

The Role of Non-Civil Servant Religious Instructors to Improve Community Religiosity: Case Study in Cianjur District, West Java, Indonesia

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Abstract. The Indonesian government has considerable attention on efforts to improve the religious community, because there are still many understandings and practices of religion that are not in accordance with Islamic law, in the community. Related to this, the Indonesian Ministry of Religion adopted a policy of recruiting religious leaders and religious guides who preach in the community to make them religious counselors, both government and non-government employees. This research is limited only to describe the role of non-civil servant religious instructors in improving community religiosity, with locus study in Cianjur District, West Java, Indonesia. Use qualitative method with case study strategy, the study results show that the role of educators and advisors is relatively dominant. Related with supporting factors, are as follows: (1) Condition of socio, economic, and political quite exist in society, (2) The existence of a strong kinship network, and (3) Knowledge of non-civil servant religious instructors have been recognized by the public. Through the statements of members of the *majelis taklim* who is guided and the statements of those who is interact a lot (especially through cooperation in implementing activities), such as the police and local government. Another finding is that non-civil servant religious instructors make a number of innovations in their preaching activities which have a positive impact on the wider segment of the community that can be preached.

Keywords: Role, Non-Civil Servant Religious Instructors, Cianjur District, Community Religiosity, Ministry of Religion.

1 Introduction

As a country with the largest Muslim population, the Indonesian government has considerable attention towards efforts to improve religiosity of society. That is because there are still quite a lot of understanding and religious practices that are not in accordance with Islamic law, exist in society.

This situation among others revealed by the Steering Committee of the 19th Annual International Conference on Islamic Studies (AICIS) Dr. Noorhaidi Hasan who also served as Director of the Postgraduate Program of UIN Sunan Kalijaga, in the opening of the conference on early October 2019 ago. He said that digital technology has made understanding and religious practices in society change significantly. As a result, many countries face the phenomenon of digital Islam, a phenomenon that arises due to the intersection of Islam with

pluralism and democratization. This Digital Islam blew a new wind in religious beliefs and practices, which often contradicted with the traditionally dominant Islamic authority. Digital Islam is meant not only to cover online Islam (religious understanding that comes from the internet), but a new model/new voice/format and new style of understanding and practicing Islam that is identical to the millennial era. A new genre integrates Islam with a neoliberal lifestyle [1].

Not only due to digital usage, the lack of religious knowledge is realized to be another cause so that various deviant religious understandings and practices are still found. That is why the Indonesian Ministry of Religion in 2014-2019 in their Strategic Plan included improving the quality of understanding and practice of religious to be one of the achievement goals from the six other goals. In the effort to increase knowledge and practice of religion by community, the Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia recruits figures and religious guides who independently or in a group have actively preached in the community, to help the work of government by making them religious instructors (both statuses as a government or non-government employees). At present there are at least 4,016 Islamic religious instructors with government employees status and 75,313 non-civil servant religious instructors, who are spread throughout the province to serve Muslim populations in Indonesia which according to the 2010 Central Bureau of Statistics census totaled 207,176,162 people [2].

This study is a research of the Ministry of Religion that was conducted with the aim to describe their roles (in this case roles of non-civil servant religious instructors) to enhance community religiosity since they were recruited as part of the Ministry of Religion's working team in 2017. Civil Servants Religious Instructors have been recruited first, namely based on Decree Menkowsabangpan No. 54 of 1999 concerning Functional Position of Religious Instructors and their Credit Numbers. While the existence of non-civil servant religious counselors is confirmed based on the Decree of the Head of the Office of the Ministry of Religion of the Regency/City, for a term of 3 years, thus the term of office will end in 2020.

The working period of non-civil servant religious instructors who will soon end is also a consideration why it is used as a research topic, which is also to evaluate their performance in improving community religiosity. Another consideration is to provide answers to related parties who question the effectiveness of the existence of non-civil servant religious instructors, especially the Ministry of Finance related to the issued budget. The budget that must be removed from state budget (APBN) to pay their incentives is indeed not small. Based on the latest policy, one non-civil servant religious instructor is given an incentive of one million rupiah. Due to their considerable number more than 75 thousand people, at least 75 billion rupiah must be spent each month. On the other hand, the doubts of many parties are actually not new, given the same thing is also aimed at civil servant religious instructors. [3]

This research actually carried out in 6 regencies and 2 Cities in Indonesia, while the researchers are tasked with collecting and analyzing data in Cianjur district, West Java Province. As for the research questions of this study are: (1) How do the roles of non-civil servant religious instructors improve the community's religiosity in Cianjur Regency? (2) What are the supporting and inhibiting factors faced by them in carrying out their roles? and, (3) What is the real contribution of non-civil servant religious instructors to the improvement of community religiosity [4].

