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**THE IMPACT OF CHILD EMPOWERMENT THROUGH ISLAMIC CHARACTER EDUCATION BY THE SMART BETING COMMUNITY IN REGIONS WITH STIGMA AND DISCRIMINATION, WEST BORNEO**

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**ABSTRACT**

Kampung Beting is one of several floating villages that still exist in West Kalimantan. This first village in Pontianak city was originally the central of government, economic, and central of the spread of Islam in Pontianak. In the past, the people were also well-known for their politeness and hospitality. However, along with the times, the change that was happening was heading towards a negative direction instead. Nowadays, Kampung Beting is stigmatized and discriminated against due to the proliferation of crimes in this region, especially on drug abuse. In areas with stigma and discrimination, children are the most vulnerable party to being victims. As a form of concern for this region, especially for children, a group of people built a community called the Smart Beting Community. The Smart Beting Community strives to abolish stigma, eliminate discrimination, and to prevent the regeneration of drug abuse among the people of Kampung Beting by empowering children through Islamic character education which is packaged in The Beting Loves Quran's Program and Beting Learning. Therefore, it is necessary to know how the characteristics of children and the impact of child empowerment by this Smart Beting Community. This study is used a descriptive qualitative method. Data collection is done by direct observation, interview, and document review. The results of this study are the child empowerment through Islamic character education carried out by the Smart Beting Community was having a positive impact. Suggestions conveyed are the need for additional volunteers who served as instructors and makes clear and firm rules for the improvement and development of the community. In addition, there is also a need for more intensive cooperation with parents, the government and the society.

**KEY WORDS**

Kampung Beting, smart community, child empowerment, stigma, discrimination.

The Beting village administratively in around 1960 AD which was known as Tanjung Pulau. The name was given because of the location of the village which was like a cape (land that juts into the sea or surrounded by the sea on three sides). But then the people asked to be replaced again with Beting. Beting is a name that is popular among local residents and the people of Pontianak City in general. There is even an expression of "do not say that you have come to Pontianak, if you do not visit it yet". The sentence certainly implies that the role of this region is so big in the process of developing the civilization of Pontianak City. Kampung Beting has a strategic location which is located between two rivers, the Kapuas River and the Landak River. The village is also close to the city center, which is around 3 Km. In the Kampung Beting area there is also the oldest mosque in Pontianak City, namely the Jami Mosque of Sulthan Syarif Abdurrahman and covers the Kadriah Sultanate complex which was built by Sultan Syarif Abdurrahman Alkadrie, the first king and founder of Pontianak City. The city of Pontianak itself was officially established on October 23, 1771 AD or 14 Rajab 1185 H.

Kampung Beting was the center of the spread of Islam, the center of worship, the centre of Islamic characters development, the place where the scholars, the authors of the book came from. Beting village actually has a high historical value. But along with the changing period that continuously happens, the history of the elegance of Malay Muslim culture in traditional villages even began to erode and neglected. The changes that occurred

in Kampung Beting actually led to negative things. Now Kampung Beting is better known for its inherent stigma. The stigma then caused discrimination toward the people, for example they are complicated in getting jobs and loans, and children also receive bullying if they were known to originate from this region. Some parents will also disagree with their child's love relationship if it is known that the child's partner is from Kampung Beting. The stigma attached to the Beting region was caused by the increase of criminal acts such as gambling, thieves, and the most dominant is drug abuse in this area.

Responding to the problems in Kampung Beting, a community was born initiated by 11 women and named the Smart Beting Community. The Smart Beting Community focused on empowering the children in Kampung Beting. They saw children as victims of bad environments and parents who care less about education and relationship of their children. Because the majority of the population in Beting Village is Muslim, this community then used the Islamic education approach, namely by reading, memorizing, understanding and characterizing the values or teachings contained in the Koran (the holy Quran), hadiths and stories of prophets and apostles. In addition, children were also taught to read daily prayers as a media to give values of Islamic character on them. Similar research in this location has never been found. In other words, the theme of this research was only first adopted in the Kampung Beting area. It was because so far the development carried out by various parties in Kampung Beting was more on physical development, such as widening the road or the park. While the Smart Beting Community made efforts to develop human resources. Through Islamic character education that was used as a bridge to achieve community goals.

