Cultural Identity of Muslim Women in the Yukngaji Community, Indonesia

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Abstract

The rise of the hijrah movement trend has caused a shift in one's cultural identity. The phenomenon of hijrah, which was initially interpreted as a personal rite, has begun to shift into a communal movement. In essence, hijrah is a process of how a person improves himself towards the process of obedience and abandons God's prohibitions. The hijrah process is essentially related to the process of searching for one's identity. In a communication perspective, identity is not generated independently, but through a process of communication with others. Through The Communication Theory of Identity (CTI), this research wants to know how the shifting of identity of Muslim women is presented in layers. This research is a qualitative research with a case study approach that collects data through in-depth interview techniques and collects data about the YukNgaji Community. The results showed that the shift in the cultural identity of Muslim women in the YukNgaji Community is depicted through enactment identity, relational identity, and communal identity. The shift in cultural identity that occurs in Muslim women is basically a positive change. So that with this change, women can protect themselves in the future.

Keywords: *Cultural Identity; Identity of Woman; Muslim Woman*

Introduction

The reality of hijrah, which is currently coloring religious movements among Indonesian youth, is an interesting phenomenon to study. This is because the hijrah, which was initially interpreted as a rite of a personal nature, has begun to shift into a movement carried out communally. It is undeniable that the joining of a person in a community can influence oneself in terms of outlook on life, including views on religion. Explored from its essence, hijrah is a process of how a person improves himself towards the process of obedience and abandons God's prohibitions. The hijrah process is essentially related to the process of searching for one's identity. Identity is an important thing in a society that has many members. Identity creates a picture about a person, through; physical appearance, racial characteristics, skin color, language used, self-assessment, and other perceptual factors, all of which are used in constructing cultural identities. Identity according to Klap (Berger, 2010) includes everything a person can legally and reliably declare about herself - her status, name, personality, and past. Gudykunst (2002), states that identity is important in cultural communication.

In a communication perspective, identity is not generated independently, but through a process of communication with others. Michael Hecht suggests an interpretive point of view which emphasizes that identity is negotiated through communication with other people. In The Communication Theory of Identity, Hecht created a series with four layers. Personal layer, which is consistent with the values that exist in social situations. Then, enactment layer, explores other people's knowledge about a person based on what someone does, what they have and how someone acts. Furthermore, the relational layer, related to who a person is in terms of relating to other individuals. Finally, the communal layer, related to who a person is when tied to the larger community. However, in this study, the research will only focus on three layers, namely the enactment layer, the relational layer and the communal layer to identify shifts in cultural identity that occur.

It is undeniable that the trend of the migration movement causes a shift in one's cultural identity. The tendency to shift identity can be seen from the content that is of interest both in reality and social media. The easiest indication to see, especially for women who are starting to migrate, is wearing a closed dress and wearing a head scarf. This is done because aurat is assumed not for public consumption. In the YukNgaji Community, nearly two thirds of the members are women. This shows that women have a high enough enthusiasm for the presence of the hijrah trend, despite the data which states that the number of women is more than men. Therefore, researchers feel it is important to look further about the shift in the cultural identity of women in the YukNgaji Community.

Methods

This research is a qualitative study where researchers can enter their opinions in assessing the cases studied. Furthermore, the distance between the researcher and the object under study is very close (Creswell, 2007). Researchers approach case studies that investigate phenomena in real-life contexts, when the boundaries between phenomena and contexts do not appear explicitly, and where multisources are utilized (Yin, 2015). Researchers used this approach because they observed the phenomenon of hijrah among young people. This research was conducted using a case study research approach, namely a method that refers to research that has an element of how and why in the main research question and examines contemporary (current) problems and the lack of opportunity for researchers to control the events (cases) they research (Yin, 2015). To determine the research sample used purposive sampling method at first after conducting pre-research observations then through snowball sampling in the process of data validity. In relation to this research, to achieve the research objective, namely to explain the cultural identity of Muslim women in the Yuk Ngaji community, informants who know and experience the hijrah process are selected who are appropriate sources of information. The criteria for informants in this study are Muslim women who have joined the YukNgaji Community for at least two years, regularly participate in study groups, and are active users of social media.

Result and Discussion

In general, The Communication Theory of Identity (CTI) is built on three cultural contexts, namely individual, communal and social. Identity is an amalgam or liaison between individuals, social and with the existence of communication, this relationship can occur. A person's identity will be a "code" for membership in a group. A person will get views and reactions from other people when there is social interaction, and shows an identity that is done by expressing oneself and responding to others. Thus, identity can change because identity continues and undergoes a process (Littlejohn, 2011). The results of this study present information from interviews with informants and divide it into 3 important points, namely enactment layer, relational layer dan communal layer.

