

## **THE SPIRITUAL LEVEL OF THE COMMUNITY OF EAST KALIMANTAN, INDONESIA, DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

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### **ABSTRACT**

In several countries, including Indonesia, and East Kalimantan, people are not prepared to deal with Covid-19, so they are afraid of getting infected with Covid-19. East Kalimantan ranks 7th in Indonesia and has the highest Covid-19 infection rate outside of the island of Java. The high number of Covid-19 infections naturally affects the psyche of people in East Kalimantan. Hence, people in East Kalimantan need to improve their spirituality, so they do not have to worry. This study aimed to assess the level of community spirituality during the Covid-19 infection. The method used in this study is quantitative analysis with description using SPSS 25.0 software (n = 538, age = 18-60 years) by online questionnaire. The results of the study showed that the level of spirituality of people in East Kalimantan was low for both men and women. This caused disruption to social interaction, anxiety, and stress. However, the people of East Kalimantan have embraced and accepted the situation and hope that the government can defeat the Covid-19 pandemic.

**Keywords:** Spirituality, Indonesian Society, Covid-19

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Currently COVID-19 has spread in Indonesia which becomes a major problem, including in the Province of East Kalimantan, Indonesia. In East Kalimantan, there were 209,483 people infected with COVID-19 and 5733 of them died, making the province the most infected with the disease (seventh in Indonesia). Symptoms of COVID-19 infection include flu, fever, sore throat, and high fever (Harjana et al., 2021). Some Indonesians believe that COVID-19 is a trial from God, so it is necessary to increase worship to Allah Subhanahuwata'ala. Some people in this province consider that Covid-19 is a punishment that God has sent down to mankind (Dharma et al., 2020).

People in East Kalimantan who were infected with COVID-19 received a negative stigma from the community; people avoided communicating with them for fear of contracting it. In addition, when people die from this virus, some people refuse to bury their bodies in public places for fear of

becoming infected. This can cause people to be anxious and stressed (Whitehead et al., 2019). There are several factors that can cause anxiety in people, namely biological factors, social environmental factors, behavioral factors, and cognitive and emotional factors (Fauziyah et al., 2019; Nugrahati et al., 2018; Suparman, 2019).

Therefore, it is necessary for the people of East Kalimantan to strengthen their spirituality to reduce anxiety during the pandemic. Spirituality is a form of positive feelings in life-related to Allah, the universe, the environment, and other people, so that a concept, serenity, compassion, positive behavior, and life goals are formed (Hamka et al., 2020; Imaduddin, 2017; Mirwanti & Nuraeni, 2016). Spiritual meaning can be interpreted as the highest achievement of individuals in interpreting and striving for life goals, which are indicators of mental health (Ellison, 1983; Imaduddin, 2017). In essence, humans are created as spiritual beings. The quality of individuals' spirituality can be

discerned from the individual consciousness of accepting the Almighty's decision in human life as a hostile force in determining self-identity (Imaduddin, 2017; Martin et al., 2018).

The higher the individual's spiritual level, the lower their stress and anxiety levels (Widiastuti & Yuniarti, 2017). This means that the higher the individual's spiritual level in terms of his happiness with God, the calmer, happier, physically and psychologically healthier his life will be (Bosco-Ruggiero, 2018; Hamka & Astuti, 2019; Mastrocinque et al., 2020). This will affect his clear communication in responding to life's problems, one of which is the current Covid-19 outbreak in East Kalimantan, Indonesia (Maulana, 2018; Ro, 2018). People who involve God in their lives when coping with stressors have low anxiety levels, good physical and mental health, and good psychosocial behavior (Hathaway & Pargament, 1990; Pargament, 1997). Therefore, spirituality can provide psychological support during disasters by promoting acceptance, patience, steadfastness, and increasing faith and piety toward Allah (Fauziyah et al., 2019; Nosantika, 2019; Supradewi, 2020).