There are two opinions about character formation or development. The first opinion is that character is an inherited trait that cannot or is difficult to change (educated). The second opinion is that character can be changed through education [1]. Whereas Maksudin [2] argues that characters are not born based on descent or occur suddenly, but through a long process, namely character education. In terms of the essence of Islamic education/religion, in fact, educational activities are indeed an inseparable part of the life of Islamic religion, both in families, communities, centers of worship, and schools. Religious education is an important part of national education with related to aspects of attitudes, moral values, and moral values [3]. Islamic education facilitates humans to learn and practice actualizing all the potential they have, both physical and non-physical, whose profile has been described by Allah in the Koran as a figure of *ulil albab*, as a complete Muslim man, namely man who has faith, knowledge and productive works of good deeds based on the guidance of Islamic teachings [4]. Character education is a solution to solve moral problems. This great effort must be realized in big actions. As a result, all teachers in all regions of Indonesia must pay great attention that teaching not only makes students smart in terms of intelligence (brain) but also in terms of behavior [5]. Islamic education is formed to prepare students to recognize, understand, appreciate and then have trust, *taqwa* (fear of Allah) and have good character in practicing Islamic teachings based on the Koran and Hadith. This process is done through guidance, teaching, training and experience. We are required to respect followers of other religions and live as a united community [6]. The concept of Islamic education is based on the Koran and Hadith, and prioritizes human development as a whole, which includes the spiritual, intellectual, emotional, and physical aspects. Islamic education includes the process of forming individual characters, namely by giving guidance and guidance so that they wholeheartedly believe that there is a God whose command must be obeyed by worshiping and having good character [7].

Empowering children through Islamic character education is the solution to overcome the problems that exist in children in Kampung Beting. There were indications that children were under threat of bad environmental influences and they were as the most vulnerable group to become victims. They also appeared to be used to saying dirty and rude, acting impolite, with or without consciously bullying people around, smoking, playing gambling, and other behaviors that indicate that the child has a bad character. The children should be in a conducive environment, security, comfort and all their rights are maintained. The children in this village also have self potential that can be developed as in various sports, especially swimming. and other fields. Therefore, an empowerment approach is needed for children in

this region to explore and improve the quality of science, faith and charity for the creation of the quranic generation.

The theoretical implication of this research is that the empowerment of children through Islamic character education only gives a positive impact on children. They become better after participating in the child empowerment program carried out by the smart beting community. Children who used to say dirty and rude now they become softer and polite in speaking. Those who were previously naughty, now become more obedient and respectful to teachers or older. Islamic religious education which given to them has been proven to prevent children from behaving badly. Then the practical implication is that this research is expected to be a material for evaluating the smart beting community to improve the quality and quantity of teachers or volunteers. In addition, it can also be used as a reference for other researchers who want to do further research or similar to this theme.

## **METHODS OF RESEARCH**

In this study, the researchers used qualitative methods with descriptive type. We also used purposive with a case study of efforts to establish islamic character in children in Kampung Beting, Bugis Dalam Sub-District, East Pontianak District, West Kalimantan Province. Here the researchers observed and participated in interactions with people related to the problem to be studied. Then, we tried to capture a variety of qualitative information, provided, and described situations and the events found during the study took place accurately also carefully according to the facts obtained in the field, without containing prejudices about the object under study. The data which were collected in this study were data that obtained in the field from informants or sources of data and observations which done by the researchers themselves. The data collection technique which used was direct observation, semi-structured interview, and document review. Then, in in this study, the researchers also used triangulation technique which was used to test the data validity by checking the data to the same source with different techniques. It means that the data which were obtained by interviews, then checked with the results of observation and documentation. The data analysis techniques which used by researchers were referring to Miles & Huberman in Salim 2006 [8] who suggested that the components in data analysis, namely reduction, presentation of data, and drawing conclusions.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The Smart Beting Community is one of several communities born in the Kampung Beting area. Smart Beting was born because of its concerns about the stigma of Kampung Beting and the discrimination received by the people. Since 2016 until now, this community has consistently shown concern for its environment by directly involved in development, especially in improving the quality of human resources. Kampung Beting children and youth are priority targets of its program. Beting Pintar also tried to make behavioral changes and the formation of the Islamic character of the Kampung Beting community to become better and more moral through education. The Smart Beting Community seeks to increase public awareness of the importance of education, and explore the potential and capabilities of the people of Kampung Beting by focusing on Islamic Education which is taught through the Koran teaching and learning activities. The Qur'an and the sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad are the main guidelines used in running community programs. Those two guidelines were considered containing all the values needed to build the Islamic character of society, especially in children and adolescents.

