
'Jamaah' As a Communication Symbol of Da'wah of Wahdah Islamiyah Group

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Abstract

Wahdah Islamiyyah is a religious group that has its own characteristics. Its main strength lies in the concept of 'Jamaah' as well as its group doctrine. As a dakwah concept, the term 'Jamaah' has a meaning manifested in the behavior of each of his followers. Therefore, this study aims to reveal the meaning of 'Jamaah' as religious propaganda. The unit of analysis of this study was the followers of the Wahdah Islamiyyah group. Thus, this research approach is a case study. Data were collected by in-depth interview techniques, observation, and literature review. Furthermore, the data were analyzed using the Three-Groove Technique model in the form of reduction, categorization, and interpretation as a result. The results of this study are: (1) Wahdah Islamiyyah (WI) has the power as a 'Jamaah' (community) which is also a symbol of communication. Through the 'pilgrims' they display their identity as a form of dakwah. (2) 'Jamaah' is also a social relationship which has the function of strengthening individual relations by means of emotional ties and social solidarity. The conclusion of this research is Wahdah Islamiyyah has the identity (characteristic) of 'Jamaah' with all its elements which is an attraction to others as a symbol of communication.

Keywords: *Communication Symbol; Dakwah; Jamaah; Religious Group; Wahdah Islamiyah.*

INTRODUCTION

In the Muslim community, da'wah is one of the obligations that must be carried out in various forms according to the ability of the individual concerned. Through preaching activities, the lives of Muslim communities have developed and spread through religious symbols.

Da'wah as an activity, can take place in a variety of forms. This is intended so that it becomes a magnet or attraction for the public so that it contributes to the development of the Islamic religion and strengthens the belief in God (Basit, 2013).

In the level of practice and theoretical, Islam is a religion of da'wah. Even more than that, Islam also stipulates for its adherents an obligation to preach the truth of Islam to the public, including himself. Then this conditions the social situation that *Rahmatan Lil-'Alamin* enjoyed in this life.

To realize the above social situation, preaching must have an impact on change for the better. As a social process, da'wah must include all its elements in influencing others. These elements are da'wah bi-al-hal (non verbal) dan da'wah bi al-lisan (verbal) (Amir, 2008).

In the perspective of the purpose of da'wah, it must be holistic or total. Aside from preaching on fiqh, the most important theme is the essence of Islamic teachings. Islam goes beyond all aspects and provides ideas and solutions for all life's problems. All of that must use many methods that are memorable to the public.

In Indonesia, the type of non-verbal preaching (bil al-hal) is not as much as the verbal preaching (bil lisaan) especially for preaching institutions. The type of non-verbal preaching that takes place is still in the form of symbols as markers in social processes. This symbol is absorbed by the public as a message and influence its actions on the symbol. As something inherent, symbols are an important part of preaching as well as communication. For example, the symbol in the pilgrimage is Ihram clothing with white without stitches. The white color means purity or freedom from everyday mistakes.

Likewise with symbols that exist in various Islamic religious groups, such as Wahdah Islamiyah. The identity that characterizes his group is a symbol that is attached to him like the concept of '*jama'ah*'. That symbol is what was responded by non Wahdah Islamiyah as its founder, which revealed various things about the concept as a form of da'wah.

The word '*al-Jama'ah*' comes from the word *jama'a*. The descendants of the word are '*yajma'u*' (agreeing), and '*jama'atan*' (agreeing). In the context of this paper, *al-jama'ah* shows the condition of 'not disputing because the congregation is holding fast to the way of Allah SWT. This is as the statement of Ali ibn Abi Talib, which is: "Decide by all of you as you specify, in fact I hate disputes until humans become congregations" (Munawir, 2013).

The Arabic word *jama'a* literally denotes a group, collective, congregation and other synonym words. But the general definition of linguistics is community. In terms of jurisprudence, this refers to congregants who pray (Wehr, 1994).