Previous research has found that religious therapy can reduce mental health disorder (Fitriani, 2018; Hamka., et al., 2020). Spirituality is part of the individual development that characterizes humanity and is an indicator of mental health (Imaduddin, 2017). In addition, spirituality is a source of driving energy in the dimension of well-being (Hamka et al., 2022; Ukhtia et al., 2016). Spirituality does not only mean the practice of worship based on traditional religious experiences but all forms of realization of consciousness, all forms of functioning of human beings as creatures to achieve higher life values (Alfarabi et al., 2017). Therefore, promoting spiritual needs is an objective basis for individual self-development (Itsna, 2016; S. Lestari, 2017; Litonjua, 2016; Martin et al., 2018; Mastrocinque et al., 2020).

According to Imaduddin (2017), there are four spiritual dimensions in human beings,

namely: (1) belief in Almighty God, (2) the meaning and purpose of life, (3) inner resources, and (4) harmony with the environment (Imaduddin, 2017). This research was conducted because researchers wanted to know about the spiritual level of the people of East Kalimantan during covid-19. Based on the above data, the researcher hypothesizes the following: H1. The people in Indonesia, especially in East Kalimantan, have a low level of spirituality.

## RESEARCH METHODS

### Design

This study is a quantitative study with a descriptive statistical analysis approach used to study a specific population or sample. This study conducted a spiritual analysis on gender, education and age. Sampling is usually random, data collection is done using research instruments, and data analysis is quantitative/statistical with the goal of testing the hypothesis posed (Creswell, 2016; Zook & Pearce, 2018).

Descriptive research is research conducted to determine the presence of independent variables, either on only one variable or on multiple variables, without making comparisons or linking to other variables (Attneave & Arnoult, 1956; Hancock et al., 2018). Independent variables are independent variables, not dependent variables, because independent variables are always paired with the dependent variable (Counsell & Harlow, 2017; Peters et al., 2016; Sidel et al., 2018). Thus, in this study, a variable was used because the researcher wanted to find out how high the spiritual level of the Indonesian population was during the COVID-19 pandemic, based on the Spiritual Well-Being Questionnaire (SWB).

### 3.2 Participants

In this study, the research population is the population of East Kalimantan. The population is the research subject. According to Unaradjan (2019), the population is the set of all objects or individuals that have certain characteristics, are clear, complete, and are to be studied. Rukajat (2018) suggests that the

population is a generalization area that consists of objects/subjects that have certain characteristics and features determined by the researchers to be studied and then draw conclusions. Yusup (2018) explains that the concept of population is a complete set of units of analysis that are being researched.

The determination of respondents in this study was based on the criteria, namely the Indonesian population aged 18 to 60 years. The number of participants in this study was 538 people, including 213 males (39.59%) and 325 females (60.41%). The sample is a part or population that is studied in a certain way and has certain characteristics that are clear and complete (Yusuf, 2016).

Table 1. Demographic Table

Demographic	Frequency (%)
<b>Gender</b>	
Male	227 (42,19)
Female	311 (57,81)
<b>Age</b>	
< 26 years	217 (40,33)
26~40 years	267 (49,63)
>40 years	48 (8,92)
<b>Occupation</b>	
Employee	204 (37,92)
Farmer	173 (32,16)
Entrepreneur	161 (29,93)

**Measurement**

This study used a survey approach. This study used a survey approach with a spiritual well-being questionnaire (SWB) (Ellison, 1983). The spiritual well-being scale consists of 12 items consisting of two aspects, religious well-being and extended well-being with a rating scale of 1 (very dissatisfied) to 5 (strongly agree) with 12 items. The category calculation is based on the theory of (Azwar, 2012). Each aspect consists of 6 items. The spiritual well-being scale is used by Hamka et al (2020) in Indonesia with Cronbach Alpha = 0.89, while in this study Cronbach alpha = 0.86.

Table 2. Standard Category of Spirituality

Category	Score
low	< 18.88
Moderate	18.88 – 37.95
High	>37,95

**3.3 Data Collection**

In order to obtain and prove complete and accurate data, the author uses a data collection technique that employs the questionnaire method, that is, a list of questions or written questionnaires about spirituality were answered by respondents, including alternative answers to be collected, elaborated on, and evaluated. In collecting data, the researchers disseminated spiritual well-being on an online scale.

