

The Experience of Loneliness and Coping Strategies of Senior Santri and Sufistic Therapy

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Abstract: Chronic loneliness may lead to negative problems such as depression, anxiety, socialphobia, and other mental disorders. Loneliness in senior students is an interesting issue because at this point, a person experiences a throw-back in social interactions due to physical disability. Previous studies found that there was a desire for senior students to die in a state of "husnul khatimah" (peace) which was implemented with doing activities at Islamic boarding schools; on the other hand, they still wanted to be close to their families. This particularly encouraged researchers to know and describe the experience of loneliness, types of loneliness, causal factors, and coping strategies used by older adult students. This research is a phenomenological qualitative method with data collection techniques: interviews, observation, and documentation. The findings indicated that senior students not only wanted to deepen their religious knowledge, but they also wanted to be close to their loved ones. Even though they had a structured daily and weekly schedule, they still experienced loneliness such as emotional and social isolation. The cause of the loneliness of the senior students lay in situational factors. To overcome this feeling of loneliness, older adult students use emotional focused coping, problem focused coping, and positive religious coping strategies.

Keywords: Elderly, Senior Student, Lonely, Coping Strategies.

Introduction

The dynamics of human development both physical and mental well-being is crucial to highlight, considering that each individual has different knowledge and experiences. Old age is generally considered a period of decline experienced by individuals who have a longevity in their life span (Kimmel, 2014). In old age, a person will experience obstacles due to the gradual decline in physical, mental, and social aspects (McInnis-Dittrich, 2014). At this point, this could not retreat in which there must be a harmony between behavior and mental processes as a reference for the development of the elderly people who are hopefully able to provide a way out of the problems that exist in old age to live their life more meaningful (Kotecho et al., 2021; Tegawati, 2009; Sunaryo et al., 2015).

People who are included in late adulthood can be identified both biologically and chronologically, as stated by Suardiman (2017). The biological approach refers to someone who is deemed old based on physical capacity; while the chronological approach shows at the age calculation through the calendar or the age of the last birthday. The definition of old age, according to the Government Regulation No 43 of 2004 concerning Social Welfare of the Elderly and Law No 13 of 1998 states that the older people is a period in which a person is over the age of 60 year. From the perspective of developmental psychology, old age is the final phase of the development of a human's life (Novitasari & Aulia, 2019).

The number of elderly population according to the Ministry of Health in 2017 was 23.66 million people or 9.03% of the elderly population. Munandar et al. (2017) noted in 2020 the number of elderly people reached 30-40 million, placing

Indonesia in the 3rd position in the world. This study is supported by the Central Java Statistics Agency which states Indonesia now entering the aging population era (Pusdatin Kemenkes, 2017). The increasing number of the elderly population receives more attention, as today they are prone to have problems, such as feeling of worthlessness and loss that lead to loneliness due to lack of interaction because of retirement, lost of beloved friends, children who are busy, or their physical inability to interact. Munandar et al. (2017) state that 50% of elderly people in Indonesia experience loneliness.

According to Dahlberg et al. (2018), loneliness is defined as a gap between expectation and reality experienced by people in social relationships. Loneliness in elderly man is the result of one's dissatisfaction in social relationships. On one hand, they still expect good and intense social interaction, but on the other hand, ironically, they experience various limitations. Based on psychological health criteria, this condition tends to be potentially negative for a person's psyche (Winningham & Pike, 2007). This opinion is confirmed by Gunarsa (2006) that loneliness also has the potential to negatively reduce the ability of the elderly to deal with social problems.

