ACTORS' COMMUNICATION STRATEGY IN ENFORCING ISLAMIC SHARI'A IN NORTH ACEH, INDONESIA

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Abstract

There are ups and downs, obstacles, challenges, and problems during the implementation and enforcement of Islamic sharia in North Aceh. The legal basis for enforcing Islamic sharia in Aceh is based on Qanun Number 5 of 2000 concerning the Implementation of Islamic Sharia as the foundation for the implementation of Islamic law. The supervision and control of the Qanun implementation belong to the Wilayatul Hisbah (Shari'a Police) as the authorized and legal agency. This study aims to analyze the actors' communication strategy in enforcing Islamic shari'a in North Aceh, Indonesia. This study used a qualitative descriptive analysis. Observation, interviews, documentation were used to collect data. This study revealed that there was a fluctuation in the number of violations during the implementation of Islamic law in North Aceh. As its communication strategy, Wilayatul Hisbah of North Aceh conducted the following programs: (1) Enhancing understanding towards Islamic values; (2) Enhancing understanding and practice of the Koran; (3) Enhancing the quality of religious life and tolerance; (4) Fostering da'wah and Islamic sharia; (5) Deepening, developing and fostering sharia; and (6) Strengthening, developing, empowering and enhancing Islamic Sharia Court Cooperation. These six programs required immense and intense communication strategy. However, not all these programs have been implemented optimally due to factors such as a lack of budget, human resources, and the reluctance of actors. Such phenomenon occurred because of weak communication among actors resulting in the occurrence of many obstacles during the programs implementation.

Keywords : *Strategy, Communication, Enforcement of Islamic Syari'ah*

1. INTRODUCTION

Aceh was given special autonomy, thus, Indonesian government formed and appointed the Islamic Sharia Service, the Civil Service Police Unit and Wilayatul Hisbah, Sharia Court as the actors for enforcing Islamic shari'a in Aceh. The enforcement of Islamic law in North Aceh District experiences ups and downs, obstacles, challenges, and problems during its implementation in the community. Besides, institutional dynamics within internal context also emerges misperception about the realization of Islamic Sharia, in which people think that the responsibility for enforcing Islamic Sharia in Aceh is solely carried out by Islamic Sharia Service (DSI). Instead, other Aceh governmental bodies such as Regional Planning Agency, Maritime Affairs, Mining, Tourism Affairs, Public Works, and others assume that they do not have to take Islamic Sharia into account when planning and realizing their agendas, programs, and budgeting (Helmi & Nurmandi, 2016).

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The issue of actors' communication strategy in enforcing Islamic shari'a in North Aceh has become a classic problem. According to Edwards III (1984), "Communication is the key success to policy implementation, which requires the implementers to know what to do. Hence, the goals and objectives of the policy should be informed to the target group in order to reduce distortion". Likewise, Warwic in (Subarsono, 2011)(Sururi, 2017) states that information also plays an important role because the lack of information can affect the policy itself.

The legal basis for the duties, functions, and the implementation of Islamic Shari'a enforcement has been set out in the Qanun of Aceh Number 5 of 2000 concerning the Implementation of Islamic Shari'a for its special autonomy, namely the enforcement of Islamic Shari'a. In terms of supervision and control, Qanun Number 5 of 2002 article 20 rules Wilayatul Hisbah (Shari'a Police) as the authorized actor. It is an institution which is responsible for overseeing, fostering, and advocating the implementation shari'a and regulations (Anggraini & Safira, 2019).

The supervisory duties require concrete steps to minimize the number of violations of the Islamic Shari'a. Based on data throughout 2021, violations of the qanun entailed khalwat, ikhtilat, sexual harassment, liwath, and qadaf, while the settlement of violation cases were caning and customary settlements. Based on these problems, this article aims to analyze the actors' communication strategy in enforcing Islamic Shari'a in North Aceh.

2. IMPLEMENTATION METHOD

This study used a qualitative descriptive analysis approach. It is a model of humanistic research, placing humans as the main subject in social/cultural events. This type of research is based on a phenomenological philosophy which perceives that social, cultural, and human behavior phenomena are inadequate to describe the reality, thus, there is a need to look at those phenomena as a whole because behavior (as a fact) cannot be simply separated from every context that influences it (Creswell, 1994). (Creswell, 2012) believes that Qualitative research is descriptive in nature, which tries to describe the relationship of the symptoms encountered during observations. This study is intended to obtain an overview related to actors' communication strategies in enforcing Islamic Shari'a in North Aceh.

