

The Role of School Environment in Maintaining the Consistency of Hijab Wearing in Students: Social Challenges and Solutions for Religious Education in the Modern Era

Zubaidah¹, M. Aqil Fahmi Sanjani², Uswatun Hasanah³, Moh Nur Fauzi⁴, Muhammad Abrori⁵

¹ Universitas Nahdlatul Ulama Sunan Giri, Indonesia

² Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim, Indonesia

³ Universitas Nurul Jadid, Indonesia

⁴ Universitas KH Mukhtar Syafaat Blokagung, Indonesia

⁵ Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Syari'ah Darul Falah, Indonesia

Email :zubaidahzubeth@gamil.com

ABSTRACT

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Hijab, Religious Education, Social Pressure

* Zubaidah

This research focuses on the understanding and challenges faced by students in maintaining the consistency of wearing hijab, as well as the role of schools in supporting the understanding and practice of hijab among students. This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study design, which combines data collection techniques of interview, observation, and documentation. Respondents involved in this study consisted of students, religious teachers, and school staff who play a role in religious activities. The data obtained were analyzed through the stages of reduction, display, and verification to draw valid conclusions. The results showed that the majority of students in both schools viewed hijab as an important expression of religious identity and as a form of modesty. However, they face challenges in maintaining consistency in wearing the hijab, mainly due to the influence of peer pressure, social media, and social norms outside the school environment. In addition, this study also found that religious education programs implemented in schools have a significant role in shaping the understanding and practice of hijab among students. Support from peers, family, and school environment proved to be important in encouraging students to maintain wearing hijab. The implications of this study suggest that a supportive school environment, both structurally and socially, can strengthen students' consistency in wearing hijab, while enriching their understanding of religious values. This research provides important insights for the development of a more holistic religious education curriculum.

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INTRODUCTION

The phenomenon of hijab wearing among students in Indonesian schools, especially in Bojonegoro, reflects complex social dynamics. On the one hand, hijab is seen as an integral part of religious identity and morality (Hijab et al., 2023; Llorent-Bedmar et al., 2023; Rumaney & Sriram, 2023) , but on the other hand the wearing of hijab also often faces major challenges, both from social pressure and popular culture (Basir et al., 2023; Kennedy et al., 2023; Laxer et al., 2023) . In schools such as SMAN 2 and SMAN 4 Bojonegoro, many students consistently wear the hijab as a form of religious observance, while others find it difficult to maintain the hijab in their social life outside of school. Peer pressure, the tendency to follow trends (Alkouatli, 2023; De Schaepmeester et al., 2022; Iner, 2021) , as well as the influence of social media are often factors that influence an individual's decision to wear or remove the hijab (Aladsani, 2022, 2022; Mahmud, 2024) . This phenomenon is important to be studied further to understand the social dynamics that shape students' behavior in religion and dress.

Based on the existing literature review, many previous studies have highlighted the role of hijab as a symbol of religious identity and modesty, both in Indonesia and other countries. Research by Salih & Omar,(2023) shows that the hijab serves not only as a religious obligation, but also as an expression of moral awareness and spiritual values. On the other hand, several studies, also identified social challenges in maintaining the hijab, especially in the face of social influences and popular culture (Cureton, 2024; Khan et al., 2022; Sonmez et al., 2023) . However, there are few studies that discuss the influence of school environment in shaping students' consistency in wearing hijab, especially among teenagers. This research is here to fill the gap and provide deeper insight into the role of school and social environment in supporting or inhibiting the wearing of hijab among students.

This study aims to explore students' perceptions of hijab, the challenges they face in maintaining the hijab, and the role of schools in supporting the understanding and practice of hijab. Based on these objectives, the problem formulations in this study are: (1) How do students in SMAN 2 and SMAN 4 Bojonegoro perceive the wearing of hijab? (2) What are the factors that influence students' consistency in wearing hijab? (3) What is the role of school in shaping and supporting students' understanding of hijab?

