DETERMINING THE STATUS OF THE ONTOLOGY OF THE DAKWAH STRATEGY: IN THE CASE OF RELIGIOUS CONVERSION

MENETAPKAN STATUS ONTOLOGI STRATEGI DAKWAH: DALAM KASUS KONVERSI AGAMA

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Abstract

Determining the ontology status of a science becomes important. Especially if the science is used as a study or theoretical basis to explore the object of research. Da'wah strategy as a science at this time is needed by a religious institution or preacher to spread religion. For this reason, the spread of various religions in Indonesia requires a different strategy from each religion. Writing this article aims to determine the ontology status of the da'wah strategy carried out by the Malang Prayer Center Foundation (YSC) and as a pre-research activity prior to field research. The success of YSC's da'wah strategy in Tugurejo Village is an interesting research object to know so that it can be used as a da'wah strategy for other religious groups, especially those motivated by religious conversion. Spreading religion (preaching) to fellow believers is indeed necessary to achieve the degree of piety. However, there will be conflicts between religious communities if the da'wah is intended for religious conversion. For this reason, an appropriate da'wah strategy is needed in accordance with the nature of its ontology as a science. The research in writing this article is based on a type of qualitative research literature study which has seven steps in the research process. From this literary research, it can be concluded that at this time there are various da'wah strategies, including *smart* da'wah, *wasahtiyah* da'wah, al Bayanuni da'wah. Based on the three da'wah strategies, the ontology of YSC Malang's da'wah strategy leads to *wasahtiyah da'wah.*

Keywords: religious conversion, da'wah strategy, ontology

Abstrak

Menentukan status ontologi suatu ilmu menjadi penting. Apalagi jika ilmu tersebut dijadikan sebagai kajian atau landasan teori untuk mengupas objek penelitian. Strategi dakwah sebagai sebuah ilmu pada saat ini sangat dibutuhkan oleh sebuah lembaga keagamaan atau pendakwah untuk menyebarkan agama. Untuk itu, penyebaran berbagai agama di Indonesia menuntut adanya strategi yang berbeda dari masing-masing agama. Penulisan artikel ini bertujuan menetapkan status ontologi strategi dakwah yang dilakukan oleh Yayasan Sholat Center Malang (YSC) dan sebagai kegiatan prapenelitian sebelum ke penelitian lapangan. Keberhasilan strategi dakwah YSC di Desa Tugurejo menjadi objek penelitian yang menarik untuk diketahui agar dapat digunakan sebagai strategi dakwah kelompok keagamaan lain terutama yang dilatarbelangi oleh konversi (perpindahan) agama. Menyebarkan agama (berdakwah) kepada sesama pemeluk agama memang diperlukan untuk mencapai derajat takwa. Namun akan terjadi konflik antar umat beragama jika dakwah ditujukan untuk konversi agama. Untuk itu, diperlukan strategi dakwah yang tepat sesuai dengan sifat ontologinya sebagai ilmu. Penelitian dalam penulisan artikel ini didasarkan pada jenis penelitian kualitatif studi pustaka (literer) yang memiliki tujuh langkah dalam proses penelitian. Dari penelitian literer tersebut dapat disimpulkan bahwa pada saat ini terdapat berbagai strategi dakwah antara lain *smart* dakwah, dakwah

wasahtiyah, dakwah al Bayanuni. Berdasarkan ketiga strategi dakwah tersebut ontologi strategi dakwah YSC Malang mengarah kepada dakwah *wasahtiyah.*

Kata kunci*: konversi agama*, *strategi dakwah, ontologi*

Introduction

Diversity in Indonesia is a potential that is rarely owned by nations in the world. This diversity is a national asset that must be managed by the community, nation and state. This diversity includes religion, ethnicity or race, culture and language. One of these diversity is the existence of five religions that are recognized by the state and spread to all islands in Indonesia. All ethnic groups or races in Indonesia embrace these religions. So, religion is not dominated by one particular ethnic group. Religion is universal, even embracing religion is a fundamental freedom for humans, so it is guaranteed by the constitution in Indonesia. In addition, religion is a value that demands sincerity for its adherents.

