

Sociology of the Crisis of Self-Confidence of Muslim Adolescents in Islamic Religious Education Learning at SMP Ma'arif NU 1 Purwokerto: A Phenomenological Study of Emotions, Body, and Identity

Sosiologi Krisis Kepercayaan Diri Remaja Muslim dalam Pembelajaran PAI di SMP Ma'arif NU 1 Purwokerto: Studi Fenomenologi tentang Emosi, Tubuh, dan Identitas

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ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini dimulai dengan fenomena hilangnya kepercayaan diri yang dialami oleh remaja Muslim yang belajar Pendidikan Agama Islam (PAI) di SMP Ma'arif NU 1 Purwokerto. Masa remaja yang rentan seringkali menimbulkan tantangan psikologis yang mengakibatkan rendahnya keterlibatan siswa dalam kegiatan keagamaan. Tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk mendeskripsikan praktik kelas, hubungan sosial antar aktor pendidikan, dan dampak pedagogis terhadap pembentukan identitas keagamaan siswa. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan fenomenologis, data dikumpulkan melalui observasi non-partisipan, wawancara semi-terstruktur, dan analisis dokumen. Hasil penelitian mengungkapkan tiga temuan utama: Pertama, siswa mengalami gejala kecemasan belajar—ditandai dengan rasa malu, takut membuat kesalahan, dan kurangnya kepercayaan diri saat membaca Al-Quran atau berdoa—yang diperburuk oleh interaksi otoriter dan stresor lingkungan. Kedua, guru PAI berperan sebagai figur kunci yang memberikan dukungan moral dan emosional melalui metode kolaboratif dengan konselor bimbingan dan orang tua untuk mengurangi krisis identitas digital yang berasal dari paparan media sosial. Ketiga, pengalaman pubertas, tekanan teman sebaya, dan pembentukan identitas keagamaan saling terkait erat dalam memengaruhi kepercayaan diri siswa. Artikel ini berkontribusi pada sosiologi pendidikan Islam dengan menekankan bahwa kepercayaan diri pada remaja Muslim adalah proses sosial yang kompleks yang secara langsung terkait dengan transformasi fisik, pengaturan emosi, dan pencarian identitas.

ABSTRACT

This research begins with the phenomenon of the loss of self-confidence experienced by Muslim adolescents studying Islamic Religious Education (PAI) at SMP Ma'arif NU 1 Purwokerto. The vulnerable period of adolescence often gives rise to psychological challenges that result in students' low engagement in religious activities. The purpose of this study is to describe classroom practices, social relationships between educational actors, and the pedagogical impact on the formation of students' religious identities. Using a phenomenological approach, data were collected through non-participant observation, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis. The results reveal three main findings: First, students experience symptoms of learning anxiety—characterized by shame, fear of making mistakes, and a lack of confidence when reading the Quran or praying—which is exacerbated by authoritarian interactions and environmental stressors. Second, PAI teachers serve as key figures providing moral and emotional support through collaborative methods with guidance counselors and parents to mitigate the digital identity crisis stemming from social media exposure. Third, puberty experiences, peer pressure, and religious identity formation are intricately interrelated in influencing students' self-confidence. This article contributes to the sociology of Islamic education by emphasizing

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that self-confidence in Muslim adolescents is a complex social process directly linked to physical transformations, emotional regulation, and the search for identity.

1. INTRODUCTION

The current crisis of self-confidence among Muslim adolescents is a critical issue in the context of Islamic Religious Education (PAI), particularly at the junior high school level. This phenomenon extends beyond cognitive or intellectual deficits; it directly impacts students' spiritual comprehension and their willingness to perform religious duties. Initial observational data from SMP Ma'arif NU 1 Purwokerto indicates a prevalent psychological barrier. Students frequently display signs of uncertainty, speak in faint voices, and verbally refuse to answer questions, recite the 30th chapter of the Quran (Juz Amma), or perform practical prayers in class. Addressing this issue is vital within the sociology of education, as self-confidence forms the bedrock of religious self-efficacy. If students lack confidence in religious learning, the internalization of spiritual values is severely hampered (Hidayat, Harahap, & Siregar, 2025).

