OPENNES OF ISLAMIC LEARNING IN FACULTY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY STUDENTS IN ACCESS TO RELIGIOUS INFORMATION

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ABSTRACT

Millenial Islamic generations are often identified with popular culture that is characterized by an instant and tend to smell of technology. In the "consume" of religious teaching, according to some research using this characteristic namely learning religion quickly, instantly and without going through a dilligent study process with teachers or through formal education process. The era of technological development is also become a tool in learning religion. On that basis, the researchers want to describe how information access of religion among students in Faculty of Science and Technology at UIN North Sumatera Medan. This is because almost 90% students in faculty are from public school educational background and then study in Islamic University who certainly participate in the study of Islamic discourses. As a result, religious access or more precisely religious reference in obtained through an instant process, for example learning from whatsapp group, youtube and social media like facebook etc. All of the processes are more dominantly accessible to the students, so although they study in Islamic University, but source of Islamic learning comes from outside of the University. The dominant reference figures for example Abdul Shomad, Dr. Zakir Naik, Dr. Khalid Basalamah and the similar ideological figures.

Keywords: Millenial generation of Islam, Popular Islam, Access to religious information.

INTRODUCTION

The existence of the internet has changed the behavior of millennials in getting information. The internet is used as one of the most dominant means of accessing information. Especially students, the role of the internet is so important in supporting the process of learning activities. The role of the internet for students has gained a position of equal importance even more when juxtaposed with other sources of information in terms of meeting their information needs. It is not unusual for students in this digital era to be more concerned with bringing gadgets than books or other printed information sources.

Instant culture facilitated by the internet in getting information has provided shortcuts for students, including accessing religious information which is usually done by reading religious books or asking lecturers or religious teachers who are experts in the field of religion. The process of tracing religious information has undergone a change as many "digital ustadz" and Islamic discourses flourish in the walls of social media. Students in accessing religious information no longer visit majlis taklim or gather in religious organizations but by visiting websites, personal blogs or video streaming religious leaders even conduct virtual religious consultations (Nugraha, 2016).

"Cyberreligion" has a concept that consists of two forms, either in the form of "online religion" or "religion online". According Fakhrurrozi in Nugraha distinguish between online

religion and religion online. "Religion Online" seeks to explain religious information and services through religious websites, while "online religion" is defined as religious services such as virtual religious observations or consultations (Nugraha, 2016). It can take the form of streaming video, chatting through social media or using other chat sites in terms of conducting religious consultations. This "religion online" activity in principle it can be an alternative to learning religion for students that the background is not from Islamic education institutions then continue their education to Islamic educational institutions. Through this activity students can equip religious knowledge before finally being used as a credible reference source for course activities especially religious subjects.

According to the survey results, the majority of students from the Faculty of Science and Technology (Saintek) UIN North Sumatra Medan came from general or non-religious educational institutions. This phenomenon is interesting because the curriculum of State Islamic Higher Education (PTKIN) institutions is forced to deal with specific Islamic subjects, such as Al-Quran, Hadith, Sufism, Fiqh, Arabic, etc. that are not found while in educational institutions previous. Therefore students are required to have reading or reference sources to be used as a reference for learning courses and religious discourses. The lack of printed information sources related to the religious information which are owned, makes them switch to media that offers quick and cheap access through cyber activities

This article wants to explore access to religious information carried out by students Faculty of Science and Technology UIN North Sumatra Medan (Saintek) in the context of "religion online" and the extent to which religious learning openness is generated through online activities in Islamic discourses in Islamic Universities.

METHOD

This research was conducted at the Faculty of Science and Technology (Saintek) UIN North Sumatra Medan with the consideration that the majority of students came from the background of non-religious education institutions. This study wanted to see access to religious information carried out by Faculty of Science and Technology (Saintek) UIN North Sumatra Medan students as well as the extent to which religious learning openness was generated through activities in the virtual world. This study uses a qualitative approach. Data collection methods are carried out by survey, observation, interview and literature study. The sample selection is done by using purposive sampling technique which consists of lecturers of religious courses as well as some saintek faculty students who have high intensity in accessing online information sources as a tool to meet religious information needs (Padgett, 2016).