This study assumes that hijab wearing among students is not only influenced by individual factors, but also by social and educational factors. We hypothesize that students who get strong social support from school and family environment tend to be more consistent in wearing hijab, despite social challenges outside school.

In addition, we argue that intensive and structured religious education programs at school have an important role in strengthening students' understanding of the meaning of hijab, so that they are better able to deal with social pressure and popular culture. Provisional answers from this study suggest that peer, teacher, and family support are important factors in helping students maintain consistency in wearing hijab, although the influence of social media and social norms outside of school remains a significant challenge.

METHOD

This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study design, which focuses on an in-depth understanding of the wearing of hijab among students at SMAN 2 and SMAN 4 Bojonegoro. The units of analysis in this study are students who wear hijab, religious teachers, as well as school programs related to teaching religion and modesty values. Using a case study design, this research seeks to explore in detail the subjective experiences of students regarding the meaning and challenges of wearing hijab in their daily lives (Mezmir, 2020; Renjith et al., 2021; Riazi et al., 2023) . The focus of this research is to understand the factors that influence students' decisions to maintain or remove the hijab, both in the school environment and outside of school (Memon & chanicka, 2024; Nolan & Owen, 2024; van Bergen et al., 2021) . A narrative approach was also used to reveal individual stories related to hijab, providing a broader perspective on the understanding and practice of hijab among adolescents.

The sources of information in this study consist of three main groups: students who wear hijab, religious teachers, and documentation of school programs related to religious education and modesty. The main respondents in this study were 20 students who actively wear hijab in SMAN 2 and SMAN 4 Bojonegoro. They were purposively selected, taking into account variations in the length of hijab wearing, the level of participation in religious activities, as well as social differences that might affect their views on hijab. In addition, interviews were also conducted with 5 religious teachers who have an important role in providing hijab education. Documentation of school programs, such as religious lectures and religious discussions, was also used to complement the data obtained from interviews and observations, and provide a more comprehensive picture of the school's role in shaping hijab understanding.

Data were collected through three main techniques: interviews, observation, and documentation. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with students and religious teachers to obtain their personal views on hijab wearing and the challenges faced. Observations were made in the school environment, both during teaching and learning activities and extracurricular activities, to record students' behavior in their social context.

Documentation in the form of photographs and school activity reports were used to provide visual and contextual evidence. After data collection, the data was analyzed using data reduction to identify main themes, data display to present information in a structured manner, and data verification to ensure consistency and credibility of results. The following table shows the source code used in this study to maintain the privacy of the respondents.

Table 1. Interviewee Codes

Source Code	Type of resource	Description
I_AN	Student A	Female students wearing hijab
I_BN	Student B	Female students wearing hijab
I_CN	Religion Teacher C	Religious teachers who teach at SMAN 2
I_DN	Student D	Female students wearing hijab
I_EN	Religion Teacher E	Religious teachers who teach at SMAN 4
I_FN	Student F	Female students wearing hijab

This table is used to refer to interviewees who provided information through interviews. Each interviewee code protects the identity of the respondent and facilitates the data analysis process. This code will be applied in the interview report and data analysis to ensure the privacy and security of the information obtained.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Hijab as an Expression of Identity and Religious Compliance

The results showed that the wearing of hijab among students of SMAN 2 and SMAN 4 Bojonegoro is seen as a form of expression of strong religious identity. Based on observations in the school environment, the hijab is often a visual marker that emphasizes the values of modesty and morality. Documentation from school programs such as religious lectures and group discussions show that Islamic religious education has a significant role in shaping students' understanding of the importance of hijab. The majority of respondents stated that wearing hijab makes them feel more valued in social interactions at school. This is as reported in the observation results attached in table 2.