Data collection techniques are the most strategic steps in research because the main purpose of research is to get data. Without knowing data collection techniques, researchers will not get data that fulfills the data standards (Moleong, 2019; Sugiyono, 2019). The data collection techniques used by researchers were as follows:

a. Observation is a method of collecting data by directly observing facts about the real occurrence at research locations.
b. An interview is a meeting of two people to exchange information and ideas through questions and answers so that meaning can be constructed around a particular topic. In this study, interviews were conducted by having question and answer with parties related to the object of research.
c. Documentation is a method of collecting data from written documents related to this research such as regional regulations (*qanun*), journals, reports, strategic plans, publications, journalism and official reports, personal diaries, letters, and photographs.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

Stakeholders holds important positions for the organization, according to the statement "*It requires that managers think strategically about their business overall and about how they can effectively communicate with stakeholders, including customers, investors, employees and members of communities in which the organization operates*" (Cornelissen, 2014). They are defined as individuals, groups, or organizations that are related to every decision, activity, project, program, and matters involving organization(s) (Bourne, 2016).

Clarity of standards and targets does not guarantee effective implementation if it is not accompanied by inter-organizational communication and confirmation (Meter & Horn, 1975). All implementers must understand the ideal implementation of the *shari'a*. Nevertheless, communication is a complicated process, resulting in potential for irregularities to occur. This concerns the issues of authority and leadership. The superior should be able to condition subordinates or implementing organizations should understand the ideality of a policy (Wibawa, 2004).

Implementation will be effective if the standards and goals are understood by the individuals who are responsible for acting the policy. Thus, clear goals and standards, proper communication with executors, consistency and uniformity of goals and standards should be communicated with various sources to the society. Communication within and among organizations is a complex and difficult process. In forwarding messages in an organization or from one organization to another, communicators can store or disseminate information, either intentionally or unintentionally. Moreover, if the sources of information or the same sources provide inconsistent interpretations of the basic measures and objectives or even conflict, the implementers of the policy will have greater difficulty in carrying out the intentions of the policy. Therefore, according to Meter & Horn (1975), prospects for effective implementation are determined by the clarity of measures and objectives and by the accuracy and consistency in communicating those measures and objectives.

Meter & Horn (1975) notes that successful implementation often requires institutional mechanisms and procedures. This will help superiors to encourage subordinates (implementers) to perform consistently with the measures and objectives of the policy. Stakeholders have personnel influence and power because of their hierarchical position. This influence and power include recruitment and selection, career paths for subordinates, control over budget allocations, influencing the behavior of subordinates and having authority in responding to policy achievements. The relationship between organizations and governments in the implementation can be seen in two types. First, the provision of technical assistance in which high-level officials can help subordinates to understand government regulations and guidelines, structure responses to initiatives and acquire the necessary physical and technical resources in implementing policies. Second, superiors can rely on various sanctions, both positive and negative.
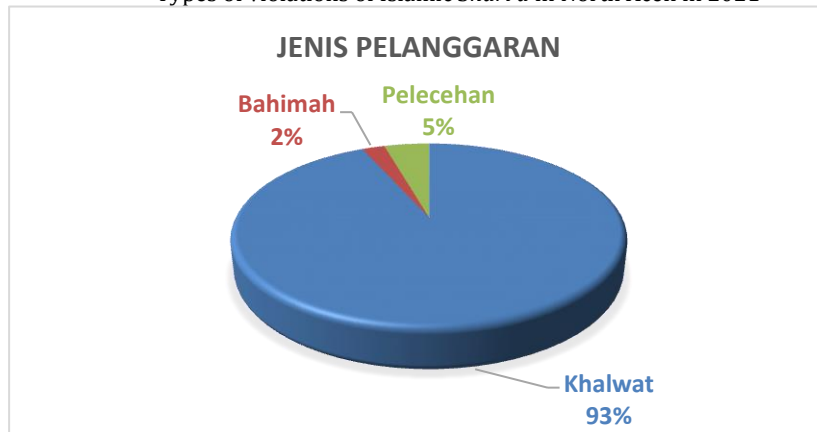
4. DISCUSSION

Meter & Horn (1975) believe that "the clarity of standards and targets does not guarantee effective implementation if it is not accompanied by inter-organizational communication and confirmation". Therefore, actors' communication strategy in enforcing Islamic *shari'a* is of paramount importance. The number of Islamic shari'a violation in North Aceh keeps fluctuating and retain occurring until now.

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The Civil Service Police Unit and Wilayatul Hisbah Service reported that there were 45 violations of Islamic law in 2021. The diagram below illustrates the types of violations in North Aceh in 2021.

Diagram 1.1
Types of violations of Islamic *Shari'a* in North Aceh in 2021

Source: Civil Service Police and *Wilayatul Hisbah,* 2021

The table shows that *khalwat* violations predominate in North Aceh. There were 2 cases of harassment and 1 case of *bahimah*. The number of *khalwat* violations was 42 cases, in which the perpetrators were a pair of men and women. *Khalwat* is improper and dangerous, thus, both men and women must familiar with the rules of social interaction in Islam in order to avoid acts prohibited by religion. If a man and a woman together without the presence of a third person, it will lead to adultery. A glance is usually the initial step that will lead to adultery (Irfan, 2020). According to Aziz (2005), *Khalwat* is a term used for a situation where an unmarried couple far from the sight of other people. This term has a double connotation, positive and negative. In a positive manner, *khalwat* is withdrawing from the crowd and solitude to get closer to Allah SWT. Meanwhile, in a negative way, it means a solitary action in a quiet place or avoiding other people done by man and a woman who are not *mahram* and not bound by marriage.