*The Characteristics of the Participants of Programs.* Based on the results of a study toward two work programs of smart Beting community, namely Beting loves Qur'an program and Beting learning program, it was known that the number of students was fluctuating. But in February until May 2018, it was discovered that there were 46 children registered as participants of those programs. Although it was still fluctuative, the number was as the highest number of registered and active students. They were 4-16 years old students.

Table 1 – The Number of Students in Beting Loves Qur'an Program and Beting Learning Program Based on Their Gender and Age in February-May of 2018

Gender	Age	Total	Percentage
Male	4-5	2 people	4
	6-7	4 people	9
	8-9	2 people	4
	10-11	4 people	9
	12-13	-	-
	14-15	-	-
	16-17	-	-
Female	4-5	6 people	13
	6-7	10 people	22
	8-9	10 people	22
	10-11	5 people	11
	12-13	2 people	4
	14-15	-	-
	16-17	1 person	2
Total		46 people	100

Based on table 1 above, it can be seen that participants in the child empowerment program through Islamic character education which done by smart beting community are mostly female. When observations were made, it is also known that girls had a higher level of adherence to the rules of the teacher than boys. Girls were more easily guided to be in order/regulated nicely and neat. They were also more enthusiastic in joining the program.

*The Impact of the Program on Children.* The aim of continuing the children empowerment program of smart beting community in the Beting village was to make a change in their behavior. Behavior changes from non-Islamic one to the formation of Islamic characters. Both behavioral changes in children, parents, and for the community itself. This community seeks to build Islamic values that are considered containing all aspects needed by humans to achieve the goodness of life through some of their work programs. The Beting loves Quran program and Beting larning program were recognized as the most beneficial and had positive impacts for various parties involved in it. Especially for children, parents and the community itself. After 2 years of the existence of this community, there was a change in the students' characteristics which became more Islamic. This is recognized by the statement of the head of the smart beting below:

*"What is seen so far is that children have seen behavioral changes. If the children who were new, I do not dare to say that there have been changes, it is caused that the students are within 6 months to be active. In the past, yes there were but they were good children from the beginning, they were not naughty"* (Nurbaiti, October 2017).

Furthermore, there were also participants of programming who did not show any impact on their activities. They were children who only followed the learning process in smart beting for a few weeks. In addition, for the new students who took the program less than one year, most of them were children with a good basic attitude. The result of authors' observation related to the effects of the existence of the smart beting community with its superior programs, beting loves Quran and beting learning programme also in line with the information conveyed by its secretary below:

*"Yes, Allah, first of all you can see, if we visited them, they liked always keeping their hands up, Sis, I begged you, Sis, your sandals had been tidied up, sis. They were naughty, they were not vaccinated. Oh, Allah Sis, when I first arrived, they would read the holy Quran if we asked them to read it. They came with the smell of sweat, their body was dirty. The smell of their sweat until I vomited. So, the volunteers who taught them did like what I did (covering their nose with veil), even though I didn't say that we understood the problem because we had experienced it. Sis, it's really nauseous. Those who were like that, they were orphan or did not have parents. Once loosing sandals, spit out, were punched at the beginning. Anyway, bad feeling was enough to meet with all of them. Everything was like*

