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The Role of Women in Improving Family Resilience in The Middle of The Covid-19 Pandemic

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ABSTRACT

Coronavirus is a deadly threat to all humankind. Its sudden arrival confused the government and society. The government policy, which limits activities outside the home and demands people to avoid crowds, followed by learning from home, is a new burden for the community. This article aims to explain a mother's new role as a teacher and build more effective family communication patterns in dealing with Covid-19. The research was carried out by collecting data from several respondents who live in the Surakarta area. This article's object is related to the activities of mothers who are also online teachers to their children at home with different educational backgrounds and social statuses. This study's results show that the Covid-19 pandemic was an opportunity for women as citizens and citizens to experience social change. First, related to the globalization vortex that is increasingly aggressively forcing women to come into contact with information technology more. Women, namely mothers, are invited to better understand user information technology to become teachers and accompany their children when learning from home. Second, this period at the same time provides an opportunity for Javanese women to further instill social moral values as provisions for their children in the future. Third, this period is an opportunity to improve ourselves so that they are more worthy of becoming a more meaningful creature.

KEYWORDS: *Covid-19, women, resilience, family*

INTRODUCTION

The Covid-19 pandemic has become a disaster that has attacked all of humanity since World War II. The Coronavirus, named Covid-19 by WHO, is the biggest challenge threatening global health in this century. The world, including Indonesia, is threatened with a deadly disease outbreak. The outbreak started in the Wuhan area, Hubei Province, China, in early December 2019 (Huang et al., 2020). A WHO report, on April 18, 2020, stated that 2,164,111 people were infected, and more than 146,198 people from 200 countries or more died. The rapid spread of the virus is becoming a new challenge and threat, affecting the economy, education, health, environmental and social sectors, and other human life sectors.

Covid-19 has been spreading in Indonesia. Until May 15, 2020, 9,511

people were tested positive for Covid-19, 773 died, and 7,484 were treated, while 1,254 people had recovered (kompas.com). Covid-19 cases are increasing, while the cause is not certain. So far, the virus is allegedly transmitted by animals and can be transmitted from one species to another, including humans. The name Covid-19 stands for "Co," short for *Corona*, "vi" for *virus*, "D" for disease, and 19 for 2019—the beginning of its spread in Wuhan. The virus's estimated diameter is 80-120nm (Gorbalenya et al., 2020).

Coronavirus causes disease and is deadly, compared to various other viruses that only cause disease. This deadly virus can be a terrible threat to human survival in all corners of the world. This virus can match the threats to human life caused by global warming, pollution, land degradation, etc. which threatens the planet earth and human health. The spread of the virus is so fast and unpredictable that it causes environmental changes globally. Yoo (2020) explains that increasing solidarity and cooperation between personnel, the public, and the government is a means of anticipation and cutting Coronavirus spread.

Due to the virus' spread, the Indonesian government implemented Large-Scale Social Restrictions (PSBB), *Social Distancing Measure,* and *Physical Distancing protocol.* The government demanded that citizens wear masks, wash hands regularly, follow health protocols, and others. The rapid spread of this disease makes people always alert and suspicious of others. According to government recommendations, the community began to limit activities outside the home, such as

Work from Home (WFH) and *Learning from Home* (LH). The public is encouraged to improve discipline, be responsible, and look after one another. The rapid spread of this virus has resulted in the emergence of new social activities such as working together, helping each other, and synergizing.

The social changes that have occurred amid the Covid-19 pandemic require people to adapt to digital communication. When opening the Ministry of Trade Work Meeting on March 4, 2020, President Joko Widodo himself issued a new policy that requires students to study from home and the State Civil Service (ASN) as well as employees—from both public and private institutions—to work from home, . The government implements that study-and-work-from-home policy that requires the support of an online system. This policy is very important, considering that the Coronavirus spread occurs through physical contact such as touching and through the air from coughing or sneezing. *Social* or *physical distancing* with a distance of about 1.5 meters is one way to avoid the spread of the virus (Zaharah, 2020).

This new policy has become a burden for families with school-age children. Parents are required to replace teaching positions both academically and non academically. This demand becomes heavy for parents when they do not have much experience with information technology. Various conditions, such as being busy to meet family needs coupled with a lack of insight into technological developments, are both a challenge and a burden for parents. On the other hand, information technology can bridge

difficulties in learning that are not carried out directly in a formal education environment.

The use of information technology for current conditions plays a major role in fulfilling learning that remains of quality. Children will routinely be accompanied by their parents so that on the other hand, family closeness will be created. Demands for using information technology to facilitate online learning from home are more borne by female parents. Mothers have their psychological closeness with their children. At the same time, mothers share their time to take care of household affairs by providing teaching and learning. Mothers who usually have more time with their children are also categorized as women who work outside the home.

