

Islamic Religious Education and the Formation of Adolescent Self-Identity

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Abstract : *This study aims to examine the influence of Islamic religious education on the formation of adolescent self-identity and the factors that support and inhibit the process. The method used in this study is a literature study with a descriptive approach, which involves the analysis of various relevant sources of information, including scientific journals and academic publications. The results of the study indicate that Islamic religious education has a vital role in shaping adolescent identity through the instillation of foundational values such as faith, worship, and morals. Religious education does not only function as a transfer of knowledge, but also as a process of internalizing spiritual values that help adolescents understand themselves and their environment. In addition, Islamic religious education contributes to increasing adolescent self-confidence, tolerance, and critical thinking patterns. In addition, there are also inhibiting factors, such as minimal understanding of religion, negative influences from the environment, and a rigid educational approach. This study emphasizes the importance of collaboration between families, schools, and communities in supporting religious education to form a strong and positive adolescent self-identity amidst the challenges of globalization and digitalization.*

Keywords : *Islamic Religious Education, adolescent Self-Identity, Character Building, Role of The environment*

Abstrak : Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji pengaruh pendidikan agama Islam terhadap pembentukan identitas diri remaja serta faktor-faktor yang mendukung dan menghambat proses tersebut. Metode yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah studi pustaka dengan pendekatan deskriptif, yang melibatkan analisis berbagai sumber informasi relevan, termasuk jurnal ilmiah dan publikasi akademik. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa pendidikan agama Islam memiliki peran yang vital dalam membentuk identitas remaja melalui penanaman nilai-nilai pondasi seperti akidah, ibadah, dan akhlak. Pendidikan agama tidak hanya berfungsi sebagai transfer ilmu, akan tetapi sebagai proses internalisasi nilai-nilai spiritual yang membantu remaja memahami diri dan lingkungannya. Selain itu, pendidikan agama Islam berkontribusi dalam meningkatkan rasa percaya diri, sikap toleransi, dan pola pikir kritis remaja. Disamping itu, terdapat juga faktor penghambat, seperti minimnya pemahaman agama, pengaruh negatif dari lingkungan, dan pendekatan pendidikan yang kaku. Penelitian ini menekankan pentingnya kolaborasi antara keluarga, sekolah, dan masyarakat dalam mendukung pendidikan agama untuk membentuk identitas diri remaja yang kuat dan positif di tengah tantangan globalisasi dan digitalisasi.

Kata Kunci : Pendidikan Agama Islam, Identitas Diri Remaja, Pembentukan Karakter, Peran Lingkungan

Introduction

Islamic religious education has a big role in the lives of adolescents, especially in equipping them with spiritual and moral foundations in the midst of the complexities of modern times. According to Azra (2019), adolescents who receive a strong religious education tend to have better mental and emotional resilience when facing social pressure. This shows that religion not only serves as a ritual guideline, but also as a psychological foundation that helps adolescents undergo a transition phase to adulthood more stably. Without an adequate understanding of religion, adolescents are vulnerable to falling into deviant behavior or losing the direction of life (Nurdin, 2021).

Furthermore, Islam plays an active role in shaping individual values, morals, and character through its comprehensive teachings. As explained by Hasan (2020), the internalization of Islamic values such as honesty, responsibility, and empathy can form a complete personality with integrity. Research conducted by UIN Jakarta (2022) found that adolescents who actively participated in recitation or religious activities showed a higher level of discipline and respect than those who were not involved. This proves that Islam not only regulates aspects of worship, but also forms an ethical framework in social interaction.

However, in the era of globalization and digitalization, adolescents face much more complex challenges in the process of forming their own identity. The rapid flow of information through social media often overwhelms them with values that are contrary to religious teachings (Wibowo, 2023). A study from the Indonesian Ministry of Religion's Religious Research Center (2021) revealed that 65% of Muslim adolescents in urban areas experience identity confusion due to exposure to popular culture that glorifies hedonistic lifestyles. This condition emphasizes the need for a strong mental filter, one of which can be built through consistent Islamic religious education.