I. Enactment Layer Identity

Identity which is included in the enactment layer is interpreted as other people's knowledge of someone based on what they do, have, and how that person acts. Muslim women who are members of the YukNgaji Community in their capacity as individuals can show an identity that is included in this layer when linked to the hijrah process they are undergoing. The cultural identities that are affected are language, fashion, and behavior.

1.   Language Identity

The hijrah process does not only change a Muslim woman starting from her behavior but also in the use of the language used. This change is deemed necessary as a reinforcement and implementation of an attitude of self-consistency in undergoing the hijrah process. Informant WS admitted that previously he used regional languages and greetings that were often rude, so he also explained that there were changes in him related to the language used.

"Slowly I learned, if this style of speaking. Alhamdulillah I got support, so I reduce using greetings like that …… ". (Interview with WS on 12-07-2020)

In accordance with the result of the interview above, process in reducing the greeting that tends to be rude, received support from other friends so that the hijrah process did not feel heavy. In contrast to informant WS, informant LT, who previously felt that there was nothing wrong with the language used, experienced a change by copying Arabic greetings used in the YukNgaji Community.

"If the language does not change, but yes, follow the greeting words when studied, like Ukhti, Antum, Jazakillah. It's not strange in my opinion, it just feels cool when greeting a friend or being called a friend ... ". (Interview with LT on 21-07-2020)

Based on the explanation from informant LT above, the change in Arabic-tended greetings made the impression that he felt comfortable.

2.   Fashion Identity

The decision to migrate is a commitment in a person whose application can be reflected through behavior and dress styles. The awareness of dressing for Muslim women is an obligation because there is Islamic law that regulates it. As for the limits of a woman's limbs that can be seen, namely the face and palms, it means that apart from the two limbs it is obligatory for a Muslim woman to cover them. In this context, covering the genitals is not just covering it up, but there are additional rules in the form of clothes that should not be exposed and form curves which lead to lust of the opposite sex. The hijrah process cannot be done instantly, meaning that it is done slowly but consistently.

"It took me a year to be sure and confident to wear a wide hijab. I used to think about what to do, there were many considerations in essence. Especially now that I try to wear a veil if I go anywhere, I think about it for a long time until I'm sure with it ". (Interview with AM on 11-06-2020)

From from some of the interview data with the sources above, it can be seen that there is a change in the style of dress between before and during the hijrah process. Basically, there are no special clothes that a Muslim woman must wear, both in terms of color and type. However, pay more attention to fashion that is closely related to the syariat covering the genitals.

3.   Behavior Identity

Regarding behavior, Muslim women who are members of the YukNgaji Community in the process of migrating have experienced a slight shift compared to before. Although these changes are not very significant, they are sufficient to have an impact on the present life.

The changes that occurred after deciding to migrate were recognized by Muslim women who were members of the YukNgaji Community as changes that made themselves better. Feel better applied in dealing with everyday situations.

"I wasn't close to my mother. Actually, there were some problems, but after following YukNoran (taking part in the study) I knew and tried to change my attitude and behavior towards my mother. It was really strange at first and continued to denial myself. So thanks to my friends, this is okay, this is one of the key ways to heaven too ". (Interview with FT on 20-04-2020)

There is an awareness that his attitude first needs to be evaluated because it has a negative tendency, thus making informant MD learn to change this attitude to be more positive according to the praiseworthy morals taught by Islam. The three informants above did not deny that in the process, hijrah tends to be a new thing because it is not used to it. However, the three of them continue to learn and unite themselves in a community that supports their steps so that if they are careless in the process, there are friends who provide support to return to the line of migration.

II. Relational Layer Identity

The identity that is included in this layer illustrates that this identity appears on a person who is influenced by who that person is. The emergence of identity is also influenced by the recognition in a relationship and the role of other people. The identity included in this layer can be seen in the identity of women who are selective in using social media.

It cannot be denied that social media has an influence on someone. In the context of this research, a Muslim woman experiences a shift in identity in terms of social media. The shift is interpreted by a reduction in the existence of faces and selectively in sorting out followers. If previously there was a tendency to exist and have a high enough intensity of interaction on social media, then after deciding to move a little that intensity decreased. As stated by informant FT below.

"Now I rarely upload faces, photos that used to be with captions that I felt strange were the ones I took. Shame to read it. I often repost study info, if not, pearls of wisdom. " (Interview with FT on 28-07-2020)

A similar expression was stated by informant WS as follows.