Several programs carried out by North Aceh Islamic Sharia Office as a strategy for Islamic *shari'a* enforcement. The programs include, first, enhancing understanding towards Islamic values. In this program, the communication strategy is carried out by conducting training and improving the capacity of community leaders in the implementation of Islamic *shari'a*, developing the capacity of *ru'yat* workers, and conducting seminars related to *shari'a* enforcement. By doing so, communication between institutions and the community in enforcing Islamic law is established. Meter & Horn (1975) mention that prospects for effective implementation are determined by the clarity of measures and objectives as well as the accuracy and consistency in communicating those measures and objectives. Building communication with Community Leaders has been carried out, and all community leaders support the enforcement of Islamic law in North Aceh. Communication strategy has been carried out by *Wilayatul Hisbah,* Islamic Sharia Service with the Regional Planning Agency and BPKD regarding the importance of capacity building for *Hisab* and *Ru'yat* workers. The budget is available but not sufficient to significantly develop the capacity.

Second, enhancing understanding, appreciation, and practice of the Koran by developing the capacity for *Imam Hafidz* at mosques and holding *MTQ*. These communication strategies have been implemented, in which the capacity building program for *Imam Hafidz* was conducted at mosques while MTQ is one of the leading programs for preaching and spreading Islamic values in North Aceh.

Third, improving the Quality of Religious Life and Tolerance by holding a Working Group on the Resolution of *Shari'a* Problems. In this activity, many elements were invited to resolve sharia issues in North Aceh including the Islamic Scholars Consultative Council (MPU), *Muspida* and other relevant stakeholders.

Fourth, fostering *da'wah* and Islamic *shari'a* by carrying out programs to improve the quality of *da'wah* and enlightenment of *shari'a*, fostering the pilot village of Islamic *Shari'a*, providing *Khatib* for Friday prayer to villages and improving the facilities and infrastructures of religious places.

Fifth, study and development of Islamic *Shari'a* through dissemination of information, outreach to elementary schools, middle and high Schools, monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of Islamic *Shari'a*, capacity building training for Mosque/*Meunasah Imeum* in implementing Islamic *Shari'a*, development of Islamic families , guiding *Qari Qariah*, guiding *Hafizh-Hafizhah* and providing scholarships for *Qori/Hafizh*.

Sixth, strengthening, developing, empowering and enhancing cooperation of the Islamic *Shari'a* Courts through counseling on Islamic Shari'a regulations, Islamic courts technical guidance, marriage *isbat* for conflict victims and poor people, preparation of Islamic Shari'a regulations, supervision of *shari'a* enforcement, organizing Islamic Days - Islamic holidays, organizing *Rukyatul Hilal* and Regional pilgrimage.

Seventh, the organization of worship and institutional development of the regional Grand Mosque is conducted through institutional development of education and *da'wah* at the Regional Grand Mosque, technical guidance for IT officers of the regional Grand Mosque, routine Islamic teachings at the regional Grand Mosque, training for Al-Qur'an Tutors at the regional Grand Mosque, and Routine/Periodic maintenance of regional Grand Mosque facilities and infrastructure.

The above programs require proper communication strategy so that the program can be implemented optimally. However, not all these programs have been implemented optimally due to lack of budget, human resources, and the involvement of actors. This occurs because of weak communication among actors which result in many obstacles occur in the implementation of the program. Meter & Horn (1975) note that successful implementation often requires institutional mechanisms and procedures. This will help superiors to encourage subordinates (implementers) to perform consistently in line with the measures and objectives of the policy. It is expected that through these programs, the implementation of Islamic *shari'a* will continue even though violations still occur, but the number can be reduced.

5. CONCLUSION

There is a fluctuation in the number of violations towards Islamic *Shari'a* during its implementation in North Aceh. The actors conducted six programs as their communication strategy, namely 1) enhancing people's understanding towards Islamic values; 2) enhancing the understanding and practice of the Koran; 3) enhancing the quality of religious life and tolerance; 4) fostering *da'wah* and Islamic *shari'a*; 5) assessing, developing, and fostering Islamic *Shari'a*; and 6) strengthening, developing, empowering and enhancing Cooperation of Islamic *Shari'a* Courts.

The six programs require proper communication strategy in order to be implemented optimally. However, not all these programs have been implemented well due to factors such as a lack of budget, human resources, and the actors. These occurred because of the weak communication among actors so that many obstacles occur in the implementation of the program.

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