RESULTS

The use of the internet as an information provider media has an impact on the context of religious learning from the aspect of information access. In the past, access to religious information was carried out by joining religious organizations, majlis taklim or visiting recitation held in mosques, but today what happened was the commodification of access to religious information which was carried out through religious sites, video streaming or websites containing religious consultations conducted without face to face (Sutopo, 2010). This openness of Islamic learning was produced through online activities in the context of online religion, where students flocked to visit religious sites, Islamic organization websites to obtain religious information. Religious figures such as Ustadz are no longer considered sacred as the only religious information media and face-to-face activities to ask directly to the Ustadz or teacher are no longer obligatory or legitimate to obtain religious information.

Access to Religious Information Faculty of Science and Technology (Saintek) UIN North Sumatra Medan Students.

The internet presence has actually shown how to commodify religious learning that occurs from aspects of access to religious information. According to the survey, there were variations in answers from students in terms of access to religious information. Access to religious information that is most often accessed to meet information needs is as follows:

1. Internet. The existence of the internet has created a new chapter for students in the aspect of information seeking behavior. Apart from the assumption that the information generated from the internet is deemed necessary to evaluate its validity, it cannot be denied that the presence of the internet has become an alternative means of learning religion for students, especially students of the Faculty of Science and Technology of North Sumatra Medan. Information generated through visits to websites or sites from the internet makes provision for students to participate in lectures and religious courses.

2. Social media. The presence of the internet has created a revolution in student behavior in obtaining information, including religious information. The many applications or sophisticated features created due to the development of technology make it easy for students to fulfill information for learning activities. Social media is used as a means to meet the religious information needs of students (Sadida, 2018). Social media is considered as one of the most effective means of meeting religious information needs for students. The most frequently accessed forms of social media for religious information are Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp and YouTube groups. The dominance of social media in terms of dissemination of religious information can be seen with the emergence of "digital teachers" who are used as reference figures. The figure that becomes a religious information reference for the majority of Saintek Faculty students is Ustadz Abdul Shomad. He is one of the religious leaders whose religious content is the easiest to digest. This is because the content delivered close to everyday life and improvised with comedy content and distinctive accent is the main attraction for listeners. Other figures who emerged as ideological figures accessed were such as Ustadh Hanan Attaki, Oki Setiana Dewi, Zakir Naik and Khalid Basalamah.

3. Ustadz. For some students of the Faculty of Science and Technology, North Sumatra Medan, the internet presence does not necessarily make the internet the only mouthpiece for access to religious information or means of learning religion. Although the presence of the internet is undeniable as a means of accessing religious information that is easy to use, but the cleric is still a medium for access to major religious information that is considered sacred. The sacredness of religious information is the main reason why Ustadz does not shift his role as a medium to explore religious information that should be done directly in an organization or assembly of majlis taklim. In this case Ustadz does more of his role as an evaluator as a final backrest to legitimize religious information obtained from various forms of media.

Internet as Tool of "Religion Online"

The phenomenon of "cyberreligion" has become increasingly developed due to the rapid development of the internet. The concept of cyberreligion can be categorized into two forms, namely online religion and religion online. Online religion refers to religious learning activities

through video streaming or conducting religious consultations live, while religion online is more about visiting web sites, religious sites, or personal blogs of religious leaders in order to seek religious information.