METHOD

What makes research feminist? A classic answer is that it is research done by, for, and about women. First, feminist research is characterized by its double dimension. As opposed to traditional research, its objectives include both the construction of new knowledge and the production of social change. Historically, feminist research has been informed by women's struggles against the multiple forms of their oppression. Second, feminist research is grounded in feminist values and beliefs. It seeks to include feminism within the process, to focus on the meanings women give to their world, while recognizing that research must often be conducted within institutions that are still patriarchal. Feminist principles inform all stages of the research, from choice of topic to presentation of data, acting as the framework guiding the decisions being made by the people involved in the research. Third, feminist research is characterized by its diversity. It is interdisciplinary and trans disciplinary, it uses different methodologies, and it is constantly being redefined by the concerns of women coming from very different perspectives. Feminist research thus requires that such issues as antiracism and diversity, democratic decision making, and the empowerment of women--including traditionally marginalized women-- are addressed.

Methodologically, feminist research differs from traditional research. It actively seeks to remove the power imbalance between research and subject; it is politically motivated in that it seeks to change social inequality; and it begins with the standpoints and experiences of women. A wide range of methods, both qualitative and quantitative, are available to feminist researchers. Instead of focusing on which type of research is better, it makes more sense to allow the context and purpose of the research to guide the choice of research tools and techniques. There is no one method or strategy for feminist research. Feminist research cannot claim to speak for all women, but can provide new knowledge grounded in the realities of women's experiences and actively enact structural changes in the social world.

The Role of Women in Technology

The importance of mothers' role in providing online learning and teaching to their children today is realizing a change in their social dimensions. In the 1980s, several studies stated that women were people who had their fear of technology. Some of these authors call women "afraid" of technology as *technophobia* (Weil & Rosen, 1995; Triastuti, 2013). This assumption is driven by the idea that technology is masculine, created to allow men to achieve certain goals more easily. Triastuti (2013) mentions that computers and the internet were created to follow globalization's demands and experience commodification by adapting to local culture. The family becomes a prototype for a local culture so that the technological media is adapted to domestic needs.

Fulfillment of domestic needs forces women (read: mothers) to understand and be able to operate media technology. Kamilia Manaf and Ni Luh Gusti Madewanti (2013) explain that globalization demands inclusiveness and women's involvement to voice their human rights and gender perspectives in internet governance. Information disseminated through the internet opens up access and demands that the public be informed. With this information literacy, society will experience a process of development and social change globally.

The social change that has spread so intensively as a marker of globalization becomes an opportunity to recall Cohen's thoughts in 1972 regarding *moral panic*. Cohen had come up with the idea that the time when the world no longer had limits was when moral panic erupted. Moral panic becomes a society's reaction to certain social groups or subcultures based on a belief in the emergence of new threats to social values, ways of life, and culture in general. Social reactions that create public fear result in excessive suspicion of one another. Personal and communal activities are suspected; excessive social control even goes beyond moral standards and values that generally apply in society (Emmanuel, 2014).

The emergence of a social reaction is interpreted as a moral panic and an embodiment of anti-globalization groups. According to this group, globalization has increased competition and strengthened pressure from one party to another. People are forced to follow new values that are not from the group (Teitel, 2005). The point is that globalization directly provides opportunities for individuals to increase their ability to control their lives that are influenced by technology.

The Role of Women in Development

Development and modernization become a process to advance all elements of society in various fields of life. The role of women in development varies from one society to another. There are three roles of women who care about government policies in the context of women in development, namely (1) *defenders*, meaning that women should be able to carry out their duties as good citizens and defend policies issued by the government. The form of defense is to support

the government's policies to maintain the community's continuity, safety, and comfort. Defenders also inventory the negative influences that can hurt women during the development process and fight for women's rights and protection. (2) *Practitioners*, which means implementing government policies in their daily lives. At the same time, practitioners develop development projects by making women their subjects, and (3) scientists identify development problems related to women's lives. Scientists see that the patriarchal system is still an obstacle for women to develop and advance (Holzner, 2016).

The three groups have different views on seeing government policies related to development. The second group, namely practitioners, sees that government policies in development need to be supported by improving human resources quality through education. Women, as part of society, should be involved in the education process organized by the government. The defense group focuses more on eliminating discrimination against the women's labor market and defending poor women through non-formal education. Scientists tend to try to conduct research and develop science with a feminist approach to eliminate sexist bias in the school curriculum.

