



Islamic Education Model for *Muallaf* (Converts) through a Participatory Approach

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INTRODUCTION

The basic idea of this research was taken from an idea about “education for all”. This concept stated clearly that there is no discrimination in education (Hopkins, 2015; Pring et al., 2012). All people have the right to get the education, from low-income groups to

high-income groups. Similarly, the education for normal and abnormal groups (with special needs) (Mayne, 2014). It is not only for Muslims but also for people who convert from other religions to Islam.

Islamic education is understood as an effort carried out in the context of fostering,

developing and directing human potential so that it can be functioning properly (Baba, 2018; Hidayat et al., 2018; L. Lubis & Asry, 2020; Suryadi, 2018). This means that Islamic education is purposed with assisting humans in developing human potential (Rohman & Hairudin, 2018; Syafe'i, 2015). It's not only from a physical aspect but also spiritually. Likewise, the target, as stated above, it is not only for Islamic groups, but also for groups who have recently converted to Islam (Fakhruddin & Awang, 2020; Yuliza, 2020). Talking about religious education it cannot be separated from groups in society. For example, converts, as a community in Muslim society, converts actually receive special attention (Setiyani & Muktafi, 2020). Moreover, Indonesian education adheres to education for all, as emphasized above.

In the perspective of the psychology of religion, people who converted are known as religious conversions, while the perpetrators are called converts (Hakiki & Cahyono, 2015; Halama & Lačná, 2011; Muhdhori, 2017). *Muallaf* comes from Arabic, namely *Allafa* which means tame or interest. So, converts are people who begin to tame or approach Islam. Have they converted to Islam or not? If they have learned and practiced Islam, they are no longer worthy to be called converts but rather to be called *Muallaf*. *Muallaf* is a person who originally disbelieved and recently embraced Islam (Abdul et al., 2021; Hamzah et al., 2021).

Based on the literature review, many scientific studies on converts have been carried out, but they are more concerned with converts' problem. The focus of the research is on the side of the reasons for converting to Islam (Abd Majid et al., 2016; PP & Syafiq, 2014), the causes of conversion to Islam (Aziz & Hidayat, 2010; Ridwan, 2017), religious commitment to converts conversion (M. Z. M. Lubis, 2019; Wesselmann et al., 2016), the psychology of converts (Fodeman et al., 2020; Snook et al., 2019), coaching of converts (Nuruddin, 2016; Zainap, 2019) and management of converts (Abdul et al., 2021).

The results of the *Muallaf* Center Indonesia research, it is known that a person

becomes a convert usually for various reasons, such as: (1) because of marriage: there are about 68% of converts to Islam from marriage, (2) study and find scientifically: because these converts are usually students, or the scholars who are indeed from academics, they found guidance after they study and study Islam, there are about 20% who are converts from this category, and (3) because of direct guidance: what is meant here is because of a dream, waking up and waking up from a coma, vow or intention change religion if the intention is granted, and several other things, there are about 12% of converts for this reason (Azni & Yusoff, 2019; Brice, 2015; Tamuri, 2015).

Sociologically, there are quite a lot of converts to Islam and it is seen as a sensitive issue, especially regarding to the religious harmony. Psychologically, the condition of converts to Islam is unstable, because it requires a special handling and services. This is not only about religious needs but also to avoid the emergence of a wrong understanding of Islam itself. It keeps away from the impression that Islam is complicated, complex, and so on. When converts want to or have returned to Islam, they want to become Muslims, they are not only in a condition to see Islam as a compilation of religious commands and prohibitions. At this level, education for converts becomes increasingly important (Abd Majid et al., 2015; Alyedreessy, 2016).

There are several possible problems or matters faced by converts in life and in their lives. The problems of converts to Islam can be seen from three aspects, they are problems in social, religious and educational aspects (Ahmed, 2012; Kassim et al., 2013; Mossiere, 2016). First, the problem from the social aspect is related to intrapersonal and interpersonal relationships in family and friends in their initial association before embracing Islam. Some of the converts received challenges and even threats from the family and were ostracized from the community of their previous religion. Second, the problems from the religious aspect, including difficulties in understanding the core teachings of Islam, practicing Islamic teachings and keeping faith steady and getting better. Third, problems in the educational aspect of converts are

sometimes confused about finding the right forum or institution where they can study and explore Islamic teachings effectively and efficiently.