Suardiman (2017) showed three theories related to aging: (1) the theory of resignation which focuses on "the more increase a person's age, the lower the social, physical, and emotional interactions; (2) activity *theory* which states that in order for an elderly person to be successful, a person must be as active as possible in participating in activities related to his social, physical, and emotional nature. In other words, an elderly person who is still involved in various activities will get satisfaction; (3) the continuity theory states that an elderly person must be able to correlate between the past and the present activities which are considered important for a continuous representation of a lifestyle. Elaborating the theory of elderly, Suardiman (2017) explained the characteristics of loneliness in elderly individuals: (1) they are a minority. They are a small group in society, and are often seen as different. This situation then affects the pattern of social interaction of the elderly and has an impact

on the emergence of loneliness; (2) they undergo the absence of attention. The elderly men tend to experience loneliness if they do not get attention from the environment. Thus, they often prefer a place that makes them feel cared for and live up to its expectations; (3) they are isolated from the social environment which is exacerbated through societal stereotypes assuming the elderly man is old-fashioned, conservative, and do not want to accept new opinions; (4) there is no place to share feelings and experiences. Humans are social creatures. If they do not have relationships with other individuals to share stories and experiences, they will feel lonely; (5) they have to live alone, with no other choice. This last characteristic is a situation that forces them to live alone, which is caused by several factors such as busy children due to work, or being a widow or widower due to a deceased spouse. In essence, there is a correlation between the understanding of those theories and the characteristics of loneliness because humans are social creatures (Rizai & Lessy, 2022).

To identify the elderly man's methods in overcoming feelings of loneliness that have negative potential, Lazarus and Folkman (in Maryam, 2017) divide two types of coping strategies, namely emotional focused coping and problem focused coping. Emotional focused coping is the regulating emotional responses that aim to manage emotional functions where individuals feel they cannot change a stressful situation. The only thing that can be done is to accept the situation. Moreover, Lazarus and Folkman noted five things in emotional focused coping, namely: provide positive judgment, emphasis on responsibility, self-control, distance, and avoidance. As for problem focused coping or what is called a coping strategy that focuses on problems and can be responded through actions to solve problems. Someone will choose this focus if the problem can still be controlled. In this case, Lazarus and Folkman categorize the three strategies of the problem, namely: plainful problem solving, confrontative coping, and seeking social support.

In addition to coping strategies, there are religious coping strategies (Lestari & Lessy, 2022). Aflakseir and Coleman (2009) reveal that religious coping is a cognitive or behavioral strategy based

on beliefs and practices of religious rituals to provide problem-solving facilities in preventing or mitigating the negative impacts of stressful situations or circumstances. More deeply, they distinguish religious coping into two types, namely: positive and negative religious coping. They define positive religious coping as an expression of spirituality, a relationship that provides a sense of security with God, the meaning that can be found in every life, as well as the spiritual relationships with other people. Here are eight aspects of positive religious coping that have benefits for mental health: spiritual support, collaborative religious coping, benevolent religious re-arranging, religious purification, spiritual connection, seeking support from clergy or members, religious helping, and religious forgiving (Dewi et al., 2022). As stated by Amawidyati and Utami (2007), negative religious coping strategy is defined as an expression of weak relationships, lack of trust in God, excessive pleasure, and the absence of struggle in search for meaning. This links with distress, levels of depression, cognitive function, and poor quality of life. These coping strategies involve six aspects, namely: punishing God reappraisal, demonic reappraisal, God's power reappraisal, self-directed religious coping, spiritual discontent, and interpersonal religious discontent.

To overcome the social and psychological problems, the government has passed Law No 13 of 1998 concerning elderly welfare to prosper the elderly both physically and mentally. Also, the government has consistently paid attention to welfare of the neglected elderly about their economic situations through a shelter program via the establishment of *Panti Weridha*. However, in March 1953, a non-formal institution that accommodated the elderly in Central Java and its surroundings was interestingly established to bridge the elderly in obtaining mental and physical well-being, namely *Pondok Pesantren Sepuh* (*Pondok*), the Great Mosque of Payaman. The *Pondok* itself is a unique Islamic boarding school because it is inhabited by elderly students. The people who stay at this boarding school consist of a number of students with a range of ages 13-40 years.

