Cultural Shifts in Family Virtual Communications: Sungkeman and Halal Bi Halal Traditions before and after Covid-19 Pandemic

Rahmah Attaymini and Maya Sandra Rosita Dewi
Communications Science Department, UIN Sunan Kalijaga, Yogyakarta, Indonesia

Abstract: Covid 19 has made changes in all sectors, one of which is in terms of communication. The phenomenon that feels different can be seen in Sungkeman and Halal Bi Halal traditions during Eid al Fitr. By using the theory of communication culture change in family communication practices, this article wants to prove how the practice of shifting family communication and communication culture during the Covid 19 pandemic. The method used in this research is descriptive qualitative, with data collection techniques through observation and interviews. This study found that there was a shift in communication culture using technology which was previously done conventionally now into new media era communication, from what previously happened face to face communication to communication mediated by computer devices, this is also due to restrictions on movement. community activities but again technology is present as a bridge and solution to these problems, of course this cannot be separated from positive and negative impacts as well as shortcomings and advantages.

1 INTRODUCTION

The Covid-19 pandemic has caused changes in people's communication patterns, particularly in this current digital era. Digital communication or familiarly called virtual communication is currently heart of communicating. Where communication is usually done face-to-face, now communication is done with digital or virtual communication media. Moreover, the Government has several times provided social restriction policies, both micro and macro. During this pandemic, Indonesian Citizen are encouraged to practice social distancing. Virtual communication is like a new field that is growing, more and more people are communicating through online media to be able to communicate face to face using video calls, zoom meetings, google meet, and similar applicants.

The spread of virtual media in supporting the communication process can be explained through the theory of CMC (Computer Mediated Communication), the term used to communicate between two or more people who can interact with each other through different computers. The point is not how two or more machines can interact with each other, but how two or more people can communicate with each other using computer aids through application programs on the computer. This is consistent with the definition of CMC presented by Susan Herring in (Thurlow, Lengel, and Tomic, 2004: 15) "CMC is communication that takes place between human beings via the Instrumentality of computers".

CMC has two types, which are determined from the type of communication that occurs, namely synchronous communication or asynchronous communication (Pearson et al, 2006: 276). Synchronous communication is communication that occurs when communication participants interact in real-time. Participants of communication here act as both sender and receiver, for example on a phone call or online-chat. Meanwhile asynchronous communication is communication whose interaction is delayed and each communication participant must take turns being the sender and receiver. An example of asynchronous communication is correspondence via email.

To describe the research that will be conducted, the researcher reviewed several previous studies regarding virtual communication culture. First, research on Computer Mediated Communication, Social Networking Sites and Adolescent Self-Identity, which was conducted by Basuki Agus Suparno, etc. This research showed that the presence of technology has determined the way to communicate. Technology can expand and increase

the capacity and capability of social awareness which will affect the form of self-concept and social identity and respondents use CMC to express feelings, emotions and entertainment (Basuki etc, 2012: 86). Another research was conducted by Fitri Ariana Putri, this study found that virtual communication media that often used in meeting or learning agendas during the Covid-19 pandemic were zoom, skype for business and go to meetings.

Virtual communication is not only widespread in academic world. In Sungkeman and Halal Bi Halal traditions, they switch the communication form and utilize the help of modern communication technology media. During the pandemic, the homecoming tradition was indeed prohibited by the Government. This policy was made and implemented to break the chain of the Covid-19 virus spread and to prevent new transmission clusters. Therefore, many citizens need to obligate the travel restriction thus they cannot *Mudik* and celebrate Eid with their parents and closest relatives. In this situation, many people feel sad and disappointed because they usually celebrate Lebaran with mudik and have gathering with extended family and. Lebaran is a time to stay in touch, meet and gather with parents and closest relatives, and release a very deep longing because for a long time they have to be separated because of the demands of work. In the end, virtual communication is a solution, to still be able to let go of longing, stay in touch, and apologize for any mistakes with parents and closest relatives. From the above phenomena, this study was conducted to explain the shift in family communication culture in the Sungkeman and Halal Bi Halal traditions before and after the pandemic.