Another challenge comes from the lack of religious literacy among adolescents, which makes them vulnerable to narrow or radical religious understanding. The results of research by PPIM UIN Syarif Hidayatullah (2020) show that 40% of Indonesian teenagers only know Islam ritually without understanding the essence of its values. In fact, a partial understanding of religion can hinder the formation of a balanced identity between spirituality and social reality (Maarif, 2022). Therefore, a contextual and critical approach to religious education is needed.

This is where the urgency of discussing the relationship between Islamic religious education and the formation of adolescent self-identity becomes increasingly real. According to Dhofier (2021), effective religious education must be able to answer the challenges of the times without losing its *khittah* as a guideline for life. This means that the Islamic education curriculum not only emphasizes memorizing texts, but also encourages adolescents to reflect on religious values in

daily life. Recent research from the Journal of Islamic Studies (2023) states that adolescents who are taught to associate Islamic teachings with contemporary issues—such as social media, the environment, or equality—tend to have a stronger self-identity.

In addition, the role of the family and the social environment also determine the extent to which Islamic religious education is able to shape adolescent identity. Data from BPS (2022) reveals that adolescents who grow up in families with intensive religious communication have a higher level of confidence in expressing their Islamic identity. These findings are in line with the theory of religious socialization of Berger & Luckmann (2023), which states that the internalization of religious values is most effective when there is continuity between formal education and the immediate environment.

Thus, efforts to strengthen Islamic religious education for adolescents are not only the responsibility of educational institutions, but also require collaboration between parents, the community, and the government. As emphasized by Muhaimin (2020), a multidimensional approach is needed so that the young generation is not uprooted from their religious roots in the midst of the onslaught of modernity. If carried out systematically, Islamic religious education can be a fortress as well as a guide for adolescents in formulating a self-identity that is in harmony with divine values and the demands of the times. Therefore, this article will further examine how Islamic religious education can be a solution for the formation of adolescent identity in the midst of the challenges of globalization and digitalization.

Research Methods

This study uses a literature study design with a descriptive approach. Literature review is a method that is carried out by analyzing various relevant sources of information to gain a deep understanding of the topic being researched. scientific journals, and other academic publications relevant to the research topic. According to Snyder (2019) in his article in the *International Journal of Research & Method in Education*, literature review is an effective method for describing research developments in a field, identifying research gaps, and synthesizing various findings in a systematic way. This research was carried out through several systematic and structured stages, starting with determining a specific research topic, namely the relationship between Islamic religious education and the formation of adolescent self-identity. After that, a search for information sources from various reliable references, such as books, articles

The questions of this research are 1. The influence of Islamic religious education on the formation of adolescent self-identity, 2. Factors that support and hinder the role of Islamic religious education in the formation of adolescent self-identity. The data sources in this study were obtained from various literature available in reliable databases, such as Google Scholar, and accredited national journals. Keywords such as "Islamic religious education," "adolescent self-

identity," "moral values," and "character education" are used to search and collect relevant literature. Only literature that meets certain criteria, such as authors' credibility, relevance to the topic, and publications within the last five years, are used to ensure that the data analyzed is valid and up-to-date.

Results and Discussion

The Influence of Islamic Religious Education on the Formation of Adolescent Self-Identity. Islamic religious education has a very significant role in shaping the identity of Muslim youth, especially through the cultivation of fundamental values such as faith, worship, and morals. Faith is the main foundation for a Muslim's faith, where belief in Allah SWT, His prophets, His books, and the hereafter is the core of one's religion (Dirgayunita, 2024 in Hamdi, 2025:172).

According to M. Quraish Shihab in his book *Grounding the Qur'an*, religious education does not only function as a transfer of knowledge, but also as a process of internalizing spiritual values that can shape a person's personality (Shihab, 1997). In the context of adolescents, religious education is a strong foundation to understand themselves and their environment, as well as build a solid identity in the midst of changing times.

Self-identity is a complex and dynamic concept, it relates to various aspects such as values, norms, and beliefs held by individuals. According to Erik Erikson, a developmental psychologist, adolescence is a critical phase in the search for identity, where individuals begin to explore the various roles and values that exist around them (Erikson, 1968). Identity is an individual's awareness related to his or her identity in socializing. In simple terms, identity can be said to be the question "Who am I?" Teenagers can be said to be successful in finding identity if they are able to make a strong stance in ideology or career. If the identity is not sufficient, there will be confusion of roles or unclear identities (Mubasiroh, 2024: 381). In this context, Islamic religious education plays a very important role in providing a frame of reference for adolescents to understand who they are and what they believe, thus helping them in the process of identity formation.