Based on preliminary studies, daily lives of elderly students at the *Pondok* include interacting with friends of the same age, reciting Qur'an, and praying in congregation five times at the Great Most of Payaman which is adjacent to the hostel. The initial study through structured interviews with one of the elderly at *Pondok Pesantren Sepuh Payaman Grand Mosque* found that the elderly individuals experienced loneliness which was shown through behavior, namely the high intensity of contacting family at home through video calls. In an interview with one of the administrators, Nuruzzaman, it was known that the location of the *Pondok* was divided into two, namely the male and female dormitories. However, the majority of this cottage is female elderly student and have various backgrounds regarding the reasons for their decision to live in a dormitory such as the desire to deepen their religious knowledge, no family willing to take care of them, living alone at home, having no busy life, feels happy and comfortable living with colleagues of the same age, no desire to bother the family, and having a personal desire to die in a state of peace.

Method

This is a qualitative method with a phenomenological approach which was able to reveal in-depth the reality (Moleong, 2011). Furthermore, the sampling is purposive which is a technique for selecting sources based on the research objectives, and data obtained was in accordance with problems formulated. Moleong (2011) noted in qualitative research there is no random sampling. Thus, based on the focus, we chose two elderly students (male and female) who had criteria that matched the research objectives, namely: (1) the physical condition of the elderly people that is the main characteristics in determining the sources as the physical condition is considered to have an effect on the main data collection stages of the study; (2) who are lack of socialization with the environment, these characteristics can be found through pre-research observations that were carried out intensively and comprehensively based on the theoretical foundation for the characteristics of loneliness

expressed by Suardiman (2017), namely: being a minority, lack of attention from other people, isolated from the social environment, having no place to share feelings and experiences, and having to live alone with no other choice; (3) the attitude towards the changes they experience which is more about the aspect of acceptance of themselves as the elderly, because there are some elderly people who are not willing to be interviewed, regarding their personal lives. We also used a secondary resource, namely the caretaker of a boarding school to strengthen our data.

To find out and describe the lonely experience of elderly students, the data collection technique was in-depth interviews based on the characteristics of loneliness (Suardiman, 2017), namely: being a minority, lack of attention from others, isolated from the environment. In order to identify the type of loneliness in the elderly, the researcher uses two types of loneliness expressed by Natale (1986) namely: emotional isolation and social isolation. As for identifying coping strategies for the elderly, researchers used the types of coping strategies expressed by Lazarus and Folkman (in Maryam, 2017) namely: emotional focused coping and problem focused coping. Meanwhile, to identify the triggering factors for loneliness, the researcher used two types for loneliness as described by Cherry and Parello (2008) namely: situational factors and characterological factors. In

addition, researchers also use non-participant observation techniques, and documentation. The data analysis is divided into three: reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. As for testing the validity of the data, we used the triangulation technique (Brizuela et al., 2020).

Results & Discussion

A Brief History and Activities of Senior Students

The Pondok Pesantren Sepuh Payaman Grand Mosque was founded by KH Muhammad Siradj Anwari bin Abdurrosyad during the Dutch era. A study by Marzuqoh (2020) found the Pondok Pesantren Sepuh Payaman Grand Mosque was established in 1953. It also is related to the history of its establishment that it has existed since 1937 along with the construction of the Payaman Grand Mosque. According to Nuruzzaman, naming Pondok Pesantren Sepuh Payaman Grand Mosque is due to its location adjacent to the Payaman Great Mosque and the majority of its inhabitant is elderly students (over 60 years).

Currently, the Pondok is inhabited by 22 male and 6 female *santri*. As mentioned by the respondents, the capacity of the Islamic Boarding School consists of 44 elderly students. The *santri* have a structured daily and weekly schedule every day and week as shown in Table 1.1 and Table 1.2:

Table 1.1 Daily Schedule of the Islamic Boarding School of Elderly Student Payaman Grand Mosque.

