Religious Conversion among Indonesian-Chinese Celebrities

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Abstract: Religious conversion among Chinese citizens, including among artists of Chinese descent, is taking place amidst the prejudiced relationship between the Muslim natives and those of Chinese descent. Of course, this is interesting to understand. This research aims to examine the motives of religious conversion among celebrities of Indonesian-Chinese descent, especially non-Muslims to be a Muslim through Lewis Rambo's theory of Understanding Religious Conversion and its stages. This research uses qualitative methods with social media, especially YouTube, and leading and credible online news as sources of information and data. A number of individual cases representing a particular pattern are selected for analysis using strict qualitative analysis techniques. This research found 3 factors (personal, social, and Allah's guidance) that motivated individuals of Chinese-Indonesian descent to make decisions about converting religions from non-Muslim to Muslim, namely personal, social, and guidance from Allah. In addition, this research also found that religious conversion experienced by individuals not only had an impact on individual change but also had an impact on changes in social relations in their daily lives. This study concludes that religious conversion among Chinese artists who are the subject of the study takes place through a long process, not for a moment or a short process.

Keywords: Impact; individual cases; motives; religious conversion.

Abstrak: Konversi agama di kalangan warga Tionghoa, termasuk di kalangan artis keturunan Tionghoa marak terjadi di tengah hubungan penuh prasangka antara pribumi yang Muslim dan Keturunan Tionghoa. Tentu ini menarik untuk dikaji. Riset ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji pengalaman konversi agama di kalangan pesohor keturunan Tionghoa Indonesia, terutama dari non Islam ke Islam. Riset ini menggunakan metode kualitatif dengan media sosial terutama Youtube dan berita online terkemuka dan kredibel sebagai sumber informasi dan data. Sejumlah kasus individual yang mewakili pola tertentu dipilih untuk dianalisis dengan teknik analisis kualitatif yang ketat. Riset ini menemukan 3 motif yang mendorong individu di kalangan keturunan Tionghoa Indonesia dalam mengambil keputusan konversi agama dari non Islam ke Islam, yaitu motif personal, sosial dan hidayah Allah. Selain itu, riset ini juga menemukan bahwa konversi agama yang dialami individu-individu bukan hanya berdampak terhadap perubahan individu tetapi juga berdampak terhadap perubahan relasi sosial dalam kehidupan sehari-hari mereka. Studi ini menyimpulkan bahwa konversi agama di kalangan artis Tionghoa yang menjadi subyek studi berlangsung melalui proses yang panjang, bukan karena sebab sesaat.

Kata Kunci: Dampak; kasus individual; motif, konversi agama.

1. Introduction

Humans are dynamic creatures that always change according to situations. Changes in thoughts, feelings, and behavior from a psychological perspective are unavoidable and these changes indicate that there is a learning process in humans (Shaver, 2015). Changes that occur in various domains of human psychology also occur in terms of religion, for example, changes in religion are explained by the concept of religious conversion (Blanton & Fargher, 2016; Rijal, 2011).

Religious conversion is a concept that can be seen from various scientific perspectives such as sociology, religious studies, anthropology, political science, and psychology. Religious conversion is a very old concept in explaining religious behavior and has occurred for a long time in human life as seekers of God (Milla, Putra, & Umam, 2019; Paloutzian, 2005). In this article, religious conversion will be viewed from the perspective of social science, especially the psychology of religion, and more specifically from the perspective of the psychology of religious conversion.

Religious conversion can take place internally within one religion, for example moving from one school of thought to another in Islam. From a follower of *ahlussunnah wal jamaah* to being a Shia or from a conservative Islam to being a follower of moderate Islam or becoming a follower of liberal Islam. The phenomenon of religious conversion from one school to another within one religion has not attracted much public attention because it is still in one religious' identity. Even so, the case of religious conversion from *ahlussunnah wal Jamaah* sometimes becomes a complicated issue in Islam (Banaggia, 2009; J.M. Nelson, 2009; Saloom, 2019).

The issue of conversion between religions, for example from Islam to non-Islam or vice versa from non-Islam to Islam, has attracted the attention of the public at large. In the Islamic perspective, people who convert from Islam to non-Islam are called apostates and those who convert from non-Islam to Islam are called converts. Becoming an apostate certainly has religious and social consequences, as well as converting there are almost the same religious and social consequences (Moqsith, 2013).

