
Psychological Distress on Mualaf

Tekanan Psikologis pada Mualaf

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ABSTRACT

Psychological distress is a harmful condition that can affect individuals directly or indirectly over time and affect physical health conditions and mental conditions. This study aims to determine the description of psychological distress in converts. This type of research is qualitative research with a phenomenological model and data collection methods carried out by in-depth interviews and documentation. The informants of this study were three people, one man was 59 years old and had converted to Islam for 36 years and two women, the first was 40 years old and had converted to Islam for 18 years, the second was 66 years old and had converted to Islam for 41 years. The results of this study indicate that the religious conversion experienced by the informant has a relationship with psychological distress, where the process follows the interpersonal and situational factors shared by the informant. The informant decides to convert to Islam. The interpersonal factors experienced by the informants occurred in the second stage of religious conversion, namely, the phase of unease. In this phase, religious teachings are believed to bring peace no longer or cause psychological distress to him. Informants make comparisons from the previous instructions to the teachings of Islam. The peak was the situational factor he experienced, namely the stage of religious conversion (mualaf) because the teachings in Islam are considered the right way and are more capable of bringing life satisfaction.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Humans are creatures who have needs in carrying out their lives. Humans always follow the changing times whose situations and circumstances cannot be predicted. Some traits and imperatives occur in their lives that require humans always to fulfill their needs. (Alwisol, 2009).

Human needs can be divided into two parts, namely physiological needs and psychological or psychological and spiritual needs (Najati, 1988). According to Maslow (in Sumantri & Ahmad, 2019), basic physiological needs are related to fundamental activities in the body, such as food and drink, clothing, shelter, and biology. At the same time, the primary psychological and spiritual needs are related to the soul possessed by humans, where humans manifest a sense of security and have the desire always to strive to create peace in the soul and a sense of happiness in their lives (Najati, 1988).

The life of every human being that is always open often creates increasingly complex problems, both from personal factors and external factors. Spiritual needs are needs that exist in every human being (Widodo, 2019). By nature, every human being has a readiness and a potential for monotheism, namely knowing and believing in God (Allah) and humans have a tendency to be religious (Najati, 1988).

Individual tendency to religiosity is one of the needs in human life. Religion functions as a way of life that contains various rules and norms that determine how a person behaves and behaves according to the religion he adheres to. Every human being has a value system that is meaningful for their respective lives, which will form an

identity. This religious identity will help individuals understand, evaluate and explain situations and experiences in life (Mohammad & Syafiq, 2014).

Religious conversion will undoubtedly make a person's life change forever because the decision is directly related to fundamental changes and realignment of self-identity (Desieningrum, 2012). The conversion of religion from non-Islam to Islam inclines his heart to good deeds and love of Islam, as evidenced by the two sentences of the creed (Wulandari, 2018). A convert is a person who has just entered or embraced Islam by saying the two sentences of the philosophy, namely "Asyhadu alla ilaha illallaah, wa ashhadu anna muhammadar Rasulullah" which means a person's testimony that there is no god worthy of worship except Allah and the Prophet Muhammad is the messenger of Allah. Ramadhan et al., 2018).

According to Daradjat (in Rakhmat, 2003), every convert experiences a period known as the "period of unrest," the process of the inner life of the converts, raging in the form of anxiety, panic, sadness, and other things. Individual converts must pass this period of unease as the primary way to choose a new belief to overcome the inner conflict (Rokhis, 2016). The stress response leads to negative things such as anxiety and depression. According to H. Selye, distress is a pressure response that can cause something harmful or physiologically and psychologically threatening (Matthews, 2016).

The preliminary study results found that the Banyumas Mualaf center is a place for some Banyumas people who have embraced Islam. The problems often occur in converts who experience neglect and are not considered by their own families, consistency of beliefs, economic difficulties, and marital issues. There is also one side of the experience of an informant, namely informant S, who then told the story of his life, that he had studied several religions including Christianity, Hinduism and then studied Islam. Informants know Islam more deeply by a man during college. Departing from this, the informant then decided to become a convert and married the person who introduced him to Islam. But a few years together, the two decided to separate for several reasons, and one of them was because her husband was inconsistent in guiding her to the teachings of Islam. Informant S independently tried to learn Islam again well and run his life as before. However, from the problems he experienced, Informant S revealed that he felt very comfortable and at ease being a Muslim.

Banyumas Mualaf Center is an exciting place to study where many activities support the development of converts. Such as regular religious studies and the relationship of mentoring to converts which are pretty intense. For this reason, the researcher feels that the existence of several activities carried out by the Banyumas Mualaf Center can help the difficulties of converts and become a medium for converts to be able to respond to the pressure and stress they face reactions related to psychological distress in converts. Converts are assumed to have psychological reasons related to psychological distress and interpersonal and situational factors. For this reason, researchers are interested in studying how the picture of psychological distress in converts is.