Previous research on self-confidence in PAI has largely focused on the pedagogical effectiveness of teaching methods or the integration of digital media to boost student motivation (Nisa, Aslan, & Sunantri, 2021). However, a significant gap remains: existing studies rarely examine the crisis of self-confidence among Muslim adolescents as a complex social and phenomenological process. The ways in which teacher-student interactions, social labeling, and school culture intersect to construct feelings of "shame" and "fear" in a religious context remain underexplored. A sociological perspective is essential to understand that this identity crisis is not merely a technical teaching problem but a byproduct of social construction within the school ecosystem (Fraser, n.d.).

Furthermore, the digital era introduces a new layer of complexity. Adolescents' religious identities are increasingly shaped and challenged by digital exposure, such as viral social media trends (e.g., TikTok challenges) and online misinformation. These digital norms often clash with traditional religious values, creating a "digital identity crisis." Students may feel ashamed to express their religious devotion openly for fear of not aligning with the secular trends glorified online. Therefore, establishing a clear link between adolescent digital identity and sociological religious behavior is necessary to understand modern classroom dynamics (Alza, Putri, & Junaedi, 2024).

This article addresses these gaps by utilizing a phenomenological approach to deeply analyze the low self-confidence experienced by Muslim adolescents. The study aims to: (1) identify classroom practices that act as mental barriers for students during PAI lessons; (2) analyze the social relationships that position teachers as moral evaluators and peers as sources of pressure; and (3) evaluate the sociological impact of this phenomenon on the development of religious education. The central argument posits that the crisis of self-confidence in PAI is not an isolated issue but the result of the intersection between physical changes during puberty, unstable emotional states, and the rigorous moral demands of the school environment (Firdaus et al., 2025).

2. METHOD

This study adopts a qualitative method with a descriptive phenomenological approach, aimed at deeply investigating the crisis of self-confidence among Muslim adolescents studying PAI at SMP Ma'arif NU 1 Purwokerto. Phenomenology was selected because it focuses on the lived experiences of individuals facing feelings of low self-esteem, shame, and social pressure within an institutional setting.

To ensure methodological rigor, the research involved specific demographics. Data were collected from 15 junior high school students (aged 13–15 years) who exhibited signs of low self-confidence, 2 PAI teachers, and 1 Guidance and Counseling (BK) teacher.

Data collection methods included:

1. Observation: Non-participant observations were conducted during PAI classes and daily religious practices (e.g., Dhuha and Dhuhur prayers) to record emotional expressions, bodily responses, and classroom interactions.
2. Interviews: Semi-structured, in-depth interviews were conducted with the students and teachers to capture personal narratives regarding body image, emotional changes, and digital identity struggles.

3. Documentation: Analysis of relevant school documents, including behavioral control books, teacher notes, and school regulations regarding uniform and conduct.

The data analysis utilized the interactive model developed by Miles and Huberman, comprising three main stages: Data Reduction (filtering and categorizing field notes and interview transcripts), Data Presentation (structuring the reduced data into narrative themes), and Conclusion Drawing (synthesizing the findings into a comprehensive sociological understanding of the phenomenon) (Arlini & Hanif, 2025).

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Symptoms of Learning Anxiety and Authoritarian Interactions

The findings reveal significant psychological barriers faced by students during religious learning. Junior high school students, currently navigating the psychosocial stage of identity versus role confusion, experience profound feelings of shame. This shame stems not only from the fear of reprimand from the teacher but also from the fear of peer ridicule.

During classroom observations, the learning environment appeared rigid. When asked to perform religious recitations, students consistently exhibited physical markers of anxiety: lowered heads, avoidance of eye contact, and whispering. Furthermore, researchers noted the detrimental practice of "labeling," where teachers singled out specific students as examples of failure in front of their peers. This triggered reactive verbal rejection, highlighting severe mental stress. As one student explicitly pleaded during an interview, "No, ma'am... please, not me again. Everyone will laugh if my tajwid is wrong." This quote encapsulates the shift of religious practice from a theological duty to a social burden.