Activity	The place	Time
Tahajud prayer	Payaman Grand Mosque	02.00-03.00 a.m.
Reciting al-Qur'an	Payaman Grand Mosque	03.00-04.30 a.m.
Morning Prayer in congregation	Payaman Grand Mosque	04.30-05.00 a.m.
Isra prayer and Dhuha prayer	Payaman Grand Mosque	05.00-07.30 a.m.
No class, usually filled with personal activities (washing, cooking, bathing)	Payaman Grand Mosque Elderly Islamic Boarding School	07.30-10.00 a.m.
Studying	Payaman Grand Mosque	10.00-12.00 a.m.
Congregational Dzuhur Prayer	Payaman Grand Mosque	12.00-13.00 p.m.
Quran recitation	Mrs. Tibyan's House	13.00-14.00 p.m.
Resting	-	14.00-15.00 p.m.
Ashr prayer in congregation	Payaman Grand Mosque	15.00-15.30 p.m.
Religious lecture (a study of Al-Ibriz)	Payaman Grand Mosque	15.30-16.30 p.m.
Private Activities and Congregational Maghrib Prayers	Islamic Boarding School, Payaman Grand Mosque	16.30-18.00 p.m.
Personal Activities	Payaman Grand Mosque	18.00-18.45 p.m.
Isha prayer in congregation	Payaman Grand Mosque	18.45-19.15 p.m.
Resting	Payaman Grand Mosque Elderly Islamic Boarding School	19.15-02.00 p.m.

Note: Data on the management of the Elderly Students of the Great Payaman Mosque, 2022

Tabel 1.2 Weekly Schedule of the Islamic Boarding School of Elderly Students.

Activity	The place	Time
Recitating the Book of Al-Barjanji	Payaman Grand Mosque	Tuesday (19.15 p.m. -end)
Recitating Surah Yasiin and Dhikr Fida'	Payaman Grand Mosque	Thursday (19.15 p.m. - end)
Morning Lecture	Payaman Grand Mosque	Sunday (04.45 a.m. – end)

Note: Data on the management of the Elderly Students of the Great Payaman Mosque, 2022

Loneliness

The primary sources of elderly students were Mrs. SS and Mr. TH who experienced loneliness, such as emotional isolation and social isolation. The trigger factors of their loneliness were situational. The following is a description of the experience of loneliness, types, triggering factors, and coping strategies for the two elderly students who were the primary sources of research:

Mrs. SS has been in the Pondok since 2018. Before deciding to study. She was a housewife, who also had a busy life as a tailor at the institution. Her last education was SMP when her age was 62. Her husband passed away in 2012. She has three children and four grandchildren. Currently she lives with her son in Wonosobo. Accordingly, as for Mrs. SS's motivation to enter the Islamic Boarding School, it was recoded:

"Personally, if you're under pressure from your children, you'll want to be prepared for the afterlife."

Mrs. SS had considered her personal desire to stay away from home because she wanted to die in a state of peace and focus on the afterlife. Mrs. SS was the minority because she only interacted with peers. Types of interactions such as cooking, washing clothes, and shopping together. As well, she rarely interacted with local residents, especially the younger people even though she had been in the Pondok for three years. She said:

"I've never been involved in social activities."

"For three years, Mrs. SS has never changed rooms, and has always been with her colleagues from the moment she entered until the end of the day now."

Mrs. SS tends to choose a place where she is accepted, cared for, and does what she wants, which are a part of the characteristics of loneliness

related to the absence of attention from others. In an interview with Ms. SS, Ms. SS is also isolated from the social environment, as she confirmed:

"We have never been invited or participated in community activities here."

Mrs. SS is considered less able to adapt to the new environment. Her loneliness indicated two aspects, such as emotional isolation and social isolation. In emotional isolation, she showed the lack of affection from loved ones (husbands) who have died. It was clear that when we mentioned her husband, she suddenly had to tears in her eyes and said:

"Yes, remember the past, either sufficient funds, love, or moments."

"I want to share with whom. I am confused, that's it."