With the freedom to embrace the religion they believe in, a person or group of people will certainly try to improve the quality of their religious life. Thus, each religion has a certain strategy so that its adherents become noble human beings. Of course, the strategy of each religion is different in its implementation. However, these differences must still prioritize the wisdom of religious life as conveyed by Hidayat who is quoted by Islamiyah that the commitment to upholding human values is the estuary of the wisdom of religious life. This commitment does not have to be based on dislike for other religious groups. Because every religion was sent down for humans and the creation of humans is not for religion. For this reason, humanitarian standards and categories can be part of the benchmark for good or bad attitudes towards one's religious life (Islamiyah & Juz'an, 2020).

Individual freedom to embrace religion in Indonesia can be called the "religious democracy model". In the context of pluralist Indonesia, the ideal form is to free the people to embrace religion according to their respective beliefs. However, this model of religious democracy will have different implications if it is viewed from the number of religious adherents. Various problems will arise if the choice of democracy has an impact on the displacement of religious affiliations. Moreover, if this is left to the mechanism of the free market of religion and belief, democracy will have the potential to bring about religious cannibalism against the majority group to the minority. Various ways will be used by the majority group to maintain its existence and dominance. Of course, this statement is not expected to occur in religious life in Indonesia. But if that happens, no one should turn a blind eye.

The model of religious democracy which refers to religious cannibalism is what causes religious conversion. Religious conversion is changing or converting to religion, a change in belief in a religion that is adhered to, or giving up belief in a religion and embracing another religion (Ilahi et al., 2017). Simply put, this religious conversion can be said as a change of religion or a change of faith towards a religion. For example, someone who originally embraced Christianity turned into a Muslim, and vice versa. Religious conversion is actually not a new thing considering the freedom of a person's right to freely follow any belief according to his wishes. It's just that the term religious conversion is still not very familiar in the midst of a wide audience.

In the era of modernization, the problems that cause religious conversion can be said to be so complex. This is because the development of the era is also followed by changes in the mindset of humans who are increasingly developing. According to (Hidayat, 2016) the

factors that underlie or influence the occurrence of religious conversion in the modern era are divided into two factors, namely internal factors which include personality and disposition, and external factors which include family, environment/place of residence, status changes, poverty, and education. . However, some of these factors are not the only influencing factors. If the factors applied can provide a positive stimulus, then these factors can be a strategy in religious defense in accordance with the beliefs that have been held.

One way that can suppress cases of religious conversion is da'wah. Da'wah in this case is an object that is used as a form of action in maintaining their respective beliefs. Of course, in the implementation of da'wah, there are strategies that are used so that people who follow da'wah can understand and be in accordance with what is conveyed. If from the perspective of philosophy the da'wah strategy is included in the study of ontology. According to (Haris, 2022) ontology comes from the word ontos which means tangible and logos which means knowledge. So that ontology can be interpreted as a science or theory about the nature that exists. In other words, ontology studies the nature of things that exist based on logic. Meanwhile, according to (Azwar & Muliono, 2019) the realm of the study of ontology itself is limited to the level of objects studied by scientific knowledge. In other words, ontology limits its study to the realm of science that can be thought out rationally and can be studied empirically.

Discussions about religious conversion are part of religious moderation. The da'wah strategy studied is an object that is included in the field of ontology discussion. Therefore, this study aims to determine the ontology status of the da'wah strategy carried out by one institution as a pre-research activity prior to field research and the strategy in question can be used for preaching.

Method

The writing in this article is an idea, the author's idea to establish a da'wah strategy. Although many studies have been carried out to examine the da'wah strategy by a dai/mubalig or an organization, researchers also need to establish an ontology of da'wah strategies so that the research objectives can be achieved. For this reason, this research includes literature or literary research. Literature research is included in qualitative research so it is called the type of qualitative research literature study. Furthermore, the researcher has conducted research through seven steps in this research process, namely 1) primary and secondary source tracing, 2) classification based on research formulas, 3) data processing/reference citation, 4) data display, 5) data abstraction, 6) interpretation of data, and 7) drawing conclusions. The following presentation is the result of a qualitative research study of the literature that has been carried out by the researcher.