From the three groups, it is clear that the group of practitioners, in general, show their concern for women's role in filling development, especially by involving themselves in education. Tinker (1990) mentions that three women's roles in development can be united in just one person. Today's women are expected to have and be able to carry out three roles simultaneously. Women can now improve education for their children, work together with others to face life problems, and increase their capacity by being involved in small development projects. As defenders, it is hoped that women will improve their living conditions. As scientists, they are hoped to be involved in simple articles both individually and in communities. Finally, as defenders, they are hoped to find out about development problems and pioneer solutions for them.

The Role of Women in Building Family Communication According to Javanese Culture

Traditionally, married women are called *Marwa*. This naming for the Javanese is influenced by keratinase, which is then interpreted as the *signing of life,* which in Indonesian is the "soul mate" of a married couple. This concept means that the soul or life in the context of husband and wife has a balanced and equal weight (Soesilo, 2006). In married life, the relationship between men and women is balanced. Men only have one wife. Each side of the soul mate is interdependent so that they cannot live without the other.

Ideal women in Javanese society are usually characterized physically as beautiful and graceful in their walks, which is then termed as *richtiger* and sexy. The psychological side of ideal women is characterized by meekness, submissiveness, aggressiveness when making love. Women should obey their husbands considering their position as head and family leaders in any situation

and condition (Suhandjati, 2017). This understanding indirectly shows that the position of women—who still adhere to and are strongly influenced by the Javanese tradition—tends to depend on men (husbands). Religious values also influence the Javanese tradition that views men as leaders and heads of families. According to Allah's orders, married men should be leaders for their lives and according to the examples of Nawawi al-Bantay, al-Thabary, al-Raziy, and Quraish Shihab. According to Islam, a wife who has been married according to the gender order must obey the husband's orders and take care of the household, especially caring for and educating children. Their role is in caring for and educating children to produce individuals who are devout of religion and have noble character (Ishaq, 2014; Metcalfe, 2010).

The mother's role is to educate her children to become someone who worships the Creator and maintains a harmonious relationship with others. In Javanese culture, the role of mother is the embodiment of *Serat Wulangreh* from Paku Buwono IV. As the noble teaching of the court *priyayi*, Serat Wulangreh recommends that a person be a good teacher and role model for himself, his family, and others. Besides having a good origin and dignity, a good teacher is devout, sincere, and humble. The good first and foremost teacher is none other than the mother in a family (Muliyono, 2017).

Social changes brought about by globalization provide an opportunity for women to rediscover their potential. Women have a new experience that can strengthen themselves as human resources.

Internationally, women find their talents to support family abilities (Hutchings, Kate, Pamela, Lirio, & Beverly, Dawn Metcalfe, 2012). As a manifestation of globalization's international responsibility for women, one of them is their role of working from home. Through work done from home, women become a resource used to fill global demands (Tharenou, 2008). At the same time, this demand challenges women legally, institutionally to release them from traditional obstacles that are confined by domestic institutions in the household. Women are expected to become individuals who can carry out their role as pillars of the family. Women as pillars of the family are associated with their role in maintaining family resilience, which includes four fundamental keys, namely health, children's education, family economics, and the cultivation of political values (Kim, 2017; Vogel, 2015).

Women play a very important role in controlling life and family resilience in fostering children's morals and helping fulfill needs. Empowering women can create new potentials through changes in mindset, communication, and opportunities (Tjiptaningsih, 2017). Here, women are mothers who are considered the most effective in accompanying their children to undergo online learning. In the mother's figure, emotional closeness to the child is created to affect the online learning and teaching process.

Here we need fluency in family communication. The formation of family communication begins with the establishment of interpersonal communication. Through

interpersonal communication, there is a process of forming a person's character. At the same time, this activity is interpersonal interactions and sharing of the meaning of messages as an expression of ideas and feelings. Interpersonal communication within the family sphere aims to strengthen social relationships among its members (Turner, 2006). Family communication forms a pattern between parents and children or vice versa. Family communication patterns prove the closeness of feelings between children and parents to occur in two directions.

There are four patterns of family communication in both traditional and modern society, namely *laissez-faire*, protective, pluralistic, and consensual (Sari, Hubeis, Mangkupawira, & Saleh, 2010). The first family communication pattern, namely *laissez-faire, is* formed in people who live in settlements or villages. The communication pattern is formed based on the trust between parents and their children so that there are no strict restrictions on outdoor activities carried out by their children. Contrarily, protective communication patterns arise when parents place many restrictions on children's activities outside the home. Parents' rules make their children do everything ordered and as much as possible in easily accessible areas and within reach of supervision. This kind of communication pattern appears due to several factors: (1) the lack of trust of parents in their children, which is influenced by their overactive behavior; (2) lack of security in the environment around the house; (3) busy parents so that it is difficult to look after their children directly.