Among Indonesian Muslims, conversion between religions is a sensitive, interesting, and important issue to follow, especially if it happens to celebrities who are well-known in front of the public in general (Budiawan, 2020; Saloom, 2019). Of course, the conversion of religion from non-Islam to Islam attracts their attention more because in their view it shows that Islam is the true religion and really comes from Allah, the creator of the universe. Conversely, if the conversion of religion occurs in Muslim individuals or in other words, from Islam to non-Muslims, they will regret it and consider it a wrong decision (Budiawan, 2020). Perhaps, adherents of non-Muslim religions feel the same way.

Research on motives of religious conversion has been carried out by many researchers, for example Köse (1996). He examines the experiences of religious conversion among 70 native British figures. The questions asked by Köse in his research were about why they converted to Islam, what their background was to convert to Islam and what was the pattern of religious conversion from non-Muslims to Islam. This last issue is the same as the purpose of the article but the difference between the two is that the first was carried out in England with a very individualist European culture while this research was conducted in Indonesia with a very collectivist Asian culture (Köse, 1996; Lau et al., 2020).

The different cultural patterns between Europe and Asia, more specifically between Britain and Indonesia, are certainly worth noting because people's culture greatly influences how religious conversion takes place. In individualist societies, religious conversion is more influenced by the search for self-meaning and guidance from God, while in collectivist societies such as in Indonesia, of course, the influence of the social environment is very strong on the decision to convert to individual religions (Amir & McAuliffe, 2020; Cohen, Wu, & Miller, 2016).

The question is, is it true that there is an influence of the social environment on individual decisions in the experience of religious conversion in Indonesia or is it solely due to individual driving factors, such as the search for meaning in life? (Bandura, 2000; Salemink, 2004)

Research on religious conversion motives is also interesting because religious conversion is not only related to personal transformation experienced by individuals but also has an impact on social transformation. Iyadurai (2020) in one of the books on the psychology of religion criticizes the psychological study of religious conversion which only mentions the individual domain as the domain of conversion influence, but he also cites the opinion of an expert researcher on religious conversion, namely Rambo (1982), who emphasizes that religious conversion also has an impact on social change in the environment in which the converts of religion are. The same view is also emphasized by Rowena Robinson that religious conversion includes not only spiritual change but also social and cultural changes that include individuals (Robinson, 2003).

Research on the personal or spiritual impact of religious conversion has been carried out by many experts, for example, Ullman (1989) and Paloutzian (2005) who have conducted a lot of research on the theme of/ personal change. Therefore, research on the impact of religious conversion on social and cultural transformation is not widely carried out, including in Indonesia, which is considered a multi-cultural country with diverse social status. Hence, this research is intended to see the impact of social relations on religious conversion decisions and the influence of religious conversion experienced by individuals on their social interactions.

Several research conducted by researchers on the social impact of religious conversion in Indonesia have been carried out, for example, Fahriana and Lufaefi (2020) studied the conversion of religion from Islam to Non-Islam. Their findings show that the conversion of religion from Islam to non-Islam often creates conflicts between followers of different religions. However, Fahriana and Lufaefi's articles need to be strengthened by other research on the same theme so that the root of the problem and the solution to the problem can be explained clearly. The position of this article to previous research is to develop and deepen what happened in the case of religious converts experienced by many individuals.

Fuadi's research (2019) is also interesting to put forward and adds to our insight into the impact of religious conversion on social change. Fuadi writes on an important issue on the island of Lombok regarding religious conversion, does it affect ethnic change? In the case of Lombok, religion and ethnicity are one entity with two faces. In other words, religion and ethnicity are two identical identities. Sasak is synonymous with Islam and Bali is synonymous with Hinduism. The focus of Fuadi's study, which emphasises ethnic and religious similarities, is interesting in the context of social relations problems on the island of Lombok.

In principle, the author agrees with Fuad's research findings (2019) because this fact happened among the Sasak Muslim community and the Balinese Hindu community on the island of Lombok. Nevertheless, Fuadi's scientific articles need to be strengthened with data, at least from social media so that what is described is not only a literature review. Therefore, this article will complete what previous researchers and writers have written about the relationship between religious conversion and social change especially in Indonesia.

The study of the relationship between religion and ethnicity has been studied in various disciplines, especially sociology. For example, Kim (2011) examined the relationship between religion and ethnicity in America. Kim found an answer to why many ethnic groups are based on religion or ethnic group separation based on religion. This research found that religion, including, of course, religious conversion will affect social relations or social networks based on religious and ethnic affiliations.