2 Research Methods

This study uses a qualitative method with the type or case study strategy which chosen because the characteristics of the study are related to the identification of specific cases, namely the role of religious counselors non-government employees [5]. Referring to Creswell (2007), this study has set very specific and bounded system, that is related to the location of the study (two sub-districts namely Cipanas and Cianjur) and the time of the study (11-15 September for preliminary research, while 9-19 November 2019 for conducting research). Related to site selection, Cianjur District was chosen as a research locus with the consideration that the district is the capital of a Regency where religious life is more dynamic and with a fairly high plurality. While Cipanas District was chosen considering its existence as a tourist area, which in maintaining the religious life of the community has its own challenges.

3 Results and Discussion

A brief description of the research location [6]. Cianjur Regency has a fairly wide area (the second largest in West Java, which covers 3,840.16 km²). In the north it is bordered by Bogor Regency and Purwakarta Regency, in the east with Purwakarta Regency, Bandung Regency, West Bandung Regency, and Garut Regency; in the west with Sukabumi Regency, and in the south with the Indian Ocean. Cianjur Regency has 32 subdistricts, two of which are Cianjur District and Cipanas District which are used as locations.

Regarding Cianjur District, as the district capital has more dynamic characteristics than other districts. In addition to offices and business centers, Cianjur sub-district also has a higher population heterogeneity, especially in terms of religion. Based on data from the Cianjur District Office of Religious Affairs, the population in the Cianjur sub-district was 165,310 people. The majority were 160,038 Muslims (96.81%), Catholics 1,601 (0.97%), Christians 2,346 (1.42%), Hindus 267 (0.16%), and Buddha 1,058 (0.64%). Related to this, compared to Cipanas District, heterogeneity of people based on religion is more apparent in Cianjur District so that efforts to keep this region in harmony are a challenge.

Meanwhile Cipanas Subdistrict which is located about 23 km from the center of Cianjur, as a tourist destination, the challenges faced are mainly related to various social impacts arising from the presence of tourists in the area such as the high number of HIV/Aids, the phenomenon of LGBT, and the existence of workers commercial sex (PSK). Regarding population, according to data in the Office of Religious Affairs in Cipanas District, in 2018 there were 102,528 people. The majority of Muslims are 100,489 (98%), Christians 881 (0.86%), Catholic 213 (0.21%), Hindu 603 (0.56%), and Buddhist 342 (0.33%); whereas Confucianism is not recorded.

Number of Religious Instructors. The number of religious instructors (government employee) in Cianjur District is very limited, only 16 people or one person working for two sub-districts because there are 32 sub-districts in District Cianjur. This problem can be overcome by the presence of 259 non-government employee religious instructors. It shows that one of the strategic roles of non-civil servant religious instructors is to fill the lack of religious instructors needed by the community.

The role of non-civil servant religious instructors [7]. There are three roles of religious instructors in society, namely as an informant or an educator, a counselor, and administrator. [8] Related to the implementation of these roles, in general the whole is carried out, taking

into account the specific needs of the community in the area for which they are each responsible. However, the role of counselor and educator is relatively more

Frequent compared to other roles. Role as a counselor is done by providing themselves visited by people, both to solve their problems (generally to get guidance from *sakinah* families) and to get guidance on the implementation of worship (zakat settlement and pilgrimage). The role as a counselor is prominent among others because of the family relationship between religious instructor and member of *majelis taklim*. For example, the *majelis taklim* that managed by Choirul Anam, one of the religious instructors interviewed, before managed by his grandfather who's continued by his father. The member of *majelis taklim* generally still have family relations, such as one great-grandfather or one grandfather. The family relations were also conveyed by members of the *majelis taklim* who were interviewed, whose relationships with religious instruction were cousins while the others were nephews. While the role as educator can be understood why it is quite prominent, namely because the main task of religious instructor is an educator in society.