This "religion online" activity is in line with research conducted by Dawson and Cowan which states that as many as 25% of internet users prefer to seek religious information compared to economic information or friendship. (Dawson, 2004). Correspondingly, Vexen Crabtree in his journal entitled *The Internet and Religion* revealed that cyberspace facilities have created relations between the internet and religion (Crabtree, 2015). He expressed several important points of internet relations and religion. *First*, the internet has a negative side to religion. The internet as a place of production, consumption and information dissemination has created opportunities for destruction resulting from the interests of some parties in terms of claiming the truth. The interpretation that arises independently of the information received is the basis for the truth claim. This is also due to the weakening of the relationship between lecturers and students in terms of validating the truth of religious information. Parties that have authoritative religious information but have limited internet access will be inferior to small parties who do not have authoritative religious information that has wide access to the internet. *Second*, the internet has a positive side to religion. Internet access has created an open religious learning space. Every individual can access religious information without limited space and time as long as they are connected to the internet network. Cyberspace facilities have created a "market" for religions to spread the values of truth in according to the religion they adopted. *Third*, censorship and freedom of speech. One of the advantages of cyberspace activity is that it lies in the freedom to express opinions. The internet gives space to each individual freely in speaking or commenting on anything including talking related to religious values that are considered sacred. *Fourth*, the Internet is a sacred medium. The internet is considered a sacred media in terms of where the sacred texts then move from conventional traditions to machine language produced by google. The question that arises is how then do we interpret the sacredness of the holy texts appearing on the internet? Furthermore, what happens if the sacred texts come from parties that are not authoritative? How do we believe that the sacred texts can be accounted for their validity and validity as a basis for religious ethics. However, what happens in the field that the majority of individuals can easily believe is even regarded as an intrinsic truth of every religious information produced through search engines, and to share it without any effort to evaluate the truth.

Cyberspace facilities are used by Faculty of Science and Technology UIN North Sumatra Medan students in the context of "religion online". "Religion online" activities have made a new chapter for students in terms of searching religious information. The openness of religious learning produced by the concept of cybereligion has reduced the sacredness of religious information carried out by face to face in an association or majlis taklim, but does not reduce faith. The activity is considered as a natural thing regardless of the validity or validity of the information produced.

DISCUSSION

Religious authorities experienced a shift among the Facutlty of Science and Technology UIN North Sumatra Medan students with a non-religious educational background. The shift occurred due to the religious curriculum they had to learn, especially as students studying at Islamic universities, outside of the curriculum of course they were also involved in various religious discourses which forced them to be involved in the discourse of Islamic discourse.

As a generation that is familiar with the cyber world, the world of the internet is more familiar, easier and more friendly in meeting information needs, curiosity and matters related to religion, these facilities become the first as a source of information. Adherence to the device, the convenience provided plus digital da'wah is loved by young people, constructing religious information among millennials

The disadvantage of this method is that instant access cannot be used as a foothold in understanding religious teachings. Religion, especially Islam, has a deep set of knowledge and cannot be for beginners or people who have just studied religion rely on their religious knowledge from the internet or social media.

Therefore, as an Islamic university, it is important that digital literacy study be a competency that must be possessed by every student, especially on religious information. Information literacy as an umbrella for digital literacy plays a role in finding, evaluating and using religious information which is then used as a discussion for students. Information literacy knowledge tools must be understood and applied correctly by method, especially students with a general background who then learn and are directly involved in religious discourse. An important point of concern is learning and accessing religious information can have an impact on the behavior of expressing individual faith, namely understanding or school or ideology that is contrary to the values of Islam itself, such as the ideology of extremism and its kind.

CONCLUSION

The presence of the information society influences various aspects of human life, especially the culture of literacy. In this case, Faculty of Science and Technology UIN North Sumatera students is one of the information user objects. Learning culture; reading and access to information that initially relied on print media, now began to switch to online media. The process of tracing religious information has undergone a change along with the amount of information that is present from the internet which is used as the main source in learning Islam. This change occurs because online media offers faster, more complete and cost-effective access to information in the delivery of information. Including religious learning resources for each individual which will affect their religious behavior.

The concern of each individual student is no longer the same in terms of access to religious information. Activities that move to a virtual world increasingly become an implicit support, internet connection is an important point to get religious information. However, must be observant and careful in choosing religious information that is absorbed and accounted for by certain parties, but it can also have a positive impact on us.

The openness of Islamic learning that is created through online religion activities makes its own concerns about the intake of religious information that cannot be justified. This is a problem if religious information intake is not correct, it will have an impact on religious understanding and behavior that tends to be misguided. Therefore, it is necessary to present digital literacy competencies as a knowledge tool to back up Faculty of Science and Technology students in terms of tracking, evaluating and using religious information obtained through

online religion activities to be more critical, analytical and evaluative in assessing existing religious information.

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