What is not clear from previous research is how religious conversion affects the psycho-social dynamics of social relations in the context of the lowest social unit, namely the family and the social units above it such as society and nation. Based on this, this article will try to answer how religious conversion, apart from affecting personal or spiritual transformation, also affects social transformation, especially with social relations between those who have experienced religious conversion and their previous networks.

This article also attempts to question the same thing, whether the religious conversion experienced by public figures of Chinese descent will change the Muslim public's perception of the identity of converts so that they are no longer seen solely as Chinese but also as Muslims who share the same faith ties because all know that Islam places great emphasis on brotherhood of faith (Herlinawati, 2020; Jamil et al., 2023; Jubba, Nugroho, Destrianti, & Sholikhah, 2021; Nielsen, 2013). Therefore, 3 questions will be answered in this paper, namely how the experience of religious conversion experienced by the research subjects, what are the factors that encourage and attract religious conversions in research subjects, and what is the impact of their religious conversion on social relations.

This study was conducted using a qualitative method with data taken from social media, especially YouTube. 3 converts or people who experienced conversion from non-Muslims to Muslims (N = 3) They are DC, LK, and RD. Converts who display their statements and stories on YouTube or

online media are selected to be studied and subjects are analysed using qualitative analysis techniques. The statements and stories are arranged according to certain themes or categories and processed into sequential narratives describing certain patterns of religious conversion.

I chose them as research samples because they are well-known figures of Chinese ethnic descent and have a strong influence on Indonesian society in their respective fields of activity. Their conversion to Islam has attracted the public's attention, especially Indonesian netizens.

2.   Religious Conversion: Overcoming Hindrance and Finding Life Meaning

From the analysis of random YouTube content, it is found that many public figures have experienced inter-religious conversion, especially from non-Muslims to Muslims. Then from a few public figures, 3 people were selected to be the research subjects, namely DC, LK, and RD (see table 1). The religious conversion of these three people has become the subject of widespread discussion in Indonesian society in this decade. This shows that researching the religious conversion they experienced is an important thing to do. They are all descendants of Chinese who are known to the public, can be said as an established group with and high economy, and have a strong influence in Indonesia.

Table 1 Identity and Description of Research Subjects

No.	Subjects	Information
1	D C	A celebrity of Chinese descent who is known as a mentalist and hosts several shows on television, social media, and podcasts. Before becoming a convert, DC was a devout Catholic. Once married to Kl, a Muslim woman, who is also a celebrity in Indonesia and has a child. They are an interfaith couple who divorced due to incompatibility and ended up living alone.
2	LK	National athletes in wushu of Chinese descent often win various international events in the field of wushu championships. LK comes from a Buddhist family and is married to AH, a fellow Wushu athlete.
3	RD	RD comes from a Protestant Christian Chinese family who is devout and diligent at church. This film and soap opera actor had been hit by a drug case and was sentenced to prison. After he released from prison, he returned to his activities as a soap opera actor or TV film. In the midst of his worries about facing life after his father passed away, he mingled a lot with his Muslim friends.

DC is a public figure of Chinese descent who is Catholic. He is known as an entertainer and mentalist who is popular because of his skills as a magician with certain techniques that amaze the public. He decided to become a Muslim and read the creed under the guidance from one of a religious leader called GM, a preacher from the younger generation of Nahdlatul Ulama on June 21, 2019.

His decision to change religions is certainly in the public spotlight. There are many issues and conjectures surrounding his decision to convert to Islam. Among other things, as entertainment many people thought that he converted to Islam because he wanted to gain an increased source of income from his artistry. As is well known, artists rely on fans to maintain their reputation as artists. As the number of fans increases, the reputation and income increases, and one way to achieve that is to change religions.

DC admitted that he decided to convert to Islam because he received guidance from Allah through a long search process and interacted with many people in his work and life environment. This statement denies the issue on social media and mainstream media that he married solely because his future wife was a Muslim. In a report in online media, DC denied many people's assumptions that he converted because of the woman he wanted to marry.