From the description of the background of the problem described previously, researchers want to examine how psychological distress on mualaf.

2. THEORITICAL FRAMEWORK

Psychological Distress

Distress is a stress response that leads to negative things such as anxiety and depression. The concept of distress comes from H. Selye, who states that distress is a stress response that can cause something harmful or physiologically and psychologically threatening (Matthews, 2016).

Husain et al. (2017) also explain the definition of psychological distress, a harmful condition associated with feelings of depression and anxiety that can make an individual experience mental pain or suffering. Psychological distress is a dangerous condition that can affect individuals directly or indirectly over time and affect physical health conditions and mental conditions (Mahmood and Ghaffar, 2014).

Based on the explanation above, it can be concluded that psychological distress is an adverse condition such as anxiety, depression, and pain characterized by several symptoms such as being easily agitated, nervous, irritable, impatient, and very difficult to calm down. Two factors that influence a person's psychological distress are interpersonal and situational (Matthews, 2016). The interpersonal factor is a factor that can affect the level of individual distress from within. Interpersonal factors consist of personality traits, in which there are several personality traits related to the emotional tendencies of the individual. While situational is a factor that can cause distress is usually due to the influence of a person's experience of an event, a situation that is felt to be dangerous, or something that can attack well-being. These things ultimately have a different impact depending on the occasion and the individual who feels it. These situational factors can be further divided into three, such as physiological.

The study results show that several parts of the brain influence the distress response demonstrated by the individual. Sensitization of chronic stress response can consistently affect a person's level of resilience to the suffering experienced.

Cognitive

Individual beliefs and expectations that are appropriately managed can determine the psychological and physiological effects caused by stress. For example, negative moods can be stimulated by suggestive techniques such as reflecting on adverse events or making negative statements that they are unhappy. Distress develops when individuals judge themselves as someone who has failed to cope with and control important events that happen to them.

Social

Social factors have a great potential to cause distress with the disruption of social relationships owned by individuals, such as grieving situations, marital disputes, and unemployment. As for psychological distress, in particular, the signs and symptoms according to Matthews (2016) are: 1) Changes in behavior including a decrease in objective performance; 2) Less able to focus attention; 3) Often experience anxiety; 4) Depression; 5) Mood disorders; 6) Behaving evasively; 7) Difficulty in social interaction, and 8) Hurt yourself.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research is qualitative. Qualitative research has a logical paradigm and the basics of thinking for yourself, which explains the study's strength (Poerwandari, 2005).

Using qualitative methods is considered entirely appropriate because qualitative methods can answer the purpose of research, namely knowing the psychological background. Qualitative research explores and understands some individuals or groups' meaning ascribed to social (humanitarian) problems (Creswell, 2012). Qualitative research products and processes descriptive research data, such as interview transcripts, pictures, field notes, photos, video recordings, and so on. This study uses a phenomenological study, which is an approach that assumes that a phenomenon is not a stand-alone reality (Lilteljohn, in Rokhis, 2016). Phenomena that appear are objects that are full of transcendental meaning. The social world is a place of daily human life and is always intersubjective and full of meaning. A phenomenon that has been understood and known by every human being reflects transcendental experience and understanding of sense.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Informant S

Informant S is a converting female, 40 years old; she lives in Purwokerto; from childhood to adulthood, she grew up in a Christian family. S's life now is as a da'wah activist at the Banyumas Mualaf Center; he learns a lot about religion at the organization.

Informant S then told the story of his life, that he had studied several religions, including Christianity, Hinduism and then studied Islam. Informants know Islam more deeply by a man during college.

Departing from this, the informant then decided to become a convert and married the person who introduced him to Islam. But a few years together, the two decided to separate for several reasons, and one of them was because her husband was inconsistent in guiding her to the teachings of Islam.

Informant S independently tried to learn Islam again well and run his life as before. However, from the problems he experienced, Informant S revealed that he felt very comfortable and at ease being a Muslim.

Informant TR

The informant TR is a converting female, 66 years old; she lives in Purwokerto, from childhood to adulthood, she grew up in an Adventist Christian family. The informant told his life story, where he once doubted Christianity because the prophet Isa was crucified. Then they were confused because the kingship of Christianity was not included in the informant's logic. Then TR married a Muslim whose husband then guided him to study Islam more deeply. According to him, Islam has perfect teachings.

Informant PBN

The PBN informant is a convert to Islam, male, 59 years old, domiciled in Banyumas. The informant said that he decided to become a convert when he was 24 years old. The informant also said that he had married a Muslim woman. Current activities, informants are involved in the Banyumas Mualaf Center.