2 RESEARCH METHODS

In describing this research, a qualitative descriptive method is used. Pawito (2008:83) explains that the research method is defined as the process used by researchers to obtain data which is then analyzed and explained from the problems studied. The subjects taken by the researchers were Lecturers of the Communication Studies Study Program, UIN Sunan Kalijaga, with purposive sampling technique. Sugiyono (2014: 218) explains that the purposive sampling technique is a sampling technique of data sources with certain considerations, for example people who are considered to know best about what we expect or maybe as rulers so that it will make it easier for researchers to explore the object/social situation under study. With this sampling technique, four (4) informants were selected who did experience

and felt the experience according to the research theme, including TQ, BN, HI, ZI. Based on research ethics regarding the security of informant data, the researcher disguised the identity of the informant with the approval of the research informant. The data collection method used by the researcher is observation. Interviews, documentation, and supporting references. As for the data analysis method using the analysis of Miles and Huberman (1984), namely data reduction, data presentation, verification or drawing conclusions (Sugiyono, 2014: 246).

3 RESULT AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Communication Culture in Family before Pandemic at Sungkeman and Halal Bi Halal Events

One form of communication and interaction in family can be seen in Sungkeman and Halal Bi Halal tradision during Eid Al-Fitr. This tradition is marked by staying in touch and apologizing for any mistakes that have been made to each other between family and relatives. This Sungkeman tradition is carried out by children to their parents or to older families, by kissing their parents' hands and even kneeling. Sungkeman has possess a sacred meaning, especially at the moment of Eid al-Fitr. Because we return to nature and feel like a newborn who has no sin. The moment where Muslims apologize to each other for all the mistakes they have done.

Sungkeman tradition also reflects the principle of harmony and mutual respect. Likewise with Halal Bi Halal activities both with large families or community groups. This activity is not merely a gathering event to celebrate Eid al-Fitr, but this event contains values of harmony, peace, mutual respect, and forgiveness. To follow this Halal Bi Halal and Sungkeman tradition, people are willing to take their time. This is in accordance with what was conveyed by informant ZI, who stated:

"The moment of Eid Al-Fitr is the most touching thing I have ever felt. Muslims Back to fitrah is like being born again, with us forgiving each other. The most touching thing is when we apologize to our parents. when we just sleep, it's like we can't stop crying like that. The feeling in the chest is like tightness and can't speak, even when parents say forgive and pray for us. It feels even more touching. Sometimes without us even talking as if parents already know how sincerely we apologize. The most fun thing is, this Eid moment can bring our big family

together. We also can keep in touch with each other which is sometimes wrapped in a Halal Bi Halal event at a neighbor or relative's place. If it's not like that, it's also not necessarily possible because of the busyness of daily activities." (ZI, 2021)

The informant's statement and explanation above regarding to Sungkeman and Halal Bi Halal tradition, are in line with the principles of interpersonal communication. As described by Joseph Devito in his book The Interpersonal Communication Book (Devito, 1989:4) interpersonal communication is the process of sending and receiving messages between two persons, or among a small group of persons, with some effect and some immediate feedback. In Sungkeman and Halal Bi Halal traditions, when both parties have conveyed the message, it will immediately feel the reciprocity both verbally and non-verbally. The principles of effective interpersonal communication are also reflected in this tradition. As stated by Joseph A. Devito in Liliweri (1991: 13) that there are several characteristics of effective interpersonal communication, including: openness, empathy, support, positive feeling, and equality.

Furthermore, from the perspective of Islamic religious law, Sungkeman does not conflict with the Shari'a. The position of kissing hands by bowing the head accompanied by squatting symbolizes honoring older people. Shari'a does not prohibit exalting humans as long as it is not carried out with movements that resemble a form of reverence for Allah Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala, such as prostration and bowing in prayer movements (Burhanuddin, 2019). Furthermore, Burhanuddin (2019) quoted the hadith of Raudhah al-Talibin, juz 10, page 233, al-Imam al-Nawawi said: "It is not permissible to kiss hands because of ignorance, scholarship and older age factors" as well as the opinion of Sheikh Zainuddin al-Malibari in Fath al-Mu'in Hamisy I'anah al-Thalibin, juz 4, page 219, says: "Sunnah stands for people who have visible virtues, such as piety, knowledge, childbirth relationships or power coupled with self-preservation." The presentation above explaining some expressions of Ta'zim to parents and is sunnah, although it is done by standing with the aim of glorifying.