> I converted to Islam, no one told me, no one forced me, not for any purpose whatsoever. Is it because I will marry you to become a Muslim? No, not because of a woman. I moved because of guidance. I studied a lot with GM and other clerics on how to be a good person, at first, learning

was not to be a Muslim, but to be a good person. And it turns out that I got the teachings of being a good person from my friends and I happen to be Muslim and I am very comfortable. Hopefully by converting to Islam, I can also give a new color, a new story, a new story in my life and with the community, hopefully it will be useful for society. Because I told GM, I really love Indonesia, with all the differences, the religion, living in harmony, peace, that is Indonesia. And that is what people who are Muslim and hopefully I will carry on with it and continue to speak out for Indonesia (Kuntadi, 2021).

DC's statement provides the keyword that his decision to convert religion from Catholicism to Islam was purely done because of his own awareness, going through a long process of searching for self-meaning, especially in relation to his social life. DC emphasised that he has a strong desire to be a good person and be useful in life. He received the teachings about being a good and useful person from his Muslim friends, including from the ustad who were known to the public such as GM and AG. In one of his confessions in the online media, he often participates in religious gathering and preaching activities delivered by AG in several mosques in Jakarta.

In the Hikmah Talk Show hosted by AG and the event HP Show hosted by HP, DC admitted that in his search for the meaning of life he learned many lessons and values of goodness in Islam. For example, the value of tolerance in social relationships is shown by his Muslim friends. Apart from that, there were values of brotherhood practiced by the Muslim community around him which made him impressed.

The search for meaning or quest for meaning is an important factor that explains why people seek spiritual serenity. The search for meaning in a person's life is strongly influenced by psychological factors or psychological dynamics experienced by a person in their personal and social life. For example, inner anxiety, conflicts with other people or life problems that burden him. It is noteworthy that this search for meaning has strong implications for psychological well-being and spirituality (Halama, Martos, & Adamovová, 2010; Steger, 2013).

In theory, the search for meaning or significance is preceded by a crisis (Dueck & Johnson, 2016; Ferguson & Binks, 2015). A crisis is a condition in which an individual experiences the most difficult moments and things in his life, for example divorce, separation from children, the death of a loved one or something that is difficult to explain but causes loneliness, meaninglessness and anxiety (Rambo & Bauman, 2012).

In the DC case, the crisis experienced was related to his divorce from his ex-wife, Kl. It was said that there was a mismatch or frequent fights between the two and usually the wife would ask for a divorce. DC tried to ignore the request but because he was always called and asked every time there was a fight between the two of them, DC finally said yes. It seems that this incident became a kind of crisis that prompted him to reassess or evaluate himself. In this series of processes, DC often mingled with religious leaders in trying to be a good person (Tribun Manado, 2020).

In the DC statement above, it was also mentioned that the influence of his friends in his social environment and work also influenced his decision to change religions. DC emphasised that his Muslim friends, fellow nationals, were very strong in giving a positive impression about Islam. DC said that he saw the positive reality of Islam in interacting with his Muslim friends. He found a lesson that Islam is well expressed in the daily lives of his friends which are full of order and discipline.

Several studies on religious conversion, for example Halama (2010) found that the influence of other people in the social environment is very strong in supporting the process of a person's journey in search of positive self-meaning. The influence of social interaction which is full of friendliness, intimacy and openness gives positive emotions to individuals who are looking for meaning during the process of individual religious conversion. If the influence of social interactions is getting stronger, the individual's decision to change religions will also be stronger and unstoppable. The individual is at a point of no return (Halama, 2015; Halama & Bakosova, 2009).

DC's interesting statement regarding changing religions is about social identity as an Indonesian nation. In his statement, DC read that he was very impressed and proud to be part of a pluralistic

Indonesia. He really loves Indonesia's diversity in terms of religion, language and culture. That is one of the reasons why he chose Islam as his new religion. In addition, it should be assumed that DC chose Islam as its new religion because this religion is embraced by the majority of the Indonesian people, of course many of them are also a group of supporters and at first glance there is hope in DC's mind that being a Muslim will make it easier for him to get new fans.

According to social identity theory, the same identity or in group is of course an important asset to get sentiment and emotional position as well as social support in developing a career as an artist or entertainer. The success and ability of an artist in maintaining his career, of course, the income from the entertainment world that is run really depends on how far he can maintain a relationship with his fans and how he increases the number of new fans. In this context, the same identity or in group is the key to achieve this (Banaggia, 2009; Carrothers, 2007; Pelz & Smidt, 2015).