Based on these problems, converts need to be given a place, as a place of guidance. It is important to be given guidance and direction on what they are going through. Need to be given reinforcement for the decisions they take. The problem is, who is most responsible for its implementation, what is the pattern of development, what materials are their needs. Answering this question seems to require intensive and deep thought. A comprehensive study is needed, so as to find accurate and representative answers. For this reason, apart from theoretical analysis, it is important to conduct further research because the phenomenon of converting to Islam does not only occur in big cities, but also in regions.

West Sumatra Province has a total of 4.72 million Muslims or 97.42% of the total population. One of the cities in the province of West Sumatra which has the highest number of converts to Islam is in Padang. This can be seen from the data the Ministry of Religion. Padang has the highest percentage of converts to Islam compared to the other two big cities, namely Padang 65.7%, Payakumbuh 14.38% and Bukittinggi 20%. The results of the data found that in the period 2000-2016 there were 235 converts to Islam in the city of Padang, as illustrated in the following table:

Table 1. Statistical data for converts to Islam in the City of Padang

No	Districts	Total
1	Bungus	6 people
2	Padang Utara	7 people
3	Lubuk Kilangan	13 people
4	Padang Barat	10 people
5	Kuranji	33 people
6	Padang Selatan	30 people
7	Padang Timur	51 people
8	Lubuk Begalung	46 people
9	Nanggalo	9 people
10	Pauh	3 people
11	Koto Tangah	27 people
Total		235 people

Judging from the aspect of origin, converts to Islam in Padang consist of three religions. Namely Catholic, Protestant

Christians, Buddhists and Hindus (others). This is as illustrated in the following figure:

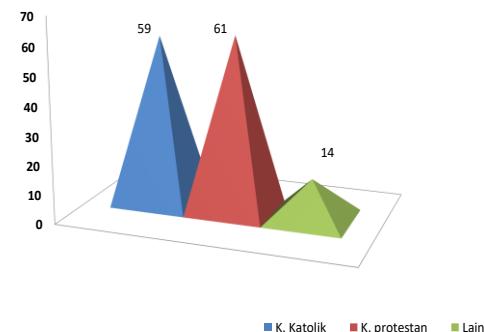


Figure 1. Number of converts by the previous religion

The picture above shows that the number of converts from Catholicism to Christianity is 59 people. While, from Protestant Christians 61 people. The remaining were 14 people from Buddhism and Hinduism. For other groups, this cannot be explained because on the certificate of conversion the religion column of origin is not filled in.

The MUI of Padang considers that the accuracy of the data of people who have converted to Islam has not been officially recorded. The same thing was found at the Regional Office of the Ministry of Religion of West Sumatra, the data for converts to Islam were not recorded accurately. Then, there is no intensive coaching for converts. Coaching is only personal; towards those in need. The process is if they come to the institution and ask to be fostered. Other guidance is carried out by the family concerned after becoming a convert. In addition to personal coaching, another way is to provide manuals after they have been creed. These books include books on prayer, fasting and about purification. Meanwhile, at the Taqwa Muhammadiyah Mosque in Padang, the education of converts to Islam is usually under the guidance of the person who accompanies them when they are creed.

It can be judged that religious education for converts not only helps them in understanding Islam, but also helps in socializing and strengthens mentally in dealing with the current environment. As a convert to Islam who needs strengthening in order to

adjust to a new environment and face his own family (Napri, 2021; Rahmawati & Desiningrum, 2020). Furthermore, religious training is needed. Family guidance is not enough, because there are limitations both in terms of understanding and opportunities. Thus, religious institutions and education or coaches are very urgent for converts.

The description above provides an understanding that converts need guidance and directions. It is not only to deepen understanding or increase confidence, but also concerns their existence as converts. Psychologically strengthening in dealing with the environment and future life.

