. Spiritual Piety

Since the Covid-19 pandemic broke out, people's efforts to explore religion have increased rapidly. It can be seen from the search activities carried out by people in 95 countries through Google regarding religion ⁴². Religion is undeniably the most basic need of every human being. In difficult times, religion can be the factor that determines whether a person can survive or not. In several community groups, religious activity during this pandemic tends to increase. Even though there are restrictions on worship activities in places of worship, the community is still enthusiastic about carrying out the ritual while implementing the health protocol.

The Baha'i people in Palopo, who are a minority group, admit that they can survive, especially during the pandemic, because they believe that behind their difficulties, there is wisdom and goodness behind them. The Baha'i community believes that prayer is a tool and medium for humans to communicate with their God. Prayer is recognized as the most universally recognized practice of spirituality ⁴³. Through prayer, humans are given guidance and strength to overcome all their problems. The Baha'i community uses prayer as a therapeutic tool to find peace in difficult times ⁴⁴. Prayer can provide emotional stability for those who believe in it ⁴⁵.

The Baha'i community always makes it a habit to recite prayers in their activities. When the research team also visited, at the end of each visit, the Baha'i community always invited the research team to pray together according to their respective beliefs. The existence of this prayer behavior is an interesting thing because the Baha'i people always pray after every activity. The Baha'i people believe that taking care of themselves during the pandemic

⁴² Jeanet Sinding Bentzen, "In Crisis, We Pray: Religiosity and the COVID-19 Pandemic," CEPR Discussion Paper, no. August (2020): 52-108, <https://cepr.org/sites/default/files/news/CovidEconomics20.pdf>.

⁴³ J. S. Levin and R. J. Taylor, "Age Differences in Patterns and Correlates of the Frequency of Prayer," *The Gerontologist* 37 (1997): 75-88.

⁴⁴ C. E. Hughes, "Prayer and Healing," *Journal of Holistic Nursing* 15 (1997): 318-326.

⁴⁵ Jared E Leet, "Benefits of Prayer on Depression in Elderly Adults." (Walden University, 2019).

is not only worldly and material but also needs to pay attention to spiritual and spiritual aspects. It is what is done through prayer and worship.

There is a change in the practice of praying and worship; going virtual does not abandon this activity. Virtual worship activities also increase spending. However, the Baha'i community continues to practice virtual worship, even though it is economically difficult. When faced with uncertainties and difficulties, humans use religion as a source of salvation ⁴⁶. These results indicate that people tend to make religion a source of safety in times of uncertainty and hardship ⁴⁷. The power from God, through prayer and worship, is considered and believed by the Baha'i community to be able to help overcome problems, especially during this pandemic. When a person feels unable to deal with the conditions he is facing, external forces are needed, which are believed to be able to overcome his problems.

CONCLUSION

The Covid-19 pandemic has had a very heavy impact on society. This impact is increasingly felt for groups of people who are in a minority position. The Baha'i community in Palopo City cannot be separated from the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic. The impact they feel is on the economic and psychological aspects. On the financial part, they reduced income due to the loss of jobs. On the psychological aspect, namely anxiety and stress due to reduced interaction and the elimination of direct congregational worship. However, the Baha'i community in Palopo survived during the pandemic. They can live in harmony and peace. It is inseparable from the strategy they practice.

This strategy practiced by the Baha'i people has proven to be able to keep them afloat. The resilience practiced by the Baha'i community in Palopo during the pandemic is centered on a high sense of family intimacy among them. The status of the Baha'i religion as a minority group in Indonesia, especially in Palopo, makes group members highly value cooperation. When a group member has difficulty, the other members help. Not only within their group but adherents of the Baha'i religion also establish harmonious social relations with other groups who live next door to them. The Baha'i religious

⁴⁶ Jeanet Sinding Bentzen, "Acts of God? Religiosity and Natural Disasters across Subnational World Districts*," *Economic Journal* 129, no. 622 (2019): 2295–2321, <https://doi.org/10.1093/ej/uez008>.

⁴⁷ Bentzen; Karen S Dunn and Ann L Horgas, "The Prevalence of Prayer as a Spiritual Self-Care Modality in Elders," *Journal of Holistic Nursing* 18, no. 4 (2001): 37–51, <https://doi.org/10.1177/089801010001800405>.

group does not hesitate to help members of other religious groups and vice versa.

In contrast, members of the Muslim and Christian religious groups who live nearby also do not hesitate to visit and help when the Baha'i religious group encounters difficulties. Mutual trust and mutual respect arise between groups so that sectarianism does not emerge. The existence of mutual help makes the trust between them also very high. This high sense of confidence and kinship is shaped by the teachings of the Baha'i religion that they adhere to. The Baha'i faith teaches that any difficulties must be resolved collectively and deliberatively. In addition, spiritual efforts in prayer and worship must also be carried out under any circumstances.

The limitations of this study are that this research is still limited to one group of Baha'i people, only in Palopo City, and limited to certain age groups, only older people. Comparative studies are needed with Baha'i community groups in other areas and other minority groups regarding gender, age, and education. In addition, this research is still limited to family resilience, so research is needed on aspects of religion, economics, and psychology for the Baha'i community.

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