Jamaah is a group of people with certain thoughts, feelings, beliefs and doctrines that consciously gather. While the community is a mass that gather to achieve or realize certain goals, both with similar thoughts, feelings, beliefs, and doctrines or not. A congregation is a group of people with certain thoughts, feelings, beliefs and doctrines that consciously gather. While the community is a mass that gather to achieve or realize certain goals, both with the same thoughts, feelings, beliefs, and doctrines or not. People who gather to form a community, although it seems united for a particular purpose, but the goals and

thoughts of each member can different. When these goals cannot be achieved, the community can disband at any time (Anonymous, 2020).

Whereas for pilgrims, because there are no differences in goals and expectations, except for differences in *ijtihad*, the possibility to disperse can be said to be impossible. They gather in something that is believed together, so that their gathering is not only a duty, it is also a worship that contains great values (Gulen, 2020).

The concept of religious symbols refers to all things that function as markers so that people know the existence of a religious group. This existence concerns group / religious norms, values and beliefs. Turner states "*Religious symbols may embody or condense moods, feelings and values, but symbols may also refer to specific places, persons or events in history*" (Turner, 1983).

Reiterating Turner's statement above, Ridwan revealed that many Islamic symbols come from religious textuality such as religious doctrine. This contrasts with the interpreters of Islamic semiotics and hermeneutics. However, the two symbol models continue to take place in their respective ways until now (Ridwan, 2004).

More about religious symbols in Islam, Piliang argued that there are two forms of popular symbols, namely (1) Islamic ideological-transcendent symbols, and (2) social-interpretative symbols. The first symbol is obligatory for Muslims, while the second symbol is still being debated. This diversity is the cause of the emergence of various styles in Islam (Piliang, 2010).

RESEARCH METHODS

1. Research Design

This research uses a case study approach. The characteristics of the case study necessitates the specificity of certain objects in the form of community or certain problems and events (Yin, 2004). The aim of this specialization is to uncover the depth of the object that is the focus of the study. Based on this description, this research focuses on the religious group '*Wahdah Islamiyah*', hereinafter referred to as *Wahdah Islamiyah*. The focus of the study revealed was the movement of *Wahdah Islamiyah* group.

2. Participant

Participants are all people involved in providing data or information both directly (primary data) or indirectly (secondary data) in this study. Furthermore, the study participants were *jamaah* of the *Wahdah Islamiyah* group. However, not all *jamaah* of

Wahdah Islamiyah are made informants but those who have been members for at least 5 years and actively participate in various social and religious activities of *Wahdah Islamiyah*.

3. Research Location

The location of this research is *Wahdah Islamiyah jamaah* in Makassar City with two areas of religious activities, namely in Abdullah Dg. Sirua street and Antang Raya street. These two regions are the centers of *Wahdah Islamiyah* activities in South Sulawesi.

4. Instrument

In addition to the researchers themselves, this study uses interview and observation guidelines. The interview guide contains questions about *Wahdah Islamiyah* pilgrims' perceptions of *Wahdah Islamiyah* itself, while the observation guide contains signs of events or activities that must be observed in *Wahdah Islamiyah* groups.

5. Data Analysis

Data analysis is done by categorizing. This means that the data obtained are grouped (categorized) based on the theme. After grouping, data that has no closeness is reduced or eliminated. The point is to focus the data according to the purpose. Next, connect the smaller themes that have been broken down into one big theme. The final step is to interpret and draw conclusions (Creswell, 2013).

6. Trustworthiness Data

This section requires that the data collected is valid and can be justified. As with the characteristics of qualitative research that the data obtained has the same tendency from different informants both in different time and location, then the data is confirmed valid and credible (Suyanto, 2015).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. 'Jamaah' as Symbol of Da'wah

In an organizational perspective, *Wahdah Islamiyah* is categorized as '*Jamiyyah*' in a working mechanism. In fact, the *Wahdah Islamiyah* 's ongoing process is in line with their structure and their household of organization guideline. The *Wahdah Islamiyah* expression as *jamiyyah* is evident in the vision of its group members accompanied by professionalism

and commitment to its path. This is the meaning of the word '*jamiyyah*' which is more or less exactly the organization and mechanism of work.