An important point of the search for identity is how and where to find self-meaning as a person and self-meaning as part of a larger social community. DC said he really loves Indonesia's diversity which is full of harmony and tolerance. In his mind, that harmony and tolerance come from Indonesia's predominantly Muslim population, and the dimension of an individual's social identity is a sense of pride if he is part of a majority group that is very tolerant and creators of harmony for the nation and state (Jake Harwood, 2017).

The public figure who has also decided to become a convert is LK, a wushu athlete who has often won world-class martial arts championships so as to elevate Indonesia among global nations as a respected country. LK is a Buddhist girl when she was not a Muslim. In various news reports on online media, it was stated that LK had converted to Islam because he was going to marry his girlfriend, AH, a fellow world-class wushu athlete. Is it true that LK decided to become a Muslim or a religious conversion because he is going to marry his girlfriend who is very devout in practicing Islam?

The view of the public that stated that she chose to become a Muslim woman because she was going to marry Muslim AH was denied by LK. However, he acknowledged that his initial interest in Islam was due to the influence of fellow wushu athletes who were Muslim. LK mentioned the names JN Wn and AH, two of his fellow wushu athletes who introduced him to Islam. Even AH later taught him a lot about Islam on the sidelines of wushu training. They then became close then she continued to be girlfriend for AH and finally they got married.

> I started looking into it in 2015. It was from my friends. That's the first, because after all we wouldn't know if there weren't introductions from people. Then, from there find out for yourself (Putri, 2019).

From the LK statement above, it can be said that the social environment is the initial source of the search for the meaning of individual life, especially related to spiritual pursuits. Research conducted by several studies in the field of religious psychology, for example Saloom (2019) also found that religious conversion is strongly influenced by the psychological dynamics experienced by individuals in their lives. This psychological dynamic can be in the form of anxiety about facing difficulties and problems and how to find solutions. Often the solution to life's problems begins by observing the behavior of other people around him. This is what is called the concept of social environmental influence (Garfinkel, 2007; Gooren, 2010; Saloom, 2019).

In the case of LK, observing the social environment provides inspiration for him to find out the meaning of life which has been part of the problems he experiences as an individual. He found solutions to various anxieties and stresses he experienced in his family life or career as a wushu athlete when he saw his friends finish praying five times a day. LK looks as if her friend, JN, is free from the burdens she faces after praying. According to him, this is how a Muslim complains to his God of various life problems, as he stated in the online news media.

> Now, when I saw JN pray, 'it's good to pray like there's a place to complain, after the prayer is calm again, the burden is reduced (Putri, 2019).

Interestingly, as stated in a few online media, LK was originally a person who did not respect Islam because he saw many Muslims who she considered evil and unpleasant. For example, a person

who acts on behalf of Islam but commits violence or terror so that she has labeled Islam with a negative label. In other words, before knowing Islam well, LK had fallen into a fatal misunderstanding of Islam and Muslims, as he stated in the online media.

> At first, I also questioned, what is Islam? I wasn't 100% pro before, there were people who said 'oh all religions are the same'. If I question. In Indonesia there are also many people who make Islam look different. I used to ask, why is this Islam? Like that, I first questioned it (Putri, 2019).

Why did LK's negative perception of Islam turn into a positive perception and even she decided to become part of the religion he previously hated? In the study of psychology, there are many explanations about the change from hate to love, but generally it is discussed in the context of love and hate in interpersonal relationships. For example, research conducted by Jin and his friends concluded that excessive love will give birth to excessive hatred for two people who are involved in interpersonal relationships (Jin, Xiang, & Lei, 2017).

In the context of interreligious relations, is it possible for individuals who hate a religion to turn into love for it? Referring to the LK case, the possibility of changing hatred towards a religion into love for it is an indisputable fact. This incident happened to Umar bin Khattab, a companion of the Prophet who hated Islam and Muslims, but because he was touched by the meaning contained in one of the verses of the Koran relating to monotheism, he finally melted and took a shahada (Handayana & Rezi, 2018; Zaitun, 2016).

The case experienced by LK is interesting to be used as material to reflect that excessive individual hatred towards other people or towards something will produce the opposite energy, namely the energy of love and defense. Fortunately, LK is an athlete, not a religious figure so that his hatred is not monitored by the public, however, her hatred for Islam has made her ignorant and considers Islam a religion that does not need attention. This LK case is the same as an Islamic hater in England named Ben Bird. He experienced Islamophobia because he was influenced by the media which depicted Islam as a religion that gave birth to many terrorists because the contents of the books and teachings of Islam were full of teachings of violence and terrorism. However, his negative perception of Islam changed because of a famous soccer player called Mohamed Salah who happened to a Muslim and he is charming and loved by many fans (Bird, 2019).