Result and Discussion

Ontology Status of Da'wah Strategies

. Research related to da'wah strategies has been carried out by many researchers such as (Sodik & Musthofa, 2018), (Fathurrahman, 2019) and many more. Most of the results of these studies contain da'wah strategies aimed at the community so that their religious life or rituals can increase. Or the problems faced by the preachers related to the condition of society,

the media, and the methods used. Sodik and Musthofa's research which analyzes the strategy of spreading several religions in Indonesia from various ages is the reference for writing this article. The results of both studies aim to formulate that without conflict each religion has the best strategy to increase its followers of its religion as much as possible.

Research on the da'wah strategy that will be carried out by the researcher is to determine the status of the da'wah strategy first ontologically. With this status the da'wah strategy that will be produced in this research can be used by da'wah activists or foundations engaged in da'wah. The perpetrators of the da'wah strategy that will be researched is a foundation located in Malang called Yayasan al Khusyu' Prayer Center (YSC) Malang. This foundation independently conducts da'wah in Tugurejo Village, Wates District, Blitar Regency. Geographically, the distance between Malang and Blitar is not far, but the concern of YSC Malang is a concern for the author. Moreover, YSC Malang is not affiliated with any social organization. The area for preaching is not only in the village but also in the Malang Women's Prison, Malang Disabled People Foundation, to marginalized communities, and Islamic boarding schools that require waqf of the Koran.

Specifically in Tugurejo Village, Wates District, Blitar Regency, YSC Malang established the Al Khusyu' Educational Institution which manages Madrsah Ibtidaiyah (MI) and Junior High Schools (SMP). In addition to Tugurejo Village, YSC based in Malang also has a Quran tahfidz house. What is unique about this foundation is that all of YSC Malang's financing or operations (free education, free distribution of rice every Friday, etc.) are sourced from donations from donors or funders spread throughout Indonesia. The da'wah conducted by YSC Malang in Tugurejo Village is related to the case of religious conversion. Education is the main strategy of da'wah carried out by YSC Malang in the village so that religious conversion can be prevented and reduced. Furthermore, can this strategy ontologically be recognized as a science? This is what needs to be studied further so that the strategy fulfills the status of a science.

1. Da'wah strategy as a science

Strategy is needed so that the goals of a person or group are achieved. As it is known that the word *strategos* (Greek), strategy (Indonesian) was originally used in the military world and was later adopted by other fields. Conceptually (Wijaya, 2020) argues that strategy is an outline in acting to achieve predetermined goals or objectives. As for Bayanuni (in Muklis, 2018) explains that the word strategy can be interpreted linguistically and in terms. 'The clear way, a careful plan for an activity to achieve a specific target' is the linguistic meaning of strategy while 'the formulation of a plan and determination so that something desire can be achieved is a strategic understanding in terms. Thus, strategy is a science of planning, determining, formulating something in order to achieve the goals set. Determining a strategy is nothing but to achieve and win victory in which there are methods, techniques, and tactics.

Furthermore, in terms of the spread of religion, especially Islam, the word da'wah is often used. According to (Abdullah, 2019) who quoted Yunus' opinion that etymologically the word da'wah comes from the Arabic *da'a-yad'u-da'wah*. The word in Indonesian means to call, invite, invite and call. By quoting the suras in the Koran (Surah al Baqarah: 221 and QS. al Fatir: 6) Abdullah said that the word da'wah has two meanings, namely da'wah for good and da'wah for evil. Opinions about the meaning of da'wah are also based on opinions (Ali Aziz, 2017) according to him, based on the suras in the Koran there are approximately ten meanings of the word da'wah. For

example the word da'wah which means to complain, is in QS. al Qamar:10. Which means asking, QS. al Shad: 51, and others.

Based on the description of the meaning of strategy and da'wah above, it can be concluded about the conceptual understanding of da'wah strategy. This understanding involves a process of planning, formulating, and establishing religious teachings so that they can be applied by humans in their daily lives. There are religious teachings that call, invite, call and invite. The da'wah strategy today is not just inviting others to follow the teachings of God's religion conveyed by the prophets, but more than that. Humans need da'wah delivered in a good and wise and dialogical way to get solutions to the problems they face.