3.2 Virtual Communication in Sungkeman and Halal Bi Halal

Events According to Hordern (2016) Muslims in various parts of the world have various traditions when welcoming the moon. Likewise in Indonesia, in the celebration of Eid al-Fitr there is a Sungkeman

tradition (the process of apologizing to elders) and there is a Halal bi Halal tradition (Kuswaya, 2016). There is a feeling or emotional side that is built when this tradition or procession is carried out directly or offline before the Covid-19 pandemic. This habit seems to be a general agreement and has become a hereditary habit. In Eid al-Fitr and Eid Al-Adha 1442 H, it is carried out indirectly or online (in the network) by using the media to unite family members, a descent and their descendants. Communication is mediated by internet communication media and computer devices, or families usually use shared meeting applications such as zoom and google meetings for Sungkeman and Halal Bi Halal events for their families. This activity is a new habit for the Indonesian Muslim community, because usually activities that are considered sacred and religious and aim to strengthen brotherhood are carried out directly in the same space. In the study of communication, the virtual communication carried out by the community can conclude that the community adapts very quickly to use technology media for religious social activities such as Halal bi Halal events. The Diffusion of Innovation Theory by Everett Rogers which describes how, why, and at what level new technologies develop and are adopted into various contexts, in this case the context of online friendships. The TQ informant shared his experience of using virtual media in communicating during the pandemic, as follows:

"Online or virtual communication is very useful to unite my family who are outside the area and cannot gather because of this corona, we can meet each other face to face and interact with each other. talking even though only in front of the screen, my family is a big family after both parents not there plus the pandemic we always use zoom or google meeting media to communicate. Zoom is an alternative to our family's virtual communication link…" (TQ, 2021)

The explanation from the informant above can be explained that virtual communication is the most frequently used medium during a pandemic like this. Due to government policies that impose restrictions on community activities, especially for traveling outside the region. To keep in touch and release longing from distant families, virtual communication is an effective communication medium to use.

Over the past few months, consciously or unconsciously, people have become accustomed to the change in communication from offline to online. This proves that people can carry out various activities online, which previously might not have been thought to be done online and had to be done face-to-face, in fact it can be done with network

communication media. The BN informant experienced this change in communication, especially during family breed events which are usually held during holidays which are wrapped in Halal-Bi Halal activities.

"There was a feeling of emotion when I led a prayer at my family's descent event, we are a big family who live far apart during the pandemic we cannot together with family, something has changed, there is a culture that is not as usual, but we are still trying to keep the family Halal Bi Halal tradition going, this is an opportunity to stay in touch, exchange ideas, ask each other how things are, virtual communication can be a solution." (BN, 2021)

BN informants felt that there were some differences when carrying out live events with virtual communication. However, to preserve the culture that has been carried out by a large family for a long time, Halal-Bi Halal activities are still carried out even with virtual media. Virtual communication greatly affects the communication process of individuals or groups. Virtual communication in Sungkeman tradition is an alternative bridge communication during the COVID-19 pandemic. With virtual communication, we can communicate at family or descent Halal Bi Halal events directly face to face even though they are in different places. There is very intense interactivity when communicating virtually, likewise when communicating directly or face-to-face. Only a few times, network problems and internet signals were often found, each of which is not evenly distributed in several areas, so it is often interrupted when communicating. It is undeniable that there is a shift in communication culture in a family, direct communication is replaced by virtual communication at important family events or moments during the Covid-19 pandemic.

3.3 The Comparison of Communication Culture in Sungkeman and Halal Bi Halal Events before and after Pandemic

Covid-19 pandemic caused social changes in society. This change is supported by increasingly rapid communication technology. The government's policy for social distancing makes some people have limited movement and time. In order to be able to communicate and to carry out activities as they should, people need the existence of communication technology. People are required to adapt to changes in communication, ways of thinking, and even ways of behaving. In the end, the social changes caused by the covid-19 pandemic are supported by the development of communication technology through digitalization which we have realized without realizing it.

The Social Distancing policy seems to be a shock therapy for the community. People are required to be familiar with communication technology and all kinds of sophistication in each of its applications. Even the communication and interaction that used to be done directly is changed through computer communication media. The theory of CMC (Computer-Mediated Communication) explains that this form of communication is different from other forms of communication such as interpersonal communication, group communication, organization and mass communication (Wood and Smith, 2005: 4). In this communication, there are often blurred boundaries between the mediated form of communication and the unmediated form of communication. It is clear from the explanation of this theory, that there is a significant difference between direct communication and ug the help of computer communication media.