Other findings, related with innovation activities of religious instructors to response opportunities. These activities have positive impact on expanding *dakwah* segment from traditional member who has been the basis for a long time. In Cipanas District, it is done by expanding *dakwah* to school (*Dakwah Goes to School*), markets (*Dakwah Goes to Market* that conducted every two weeks), hotels (*Dakwah Goes to Hotel*, i.e. *dakwah* to hotel employees), and *dakwah* to some vulnerable groups such as preaching to people with mild mental disorders, and *dakwah* to the moon racer or motorcycle gangster. Related with *Dakwah Goes to School* Program, at first as an initiative of Cianjur police office, who involved religious instructors to join with them to come to school to reduce the cases of student brawl that occurred a lot at that time. That activities have continued until now with more flexible formations, religious instructors come to school without involving the Police.

Dakwah activities are also carried out in response the local government requests to accompany the implementation of their activities, Cianjur Ngawangun Lembur (CNL), namely Cianjur District Government activities to improve public services with an office in the village once a month. During the activity the religious instructors were asked by the regional government as prayer leader and preach. The presence of religious instructors in these activities has a positive impact for religious instructors, because it increased public trust. This was stated by one of religious instruction, who stated after their participation in the CNL activities, those who had initially refused, changed their attitude to become more positive. Some of them even invited religious instructor to his place to preach. Other innovations in the form of the involvement of religious instructors in the success of local government programs, *Magrib Mengaji* (reading Qur'an after evening prayer, carried out by moving from one mosque to another mosque). This also carried out by religious instructors in Cianjur District, because *Magrib Mengaji* is national program (Ministry of Religion Program). [9]

In Cianjur Subdistrict, the most interesting and most positive impact of the religious instructor activity is preaching activities for prisoners in District Cianjur Prison, under the name of the Integrated Islamic Boarding School At-Taubah. Institutionally, the activity that began in 2012 is collaboration between prison manager with the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) of Cianjur Regency. However, for the implementation of activities, it involves a number of non-civil servants of religious instructors (9 of 30 teachers are non-civil servant religious instructors, and 3 of them are from Cianjur District).

Another thing, if religious instructors in Cipanas Sub-district take part in CNL program, religious instructors in Cianjur are involved in tourism training activities carried out by the local government's Tourism and Sports Office, with the role as prayer leaders and preachers.

The positive impact of their participation as in Cipanas, increased public trust beside increasing relation or networking of religious instructors with many parties. Another innovation in Cianjur sub-district is the activity of non-civil servant religious constructors providing religious guidance to people with HIV/AIDs. Although it is a pioneering that was built because of the personal relationship of the religious instructor with people with HIV/AIDs, this effort indicates wider public trust to non-civil servant religious instructors and that their presence is increasingly accepted by the wider community.

Supporting and Inhibiting Factors. Related to supporting factors, based on information collected, are as follows: (1) socio-economic, even political, non-civil servant religious instructors, quite exist in the community with a number of involvement in the MUI, various preaching institutions in the community, and other social institutions, (2) The existence of a strong kinship network, such as non-civil servant religious instructors, is a child or grandchild of the owner of a boarding school or an educational institution that is entrusted with managing the boarding school or educational institution because the owner has died or is elderly or due to regeneration reasons, (3) Knowledge of some non-civil servant religious instructors have been recognized by the public (for example because they graduated from Al-Azhar University, graduates of religious scholars and even master level, etc.). Regarding the inhibiting factors, the main one is due to the unavailability of modules so that the substance of the learning material delivered (including learning media and the delivery of propaganda messages used), relies heavily on the individual abilities of non-PNS religious instructors.

Contribution of non-civil servant religious instructors toward improvement of community religiosity. Related to the contribution of non-PNS religious instructors to improve the condition of religious community (increasing knowledge, attitudes, and religious behavior), it is definitely difficult to answer, especially for aspects of attitudes and behavior. That is because the people in District Cianjur (both Cipanas and Cianjur sub-districts) are generally quite religious. They actively participate in various *majlis taklim* activities both with the guidance of non-civil servant religious instructors or others. Because of that, the changes that occur cannot be claimed as changes due to community activities together with non-civil servant religious instructors. As said by two informants who were met at the *majelis taklim* which were guided by one of the non-civil servant religious instructors, both of them could participate in the *majelis taklim* up to 6 times at least 4 times a week and not all are guided by non-civil servant religious instructors.

Changes in the increase in religious skills, may be more easily recognized, for example in the form of increased ability to read and memorize the Qur'an. Related to this, real changes occur mainly through activities managed by Ustadz Lukman who guide the reading and writing of the Qur'an and *tahfiz* (memorizing) Qur'an. Young people who become students in his boarding school, their ability to write, read, and memorize the Qur'an increases very quickly.