METHOD

This research is field research. It aims to explain the religious experience of individuals who converts to Islam, it is obtained by using qualitative research methods. In qualitative research, the researcher is the "key instrument" or the main research tool to record the information needed in research. Researcher as the main instrument in collecting data in using data collection tools to fulfill the research needs (Pathak et al., 2013; Silverman, 2020). The data form of observation sheets, interview guidelines, and documentation. Treharne & Riggs (2014) noted that in the naturalistic approach, the researcher acts as a human instrument and directly adapts to a natural situation with a neutral setting based on the environmental conditions entered.

The reason for this selection is based on the argument of Moriarty (2011) who says that qualitative methods are able to capture contextual, real-life experiences from the daily lives of the interviewed individuals. With the research pattern as stated above, it is hoped that the researcher will see the object to be studied in depth and not just make a state map and general description of an object (Gerring, 2017). The rationale for using this qualitative method is: First is that the data to be explored in this research is in the form of the respondent's words and actions. Second, this study intends to observe the behavior of people in their environment, then try to understand

their language and interpretation of their environment.

Another reason is that qualitative research is seen as easier in solving problems, especially when faced with multiple realities. Then the qualitative method presents directly the nature of the relationship between researchers and respondents. Finally, qualitative methods are more sensitive and more easily adapt to many sharpening mutual influences and to the patterns of values encountered

Furthermore, this study also uses a descriptive analysis approach. The descriptive approach is carried out by collecting data, compiling it systematically, factually, and carefully and trying to make interpretations as necessary. While the analytical approach is carried out by describing the data objectively, the data that has been systematically compiled are criticized according to the existing problems.

In relation to the educational model of converts to Islam, this study seeks to find an educational model. The final product of this research is an educational model for converts people to Islam. The discovery of the model refers to Sugiyono, 2015) opinion on development research. The research method produces a particular product, complete with specifications. One of the steps in development research is to produce a model of the problems encountered. Development research can be carried out by developing appropriate techniques according to needs.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

In the early stages of the research, a documentation study was conducted, followed by interviews and observations. The findings in the field are then analyzed to reveal the need for converts about religious education. These needs are then discussed through the FGD (focus group discussion) process. The results of the FGD were then re-analyzed to further formulate an educational model for converts to Islam. The final stage is to test the rational validity of the educational model for converts to Islam. After the rational validity was revised

to make a conceptual model of religious education for converts.

Condition of Converts in Padang

The process in seeing converts to Islam in the city of Padang is quite a complicated process. The initial step taken is to visit one of the mosques that are often used as converts to say the creed. the Mosque is the Taqwa Muhammadiyah mosque which is located at Jl. Bundo Kandung No. 1. The other one is Nurul Iman Mosque which is located at Jl. Imam Bonjol Padang. The data obtained in the mosque has been documented with a computer system and is equipped with written data in the form of a master book. The management does not mind to provide print outs and lend to photocopies of the data.

The research findings show that in Padang there are quite a lot of cases of converts to Islam. Data at the Nurul Iman Mosque in Padang recorded that from 2004 to 2012 there were 18 cases. Then at the Taqwa Muhammadiyah Mosque in Padang from 1990 to 2012 there were 123 cases. Thus, from the two institutions, there were 141 cases of religious conversion. This number includes children whose identity is stated to be with their parents and whose identity is not stated as adults. The number of adult have converted are 135 people. As for the gender aspect, there are 91 men and 44 women. Judging from the aspect of origin, converts to Islam in Padang consist of three religions. Namely Catholics, Protestants, Buddhists and Hindus (others). The number of converts who came from Catholic were about 59 people. While, from Protestant were 61 people. The remaining are 14 people from Buddhism and Hinduism. For other groups, this cannot be explained because on the certificate of converting to religion the column of origin is not filled in. From 2012 to 2014 there were additional converts to Islam. However, when it was confirmed that the number of converts to Islam was increasing, the complete data obtained was only one person. According to the administrators of the Taqwa Muhammadiyah mosque, many converts did not return complete personal data

so that the details were not recorded on the mosque data base.

So far the research conducted about converts does not only come from the city of Padang. But also, from outside the region too such as Solok, Mentawai, Dharmasraya. In addition, there are also from outside the province such as Pekanbaru, Jambi, Medan and Jakarta. There are even three recorded converts from abroad, Australia.