The meaning of '*jamiyyah*' or organizations attached to *Wahdah Islamiyah* in the sense of general organization has a significant difference. Indicators of the difference mainly concern consolidation, establishment and needs. *Wahdah Islamiyah* has the solidity of work that prioritizes the value of sincerity for the benefit of Muslims. In general organizations, this is almost invisible.

The concept of 'pilgrims' as a symbol in the *Wahdah Islamiyah* perspective, among others, was raised by a congregation who was also a board member of *Wahdah Islamiyah*. He said:

... being a social creature is one of the special characteristics of humans. In terms of living in a social environment, there is a need for reciprocity in it. In fact, humans tend to lead to the life of '*jamaah*' or groups as a form of fitrah (*Thobi'atul Kaun 'Gharizah*)...."[P1]

Another informant but not a *Wahdah Islamiyah* member, but the board member of ulema council in South Sulawesi, said:

"...it is very important to build a doctrine in *jamaah* who are obedient to the ulama and leaders. The '*sami'na wa atha'na*' concept is right in the congregation of *Wahdah Islamiyah* because it is in line with its vision and mission to build obedience and obedience in Islam....."[P2]

The existence of leadership is central in *Wahdah Islamiyah* organizations. Through the strength of mechanical solidarity based on religious values, leaders can play a vital role in lifting the image of the organization in the public domain. In this aspect, it becomes important the position of chairperson through the conference forum. An elected leader must be the best and most trusted figure because he emerged from an agreement (*ijma'*) of *muktamirin*.

Related to the ideality of *Wahdah Islamiyah* as a congregation that refers to the hadith "*maa ana' alayhi wa ashhabih*" (which is in accordance with my life and my friends) told by a member that:

"....the life of the Messenger of Allah and his companions is the same as this life. This life has needs that must be fulfilled physically and mentally. We are bound to Allah who is monotheistic and also deals with humans who are social....."[P3]

The life of the Messenger of Allah and his companions with all the fulfillment of spiritual and social life is an ideal example that would be used as a model for the *Wahdah Islamiyah* model. *Wahdah Islamiyah* wants to implement the full hadith (*maa ana' alayhi wa ashhabih*) completely. In fact, *jamaah* must be bound by norms and leadership. This

concept turned out to be in line with the opinion of Imam Asy Syatibi, who considered Islamic *jamaah* to be led by an *amir*.

On a larger concept, connecting the Asy-Syatibi expression, for *Wahdah Islamiyah* the community or *jamaah* must have the power with which to implement Islamic law in a complete manner. A confession of a *Wahdah Islamiyah* member:

“...*Wahdah Islamiyah* is not '*Al Daulah al Islamiyyah*' or '*Al Khilafah al islamiyyah*', but only groups that try to apply Islamic kaffah so we are more suitable to use the word pilgrims. There's no way *Wahdah Islamiyah* will turn into '*Al Daulah*' especially in this Homeland.....”[P4]

In *Wahdah Islamiyah* 's belief, the Islamic Shari'a (at least within its congregation) includes the conditions for obtaining blessings so that the state can be included in the '*baladun thayyibatun wa rabbun ghafur*'. However, *Wahdah Islamiyah* does not reject the many factors that must be considered to uphold the Islamic State.

Wahdah Islamiyah as a congregation is also a system whose components have three core parts, namely (1) the *ummah*, (2) *Imamat / Imarah*, and (3) *Shura'*/ congress or conference.

First, *ummah*. This component indicates that the *Wahdah Islamiyah* pilgrims are also one people. Regarding 'unity', pilgrims of *Wahdah Islamiyah* hold firm commitments, namely: (1) '*Wahdatul Aqidah*'. (2) '*Wahdatul Ibadah*'. (3) '*Wahdatul Suluk*'. (4) '*Wahdatul fit Thariq*'. (5) '*Wahdatun fi Qiyadah*'.