It is clear that her husband, whom she relies on, as a life partner has passed away, which means that Ms. SS has lost a very important figure to live the dynamics of life. Moreover, the loneliness of the type of social isolation is shown by the fact that Mrs. SS has never participated in social activities in the area of the Pondok and has thus never changed rooms during her entry until now. The trigger factor for Mrs. SS's loneliness is the situational factor. Mrs. SS's open personality indicated that character factor is not the trigger for the loneliness she feels. This situation factor is more appropriate because she is far from home and the entire family. This is also confirmed by secondary sources:

"Yes, at the beginning Mrs. SS often allowed her to go home two or three times a week because she missed her children and grandchildren at home."

In addition, interpretations related to the triggering factors for loneliness were also found in an interview with Mrs. SS who stated that:

"At first I missed my grandson, but after a while I got used to it because my grandson already had his parents, I just focused on the Quran."

Based on the results and analysis it is clear that Mrs. SS's loneliness is a part of the type of emotional isolation and social isolation with situational factors. Coping strategies used by Mrs. SS related to loneliness are emotional focused coping and problem focused coping. When she is ignored by others, what Mrs. SS does is to give a positive response. Giving this value is interpreted by researcher as being included in an emotional focused coping strategy. In detail, the manifestation of this is in the form of praying, this was expressed by Mrs. SS:

"Let me remember, let me realize, I pray that I don't even hate it."

In this type of emotional focused coping, Mrs. SS also uses aspects of emphasis on responsibility by focusing her role and placing everything to adjust herself (more to feelings or non-physical). This is indicated by what Mrs. SS stated:

"Instead of asking for help I handle it myself."

Furthermore, in emotional focused coping, Mrs. SS emphasizes the aspect of avoiding herself as shown in her statement:

"Yes, there are those who don't accept it, I just leave it to the older ones."

It can be interpreted that Mrs. SS prefers to avoid the problems she is experiencing. In the problem focused coping strategy, she applied confrontative coping. The following was Mrs. SS's statement regarding the strategy:

"Usually I go out for a while and apologize right away."

This interpretation emphasizes more on real reactions to changing circumstances that can change the level of risk. In terms of the positive religious coping strategy, she emphasizes on the collaborative method and spiritual support. The

following are the results of the interpretation of the interview results related to the strategies applied by Mrs. SS:

"I confide in Allah, thank God I can overcome it, I confide in Allah."

"Let me remember, let me realize, I pray that I don't even hate it."

Then the researchers analysis and interpret with the primary resource, Mr. TH. He is a retired civil servant since 2016 as a driver at Headquarters, who comes from East Jakarta. From this background, the researcher concludes that Mr. TH has routine activities or activities with fairly high mobility, scheduled, and organized way every day, now he has reached the age of 64 years old, in Cipayung, East Jakarta. Mr. TH lives with wife, has four children who are married and working. The motivation for Mr. TH to study is:

"After I left and came here I started to eradicate sin that I have committed."

"Indeed I am Muslim but I do not really care about studying religion. When I get old I feel that when I am old, I can help myself."

This indicates that the desire to stay away from home and family at the Pondok Pesantren Sepuh Masjid Agung Payaman is based on a personal motivation to be proximity to God because Mr. TH felt that when he was young he never studied religion and often committed a sin. Based on the results of an interview with Mr. TH., the loneliness that he experienced is classified as loneliness as a minority because he rarely interacts with the surrounding environment except with peers at the Islamic Boarding School. This is what he illustrated:

"Here, socializing is only with friends. If we have free time, we go for a walk, about 5 kilometers back again."

Furthermore, Mr. TH experienced loneliness due to lack of attention from the social environment, Mr. TH said that:

"So far I've lived here, I've never lived here, no one has invited me to socialize in this

environment, so I'm only here to recite the Quran."

The social environment is considered to provide less space for Mr. TH to conduct wider interactions and build individual and social relationships. Thus, he prefers to live in a place where he accepts care and lives up with its expectation. Interviews with secondary informants indicated that he often calls home to simply ask "how he is doing", "what are you cooking", "have you had breakfast", or "what is the story today". This fits the findings in the observations we made that during the day he intensely video-called three to five times with his wife, children, or grandchildren. From this observation the researcher interpreted that in fact he lacked a place who are comfortable to tell stories and experience boredom in the Pondok. Mr. TH put is:

"When I'm bored I go back to Jakarta and come here again."