"There is still a photo of myself but my face is not covered, my Instagram is also not locked so that I can be selective when choosing followers, minimizing annoying brothers. On Facebook, I only look for study info. It's rarely used (Facebook) ". (Interview with WS on 12-07-2020)

The explanation from informant WS above provides additional reinforcement of the selective attitude of Muslim women. Even informant WS deliberately locked his Instagram account so he could filter out the friends that entered his social media. This can indicate discomfort if the social media account invites male enthusiasm.

III. Communal Layer Identity

In the communal layer, identity is described when a person is tied to a larger community, the individual as part of a larger group. As for the context of this study, the communal layer is described as a hangout or hangout activity.

Rihlah or commonly known as hangout in slang is one of the habits of millennial youth in spending free time, either alone or with friends. One of the objectives of the program that is carried out by the YukNgaji Community in order to be included in the routines of young people is not to shift or erase existing habits, but by directing these habits to be more useful in terms of content, associations, and rewards. One of the concepts that have not changed in the YukNgaji Community is hangout or known as rihlah. Basically, this hangout or rihlah activity is not something new for millennial youth, especially women.

The YukNgaji Community does not change or change the existing habits of these young people. Hangout with young people is something that tends to be inseparable from one another. So that YukNgaji slightly changes not the activities carried out but the essence of the activities. In addition, the mention of hangout has also been changed to be rihlah.

The sounding of the word rihlah was chosen by YukNoran not without reason, but as a reminder that the essence of the activity is positive and not only oriented to momentary pleasure. Following is the statement of informant RM and informant NT regarding rihlah.

> "Usually we divide it into small groups in order to get to know each other. The activity is not only sharing, but also visiting or *rihlah* the term. In accordance with the hadith of the Prophet SAW, we are invited to visit Muslim sisters…. The activities are fun so it reminds us that if we have siblings, we have to maintain friendship and build friendship… ". (Interview with RM on 20-04-2020)

> "Activities are like playing games, where do you get with your friends, but there is a difference. For example, you go to the beach and you play wet, you still remind each other if you don't forget to pray. So even though the point is to play, you don't forget to be with Allah SWT ". (Interview with NT on 14-07-2020)

Informant RM in his statement admitted that the YukNgaji community divides its members into small groups. As for the purpose of forming the group so that the intensity of getting to know each other (fellow Muslims) more often. As stated by informant RM, the activities carried out in the small group were not only reciting and sharing related to Islamic knowledge, but there were rihlah or hangout activities. Rihlah activities that are carried out more refer to the sunnah taught by the Prophet Muhammad regarding visiting fellow Muslims. This makes the essay rihlah for not just a visit but also a sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad that was carried out. So for RM (informant 6), rihlah activities were positive because they maintained friendship and friendship among Muslims.

A similar statement was also expressed by informant NT in the sentence "Activities are like playing games, miss, please look where your friends are from the Koran, but there is a difference". Informant NT admitted that playing games even though he had moved was not eliminated in his daily life, but there was a difference that was felt by informant NT, namely that even though he played, he still remembered Allah SWT. Informant NT gave an example of his rihlah activity to the beach with friends (one group in the YukNgaji Community) the essence of playing, but when it comes time to pray, remind each other. From the above statement it can be interpreted that the desire of young people to continue to exist through hangouts cannot be eliminated. However, these activities can include positive religious

values so that when they are carried out, it does not make someone neglectful of the obligations that must be carried out in Islam.

Conclusion

Based on the results of this study, the shift in cultural identity is clearly reflected in women who are members of the YukNgaji Community. This shift in identity can be seen in three layer concepts, namely the enactment layer, the relational layer and the communal layer. The shift in cultural identity in the engagement layer is reflected in language identity, fashion identity, and behavior identity. Language identity tends to adapt the greeting words from Arabic for everyday use, dress identities are illustrated through the use of loose clothing such as robes and wide headscarves, and the use of socks, then the identity of behavior is seen from the existence of an internal evaluation process when doing things. negative things, so that awareness of these experts becomes a trigger to change behavior to be positive. Furthermore, the shift in cultural identity in the relational layer is illustrated by a selective attitude in social media, such as reducing the intensity of social media, tending to follow da'wah content, and locking social media accounts in order to filter friendships. Finally, the shift in cultural identity in the communal layer is illustrated in hanging out activities. This activity is recognized as an activity that cannot be separated from young people.Therefore, the YukNgaji Community has shifted the word hangout to rihlah. The rihlah activity is the same as hanging out in general but does not forget God in its application. Seeing the results of this study, the shift in cultural identity that occurs in Muslim women is basically a positive change. So that with this change, women can protect themselves in the future.

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