Table 2. Observation Report

Observation Date	Observation Location	Activity Description
January 10, 2024	Religion Classroom	Students wearing hijab are active in the religion group discussion.
January 10, 2024	Religion Classroom	Students wearing hijab listen to religious lectures attentively.
January 10, 2024	School Field	During breaks, hijab-wearing students talk to peers in polite tones, maintaining boundaries of interaction with

				students of the opposite sex.
January 2024	10,	School (Extracurricular)	Hall	Students wearing hijab are actively involved in recitation activities led by religious teachers.
January 2024	12,	School Canteen		Students wearing hijab are seen grouping with other hijab-wearing students, rarely mingling with those without hijab.
January 2024	12,	School Canteen		Some hijab-wearing students chatted with male friends while maintaining physical distance.
January 2024	15,	School (National Day)	Hall Hijab	Students wearing hijab share their experience about hijab in National Hijab Day activity.
January 2024	15,	School (National Day)	Hall Hijab	The religious teacher gave a lecture on the importance of hijab and consistency in wearing it.
January 2024	15,	School (National Day)	Hall Hijab	All students, including those without hijab, signed a symbolic declaration to support modesty and self-respect.

From the observation report table above, it shows that students who wear hijab consistently have a higher level of confidence in expressing their religious identity. Observations show that extracurricular activities such as recitation and religious group discussions play a major role in motivating students to maintain consistency in wearing the hijab outside the school environment. Documentation also revealed students' increased awareness of modesty values instilled through the religious education curriculum. Support from peers and teachers is one of the main factors that encourage students to interpret hijab as a symbol of faith.

The results of this study confirm that hijab plays an important role in building religious identity and self-confidence of students at SMAN 2 and SMAN 4 Bojonegoro. Hijab is not only seen as a religious obligation, but also as a tangible manifestation of spiritual and moral commitment. With the support from the school environment, students are able to integrate these religious values into their daily lives. This finding underscores the importance of a holistic approach in religious education to strengthen students' understanding of the role of hijab as a symbol of obedience and self-respect.

In the perspective of Islamic education theory, this finding is in line with the view that religious symbols such as the hijab can strengthen students' moral and spiritual character. According to Sheen et al.,(2023) , the hijab is an educational tool capable of teaching the values of modesty and obedience. The social interactions of hijab-wearing students at school support the argument that good religious education can create an inclusive and supportive environment for diversity. This finding also reinforces the concept that hijab can be an effective da'wah tool in introducing Islamic values to society.

Social Challenges in Maintaining Consistency in Wearing Hijab

Interviews with students who sometimes remove their hijab outside of school revealed social pressure as a major factor. As many as 10 out of 20 students interviewed admitted that they found it difficult to maintain the consistency of hijab due to peer influence and fashion demands. Observation in the school environment showed a difference in students' behavior patterns when they were at school and outside school. This phenomenon shows that students' understanding of hijab is still fragmented, influenced by the social context outside the school environment.

Further analysis showed that social pressure from peers and the influence of social media were the two dominant factors in students' decision to remove the hijab. The Islamic teachers interviewed indicated that a lack of in-depth understanding of religious values is often the root of the problem. Students who attend religious reinforcement programs tend to be more consistent in wearing hijab. Family support was also found to be an important determinant in students' success in maintaining hijab consistency.

One student revealed, "I feel more confident wearing hijab at school because my friends support me, but when I am out of school, I often feel embarrassed because friends in my social circle think hijab is not cool" (I_AN, 2024). Another student added, "There is pressure from social media to follow certain trends that sometimes make me question my decision to keep wearing hijab" (I_BN, 2024). The religion teacher stated, "Many students actually understand the importance of hijab, but the influence from peers outside of school is often a challenge that is difficult to overcome" (I_CN, 2024).

The results of this study highlight that social challenges have a significant influence on students' consistency in wearing hijab. External factors such as peer pressure and popular culture are often the main obstacles. However, with the right approach, such as a holistic religious education program and family support, students can be more motivated to maintain their religious values across various social contexts.