The researcher also found that during his 1 year living at the Islamic Boarding School, he had returned home (Jakarta-Magelang) 25 times:

"I've been here 25 times a year."

The type of loneliness that Mr. TH feels is emotional isolation and social isolation, this type of emotional isolation is indicated by the intensity of communication, away from family so that people do not really care or love. This is the trigger for Mr TH's lonely emotional isolation, this is based on the results of an interview with him:

"We often do video call with our children and grandchildren five times a day. They are praying for me to stay healthy."

"Sometimes I've only been here for a month and I miss. I am bored here, after that I come back here for another month."

The intensity of giving news, the length of the video call, and the desire to keep going home indicate that Mr. TH actually wants to be close to his family, but on the other hand, he wants to study religion seriously. In addition to interview data with Mr. TH, the researcher also found the results of interviews with secondary informants

and observations that strengthened the interpretation. In this case, he often daydreams and tells his grandchildren and children to secondary sources who are actually administrators of the Pondok.

Furthermore, the type of social isolation loneliness is seemingly shown by the lack of social interaction and his interaction is limited only with peers at the Pondok. Therefore, this is also the trigger of social isolation loneliness. This is based on the results of an interview with Mr. TH who said that:

"I never been invited to clean up the mosque or something."

"So far I've lived here, no one has invited me to socialize in this environment, so I'm only here to recite the Quran."

In terms of types of loneliness, he experienced loneliness with the type of emotional isolation and social isolation that are triggered by situational factors. The coping strategies or efforts made by Mr. TH to overcome the loneliness are to emphasize his responsibility. To overcome the loneliness, he has the following experiences:

"I feel like I can solve my problem."

"I have high emotions, I often go, when I wasn't retired I used to play badminton."

A coping strategy such as an emphasis on responsibility and avoiding oneself is in the category of emotional focused coping. Furthermore, Mr TH said:

"I feel happy, I like to talk to, and communicate openly. As long as I retire, there are no serious problems."

"You know, I am a human. When it's quiet here there is no activity, sometimes I feel lonely thinking whether I am going home tomorrow. If I am happy, there's no thought of going home. I am an easy person. If I want to go home tomorrow morning, I'm going home."

From the two statements above, it can be interpreted that the coping strategies used by Mr. TH are confrontative coping and seeking social support. Confrontative coping is a reaction to

change the situation at a level of risk, while in seeking social support Mr. TH is openness with indication of looking for friends who feel comfortable to be a place to complain. Both of these things are included in problem focused coping.

Meanwhile, in this study, Mr. TH also used a religious coping strategy, namely collaborative religious coping or emphasis on cooperation between God and the individual either actively or passively. This is clearly seen on the statement of Mr. TH:

"If there is no activity, I take ablution and I pray two or four rak'ahs. Then, I come back again."

"So far, wudhu, it's a tool , taking a shower is just like that."

In the aspect of a positive religious coping strategy, he does an expression of spirituality which is a positive religious coping. Such a spirituality refers to a relationship that provides a sense of security with God, a meaning that can be found in every life, and a spiritual relationship with others.

Given the research results posited above, the following is a summary of the answers to the formulation of the research problem presented through the table which will then be described and discussed based on the theoretical basis and previous research that is relevant in this study:

Tabel 1.3 Research result

No	Name	Gender	Age	Status		Type of Loneliness	Trigger Factor	Coping Strategy
				Work	Marital status			
1	Mrs. SS	P	62	IRT	Widow	Emotional Isolation, and Social Isolation	Situational	Religious Coping, Emotional Focused Coping, Problem Focused Coping
2	Mr TH	L	64	Retired civil servants	Husband	Emotional Isolation, and Social Isolation	Situational	Religious Coping, Emotional Focused Coping, Problem Focused Coping