As in Sungkeman tradition and Halal Bi Halal which is usually done by the people of Indonesia. As usual Halal Bi Halal is done directly with Sungkeman to an older person (brother or sister), while conveying an apology directly. Here, there is a strong and solemn taste. The effect of this communication is also immediately felt, with a voice that is soft and vibrating even to the point of shedding tears. Situations that involve emotional and empathy that arise from communication can be directly carried out by the communicator.

Unlike the case with Halal Bi Halal which is done with the help of computer applications such as WA Groups, Zoom, Skype, Google Meetings, and others. The message is still conveyed, but there is a sense of loss, particularly situations that involve emotion and empathy. When we communicate directly, we will easily catch verbal and non-verbal messages such as words, body language, facial expressions and others. As explained by the informant below.

"It's really different, even though we say it sincerely, yes, but it's different if we don't say it straight away. Especially if the signal is broken. In fact, it makes you emotional, because what you say is not clear. Halal Bi Halal is like that, we can't talk to each other or neighbors, at least we can say it to each other on zoom. It's like that even on off cam, so the show is less emotional, right, like we're talking to ourselves. The point is different, but yes, rather than nothing at all, let's use technology. The important thing is that the moment of Eid Al Fitr is still felt even though the conditions are different. (HI, 2021).

With virtual media can indeed be a solution when we cannot communicate face to face directly. There are some things in interpersonal communication principles that are not visible when we communicate virtual, such as emotion and empathy. In the case above, it also explains that communication using virtual media is more susceptible to interference. For example, an apology is conveyed by a communicator with stammered sentences and facial expressions that show sadness and regret. Then the message can be clearly captured by the communicant, and will be replied with the same feeling. Parents as communicants will accept our apologies sincerely and even pray for our good.

This is in accordance with the explanation of CMC theory which states that this type of communication is different from the type of interpersonal, group, organizational or mass communication. Although actually seen from the perpetrators of the same communication. Only the use of the media is different.

3.4 Cultural Shift in Family Virtual Communications

In communication using communication technology, it is more susceptible to interference, both technical and non-technical. It caused the message was not to be conveyed properly, for example, unstable signal interference made our words not heard clearly and this can eliminate emotional situations. In Halal Bi Halal which is usually done by large families, empathy is sometimes also ignored, for example closing the camera or ignoring someone who conveys a message.

Sungkeman and Halal Bi Halal traditions are examples of a shift in communication culture from before the pandemic to the pandemic period. During this pandemic, communication is carried out using certain media intermediaries. Online communication or what is known as virtual communication is a consequence that is evenly distributed to almost all levels of society. Virtual communication brings its own boomerang for communicators and communicants. Coming out of the adaptation period to be more familiar with technology, people are troubled by ambiguity and misunderstood in virtual communication activities.

The important role of gestures, eye contact, high and low voice, body distance, and so on in direct communication, resulted in the emergence of its own limitations in virtual communication. Moreover, it happened in asynchronous or synchronous virtual communications. The sender of the message and the recipient of the message are not at the same time through passive messages or what the author means is a message that cannot be known how the communicator's and communicator's facial expressions, gestures, eyes gaze, high and low voice, and so on. Of course, passive asynchronous virtual communication will be much more likely to cause miscommunication compared to synchronous virtual communication (simultaneously) such as video calls.

The absence of direct face-to-face communication and it is very possible to do it at different times, will result in misunderstandings between communicators and communicants. This problem is a common problem that needs special attention for each individual. The problem that occurred was in accordance with what is mentioned by Fiske (2007: 8) in his book entitled Cultural and Communication Studies which includes accurate transmission of symbolic language, both when receiving or delivering messages and the influence of message meaning on the behavior of communicators and their communicants. If the language of symbols or messages cannot be transmitted properly, it will be prone to misunderstanding or miscommunication as mentioned earlier.

If there is a miscommunication, of course it will be very likely to affect the attitude or behavior of the communicator and the communicant. The limited space and distance that occurs at this time, seems to force the community as a communicator as well as a communicant to interpret the message unilaterally. What has been understood in one time reading the message will directly affect the attitude taken to send a reply message according to the initial perspective. A good technique is needed for someone to be able to process the received message before sending back a reply to the message. A communicant also needs to rethink about the various possibilities that underlie the opponent's communication to convey a message.