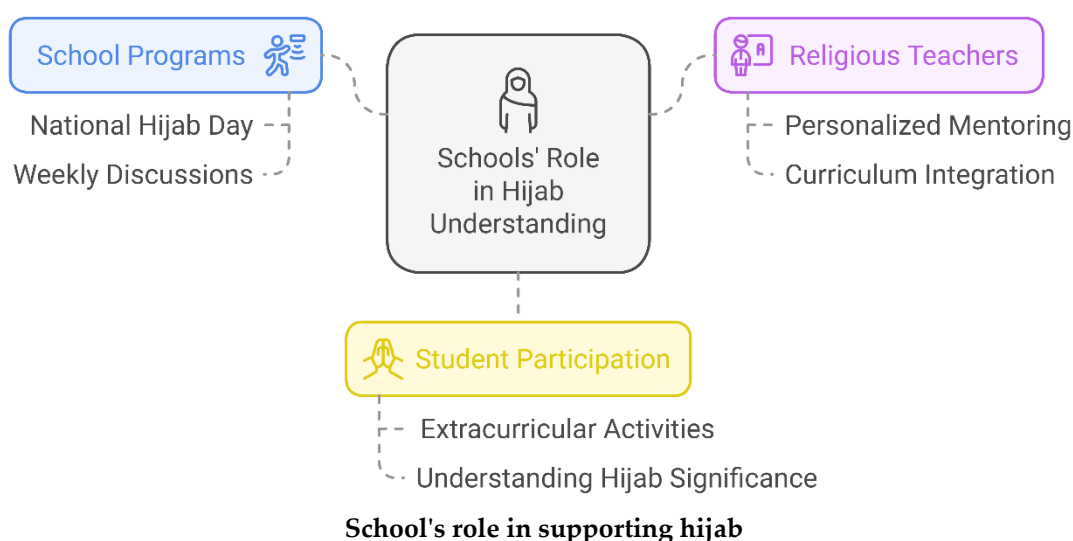
In the context of social theory, these results reflect the dynamics between individual identity and environmental pressures. According to Abu Khalaf et al.,(2022) , the decision to wear the hijab or remove it is often influenced by social norms and the need for group acceptance. This research underscores the importance of community-based approaches in addressing these challenges, by reinforcing religious values through collective support.

The School's Role in Supporting Hijab Understanding and Practice

Schools have a strategic role in shaping students' understanding of hijab. Based on documentation of school programs such as "National Hijab Day" and

weekly discussions, it was found that SMAN 2 and SMAN 4 Bojonegoro actively organized religious activities to raise students' awareness of the importance of hijab. Documentation of school activities shows the active participation of students in events that instill religious values.

Programs such as "National Hijab Day" and weekly religious discussions at SMAN 2 and SMAN 4 Bojonegoro have had a positive impact on students' understanding. Religious teachers emphasized that personalized approaches, such as individual mentoring, help students face challenges in practicing religious values. Documentation noted that students who are active in religious extracurricular activities tend to have a better understanding of the meaning of hijab as a symbol of faith. A supportive school environment can motivate students to be consistent in wearing hijab. This is shown in Figure 1.



This research underscores the importance of the school's role as an agent of change in supporting students' religious practices. By organizing structured and relevant religious programs, schools can help students internalize religious values deeply. This provides a strong foundation for students to maintain consistency in wearing hijab.

Discussion

This study shows that hijab among students of SMAN 2 and SMAN 4 Bojonegoro serves as an expression of deep religious identity and plays an important role in increasing their self-confidence. The main implication of this finding is that the religious education students receive at school not only shapes their understanding of religious obligations, but also plays a role in the formation of their character and social identity. With the support from the school environment, students feel more valued and respected in their social interactions.

This indicates that hijab is more than just a religious obligation; it also serves as a tool to build a strong sense of self-confidence. This finding reinforces the importance of religious education that emphasizes not only ritual aspects, but also broader values such as modesty, self-esteem, and simplicity, which become an integral part of students' daily lives.

The findings in this study also show that the hijab serves as an expression of religious identity and increases students' self-confidence can be correlated with previous studies that suggest that religious symbols, such as the hijab, can provide a sense of security and clear identity for individuals, especially among adolescents who are searching for identity. For example, research by Uddin et al.,(2022) suggests that the use of hijab can provide a sense of control for individuals, which allows them to assert their position in society, especially in social contexts that are often filled with external norm pressures. This finding is also in line with the opinion presented by Hidayah (2020), who emphasized that holistic religious education plays a role in increasing adolescents' confidence in facing social challenges. This correlation shows that the hijab is not just a symbol of religious obligation, but also plays an important role in the formation of a strong identity and self-confidence in students.