Adolescents, as an age group that is between childhood and adulthood, often experience identity confusion. According to research conducted by Nurul Hidayah (2020) in the journal "Journal of Education and Culture", adolescents who receive a good religious education tend to have a clearer understanding of themselves and the values they adhere. This shows that Islamic religious education can be a pillar that supports adolescents in facing identity challenges in the modern era.

The influence of Islamic religious education on the formation of adolescent self-identity can be seen from several aspects. **First**, religious education provides a deeper understanding of Islamic teachings, which includes morals, worship, and social relationships. According to Abdul Rahman in his book *"Islamic Religious Education in the Era of Globalization"*, a good understanding of religious teachings can help adolescents to internalize positive values that will shape their character

(Rahman, 2015). Thus, religious education serves as a compass or moral guide that guides adolescents in making decisions. *Second*, Islamic religious education also plays a role in building adolescent confidence. In this case, religious education teaches not only theory, but also practices that can increase an individual's self-confidence. Adolescents who are active in religious activities tend to have a higher sense of self-confidence, because they feel connected to the community and have a clear purpose in life (Siti Aisyah, 2021). This shows that religious education can provide very important social support for adolescents. *Third*, Islamic religious education helps adolescents develop tolerance and empathy for others. Every human being must always live with tolerance between fellow humans as we are religious people living in Indonesia with various ethnicities, nations, races, cultures, and religions. Tolerance is very important in achieving a peaceful life, mutual respect, mutual respect, and mutual help so that people of different beliefs can live in harmony. By understanding Islamic teachings that prioritize the values of compassion and brotherhood, adolescents can learn to respect differences and build harmonious relationships with others (Aulia, 2023).

Furthermore, Islamic religious education also contributes to forming a critical mindset of adolescents. Through Islamic Religious Education, adolescents are also taught to think critically and not accept teachings or information raw without going through a reflection process. This approach is especially important in the digital information age where radical content is easily accessible via the internet. With the ability to think critically obtained from religious education, adolescents can sort out which teachings are correct and in accordance with Islamic values, as well as which are deviations from the true religious teachings (Faizatun, 2024:94).. This is important in helping adolescents not only to receive information rawly, but also to be able to analyze and understand the context of religious teachings in daily life.

In today's digital era, the challenges for teenagers are increasingly complex. Exposure to diverse and often conflicting information can confuse them in determining identity. In this case, Islamic religious education can function as a filter that helps adolescents in sorting out information that is in accordance with the values they adhere. In some cases, religious teaching that is too rigid and dogmatic can cause students to be less able to understand the deeper meaning of the religion's teachings. Therefore, a more contextual and relevant approach to the current reality of adolescent life is needed. Religious education must be able to answer the challenges of the times and provide real solutions to the problems faced by adolescents, such as identity crises, the influence of social media, and pressure from the social environment (Faizatun, 2024:95)

From the above explanation, researchers can conclude that Islamic religious education has a great influence on the formation of adolescents' self-identity, including functioning as a moral and spiritual foundation that helps them understand themselves and the surrounding environment. In the critical phase of the

search for identity, religious education provides in-depth information about Islamic teachings, which includes moral values, worship, and social relationships, thus forming a solid character. In addition, religious education increases adolescents' self-confidence through involvement in religious activities, as well as developing tolerance and empathy for differences. By always supporting a critical mindset, religious education also helps adolescents in sorting through information in the complex digital era. Therefore, the role of religious education does not only lie in educational institutions, but involves families and communities, making it a pillar in shaping a positive and competitive adolescent identity.

Factors that support and hinder the role of Islamic religious education in the formation of adolescent self-identity In the context of the role of PAI in the formation of adolescent self-identity, there are various factors that can support or hinder this process. These supporting factors are such as the role of the family, the social environment that supports religious values, and the religious education curriculum which is related and very influential in the formation of adolescent identity.