Muallaf's Need for Education

From the research conducted, it is known that there are several needs of converts toward education, they are:

Muallaf Educator Profile

In this section, the converts do not explicitly reveal the type of educator they want. The converts emphasized that they hoped for educators who could teach them the Koran. Teach how to read the Koran one by one and slowly. They also hope that the person who teaches him should be patient, diligent and able to teach him tenaciously. The teacher can teach them continuously until he is really able to read the Qur'an.

Educational Materials Needed by Muallaf

The learning materials referred to the things that converts want to know about their existence as new converts to Islam. No limits were set by the research team. Researchers only express the hopes and needs of converts to the practice of Islamic teachings. The nature of the material needed is practical material, what are knowledge that they can apply according to their condition as converts. However, they also hope to get religious knowledge as a basis for them to carry out religious orders.

Converts Dream Education Institute

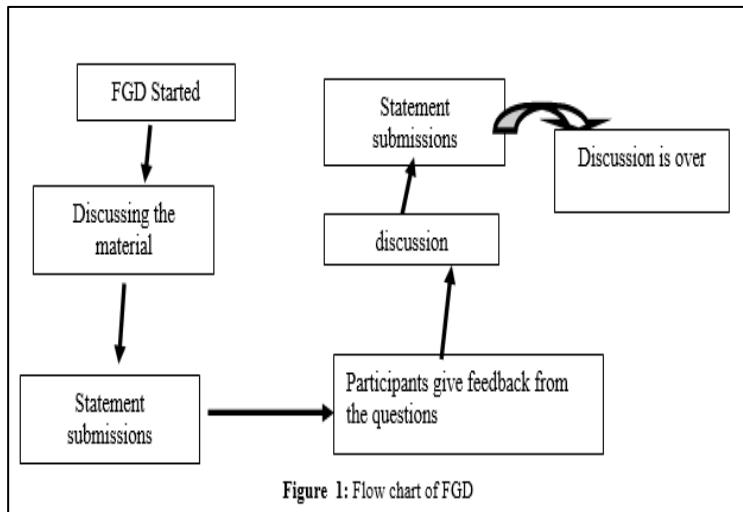
The findings obtained by the research team at the Taqwa Muhammadiyah mosque, Nurul Iman Mosque, Ministry of Religion of West Sumatra, there is no special program for coaching converts to Islam. In this context, it can be said that a representative institutional

model according to the needs of converts does not yet exist.

Analysis of Muslim Needs

After studying the needs of converts to education, the next step is to formulate an

educational model that suits the needs of converts themselves. In this case, FGD was conducted as a method to further reveal the needs of converts to Islam. The FGD was held at the Taqwa Muhammadiyah mosque. The flow of the FGD implementation is illustrated in the following figure:



This FGD aims to obtain more detailed information about the needs and to formulate an educational model that is suitable for converts to Islam. In accordance with the participatory principle, the involvement of converts is more. Related to this, the researchers adjusted to the daily routine of converts. The goal is not to interfere with the daily activities of converts. *Muallaf* as informants discussed intensively in expressing their need for education. FGDs assist researchers in finding educational models that are suitable for converts to Islam.

In the context of this research, FGDs mean a discussion about the needs of converts to Islam. The discussion was attended by related parties such as mosque administrators who became a forum for converts to make their shahada. FGDs were conducted to formulate solutions to meet the needs of converts to Islam. The stages began with: Inviting the relevant parties, then setting the discussion in the FGD, then arrange the place and time for the discussion.

Then the Focus group discussion was held at the Taqwa Muhammadiyah Mosque, from the FGD that was carried out the following points could be stated: 1) The data

contained in the mosque was only a database of the mosque and there was no follow-up to the agency that manages the population; 2) There is no representative forum for converts to receive religious education or learning; 3) Mosques as social organizations do not yet have a special program to provide guidance to converts; 4) The mosque also does not have funds that can be allocated for fostering converts to Islam; 5) Guidance for converts to Islam is only done incidentally when needed

Based on the results of the discussion, there are several solutions that can be done in order to provide services to converts: first, there is a need for the involvement of related parties, in this case the institution that manages population issues so that it is clearly recorded. Second, it requires initiative from converts and accompanied by related parties to form a formal or non-formal forum for the converts' community. Third, there is a need for a program from the mosque, and budget planning for the development of converts to Islam, both scientifically and economically. Fourth, it is necessary to increase the existing coaching activities, not only incidentally but also visiting or inviting the converts.