Interestingly, as happened to Ben Bird whose perceptions turned positive in Islam because he saw the behavior of other people who became idols of many people, LK experienced a change in negative perceptions into positive perceptions because she saw the daily behaviour of her fellow athletes, Nz and AH. The deep and positive impression on her two fellow athletes was believed to be due to the influence of their religion so that she came to the conclusion that Islam must be her choice of religion.

In the case of LK, the influence of the social environment, the search for self-meaning and guidance simultaneously affects the decision of LK to become converts. From the stories and data about the religious conversion experienced by LK, the search for self-meaning started her spiritual journey, then her social environment consisting of friendly and polite Muslims had changed her perception of Islam which she previously hated and finally received guidance from Allah and then decided to become Muslimah.

Besides LK, there was RD who also had Chinese blood and decided to become a convert. RD is a public figure known as a film and soap opera artist. He is the son of a famous fashion designer, namely Dn, who is very fond of his son, RD. It is said that the death of his father frustrated RD and lost his way so that he fell into drug traps and was jailed. The various bitter events he experienced after the death of his father pushed him to a point where he lost his meaning in life. This is the initial stage of how he looks for meaning and finds it in Islam through fellow artists who emigrated or experienced religious conversion or artists who consistently practice religious teachings while becoming artists.

Many people suspected that he converted to Islam because he wanted to marry CM, a Muslim artist, but he denied it. His decision to convert to Islam was preceded by various psychological events full of anxiety and pressure that he experienced as he said on various occasions in online media including social media such as Youtube.

I became a convert because of no one, I also had time to talk to CM if I want to marry you or not, I will convert to be Muslim (Hinggar, 2020).

CM strengthened RD's statement above by stating that they were not necessarily married even though RD had become Muslim. CM also emphasised that RD declared his Islam twice. First, in front of her uncle and aunt who are Muslims, but this is done simply and without corresponding docummentation, for example to change the religion on the national identity card (KTP). In other words, RD's decision to convert to Islam is purely his own decision withot any pressure from others.

From the findings and analysis as mentioned above, it can be said that the experience of religious conversion experienced by the three subjects is unique and complex. The religious conversion experienced by the research subjects involved three major religions in Indonesia, namely Buddhism, Christianity, and Catholicism as the origin of the subjects' religions and Islam as the destination for their conversion. Whether their individual decision to change religions affects inter-religious relations in Indonesia, frankly, has no indication in that direction. Moreover, in the case of LK who are Buddhist, there are no objections from Buddhist religious leaders regarding the conversion of LK to Islam. Perhaps one of the reasons is because Buddhism is not a missionary religion like Islam, Christianity, and Catholicism (Mohammad & Muhammad Syafiq, 2014).

The obstacles experienced by LK only came from the nuclear family, which regretted that LK had convert to Islam. There is a concern from KL's family that she will become a conservative adherent of Islam as seen her husband's family appearance. However, LK seemed not to be bother by the assumpsion for she convert to Islam to find self-meaning. This search for self-meaning is often an important concept in explaining why individuals change from an extreme perspective of thought and behaviour.

3. Stages in Searching for Self-Meaning in Faith and Social Circle

Three driving factors or pull factors for religious conversion experienced by the subjects in this research, namely the search for meaning, guidance and social environmental factors. The search for meaning becomes the basic capital for the emergence of curiosity to find the meaning of life that is lost in life. The search for meaning occurs because of the loss of meaning due to calamities or events that have an impact on individual psychological stability or learn from other parties about how to deal with life's problems (Hood, 2012; Kruglanski, 2013).

The research findings also show that Allah's guidance is the main factor driving all individual psychic energy and social energy surrounding the individual which facilitates the process of individual religious conversion. The concept of guidance is often used to explain religious conversion among Muslims because it is stated clearly and concretely in the holy book of the Koran (Abdullah et al., 2022; Al-Qwidi, 2002; Maimun, 2023). It is stated that the guidance of Allah is the core and main factor that attracts individuals to convert to Islam. Without guidance, whatever efforts are made by individuals and people in their immediate environment, it will not encourage individuals to depart from their old beliefs.