The third pattern of communication is to prioritize dialogue and exchange of ideas. The parents accept the child's opinions and ideas, and the responses are given at once. Children who want to play, for example, are given an understanding of the risks that may be caused. Children are also given responsibility for the activities they do to be more careful. The consensual pattern shows parents' high trust and confidence in their children to carry out all their activities. Parents do not seem to want to know about the risks posed by children's actions, which is good enough when they already know the responsibility and are independent and will be at risk when they still need supervision.

Based on the four family communication patterns, openness, and mutual trust between parents and children are needed. The closeness is physical and psychological so that the message conveyed by one party can be accepted and understood by the other party despite the age gap that limits it. The use of educational mechanisms built through family communication can shape social change that can support the whole human development process.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The construction of women's roles in filling development is influenced by the culture that exists in their society. The division of a person's role in life is generally based on gender and psychological conditions. For example, men who are physically stronger than women usually carry out their roles related to physical activity. Men who are

more courageous and able to face challenges have a role to play in outdoor conditions. This description aims to show the dichotomy of terms *outside* and *inside* (Sotiropoulou, 2014). Meanwhile, generally believed to have softer physiology and psychology, women tend to be oriented towards domestic problems.

Married women will carry out their roles as wives and mothers. These two roles are challenging and require a long process and struggle so that the family can be harmonious. The family is understood as the smallest part of society and a group of individuals with blood ties. A family is also a place for the socialization of social values that are still believed to be true. At the same time, the family is a core part of the value itself, given the preservation of norms that apply from one generation to the next. The socialization of dominant norms and values in society is promoted by customary or formal institutions carried on in family institutions.

The socialization of important values for life is carried out in the educational and teaching process done by parents, especially mothers, to their children. Education provides skills for individuals as human resources to be more productive. At the same time, education elevates individuals' dignity so that they can face the challenges of modern times and overcome existing problems with common sense. This element is carried out by women as a pillar of the family to give equal attention to household affairs and children's education.

The problems faced by married women today cannot be separated from the global pandemic caused by the Corona Virus or also known as Covid-19. In December 2019, a new disease infection emerged in Wuhan City, Hubei Province, China. The disease infection is caused by a virus known by WHO as Covid-19. On April 18, 2020, WHO reported that this virus had rapidly spread throughout the world and become a new challenge in various fields for all humanity. Five animals, namely bats, frogs, snakes, birds, guinea pigs, and rabbits traded in the Wunan market, are the initial causes of the spread of the virus (Wang, 2020);

Almost all UN member countries have been affected by the spread of the virus. One of them is through a presidential decree on March 31, 2020, known as Large-Scale Social Restrictions or PSBB. The head of state decides to emphasize that regional governments no longer issue their respective uncoordinated regulations. This decision also provides an opportunity for the community to continue carrying out activities even though it is limited by maintaining distance and avoiding crowds.

In the field of education, the government had issued an online learning policy on March 16, 2020. Learning is carried out from each house, which in its implementation is assisted by Ruangguru, Zenius, Google, Microsoft, Quipper, Sekolahmu. The facilities provided by the government to facilitate online learning are all free of charge. Online learning helps students follow the subject matter taught at school, even though it does not have to be face-to-face. The learning also makes it easier for students because

the material can be reopened and reaccessed at different times without leaving the room. The challenge that arises from this online learning system is that apart from the unequal availability of internet coverage in Indonesia. Parents, especially mothers, do not understand such an online learning system, considering its sudden implementation. Parents' lack of readiness to follow up on government policies is an obstacle for mothers in facilitating their children's learning.

Some indigenous women in Surakarta, whose lives are influenced by their ancestors' traditional values, have their identity cards. The values rooted in the Javanese culture are scattered in various life dimensions such as ethics and social arrangements, parent-child relationships, social and kinship relationships, and belief in the creator of nature. As a Javanese woman, the gentleness shown in communication and a virtuous attitude with her family is needed, especially in providing education to her children.

The mothers' online implementation process in this article came from Baluwarti, Sriwedari, Danukusuman, Sangkrah, Jagalan, and Mojosongo villages. The respondents include one who pursued her Strata-1 education, three with academy education, and two with D-1 and a high school diploma. Two respondents are workers, while four are housewives. All of them provide answers to the absence of internet access via Wifi in their homes. The six people only rely on the signal from the device they have. Based on the information submitted by six women with elementary school-age children, they have their own experiences in providing online education.