Then a second FGD was conducted. The second FGD resulted in the following results: 1) *Muallaf* only received information about Islam through the people around them, especially at home, including through the media; 2) *Muallaf* feels that his understanding of Islam is still minimal; 3) All converts have not been able to read the Qur'an (Arabic writing) properly; 4) *Muallaf* hopes to gain practical knowledge about the religion of Islam; 5) Female converts hope to receive assistance from women for guidance; 6) *Muallaf* hopes to receive continuous assistance; 7) *Muallaf* feel they need assistance from people who are considered capable in guiding them; 8) There are still doubts about converts to open their identity as converts; 9) There are still family doubts about converts themselves, however, families of converts hope that converts will receive religious learning services; 10) All converts stated that they had never received special training or religious education services.

If you pay attention to the results of interviews and FGDs conducted in the second cycle, it can be emphasized that converts to Islam need to be socially strengthened. This strengthening is necessary in order to help converts to socialize with their new world, namely as Muslims. The importance of this is considering that there are still people who look suspiciously at converts, including the converts' own family. On the other hand, it is necessary to get assistance in order to strengthen the understanding of Islam. Following are the needs of converts to education:

The Need for Material

Scientifically, converts need to get assistance, because overall the converts encountered have not been able to read the Qur'an in this case in Arabic writing properly and correctly. This has implications for the prayer readings they use. Because they read Latin script, they feel that the reading is not perfect. Likewise with prayer movements, the information they get is only prayer movements without knowing the position is correct or not. On the other hand, they also need to receive intensive training, especially regarding

women's matters. The problems that arise, especially the problems of menstruation, postpartum and husband and wife relations, include in this case the problem of children, parental obligations and relationships with the opposite sex.

The Need for Method

For converts, the most suitable way of learning for them is private learning. By discussing and asking questions between the facilitator and the community. In this case, non-formal strategies become a necessity, considering their position in terms of age, including adults.

The Need for Educators

In this case, according to the expression of converts, what they need are educators who are patient, diligent and tenacious. They need educators who can understand their condition as converts. As for the existence of female converts, the need for converts to female companions is very important.

The Need for Institutions

Regarding the issue of converts to Islam, they need assistance in creating a special forum for them as a convert's community. So that as fellow converts they can more freely discuss their needs as converts. In this case, the institution can be a family of converts to Islam, converts' homes, groups in social networks such as Facebook or Twitter and the like. This model of converting to Islam was developed in a participatory manner. This means that the model was born according to the needs of converts. In this case, the researcher tries to design the needs of converts by means of, translating and describing the expressions of converts into a framework to become an educational model.

In the paradigm of adult education or andragogy, there are six principles of education, they are the need for students to know, students' self-concept, previous experience, readiness to learn, learning orientation, and motivation to learn. Andragogy learning model is a process-based

learning. Educators in preparing learning involve students. This process includes creating conducive conditions, designing collaborative learning, diagnosing needs, formulating learning objectives, conducting learning experiences, evaluating learning.

Referring to adult learning, education for converts falls into this category. This is