*that. The people who could not stand with the situation, they would feel bad. They cried. Now, there is more than 50 percent of children who have changed more easily. Then if you meet them, they say hello, they don't say rude/ dirty or impolite anymore. Yes, the rest was those who failed or they did not succeed, the children who spend only few meetings for its programs and after that they would not appear anymore, they went away” (Desi, July 2018).*

From the statement of its Chairperson and the secretary of smart beting community about the changes in the behavior of children and parents above, and harmonized with observations made during the research process, the authors found that the impact of the program could be seen based on 2 things. The first was based on the length of time/ duration the child became a participant in the beting loves Quran program and memorizing. Then the second was based on the basic attitude of the child herself/ himself from the beginning of being a participant in the program. From the two ways in measuring the impact, the results showed that there were significant behavioral changes in the participants of programming who had participated since the beginning, namely starting in April 2016 until now. Children who really changed were children who at the beginning of the study looked and had non-Islamic characteristics, such as coming to recite the holy Qur'an using tight and sexy clothes, easy to say dirty and rude, arbitrarily in treating their friends and older people by hitting, throwing things, spitting on and raising the tone of their voice. Whereas in old students who were from the beginning were kind, there were no noticeable changes. The impact that could be seen only in terms of appearance and the ability of children in reciting and memorizing the holy Quran.

A participant in the beting loves Quran programs and learning program recognizes the benefits or positive effects felt on her after she joined them. She said that:

*"It's very helpful, Sis. Let the children be clever in their reciting Quran, so they knew Islamic law, know the Islamic order or rule, so that they did not speak rudely. There was a change if we did it, before we recited the holy Quran, we did not wear veil, once we did it, directly we wore veil. Even at school, we wear veil now”(Diva, May 2018).*

This 12-year-old student explained that from those programs that she had participated for 2 years brought change into her. She who previously did not wear a veil, now she wears it. Even the hijab is not only used when studying or participating in community programs, but also at school. In addition, those programs also have an impact on other friends, namely a child becomes more intelligent in reciting the holy Quran and slowly no longer says rude, especially when the teaching and learning activities are ongoing. It is understandable that this student likes to recite the Quran here because of good teachers and they get many friends. The same thing was also said by Salwa. 5 year old students who claimed to be happy to be able to recite Qur'an and studied together with the smart beting community.

*"I really liked to be here, lots of friends, there're some competition, I have ever won a prize for book and pen. I have already knows some Islamic prayers, like prayers for eating, before sleeping, and entering restroom” (Salwa, May 2018).*

Salwa started to recite the Quran in the smart beting community since she was 4 years old. Usually she was accompanied by his aunt or mother. Here parents could also accompany and directly monitor their child's activities. When she was interviewed, not only Salwa, her mother also gave an explanation of the changes in her child after joining those two programs. She explained as follows:

*"There were some effects that appeared on her. For example, every day in the environment she played with friends who she used to used rude words, impolite words but here they were taught by teacher. There were changes step by step. It's good enough. There was a bit change. The main thing she did not say impolite words even she did not use scorn words anymore. Thank God for it” (Azizah, May 2018).*

It is clear that after studying with the smart beting community, there is a positive change in children, namely in their words and manners. Children who used to be used to verbal abuse, being disrespectful towards others and those who are older, and rude and even tend to be insolent, now look civilized, orderly and calm. These changes do not only occur because of the role model of its management team and community members of smart beting community but also because of the influence of the environment and friends who

interact with children who change. According to him, besides because of many friends, it is also because in the smart beting community, there are many activities that support children's interests and talents, also supported by facilities such as reading books and games, so that teaching and learning activities do not feel monotonous and boring. Sometimes the activities of reciting or memorizing are diverted outside the classroom. For example on the banks of the Kapuas river, in the yard of the smart beting secretariat or in another place that feels comfortable for children.

Behavioral changes in participants in its programs that was quite clear in the second year of the establishment of this community. the changes that occur now becomes the allure owned by smart beting community. This community thus gained additional value which was used to invite more parents, especially those in the surrounding villages and surrounding areas to register their children as participants in its programs. In addition, smart beting also take advantage of the positive impact that has been felt by parents and their students to expand the cooperation to various parties.

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