**3.4 Data Analysis**

The analysis of the data in this study was quantitative with a descriptive statistical analysis using the program SPSS 25.0. The descriptive statistics aims to get an overview of the spiritual level of the respondents during the period of COVID-19.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Based on the results of the study, it was found that all aspects, including male and female were on moderate category. There was no different mean between male and female. For more details, see table 3.

Table3.Description of Research Results n=538

Aspect	Gender	Mean	SD	Category
Spiritual	Male	29.75	9.08	Moderate
	Female	28.25	9.58	Moderate
Employee	Male	28.19	9.45	Moderate
	Female	30.47	8.83	Moderate
Entrepreneur	Male	27.22	9.41	Moderate
	Female	30.00	9.85	Moderate
Farmer	Male	28.71	9.79	Moderate
	Female	29.37	9.24	Moderate

This study aimed at determining the spiritual level of people in East Kalimantan during the Covid-19 period. Spirituality is essential in today's society of East Kalimantan because low spirituality can increase great anxiety. This is because anxiety can cause depression and stress (Hamka et al., 2022; Rena, 2019). Religion positively affects the mind and body (Supradewi, 2020). The people in East Kalimantan with low spirituality cannot live their social life as usual. They need to follow the health protocol to prevent the spread of the virus in East Kalimantan. In Islamic teachings, spirituality teaches faith in Allah,

patience, prayer, and asking for help in overcoming life's difficulties that leads to depression (Lestari et al., 2019; Supradewi, 2020).

This study found that the moderate spiritual level of the people of East Kalimantan affected the psychology of the community. Those affected felt anxious and led to depression and stress. Current spiritual well-being and past religious experiences are associated with symptoms of anxiety and depression. The low spiritual level of the people of East Kalimantan will affect the psychology of the community (Hamka et al., 2022). Those affected feel anxious and can lead to depression and stress (Purnomo & Mansir, 2020). Current spiritual well-being and past religious experiences are associated with symptoms of anxiety and depression (Suciani & Nuraini, 2017). However, spirituality plays an important role in reducing stress (Hamka et al., 2022; Khaer et al., 2021, Taheri-Kharamah et al., 2016). With something that and stress, it can affect social relationships with other people, which aims to prevent people from becoming infected with COVID-19 (Alba & Calvete, 2019; Szkody & Mckinney, 2019).

One thing that affects spiritual well-being is the intensity of approach to Allah and remembering Allah as help in the face of this pandemic. Dhikr to Allah gives people in East Kalimantan peace in life (Maslahat & Laila, 2022). High spiritual well-being increases remembrance of Allah as a sign of gratitude for the blessings bestowed upon the people of East Kalimantan.

Currently, the lives of people in East Kalimantan are essential to improve their spirituality, belief in God, and coping skills in dealing with COVID-19 (Choi & Hastings, 2019). This study found that the High spirituality can make people calmer because everything that happens on earth is God's destiny as a test for believers (Lestari et al., 2019). Spiritual well-being is an affirmative life with God, the environment, and social relationships (Hamka, 2019). The society has given everything to God. In addition, the government has tried to issue guidelines to

reduce COVID-19. Unfortunately, the spiritual level of East Kalimantan people is relatively low.

Therefore, people in East Kalimantan need to improve their well-being to reduce anxiety and stress. There are some ways to improve well-being that is by performing prayer, reading the Quran, and reading the Sholawat.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the study's results, the people's spiritual category in Kalimantan is considered low. The low spiritual level of people in East Kalimantan affects their social relationships with others, not to COVID -19. This leads to impaired social interaction, anxiety, and stress. However, the people of East Kalimantan have embraced and accepted the situation and hope that the government can defeat the Covid-19 pandemic.

This study is limited to knowledge about the spirituality of the people in East Kalimantan. The researcher does not address the economic, social, and psychological problems (depression, anxiety, and stress) of the people in East Kalimantan. This research implies that the people in East Kalimantan should increase their spirituality to God so they will be calmer. In addition, the government needs to take measures to improve the spirituality of East Kalimantan people in cooperation with religious leaders by offering tussah or online recitation.

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