Discussion

With a schedule of daily and weekly activities that have been set by the administrators of the Islamic Boarding School of Elderly Students Payaman Grand Mosque and placing the elderly in the same environment are a part of support and an effort to provide understanding and provide emotional attachment. This is not only 'himself' who is starting to age but there are other people who are the same as him. In this research, the two primary sources, namely elderly *santri*, still experienced loneliness with a description of the experience of loneliness based on four of the five characteristics of loneliness expressed by Suardiman (2017) namely: being a minority, lack of attention from others, isolation from the social environment, and no place to share feelings and experiences. In

addition, the findings in this study indicated a comparison to the theory expressed by Suardiman (2017) about activity theory which states that with clear and active daily activities, the elderly will have good health in aspects of life physically, socially, and mentally. However, the elderly students in the Islamic boarding school still experience loneliness with a description of the experience as previously described by researchers.

Results of the interview provided an understanding that the two primary sources experienced emotional and social loneliness. This is in line with what was expressed by Natale (1986) that loneliness was a strong hunger for intimacy and community, a natural sign that we lacked companionship, closeness, and a friendly place in the environment. As well, Suardiman (2017)

asserted the similar point. She states that an elderly person tends to choose a place where he accepts care and lives up with its expectation. More deeply, the interest in the elderly in deepening the religious field is also in line with what was expressed by Hurlock (2009) which states that the elderly experience changes both physically, mentally, and socially and one of these changes is a change in the spiritual aspect where the elderly are increasingly learnt and consistent with the religion they profess .

On the one hand there is a difference between the elderly living in nursing homes and the elderly living in Pondok. The two elderly living in Pondok applied positive religious coping strategies. This is different from the results of research conducted by Setiawan (2013) who stated that the lonely coping strategy of the elderly living in the Sultan Fatah Demak Nursing Home, namely drying rice and doing gymnastics together. It gave an understanding that the religious atmosphere or atmosphere in Islamic boarding schools provide the elderly with a bridge to overcome problems related to loneliness through positive religious coping strategies in the form of collaborative and spiritual support (Urrohmah, Lessy, & Rahim, 2022). On the other hand, the findings from this study also support research by Setiawan (2013) and Sessiani (2018) which states that elderly women with the female gender are able to express their feelings expressively and directly than the male elderly, and the female gender has a wide range, longer life than men.

The Relation of the Verses of the Qur'an

“It is He who created you from dust, then from a sperm-drop, then from a clinging clot; then He brings you out as a child; then [He develops you] that you reach your [time of] maturity, then [further] that you become elders. And among you is he who is taken in death before [that], so that you reach a specified term; and perhaps you will use reason.” (Al-Mu'min: 67)

According to Shihab (2012), it is Allah Who created you, O son of Adam, from clay. From that soil He created nutfah which He later turned into 'alaqah. After that He brought you out of the belly of your mothers in the form of babies.

Furthermore, sometimes He prolongs your life, until you reach the perfection of your physical and mental powers, or lengthens it again until you reach old age, and sometimes you are killed before you reach the age of youth, or old age. Allah created you in that way that you will arrive at a certain time, namely the Day of Resurrection, and for you to think about the wisdom and lessons that can be learned from your creation through such phases.