Through a philosophical approach, YSC Malang's missionary strategy will determine its ontology realm to determine its epistemology because a scientific study will be fatal if the discussion on the ontology area is not completed. In the study of philosophy, the object of science is the discussion of the ontology field. The object of science includes material objects, which show that something exists or science itself, while formal objects are ways of looking at something or material objects. The following opinion of Sulastri clarifies the understanding of the two objects.

In the world of education, science is generally divided into two, namely natural sciences (exact sciences) and social sciences, so that studies related to religion, especially Islam, have not received a certain place. This triggered the reaction of Muslim intellectuals outside and within the country to bring up Islam as a science, one of which was al-Ghazali. In analyzing the opinion of al Ghazali, (Sabil, 2014) concluded that science is categorized into two, namely intellectual science and science that studies Islam. Intellectual science has material objects and properties that are different from Islamic science. In intellectual science there are those that are classified as universal (philosophy) and particular (medicine, mathematics, engineering, and so on). While the universal and particular classification in Islamic sciences includes the science of kalam (universal), jurisprudence, hadith science, interpretation and others including particulars. The main source of the material object of the Islamic sciences is the Koran.

Thus, based on the categorization of knowledge according to al Ghazali, the da'wah strategy includes Islamic knowledge because the source of da'wah is the Koran. By categorizing the da'wah strategy as part of Islamic science, epistemologically a methodological approach will be sought that is in accordance with the material object of the da'wah strategy.

2. Ontology of Da'wah Strategy

   a. *Smart* Da'wah

      Various strategies are used by people or groups of people so that the goal of preaching is achieved. As the definition of strategy mentioned on page five, strategy is a combination of planning, methods, media, techniques, and tactics to achieve da'wah goals. One example of a da'wah strategy that is adapted to current global conditions is *Smart Da'wah*. The da'wah strategy initiated by (Asiyah, 2016) according to Khofifah Indah Parawansa's statement is the right reference for dai-daiyah to adjust to the dynamic changes of the da'wah world such as methods, objects, and materials. *Smart* Da'wah is organized into three books thematically with different themes, namely sympathetic, creative, and intelligent.

The following are some *endorsements* expert *Smart* Da'wah book. 1) KH Abdusshommad Buchori (General Chairperson of the Indonesian Ulema Council of East Java Province) said that preachers who want to increase their horizons and horizons of thinking, especially as a provision to face problems in the global world, should have and read the book; 2) Subagya Adam (Professor of Social Sciences FISIP Unair), the book "Sympathetic Da'wah" is necessary and must be read by academics, religious teachers, teachers, Islamic boarding schools, religious organizations, taklim community and internal and external stakeholders…so that Muslims Indonesia, especially the younger generation, thinks more creatively and dynamically so that they are more productive to face tomorrow; 3) Siti Dalilah Candrawati (Lecturer of the Faculty of Syari'ah and Law at UIN Surabaya), the book "Sympathetic Da'wah" is worthy of being used as a da'wah reference to provide enlightenment to the people in undergoing the process of *sami'na wa atha'na* to Allah SWT. and to his message. Through these opinions, it can be concluded that the *Smart* Da'wah initiated by Asiyah is more towards the pragmatics of da'wah, not the strategy because it contains materials for preaching.

b.   Da'wah Strategy *Wasathiyah*

Planning a strategy cannot be separated from the method or technique that will be used in its implementation. Many da'wah strategies have been used by dai or religious organizations. Many studies have also been carried out on da'wah strategies, such as (Hadi, 2019), (Mubasyaroh, 2017) and many more. The results of the study concluded that 1) planning, implementation, and evaluation in a strategy are needed, 2) certain methods and techniques must be used so that the goals of da'wah are right on target, 3) it is important that da'i and da'wah institutions in Indonesia should guide them in the implementation of da'wah must not have religious sentiments.

Based on the results of these studies, especially in the third part, the *wasathiyah* more suitable to be applied in Indonesia. The success of da'wah in Indonesia with this strategy has given birth to safeguarding the core and nature of Islamic teachings for its adherents as well as the absorption of local culture as a variation to develop da'wah. The word *wasathiyah* comes from Arabic, its translation in Indonesian is 'moderate'. The Arabic term for the word moderation is *wasath/wasathiyyah*. In the Qur'an the word *wasathiyah is* found in the QS. al Baqarah: 143. Some commentators interpret *wasathan* in the verse, among others, 1) the best and highest position (At-thabari); 2) the best thing is justice (Al-Qurtubi); 3) something of the best quality (Ibn Kathir); and 4) goodness and justice (Abdurrahman as-Sa'diy and Rasyid Ridha) (Halim & Prihananto, 2021). Furthermore, *wasathiyah* became one of the characteristics of Islam in Indonesia, namely as a thought and practice that functions as a mediator to find common ground between the existing religious movements.