Two informants graduated from a high school and D-1 education expressed their confusion upon receiving orders from their children's school to do their learning from home. They were confused because of the inability to use the devices to teach their children and the poor internet signal at home. One informant graduated with an undergraduate degree and another informant graduated from the academy said that they were not ready for online learning considering their busy life as career women outside of the house. Two informants graduated from other academies conveyed the need for preparation to teach their children online. The two people asked for help from a neighbor who happened to be a teacher and homeroom teacher. The informants' answers show that the community is not ready to carry out online learning from home.

Two informants who are career women think that their new roles as teachers, mothers, and wives are quite tiring, which cannot be separated from the hours and workloads that take up the office. According to them, effective communication between family members helps provide online learning. As stated by Turner (2006), through interpersonal communication, a character-building process will occur. This activity is also a means of interaction between individuals and sharing the meaning of messages to express ideas and feelings. Interpersonal communication that occurs within the family's scope can strengthen

social relations among the individuals who are its members. The family communication pattern applied in everyday life combines protective and pluralistic, especially during the Corona pandemic. It means that the child's space is limited enough to facilitate supervision. However, the dialogue between the child and the parents reveals each party's ideas and wishes.

The four informants who carry out their social roles as housewives and teachers think that facing the Corona pandemic is now quite difficult. It is related to the inability to provide data packages to their children to do online learning. Children's boredom during the learning process from home also increases, which encourages them to use more devices and consequently increases the family expenses, which then becomes a new burden to the family economy. To overcome this, with the amount of time available with children, it becomes new opportunities and experiences to create and innovate. The amount of time available is an opportunity to build closeness between parents and children. At the same time, parents, especially mothers, can instill the obedience of worship and the teachings of character. For this reason, the communication pattern built between mothers and their children is *laissez-faire*, by providing opportunities for children to do many activities to avoid excessive use of gadgets.

Thus, efforts to increase family resilience in facing the quarantine period due to Covid-19 are not merely barriers for women to work. When viewed from the perspective of globalization, this period is an opportunity for women to understand information technology better to facilitate their children's learning at home. Women influenced by Javanese culture make this period an opportunity to be closer to their children. The availability of sufficient time is a means of inviting children to increase their religious observance further and teach them to do more good deeds. The Covid-19 pandemic is an opportunity to build effective family communication patterns between parents and children as preparation and provision for future life. In other words, the current quarantine period is an opportunity to undergo social change and build family resilience to be more ready to face all life challenges.

CONCLUSION

The Covid-19 pandemic period is an opportunity for women as citizens to experience social change. First, globalization demands women to understand and use information technology better . Women, particularly mothers, are invited to utilize information technology to guide and facilitate their children's learning from home. Second, this pandemic also provides the opportunity for Javanese women to instill moral and social values to equip their children to face the future. Third, it is time to self-improve and to have a more meaningful life.

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ABOUT

SALASIKA etymologically derived from Javanese language meaning 'brave woman'. SALASIKA JOURNAL (SJ) is founded in July 2019 as an international open access, scholarly, peer-reviewed, interdisciplinary journal publishing theoretically innovative and methodologically diverse research in the fields of gender studies, sexualities and feminism. Our conception of both theory and method is broad and encompassing, and we welcome contributions from scholars around the world.

SJ is inspired by the need to put into visibility the Indonesian and South East Asian women to ensure a dissemination of knowledge to a wider general audience.

SJ selects at least several outstanding articles by scholars in the early stages of a career in academic research for each issue, thereby providing support for new voices and emerging scholarship.

AUDIENCE

SJ aims to provide academic literature which is accessible across disciplines, but also to a wider 'non-academic' audience interested and engaged with social justice, ecofeminism, human rights, policy/advocacy, gender, sexualities, concepts of equality, social change, migration and social mobilisation, inter-religious and international relations and development.

There are other journals which address those topics, but SJ approaches the broad areas of gender, sexuality and feminism in an integrated fashion. It further addresses the issue of international collaboration and inclusion as existing gaps in the area of academic publishing by (a) crossing language boundaries and creating a space for publishing and (b) providing an opportunity for innovative emerging scholars to engage in the academic dialogue with established researchers.

STRUCTURE OF THE JOURNAL

All articles will be preceded by an abstract (150-200 words), keywords, main text introduction, materials and methods, results, discussion; acknowledgments; declaration of interest statement; references; appendices (as appropriate); table(s) with caption(s) (on individual pages); figures; figure captions (as a list); and a contributor biography (150 words). Word length is 4,000-10,000 words, including all previous elements.

TIMELINE AND SCHEDULE

Twice a year: February and July.

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