Discussion

Psychological distress is a harmful condition that can affect individuals directly or indirectly over time and affect physical health conditions and mental conditions (Mahmood and Ghaffar, 2014). Religious conversion experienced by converts to S has a relationship with psychological distress.

Drajat (1970) suggests several psychological processes experienced by a person who is a religious convert, so that person decides to do a religious conversion, namely quiet period. In this period, the individual's soul is relaxed because problems in religion have not yet affected his attitude. Such a situation will not disturb the balance in his mind so that he is then in a calm and serene state.

Unease stage

This stage of unease takes place when there are religious problems that have affected his mind. Religious issues can affect his psyche because of a disaster, crisis, or feeling of guilt. This condition causes a shock in his inner life, which results in feelings of anxiety, panic, hopelessness, doubt, and indecision that make people more sensitive. At that stage, there is choosing a new belief to resolve the conflict in his mind.

Conversion stage

This stage occurs after the internal conflict begins to fade or shrink because stability has been achieved, namely strength in choosing the right decision, following human nature. This decision gives meaning to resolve

previous internal conflicts, thereby creating a state of peace in the form of conditions for receiving divine guidance.

Quiet and serene stage

The stage of calm and peace is different from the peaceful period of the first stage. If in the first stage, it is a situation experienced because of indifference to religion. Still, at this stage, it is caused by satisfaction with the decisions that have been made regarding religious conversion.

Conversion expression stage

When accepting the new religious teachings that individuals believe in, the attitude of life is harmonized with spiritual teachings, regulations, and religious values. The peak is when S is in the conversion and post-conversion phases, then after he decides to become a convert, S finds some changes in his life.

Husain et al. (2017), also explain the definition of psychological distress, a harmful condition associated with feelings of depression and anxiety that can make an individual experience mental pain or suffering. Psychological distress is an unhealthy condition that can affect individuals directly or indirectly over time and affect physical health conditions and mental conditions (Mahmood and Ghaffar, 2014).

The conversion process experienced by Informant S goes hand in hand with the psychological distress process. Two factors affect a person's psychological distress: (Matthews, 2016) interpersonal and situational factors.

First, the factors that can influence the individual's level of distress from within are interpersonal factors which consist of personality traits in which there are several personality traits related to the emotional tendencies of the individual. Informants S and TR revealed that when they were in the conversion phase of the unsettling stage, Informants S and TR felt that there was something odd about their previous beliefs; there were many irrational things related to their ideas. Then a turmoil arose in him, departing from this; Informant S and TR tried to be critical to ask various things related to what he was asking and tried to find the truth.

Tumangor (2014) said that people to choose a religion tend to compare the nature of logic and rationality between the teachings of religions. People who find their religious teachings irrational have a high probability of converting to religion (external religious conversion). On the other hand, if he considers his religious teachings very rational and logical. Then it will increase his belief in his religion and the stronger his religious attitude (internal religious conversion). The basis of a person comparing his religious teachings with the teachings of other faiths is religious knowledge, namely his knowledge of the religion he adheres to, which contains his religious instructions about God, commands, and prohibitions.

Second, situational factors cause distress because there is an influence from one's experience related to an event, a situation that is felt to be dangerous, or something that can attack well-being. These things ultimately have a different impact depending on the occasion and the individual who feels it.

According to situational factors experienced by informant S, psychological distress lies in the awkward phase and the conversion phase. Informant S said that changing religion is not a trivial matter but involves many things that can affect his life in this world and the hereafter. The uneasy phase is when a person begins to feel the inner conflict raging in his heart, anxiety, tension, panic, doubt, and so on. This can be caused by morale, disappointment, governing values, and so on. People will be exceptionally sentimental, easily offended, and even very easy to suggest in this phase. This condition is different from the first phase, namely the first calm phase; people are still comfortable and satisfied with their religion, indifferent to outside information, and do not care about religious matters.

Informants S, TR, and PBN acknowledged that the calm and comfort they felt before embracing Islam was not real peace and comfort but a false calm and comfort. They feel relaxed and comfortable because of the world's life because the benchmark of their ease and comfort is only in their possessions.

5. CONCLUSION

The process of religious conversion for converts S, TR, and PBN is related to psychological distress, following the interpersonal and situational factors experienced by converts S, TR, and PBN, who then decided to convert to Islam. The interpersonal factors experienced by S occur in the second stage of religious conversion, namely, the phase of unease. When in this phase, the religious teachings are believed to be no longer able to bring peace. S, TR, and PBN made comparisons to the teachings of Islam. The peak is the situational factors S, TR, and PBN doing the stage of religious conversion (mualaf) because the teachings in Islam are considered the right way and are more capable of bringing life satisfaction.

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