Second, *Imamat / Imarah*. *Wahdah Islamiyah* *jamaah* has the same ideals so it is urgent to appoint a multifunctional leader for the *Ummah*. Following this *Wahdah Islamiyah* model appoints central, regional and branch leaders. According to the level, the leader must guide and lead the congregation in all aspects. For pilgrims must obey the priest or *imarah*.

Third, *Shura'*/ conference. This is the highest institution of *Wahdah Islamiyah*. This institution has the authority to accommodate the aspirations of the people. Leaders and *jamaah* must accept the results of conference. Through conference can lead to egalitarian nature in the interests of pilgrims, not personal interests on behalf of pilgrims.

Wahdah Islamiyah institutions run various types of conference or congress, starting from the congress as the highest, regional conference, and branch conference. In addition, there are other deliberations according to their interests and needs.

Wahdah Islamiyah 's mission is to uphold Islamic law in Islamic life. The struggle is considered part of Islamic law which must be carried out. However, due to limitations on several things, *Wahdah Islamiyah* functions as a self '*taqumu maqama ddaulah*' as a vehicle for maintaining, defending, and Islamic law.

Understanding the descriptions above, sociologically known terms group feelings (*We-feeling grup* / *in-feeling group*). This feeling arises through the interpretation of the identity of members of a solid or militant congregation. Militants are not in the context of radical terrorists as Abdul Jamil's research findings (Jamil, 2012) about the Islamic movement in Bandung. This was as stated by one of the informants that "He was fortified by a belief that leaving the congregation only occurred if he died". [P4]

Of course, the expression is more of a wish than a reality. This is because in the history of *Wahdah Islamiyah*, there is no provision that states that if a *Wahdah Islamiyah* member leaves his membership and dies, then he is sentenced as a person who died jahiliyyah.

2. 'Jamaah' as Social Power

In the perspective of *Wahdah Islamiyah*, *Al-Jamaah* has the glory in Islamic sharia. It serves as a bond to the integrity of the people so as not to break up *'ul urwatul wutsqo'*. This concept is based on Umar Ibn Khattab's opinion that Islam is a congregation in which leadership and then contains obedience. This is also in line with the hadith of the prophet Muhammad that the ties of *al-jamaah* will be released one by one, and the first to be released is the government then the last is the prayer. (Narrated by Imam Ahmad dari Abu Umamah Al Bahili)

In *Wahdah Islamiyah*, through organizing, all elements in it in the form of people, tools, tasks, authority, responsibilities, and work procedures are arranged so that they can be directed to planned pilgrimage activities. Therefore, organizationally *Wahdah Islamiyah* contains two views, namely structure, and process dynamics.

Viewed from a structural perspective, this is related to the process of implementing management. Thus it is only a static tool. Organizing only produces basic patterns and main structures that are harvesters, so new developments, task complexity, changes, goals or objectives, change of leaders, differences in priorities and environmental changes, will only affect the details of the jamiyyah structure. Thus, making the basic pattern of *jamiyyah* is based on theory and reality so it does not change often.

Every change (especially fundamental) brings consequences. For example, the implementation of activities becomes disrupted, the vulnerability associated with funds, members' duties and new fields, and so on. This situation is normal in the organization because each component will try to be balanced and function normally again in achieving goals.

In Context as process dynamics, *Wahdah Islamiyah* is related to the relationships and interactions of the people in it. This interaction takes place formally and informally. Formal relationships as well as structural relationships can be well maintained. However, informal relationships are not regulated in legal regulations, are not seen in the *jamiyyah* structure, nor are they reflected in the organization. This informal relationship tends to be more effective than formal relations in solving problems. The key lies in being able to maintain a balance between formal and informal approaches.

In organizations, formal prominence has a major impact on *jam'iyyah*. He will be less good if applied excessively to the rank, class, status, discipline and so on. Conversely, prominent informal relations also have negative impacts such as vertical blurring of hierarchical lines, difficulty enforcing work discipline, decreasing subordinate respect for superiors, and so on.