The shift in the culture of community communication towards virtual communication requires good management by communicants and communicators. Among them are emotional management, which means trying to regulate and control reactions in the form of feelings of self or an action. Then caution is needed in producing messages or message content. It is necessary to rethink the content, because our perception may be different from the perception that will be given by others. Even though using virtual or online media, communicants and communicators must still have empathy for each other and maintain good communication ethics.

Changes from face-to-face interpersonal communication patterns to the era of digital

communication. There are many advantages, as well as disadvantages. The advantages are time efficiency and also the flexibility of communication conditions, while the drawback was that the communication is built to be less directed, namely the message is sometimes not fixed on target and misunderstanding because the understanding of each individual is different and tends to be less in line. As a solution, online or virtual Halal Bi Halal can be an option. In addition to the rewards and blessings, they are the same, but there is a cultural shift that occurs when those who usually meet now only use virtual screens, including virtual Halal Bi Halal.

4 CONCLUSIONS

One form of communication and interaction in the family is seen in the tradition of Sungkeman and Halal Bi Halal during the Eid al-Fitr holiday. This activity is not merely a gathering event to celebrate Eid al-Fitr, but there are values of harmony, peace, mutual respect, and forgiveness. Virtual communication greatly affects the communication process of individuals or groups, virtual communication in the Sungkeman tradition is an alternative tongue-in-cheek during the COVID-19 pandemic. With virtual communication, we can communicate at family or breed Halal Bi Halal events directly face to face even though they are in different places.

There are several comparisons of communication culture before and after the pandemic in the context of virtual communication in Sungkeman and Halal Bi Halal traditions, there is a strong sense of solemnity, emotion and empathy that is felt when Sungkeman and Halal Bi Halal processions are directly different when done offline, but the presence of technology has become a breath of fresh air for the community to be able to gather virtually with family. Another difference can be seen from the message conveyed by communication in virtual communication, the message can be conveyed properly and clearly, but there is a sense or sense that is lacking when the message is delivered.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

REFERENCES

Ali, Hassan. 2008. Marketing. Yogyakarta: Main Media.

Burhanuddin, Auliya. 2019. The Sungkeman Tradition in Islamic View. https://siedoo.com/berita-21847-tradition-Sungkeman-dalam-pandangan-islam/. Accessed on July 18, 2021 at 19.30.

Denzin, Norman K. & Yvonna S Lincoln. 1994. "Introduction Entering the Field of Qualitative Research" in the Handbook of Qualitative Research. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.

DeVito, Joseph. 1989. The Nonverbal Communication Workbook (Prospect Heights). illinois: Waveland Press.

Idris, Sardy. 1992. Communication in the Family. Bandung: Image of Aditya Bakti.

Liliweri, Hello. 1991. Interpersonal Communication, Cet.1. Bandung: PT. Citra Aditya Bakti

Littlejohn, Stephen W., and Karen A. Foss. 2009. Encyclopedia of Communication Theory. California: Thousand Oaks

Miller, Katherine. 2002. Communication Theories, Perspectives Processes and Contexts. Boston: McGraw Hill.

Mulyana, Deddy. 2004 An Introduction to Communication Studies, Pt Teen Rosdakarya, Bandung

Pearson, Judy et al. 2006. Human Communications Second Edition. New York: McGraw Hill

Daughter, Fitri Ariana. 2020. Virtual Communication Culture During the Covid-19 Pandemic (Case Study of Online Learning at UIN Walisongo Semarang). Journal of Islamic Communications: Journal of Communication Studies and Islamic Studies, Vol. 7 No. 2 (Issue) 2020, pp. 253-269.

Suparno, Basuki Agus; Sociawan, Arief Edwi; and Sigit. 2012. Computer Mediated Communication (Social Networking Sites and Adolescent Self-Identity). Journal of Communication Studies, Volume 10, Number 1, January-April 2012, pages 85-102

Thurlow, Crispin, Lengel, Laura & Tomic, Alice. 2004. Computer Mediated Communication Social Interaction and The Internet. London: Sage Publications.

Wood, Andrew F and Smith, Matthew J. 2005. Online Communication. New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publisher.