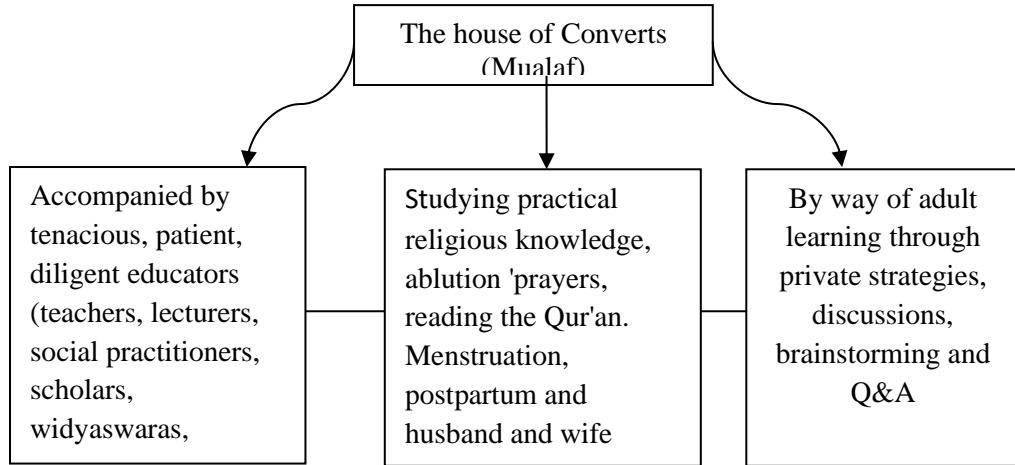


Figure 2: Community Based Education

Furthermore, being inspired by the out-of-school education model proposed by Sudjana, it can be emphasized that the elements of education for converts include:

process components and objectives. Furthermore, education for converts is made in a model which is described as follows:

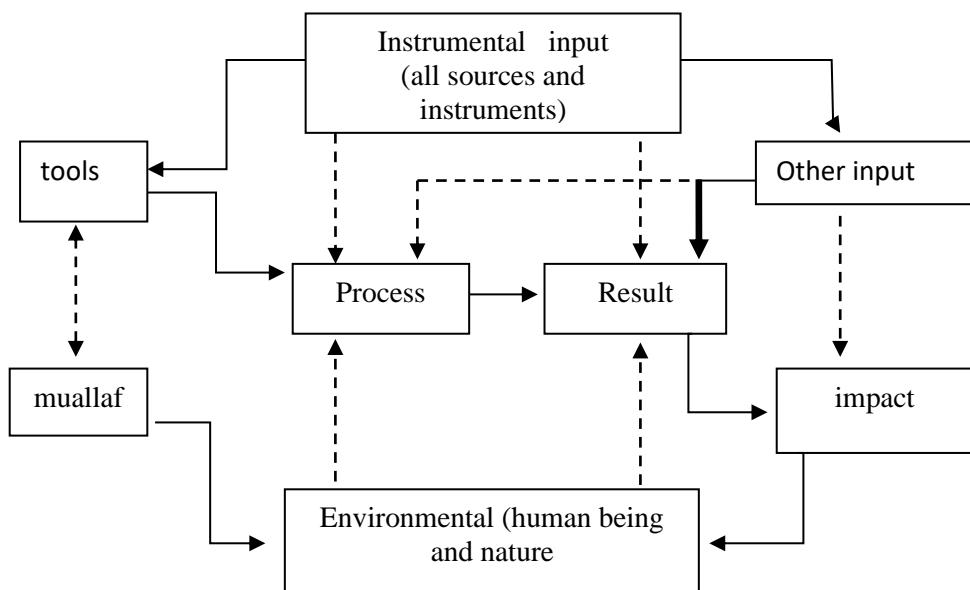


Figure 3: Interaction between components in the model of converts to Islam

Instrumental input or input means learning resources and facilities that make it

possible for converts to learn. This includes the goals or what the converts want to learn, who

is educating them, and where is the source of the costs for the process. The second element concerns who and how to convert. *Muallaf* has a unique character, not only because of the issue of religious background including social, educational and economic character. Furthermore, the issue is cognitive character, initial knowledge of Islam and learning methods.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Based on the result of findings, it can be concluded that the converts education model is developed by using a participatory method. After reviewing the findings in the field and discussing them, the formulation of the educational model for converts to Islam in the context of this research is a community-based education model and needs. The educational model for converts is not in a procedural sense, but is directed at learning techniques.

The appropriate model for converts is a private and independent learning method. In more detail, the process can be done by means of discussion, brainstorming, question and answer then practice. The learning process does not prioritize material achievements, but mastery according to needs. Therefore, in learning, it is possible to repeat one material several times. In order to support this learning method or strategy, it is necessary to have tools such as books and other media as a guide for converts.

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