Islam *wasahtiyah* for preaching was Kanjeng Sunan Ampel whose success was followed by the guardians of the island of Java.da'wah *wasathiyah* based on the following nine things.

1) *Tawasuth* (taking the middle way) means in understanding and practicing religious teachings not excessively and not reducing them.

2) *Tawazun* (balance) means understanding and practicing religious teachings in a balanced way between all aspects of life in this world and the hereafter and being firm in principled against differences and deviations.

3) *I'tidal* (straight and firm) means to put something in its place, namely to exercise rights and fulfill obligations according to its proposition.

4) *Tasamuh* (tolerance) means respecting and acknowledging differences in all aspects of life and religion.

5) *Musawah* (egalitarian) means prioritizing equality and not discriminatory because there are differences in everything with others.

6) *Islah* (reform) means to achieve better conditions in accommodating changes and progress of the times always based on the public benefit by prioritizing reformative principles.

7) *Alawiyah* (put priority) means prioritizing something that is more important to be implemented than the interests that are below it.

8) *Tathawur wa ibtikar* (dynamic and innovative) means always ready to change in keeping with the times and trying to create something new for the progress and benefit of the people.

9) *Shura* (deliberation) means making deliberation and consensus as a means of solving every problem while still holding the principle of putting the benefit above any interest (Halim & Prihananto, 2021).

Furthermore, in carrying out the nine basic da'wah of *wasathiyah* , Kanjeng Sunan Ampel used the da'wah strategy of *rahmatan lil 'alamin*. This method is reflected in the spirit of love, tenderness, mutual love, moderation, tolerance, not interfering in the affairs of state power nor threatening state security and not worsening social life. Based on the presentation of the two da'wah ontologies above, this research refers to the *wasathiyah* run by Kanjeng Sunan Ampel because it is more appropriate to be applied in Indonesia as a multicultural country.

3. Religious Conversion and Da'wah Strategy

Freedom of religion which is the main right in humans implies that there is no compulsion in believing in it and free to choose it. Likewise the transfer from one religion to another. Transfers or conversions in religion have been going on for centuries with various backgrounds and occur in almost all parts of Indonesia. For this reason, many studies on religious conversion have been carried out. For example, (Hidayat, 2016), (Fahriana & Lufaefi, 2018), (Anta, 2019). From the results of the study, information was obtained about the meaning of religious conversion, the factors that cause religious conversion, and the problems experienced by people who change religions. Although this research is related to religious conversion, the focus of the research is different from these studies.

In writing this article, the discussion about religious conversion is only a reference as the basis for the act of da'wah. The existence of people who are affiliated with the new religion and leave the old religion requires a da'wah strategy that can prevent further religious conversions and be able to return them to their original

religion. This principle is taken to avoid religious sentiments against certain religions so that the success of the da'wah strategy can be felt by the community. The da'wah strategy that has been carried out by Kanjeng Sunan Ampel is the right choice that can be used by YSC in da'wah activities in Tugurejo Village, Wates District, Blitar Regency.

Conclusion

Da'wah strategy as a means of spreading religion (especially Islam) plays an important role in the particular part of Islamic science. With the stipulation of the da'wah strategy as part of Islamic science so as to clarify the source of the study, namely the word of Allah al-Quran al-Karim. From various statements about da'wah strategies, there are two keywords, namely planning and invitation. Da'wah strategy must start from planning because it will invite people into the goal of goodness. In order to carry out life sometimes a person converts to another religion with various backgrounds. The condition of a society if there are citizens who convert (conversion) to other religions, of course there will be parties who care to prevent this from happening and even try to prevent and return to their original religion. These activities require the right strategy so that these goals are achieved. Achievement must be based on the method (epistemology) and study (ontology).

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