Finally, it cannot be denied that the social environment greatly influences an individual's choice of religious conversion. This is certainly in line with the general formula in psychology, especially social psychology, that the social environment has a strong influence on individual thoughts and feelings. In fact, it is stated in various social psychology research that the social environment has a stronger influence than the personality entity or individual personal factors (Delamater, 2006).

Thus, it can be illustrated through schemes or pictures that religious conversion is influenced by three factors which are interrelated but cannot be determined which one gave the earliest influence because religious conversion is a very personal and secretive subjective event. However, in research with three study subjects in this article, it can be said that personal crises or the search for meaning are the starting points for the conversion process of religion, while the influence of religious leaders' guidance and social support is thought to occur simultaneously.
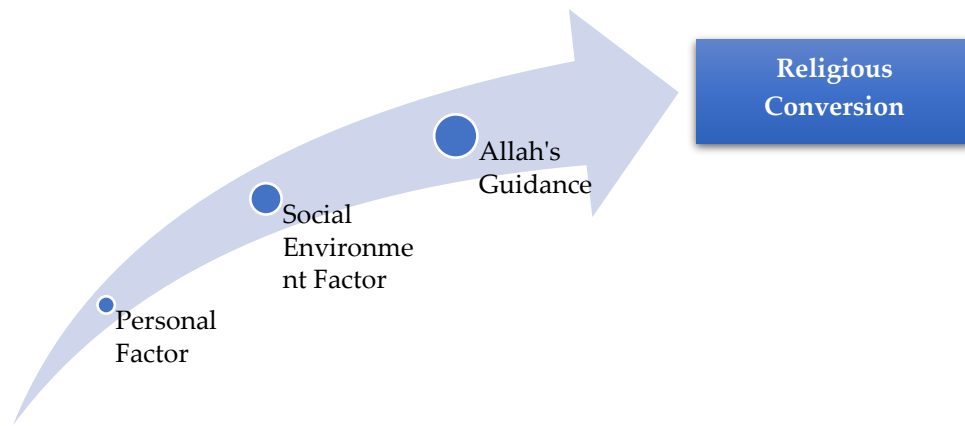
Figure 1 Driving Factors for Religious Conversion

Referring to the model of religious conversion initiated and developed by Rambo (1993) and his colleagues, the religious conversion process experienced by the three subjects includes various stages of the process (see figure 1), the context of events that are historical, religious, social and cultural in nature; the personal crisis as well as a social crisis or a combined crisis between a personal crisis and a combined crisis; undergoing all crises while looking for solutions, deliberate search to find out what problems are being faced and how to solve them, and encounters with new religious stakeholders, for example by consulting the target religious leaders or other people who have previously become part of the new religion (Dueck & Johnson, 2016; Ferguson & Binks, 2015; Rambo, 1999).

Intensive interaction is carried out afterword to find what is looking for by asking questions, discussing with fellow religious experts and showed interest and convert., Finally, as a consequence of their decision to choose Islam as their new religion, they must implement the religious provisions or practice the most basic Islamic principles, namely carrying out the pillars of Islam and the pillars of faith in their daily life (Dueck & Johnson, 2016; Ferguson & Binks, 2015; Hassan & Azura, 2014; Hidayat & Putri Sherina, 2020; Rambo, 1989; Rasit, Hassan, Osman, & Ali, 2011). The model of religious conversion is shown in table 2.

Table 2 Model of Religious Conversion

Stages of the Conversion Process	Factors to be Evaluated	Relevance to Subject
Context	Historical, religious, social, cultural and personal factors	DC: comes from Chinese ethnic and culture and is a well-known by public including the Muslim public and associates with Muslims. Previously, he was a Catholic and always looked for how to be a good person in the midst of the association of the Indonesian people who are religious and committed to Indonesian nationality..
		LK: A national wushu athlete who has many Muslim friends. She comes from a family with a strong Buddhist tradition, but experienced a life anxiety that she doesn't know why it happened.
		RD: A television film and soap opera actor who works with a predominantly Muslim team and at the same time he has many life problems that he has fallen into drug traps so that he ends up in prison and makes his life meaningless. His suffers grew stronger after the death of his father whom he loved so much.