Sociologically, this anxiety is compounded by environmental stressors. The physical condition of the classrooms—hot, poorly lit, and situated near a noisy major highway—disrupts the habitus of religious tranquility. To overcome the noise of passing vehicles, teachers naturally raise their voices. However, students perceive this increased volume as "snarling" or anger (Marjuki et al., 2024). This misinterpretation of bodily expression (the teacher's loud voice) exacerbates the students' physiological responses (accelerated heart rate and fear), aligning with the James-Lange psychophysiological theory where physical environmental triggers form the basis of emotional trauma.

The Role of PAI Teachers in Moral and Emotional Validation

The second major finding highlights the critical role of PAI teachers as emotional validators and moral anchors, especially in combating the modern digital identity crisis. In today's digital landscape, students are heavily exposed to social media trends that often promote secular, hyper-visual, or impolite behaviors. Students who wish to fit into these online norms may feel embarrassed to publicly display their religious identity at school.

To counter this, SMP Ma'arif NU 1 Purwokerto implemented a collaborative approach between PAI teachers, BK teachers, and parents. Observational data demonstrates that teachers do not merely teach doctrine; they act as the primary filter against digital misinformation and negative peer influence (Arifin & Ramadhani, 2024). During one-on-one counseling sessions, teachers actively validated the students' emotional confusion, helping them separate their authentic religious identity from fleeting social media personas.

As stated by a PAI teacher during an interview, "We have to understand that these kids are comparing themselves to what they see on TikTok. If we just yell at them to pray, they rebel. We have to listen to their insecurities first." This indicates a necessary shift in power dynamics from strict authoritarianism to organized social support. When students perceive a consistent moral compass across their school and home environments, their religious self-efficacy significantly improves (Kubro & Hanif, 2025).

The Intersection of Puberty, Peer Pressure, and Religious Identity

The third finding reveals that psychophysical changes during puberty directly influence self-confidence and religious adherence. As adolescents undergo rapid physical transformations, they experience heightened insecurity regarding their bodies. To mask this insecurity, students often attempt to stand out by imitating external, sometimes rebellious, trends in their dress and speech (Aslahudin et al., 2023).

Field observations indicated that socializing within negative peer groups can actively suppress a student's religious identity. Self-confidence, in these cases, is derived from peer validation rather than moral integrity.

To address this, the institution enforced strict, uniform regulations (such as covering the awrah) to create an "institutional umbrella" of religious identity. By standardizing physical appearances through school uniforms, the school minimized body-related insecurities and peer competition regarding clothing.

Furthermore, integrating contextual, real-life project methods based on the Merdeka Curriculum allowed students to engage in collaborative religious activities rather than isolated, high-pressure memorization tasks (Abdurroziq & Hanif, n.d.). This holistic approach successfully transformed the adolescents' vulnerability into character resilience, proving that stable self-esteem must be built on authentic spiritual values rather than shifting social trends.

4. CONCLUSION

This study highlights that the crisis of self-confidence among Muslim adolescents in PAI learning is a profound sociological phenomenon. The students' mental barriers are not the result of cognitive failures but are driven by social interactions, authoritarian communication patterns, and environmental stressors (such as classroom noise) that trigger acute learning anxiety. Behind the formal religious activities lies a complex process of identity negotiation, where students struggle to balance the physical changes of puberty and the pressures of digital social media trends with the moral norms established by the school.

The integration of PAI teachers and Guidance Counselors in providing emotional validation has proven highly effective in rebuilding student resilience. By understanding the intersection of emotions, the physical body, and social identity, educators can shift their approach from rigid instruction to humanistic support. While this study is limited to a single institution, it provides a crucial framework for future sociological research on Islamic education. It is highly recommended that schools continue to foster strong synergies between teachers, parents, and students to ensure that religious education serves as a stabilizing, rather than stressful, force in adolescent development.

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