The definition of *nutfah*, *'alaqah* and *mudlghah* stated in the letter al-Sajdah: 7, 8 and 9; al-Mu'minûn: 12, 13 and 14; Ghafir: 67; and al-Hajj: 5, are the following. The word *nutfah* has several meanings, one of which is 'sperm'. In fact, in verse 37 of the letter al-Qiyâmah, the meaning of the word *nutfah* is even narrower: 'part of the sperm'. Modern science proves that the part in question is spermatozoa contained in male sperm. Spermatozoa are what fertilize the egg. The word *'alaqah*, from an etymological point of view, means 'thick blood' or 'watery blood that is very red in color'. However, from a scientific perspective, the word *'alaqah* means 'fetal cells attached to the uterine wall after the fertilization of the spermatozoa to the ovum'. The cells at first are one, then split into several cells that are increasingly increasing in number, then move towards the uterine wall and sink, causing further bleeding around it. While the word *mudlghah* means a fetus that has passed the *'alaqah phase*. After the fetal cells attach and spread randomly to the uterine wall and are covered with a membrane. This *mudlghah* phase lasts several weeks before entering the *'izham phase*. The *mudlghah* itself, to a large extent, consists of the human-shaped cells that later become the fetus, and the non-human-shaped cells that line the first cells. These second cells are in charge of protecting the future fetus and providing a food supply. Lastly, the word *'izham* means 'bone'. Recently, the world of genealogy has proven that the center of bone formation is in the middle layer of the *mudlghah* cell, which is the phase before *'izham* . Thus, bone cells have their own center of formation that is separate from muscle-building cells (Shihab, 2012).

This verse is in line with what was discussed earlier, starting from the time of pregnancy until

death, the dynamics of development, both forward and backward. The physical and mental aspects of humans are very interesting studies considering that each individual has different knowledge and experiences. Old age or the elderly is a stage of decline experienced by a person in his life span.

“And Allāh created you; then He will take you in death. And among you is he who is reversed to the most decrepit [old] age so that he will not know, after [having had] knowledge, a thing. Indeed, Allāh is Knowing and Competent” (An-Nahl: 70).

According to Shihab (2012), Allah has created you and determined death that is different from one another. Some of you are killed at a young age and others survive to a very old age and gradually return to being weak. As you get older, the workability of cells decreases. Bones, muscles and arteries loosen and eventually lose all power and ability. Indeed, Allah is All-Knowing of the secrets of His creation and All-Powerful to manifest whatever He wills. In accordance with the discussion, definition of the elderly in the perspective of developmental psychology is seen as the end stage of the life cycle of a human being. This life cycle begins in the prenatal period until death, while the elderly time is marked by age of 60 (Yurdik, 2015).

Implication for the Sufistic Therapy for Elderly People

As their physical and psychological performance begins to decrease, the elderly students want to prepare to die in a state of peace. The problems experienced by the elderly students above are also related to the lack of sociality so they feel lonely. To overcome the problem, we proposed Sufistic therapy for the elderly *santri*, such as remembrance and prayer therapy. Wulandari and Nashori (2014) found that remembrance therapy applied to the elderly has a positive impact on their psychological well-being than the elderly who are not given remembrance therapy.

Dhikr is one of the ways in which the elderly students prepare their provisions so that they would die in a state of peace. By spending free time with *dhikr*, they will get two positive values at the

same time, namely getting closer to God and psychologically growing prosperity. Accordingly, they are better prepared to face death and can reduce the fear of death.

It is worth noting that when people get older, they generally have high level of sensitivity. It is necessary to be careful in preaching to the elderly students. The results of this study also show that in the process of preaching to the elderly, the presence of *dai* as a part of elements of *da'wah* is significant. They have the capacity of knowledge, give valuable advices to the participants and have *sharia* knowledge according to what is taught. As well, they have to know the language of his people and the condition of the participants. The material presented is related to the physiology of the elderly, *fiqh* of worship, morals. and *muamalah*. They may have methods such as lectures, dialogues, simulations, repetition method, practice and combined method.

Conclusion

Clear and structured daily activities still provide a gap in one's feelings of loneliness. This study is a comparison of activity theory because the two elderly students in the Pondok experience loneliness with mixed types: emotional isolation and social isolation which are indicated by the high intensity of video calls with family members and permission to return home, the desire to participate in social activities but there is no invitation, and choosing a place where they are accepted and comfortable. The loneliness was triggered by situational factors where elderly students wanted to deepen their religious knowledge but at the same time wanted to always be close to their loved ones. To overcome this, the two elderly students use emotional focused and problem focused coping. This study found that women are more able to express their feelings expressively, and have a longer life span than men.

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