Stages of the Conversion Process	Factors to be Evaluated	Relevance to Subject
Crisis	Personal and social distraction or both simultaneously provoke search	DC: Divorce and not feeling a good husband LK: Feel uncomfortable and often experience stress but without resolution RD: Abandoned by parents (father) and fell into drugs
Quest	Intentional involvement with the crisis and its resolution	DC: Trying to be a good person and citizens in the midst of Indonesia's diversity through wide association with many groups, especially religious leaders LK: Often observes close friends how they find comfort through praying five times a day and discussing Islam and life with their Muslim friends.
Encounter	Confession and contact with new religions	DC: Often listens to and follows Islamic studies from well-known clerics and religious figures LK: Reading Islamic religious books, discussing Islam with friends in social circles and observing religious rituals performed by friends and their psycho-social impact RD: Claims to be comfortable with friends who are Muslim and often participate in their religious activities.
Interaction	Multiple exchanges between converters and new religions	DC: Often attend religious recitation and religious discussions that are interpersonal or in small groups. LK: Read a lot of books and discuss with fellow athletes who are Muslim to fulfill curiosity about Islam. RD: Discussing and asking Muslim friends and relatives like his aunt and uncle about Islam
Commitment	Construct a new identity and become a legal member of the new religion	DC: Making the creed in front of the mosque congregation lead by one of a prominent religious leader GM. LK: Secretly converted to Islam without being noticed by her nuclear family and relatives to avoid tentsions. Not long after becoming a Muslim, she married her current husband, MH. RD: Read the creed twice. First, in front of his uncle and aunt. Second, take another *shahadat* in front of an institution that specializes in religious conversion to obtain a certificate as a new Muslim.
Consequence	Conversion as a result of new commitments, consolidation of experiences, identities and commitments.	DC: Steady being a Muslim and trying to practice all the pillars of faith in Islam gradually. LK: Trying to implement Islamic teachings, especially those in the pillars of faith and the pillars of Islam. The change in identity that stands out as convert by wearing a hijab or head scarf. RD: Be steady and confident to become a Muslim by participating in religious activities organised by his fellow artists and celebrities.

Note: Rambo model of religious conversion (1993)

Finally, based on their motives and reasons as mentioned and described above, it can be resumed that their motives of religious conversion were vary and described in a table 3.

Table 3 Motives and Reasons of Religious Conversion of the subjects

Subjects	Motives			Trigger
	Personal	Social	God's guidance	
DC	V	V	V	Personal problem with marriage
LK	V	V	V	Personal anxiety
RD	V	V	V	Personal problem with drug

Those who converted to Islam through a long conversion process generally grew up to become devout and diligent worshipers of the new Muslim. This is because the decision to change religions is based on a deep search for the meaning of life and one's position in life. If previously they felt they were not at all meaningful, after changing religions, they grew to become mature and meaningful individuals.

Consistency in carrying out religious teachings after a long religious conversion is supported by social circles that are important in the lives of converts, starting from their spouses and close social relationships. The closer a person is to the social circle, the stronger the consistency in practicing religion is because various obstacles and challenges can be overcome with the help of important people around converts.

3.   Conclusions

There are three motives that explain why individuals experience religious conversion, especially from non-Islam to Islam, namely due to getting guidance from Allah *(hidayah)*, the unbroken search for self-meaning and the influence of social relations, both due to marriage and friendship. This research findings insisted Rambo findings that individual motive and social relation motive motivated people to convert to other religion or belief. For *hidayah* or God's guidance, it can be said that it is special concept that has not been known in other religion than Islam. How to measure that someone get guidance to be converted? Based on the data, it is informed from subjects' statements that they received signs that were difficult to understand with common sense but gave them strong confidence to get closer to Islam and Muslims.

 These three motives of religious conversion are interrelated with one another. One motive can be a starting point for religious conversion and reinforced by another. For example, people get guidance because they continue to experience life anxieties and seek the true meaning of life and the search for the meaning of life becomes open due to the influence of the social environment that surrounds them, for example social relations with someone that is special, for example through marriage or social relations with intensive people in a work environment. This finding is in line with Kose's finding that religious conversion is complex phenomenon and can't be explained with only one motive but with multi-motives (Köse, 1996).

The decision to convert to Muslim certainly has an impact on their circle of social interactions. In the early stages, relationships with close family, especially parents, become somewhat strained, although eventually they return to normal. In other words, relationships with parents and close relatives are ultimately characterized by mutual understanding and high tolerance. Lastly, the social environment has become wider, especially the social environment that is concerned with Islamic religious activities.

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