This study reveals the challenges faced by students in maintaining consistency in wearing the hijab, especially when they are outside the school environment. The findings show that external factors, such as social pressure from peers and the influence of social media, play a major role in influencing students' decision to remove the hijab. The implication of this result is the importance of paying attention to social influences in shaping students' understanding of hijab. If students are not adequately equipped to deal with social pressure, then they may be influenced by external factors that can reduce consistency in religion. This study reminds us that religious education needs to not only focus on personal aspects, but also on how students interact with the social norms around them. Thus, schools and families need to strengthen cooperation in providing a deeper understanding of the importance of maintaining a religious identity even outside a supportive environment.

Furthermore, this study identifies the social challenges students face in maintaining their hijab wearing, underscoring the importance of social awareness in religious identity formation. Previous research by Paolini et al., (2022) shows that adolescents are strongly influenced by peers and social environment in shaping their decisions, including in terms of hijab wearing. This is reinforced by research conducted by Hassan & Ara, (2022) , which reveals that the influence of social media and pressure from social groups can change individual views on religious symbols.

Therefore, the results of this study indicate the need for a more comprehensive approach in religious education, namely by educating students to be more responsive to external influences that can obscure the religious values they have learned at school. Given the strong social influence on adolescent behavior, a community-based approach involving family, peers and teachers is important to support students in maintaining the consistency of their religious values.

The results of this study highlight the important role of schools in supporting the understanding and practice of hijab wearing among students. Schools, through programs such as National Hijab Day and regular recitation, act as agents of change that strengthen students' understanding of religious values. The implication of this finding is that schools have great potential to shape students' religious character, not only through formal religious lessons, but also through extracurricular activities that promote modesty and religious values. This shows that the role of schools as educational institutions is more than just conveying knowledge, but also as a place to build students' religious character and identity. With the right programs, schools can be a place that supports students in maintaining consistency in their religion and worship.

This research is in line with previous research by Syahrivar, (2021) , which states that schools have a significant influence in shaping students' religious identity through various programs involving religious values. Programs such as recitation and National Hijab Day provide space for students to express their religious identity openly and deeply. This is reinforced by research by Shahzad & Fatima,(2024) , who found that faith-based character education can help students build self-confidence in living their social lives. With the right support from the school, students will feel stronger in defending religious principles, even when they face social challenges outside of school. This finding suggests that a supportive educational environment can provide a solid foundation for students to internalize and practice religious teachings in their daily lives.

CONCLUSION

This study successfully revealed the important role of hijab in shaping the religious identity and self-confidence of students at SMAN 2 and SMAN 4 Bojonegoro. The findings show that hijab is not only seen as a religious obligation, but also as a symbol that emphasizes the value of modesty and morality, and provides a sense of security and confidence among students. This research provides new insights into the important role of religious education in schools in shaping students' character and identity, and how a supportive school environment can facilitate consistency in religious practice.

The main takeaway is that the hijab, as a religious symbol, can be an element that strengthens students' social and spiritual relationships, and positively influences their personal development.

On the other hand, this study makes a significant contribution to the existing literature by highlighting the social challenges faced by students in maintaining consistency in wearing hijab outside the school environment. By exploring external factors, such as peer pressure and social media influence, this study opens up new perspectives in understanding the dynamics of adolescent hijab wearing. In addition, this study introduces the importance of a community-based approach, involving school, family, and peers, to support students' religious consistency. Nonetheless, this study has limitations in terms of its limited scope to two schools in Bojonegoro and lack of variation in respondents' demographics. Further research with a more diverse sample and broader survey methods is needed to delve deeper into differences in gender, age or social background, to provide a more comprehensive basis for inclusive education policy.

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