Other real changes can be seen prominently in Cianjur Prison. Based on the statement of the prison management, the conditions of prisoners who took part in the At-Taubah Islamic Boarding School, namely routine religious guidance activities in prison, were clearly visible. Prisoners become easier to be directed, not easy to cause trouble or commotion, and conflicts between prisoners are relatively reduced. In addition, there are prison residents that after leaving the prison live a better life by becoming non-formal religious teachers. Another thing, religious activities in Cianjur prison according to the police, contribute to the reduction in crime rates. Prisoners at the beginning of 2013 numbered 897 people, while in 2014 the number dropped to 678 people. In add beside it, prisoners held by other prisons at each Eid al-Fitr also tend to decrease, especially starting in 2014, namely after the start of the At-Taubah

Islamic boarding school in Cianjur prison. In addition, prisoners who are entrusted by other prisons on each Eid al-Fitr also tend to decline, especially starting in 2014, namely after the start of the At-Taubah Islamic boarding school in Cianjur prison. If prisoner is entrusted up to 30 people, decrease only 5 people.

Statement from others that quite intense in interacting with non-civil servant religious instructors can also be a reference. For example, the statement from the Police and Brimob Sub-district of Cipanas that non-civil servant religious counselors help reduce student brawls because after 2016, after *Dakwah* activities go to school, after activity *Dakwah Goes to School* began in Cipanas sub-district, there was no longer student brawl in the area. Another statement was stated by a member of the *majelis taklim* who was guided by Ustadz Nuraini, a non-civil servant religious instructor specializing in Napza, HIV and AIDS. Due to the explanation of the dangers of narcotics use delivered by Mrs. Nur Nur'ani, the mothers who are members of *majelis taklim* that manage by Nurani feel that they are always reminded to constantly monitor the activities of their children. Considering that in Cipanas Sub-district many migrants, many cafes, and many tourists; the condition is indeed very vulnerable. Likewise, the *dakwah* activities to the moon racer (motorcycle gangster) carried out by non-civil servant religious Instructors in Cipanas, have changed the lifestyle of motorbike gangster even though they continue to race motorbikes, but now they want to pray, reduce the use of cigarettes and stay away from drugs.

Based on the explanation of the research findings, the role of non-civil servant religious instructors, although often questioned is clearly needed. Statements from *majelis taklim* members as the party guided by religious instructors about the benefits gained by participating in non-civil servant religious instructors' activities, become concrete evidence. It was reinforced by the statements of other parties who often interacted with non-civil servant religious instructors intensively (especially through collaborative activities), like the police officer, prison management, and Local Governments of District Cianjur. Efforts to enhance their role in enhancing the religiosity of the community are certainly very necessary, both by providing modules so that their work becomes more directed and the results are certainly more progressive; and by developing the innovations that have started towards more sustainable ones.

4 Conclusion

The implementation of the role of non-civil servant religious counselors in Cianjur District generally quite well for various existing roles with the dominance of roles as counselors and educators. An important finding related to role implementation, there are quiet intense effort to broaden the scope of *dakwah* from traditional groups that have been preached (*majelis taklim and pesantren*) to a wider segment (people with HIV/AIDs, patients with Mental Disorders, and the motor community). Either by innovating activities (*Dakwah Goes to School, Dakwah Goes to Hotel, and Dakwah Goes to Market*), contributing to solving problems in the community (responding to the police's invitation to reduce student brawls), and supporting government programs e.g. *Maghrib Mengaji*, Cianjur Ngawangun Lembur (Cianjur Building a Village), and helping the management of the At-Taubah Islamic Boarding School, Islamic boarding for prisoners in Cianjur District Jail).

Their role can be carried out well because they are generally native sons (knowing the situation well so they can intervene appropriately), have better socio-economic conditions

(formal and religious education better from local residents), other because of the existence of their extended family in the local area (owners of boarding school, foundations, schools, and *majelis taklim*). While the inhibiting factor is related to the lack of modules (highly dependent on the personal *ijtihad* of non-PNS religious instructors) and trapped routines due to lack of challenges.

The religious condition of the community in general is getting better, even though it has not completely changed due to the role of non-PNS religious instructors, because the presence of other preachers beside the non-civil servant religious instructors in the area. However, partial changes such as an increase in ability to read and memorize the Qur'an were evident, in addition to significant changes in prisoners in Cianjur Prison, whose success has been recognized by many and making it as a model to increase the religiosity of prisoners.

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