In this context, it is very necessary to be aware of consensus or agreement on tradition in *jamiyah*. That tradition is the common reference in building balanced social relations, both formal and informal.

DISCUSSION

In the context of the *Wahdah Islamiyah* community, the similarities in the identity of the *Jamaah* to understanding, norms, and beliefs lead to collective awareness that appears in behavior and becomes a daily lifestyle. This has become a special magnet or interesting power that causes the dynamics of rapid population growth in this community. This situation also conducted in *Jamaah Tabligh* as religion group (Halim, 2011).

The identity of pilgrims through appearance with special packaging through how to dress with a veil and abaya in dark colors (black) for women, and men using pants that hang and maintain beards, with always sincere in all their activities, has given the impression that they carry out Sunnah Rasulullah SAW. This appearance shows the occurrence of cultural phenomena as well as symbols that bind the *Jamaah* of *Wahdah Islamiyah* (Roach & Eicher, 1979). The function of clothing here is the media in expressing the identity of a culture for the group.

Equally important in this community is the formation of congregational solidarity based on the values of Islamic teachings. This congregational solidarity is a state of relationship between individuals and / or groups based on moral feelings and beliefs shared and strengthened by shared emotional experiences. These characteristics make it a social movement group that aspires to Islamization of people's lives which are obedient to Islamic principles of life (Jurdi, 2013).

Such is the case with collective consciousness which gives birth to militant attitudes. Sincerity which is manifested from the similarities in their form of carrying out the duties and various da'wah activities. The cadres and sympathizers are preachers who carry out the task of preaching not based on the general payroll system but with the "*kafalah* system". This is formed on the basis of beliefs that serve as the foundation for behavior. Increased propaganda activities that are not bound by space and time with various formations such as educational, social, and health activities, have become media publications for *Wahdah Islamiyah* to open themselves from the environment, so that its presence in the community can be well received. This is also

Religious interactions in *Wahdah Islamiyah* by promoting cooperation and accommodating, can strengthen the existence of these worshipers, so that it functions in reducing competition and disputes in it. This situation shows that religion functions to maintain and foster the solidarity of members of the congregation. Therefore *Wahdah Islamiyah* can be a spiritual solution like the tabligh congregation group (Halim et al., 2016).

In the *jamaah* of *Wahdah Islamiyah*, there is a common spirit and ideals among them in striving to purify Islamic teachings according to the teachings of the Prophet, be a source of strength for the building of congregational solidarity among those based on the values of piety, *ukhuwah*, pious deeds, sincere *tawadhu*, and *qana'ah*. Individual awareness of the values of Islamic teachings that are socialized and internalized within the *Wahdah Islamiyah* community environment are reflected and manifested in their daily social behavior in the form of: (1) kinship (2) consistency (3) exemplariness, and (4) honesty. The development of various charitable businesses undertaken by *Wahdah Islamiyah*, among others in the fields of economy, social, health, education, proselytizing as well as the empowerment of the *ummah*, is a powerful driver of the growth of worshipers among them. It is these conditions which attract the general public to become part of the *jamaah* of *Wahdah Islamiyah* and contribute to the fight for their teachings.

CONCLUSIONS

The term '*jamaah*' is only known in Islam and the Qur'an always uses the term when referring to groups that have emotional ties. Emotional ties are based on faith and devotion.

In a popular context, the word '*Jama'ah*' can be paired with the word 'community' even though the substance is not the same. Community is more often associated with identities that are physical, regional or primordialitas, hobbies, professions, and so on. In Islam, the word *jamaah* transcends the existing identity in the community.

Wahdah Islamiyah is formally categorized as an organizational structure, but is substantially classified as a congregation. In it inherent religious physical identity as well as

spiritual identity in the form of faith and piety. That is the reason this congregation also presents itself as a symbol of communication. Physical appearance characterized by religiosity, is a symbol that brings messages to the public about their characteristics.

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