The role of the family is one of the main supporting factors in religious education. Families that apply religious values in daily life can have a positive influence on the development of adolescent identity. The role of parents in the family in the formation of character for their children is the first and main role. First, because the family is the initial environment before the child gets to know the outside and the main because the family is a social and emotional environment that can provide quality experiences so that it becomes a determining factor for the formation of a child's personality. The family has functions as education, socialization, protection, affection, religious, economic, recreational and biological. From these functions, parents as the first and main educators have the obligation to provide education to their children, including the cultivation of religious values. Allah said, which means: *"Protect yourselves and your families from the fire of Hell"* (Q.S. 66:6). By referring to this verse, it means that religious education must be given to children from an early age.

In the cultivation of religious education in the family environment that must be given to children is not limited to worship issues such as prayer, zakat, fasting, recital, but must cover the whole of life, so as to be the controller in all actions. Religious and spiritual education is a field of education that must be given full attention by families to their children. This religious and spiritual education means awakening the instinctive spiritual strength and willingness that exists in children through healthy religious guidance and practicing their religious teachings (Hasan Langlung, 1986 in Masduki, 2021: 8)

The social environment that supports religious values also plays an important role in the formation of adolescent identity. The social environment has a strong influence on the formation of a person's self-identity. This happens through the interaction of individuals with people in their socio-cultural environment. And

this is what socialization is all about. Socialization is the process by which a person becomes who he is (his identity is formed) through his interaction with other people in his socio-cultural environment. This socialization is a lifelong process because after all human beings will always live in their relationship with others. Therefore, the amount of influence a person receives from others varies throughout his lifetime. This means that the amount of influence a person receives when he is a child is different from the amount of influence he receives when he is an adult. The older a person is, the smaller the amount of influence he receives from others. Because the older a person is, the more critical he becomes, so that he is able to filter out influences that come from outside or from others. A supportive environment can create a sense of security and comfort for adolescents to explore and understand religious teachings, thus helping them form a strong identity.

A relevant religious education curriculum is also a significant supporting factor. The PAI curriculum has a significant contribution in integrating national values, such as unity, tolerance, and *ukhuwah wathaniyah*, which are the basis of Indonesia's national identity (Sapruddin, 2025). The Theory of Character Education developed by Thomas Lickona also supports the idea that religious education can shape the character of students, not only in the spiritual dimension but also in the social dimension. Lickona argued that character education focuses on the development of morality, which involves values such as honesty, responsibility, and respect for others (Lickona 2019 in Sapruddin, 2025: 351). In this context, the PAI curriculum plays a role in instilling these values in adolescents, which ultimately contributes to the formation of their self-identity. With a relevant curriculum, adolescents can more easily relate religious teachings to their life experiences, thereby strengthening their self-identity.

However, there are also factors that hinder the role of Islamic religious education in the formation of adolescent self-identity. One of the main factors is the lack of understanding of religion. This lack of understanding causes religious values to not be internalized properly, so that adolescents have difficulty applying them in their daily lives. In addition, parents' busyness, lack of time to interact with children, and the influence of social media that often presents content that is contrary to religious teachings are also inhibiting factors. This lack of understanding can be caused by a lack of access to quality religious education.

The negative influence of the environment is also a challenge for religious education. In today's digital era, teenagers are often exposed to values and norms that are contrary to religious teachings. So in this case, the environment, like the community, has a role in the development and growth of adolescents in their environment. Religious leaders, community leaders, can collaborate in creating activities that can involve teenagers, especially religious activities such as youth organizations, mosques, and others.

The lack of role models from adults, both in the family environment and the community, is also an inhibiting factor. Adolescents need to see adults who have a

strong and stable self-identity, who can be used as an example in living life and achieving goals. If adults don't provide enough support or understand a teen's self-discovery process, they may feel confused, insecure, and difficult to find their own identity. A lack of positive role models, such as responsible, honest, and good values, can lead adolescents to look for external examples, which are not necessarily positive and in accordance with their development. A good example from adults has a great influence to provide a real example for teenagers in living a religious life and forming self-identity.

Another factor to consider is the approach used in religious education. A rigid approach to religious education or emphasizing strict rules without providing room for critical thinking can hinder the formation of adolescent self-identity. Approaches that are too formal or irrelevant to adolescents' daily lives can also make them feel alienated and uninterested in religious teachings, which can further hinder the process of forming a strong and positive self-identity (Taufiqurrahman, 2023: 179). A more interactive and contextual approach can help adolescents to better understand and apply religious teachings in their daily lives.

The limited religious education facilities are also a significant obstacle. Facilities and infrastructure in Islamic religious education are also factors that affect the character and learning outcomes of students and adolescents. In schools or madrasas or in remote areas, obstacles in facilities and infrastructure are often the main reasons for problems to arise. The inadequate condition of buildings and classrooms (dark and damp), worship facilities such as prayer rooms and mosques, the unavailability of library and laboratory rooms, the lack of availability of textbooks, religious books, media/learning aids that are minimal are illustrations of the problems of PAI learning in schools/madrasas and also remote areas. (Lailatul et al., 2021: 35). These limitations can reduce the quality of religious education received by adolescents, thus having an impact on the formation of their identity.

The next inhibiting factor for character building is the role of society in which there are peer factors, culture and habits of society, and violence in society. Research by Suparmi, S., & Isfandari (2016 in Faiz, 2020: 90) on peers who have an important role in social life. Therefore, if the role of peers leads to negative things, it is likely that individuals who are included in the group are likely to engage in negative behavior as well. Suparmi and Isfandari also revealed that peers contribute to increasing behaviors such as smoking and consuming alcohol. Individuals with negative tendencies tend to choose peers with similar behaviors.

The second factor in the role of society is culture and habits that can be an obstacle to student character building. Heterogeneous social conditions, culture and customs also affect the character of students/individuals. On the one hand, these cultures and habits are an advantage in themselves, but on the other hand, they become obstacles in the formation of adolescents (Faiz, 2020: 90).

The next inhibiting role is the role of the media which sometimes brings negative things. The presence of technology is like two knives, on the one hand it

can increase knowledge, on the other hand it has a negative impact on students. Students who often see public figures on social media also affect their behavior at school because the jargon of these public figures damages the value of students' language politeness when communicating with teachers. Whether we realize it or not, the habit of imitating public figures that leads to negative things will gradually affect students' behavior and character (Faiz, 2020: 92). The next inhibiting factor from the role of the media is that violent shows that often appear both on television and social media have a negative impact on adolescent behavior. Therefore, it is important to provide good media education so that adolescents can sort out the information they receive.

In this case the researcher can conclude that there are several supporting factors for Islamic religious education on the formation of adolescent self-identity, including the role of families who instill religious values from an early age, a positive social environment that helps adolescents understand religious teachings, a relevant and integrated religious education curriculum. The family functions as the first educator or madrasah, while a supportive social environment creates a sense of security for adolescents. However, there are also inhibiting factors including, lack of religious understanding, negative influences from the environment, minimal role models from adults or leaders in the community or family environment, rigid educational approaches, limited educational facilities, and the negative impact of the media and peers and the community environment. Therefore, it is imperative to create cooperation between families, schools, and communities in supporting religious education, as well as overcoming existing challenges so that adolescents can internalize religious values and form a strong self-identity.

Conclusion

This study shows that Islamic religious education has a significant influence on the formation of adolescents' self-identity. The findings show that through religious education, adolescents can develop strong moral and ethical values, which contribute to the formation of their character and self-identity. In addition, supporting factors such as family, social environment and access to adequate learning resources are important factors in strengthening the influence of religious education. In addition to supporting factors, there are also inhibiting factors, such as lack of parental attention, negative influences from the social environment and the lack of adequate educational facilities, which can reduce the effectiveness of religious education in shaping adolescents' self-identity. Based on these findings, it is suggested that related parties, such as educational institutions, parents and communities, be more active in creating a supportive environment for religious education. Educational institutions should integrate the religious education curriculum with relevant activities so that adolescents can experience the application of religious values in their daily lives. In addition, parents are also

required to be more involved in the education process of their children or adolescents, such as providing the necessary ethical and moral support. Communities also need to lead by example in creating a positive and supportive environment, by holding programs that promote religious and ethical values. With these concrete steps, researchers hope that Islamic religious education can be more effective in shaping adolescents' self-identity, so that they can grow into individuals with character and responsibility.

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