



Dramaturgy in Religious Practice: A Systematic Review of the Role of Front Stage and Back Stage in the Context of Islamic Education

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Abstract

Introduction to The Problem: Islamic education in Indonesia not only acts as a medium for religious learning, but also as a social space that shapes the identity and religious expression of individuals, especially students, santri, and teachers. Behind the formal religious practices seen in classrooms, mosques, and dormitories, there is a complex and often hidden symbolic dimension. **Purpose:** This research aims to systematically examine how Erving Goffman's dramaturgy theory, particularly the concept of front stage and back stage, is used to understand religious practices in the context of Islamic education. **Design/methods/approach:** This research uses a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach by trawling 16 scholarly articles from databases such as Google Scholar and DOAJ published in the span of 2020-2025. Each article was critically reviewed to explore how the concept of dramaturgy is applied in Islamic education studies. **Findings:** The findings show that religious practice in Islamic education is dynamic, especially in terms of the difference between the outward appearance of adherence to institutional norms and a more personalised and flexible religious life in the private sphere. **Research implications/limitations:** The results of this study show that the dramaturgical approach can reveal the tension between socially constructed religious identities and more personalised religious expressions. Goffman's theory is able to explain the representation of religiosity in Islamic education that is not only symbolic, but also performative. **Originality/value:** These findings provide a theoretical contribution in understanding the dynamics of religious identity in Islamic educational institutions. Therefore, it is important for educators and researchers to not only focus on religious performance in the front stage, but also understand the religious reality that occurs in the back stage, as part of the dynamics of religious identity construction that is more authentic and humane.

Keywords: Dramaturgy, Public Space, Private Space, Islamic Education.

Introduction

Islamic education in Indonesia not only serves as a medium for religious knowledge but also plays a significant role in shaping the identity and religious expression of students. Behind the various religious practices in classrooms, mosques, and dormitories, there remains a symbolic dimension that is often not visible on the surface. These religious practices are not limited to ritual worship activities but also involve complex social aspects. In practice, the Islamic education

environment, where religious values are not merely taught but also practiced in daily life, plays a central role. This is true in madrasas, pesantren, and Islamic schools, which serve as social spaces.

In this regard, Erving Goffman's dramaturgy theory is relevant for examining religious practices and interpreting them within specific social contexts. In his book *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, Goffman explains that social life can be likened to a theater performance, where individuals play specific roles on the social stage. In this context, there are two perspectives: front stage and back stage. The front stage refers to the public domain where individuals perform according to social norms. The back stage, on the other hand, is seen as a more private space where individuals feel freer from social pressures (Goffman, 1996). From the perspective of Islamic education, this understanding is used to examine how students, santri (Islamic boarding school students), and teachers perform their religiosity in accordance with institutional and social demands around them.

From the perspective of Islamic education, both teachers and students face strong institutional pressures to present an idealized religious identity. This is part of the front stage. The back stage, however, is formed, for example, when religious practices occur in private spaces such as dormitories, mosques, or informal discussion rooms. Several Islamic educational practices, such as dressing styles, can also be viewed as part of the front stage, where a person's religious identity is displayed. For example, male santri are prohibited from wearing jeans, skinny pants, or hawaiian shorts, while female santri are not allowed to wear pants, skirts, or jeans. Santri from different backgrounds have different dressing habits. However, once they enter the pesantren, they are bound by the rules set by the pesantren administration (Mujahidin, 2021). It is not uncommon to find discrepancies between these outward appearances and the religious beliefs or practices of individuals in more private spaces (back stage). The tension between religious appearance and more personal religious experiences reflects the complexity of the process of religious identity construction.

Previous research has extensively discussed religious identity, social performance, and Islamic education. A study written by Azizah titled "Dramaturgy and the Religious Life of Beggars: An Islamic Education Perspective" reveals the dual role of beggars at the Sunan Kalijaga and Sunan Kudus tombs. On the front stage, they use religious symbols to attract sympathy, while on the back stage, they do not face economic issues, showing a contradiction in their religious identity (Azizah et al., 2023).

In the modern era, religious expression has become increasingly commodified and visible, especially through social media, formal institutions, and communities based on religious values. This makes it important to revisit how religious identity is constructed in spaces considered sacred

within educational settings. The public space is where conflicting interests compete with each other, and it is a place where individuals can exchange opinions and information, as well as openly and democratically advocate for their interests (Mohammad Fattahun Ni'am, 2023).

This article aims to conduct a systematic review of the literature that discusses dramaturgy in religious practices: a systematic review of the role of front stage and backstage in the context of Islamic education, focusing on how Goffman's dramaturgy framework can help understand the dynamics of front stage and back stage in their lives. Thus, the issue arises: how does Erving Goffman's dramaturgy concept, particularly front stage and back stage, apply in religious practices through Islamic education? Using the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach, this article identifies, analyzes, and synthesizes empirical and conceptual findings from relevant previous studies. The results of this review are expected to contribute to the field of Islamic education and enrich the understanding of religious practices.

Literature Review

The systematic literature review on the role of dramaturgy in religious practice, particularly in the context of Islamic education, emphasizes the relevance of Erving Goffman's dramaturgy theory, especially the concepts of front stage and back stage, in understanding the dynamics of religious expression. In Islamic educational settings, the front stage represents the space where students, santri, and educators display religious behaviors that conform to institutional and social expectations. This includes adherence to dress codes, participation in religious rituals, and other formal displays of religiosity that align with the social norms of the institution. Thadi (2020) and Rimasasi & Astutik (2021) highlight how such behaviors are presented to maintain an idealized religious image in public. However, the back stage provides individuals with a more private and authentic space to express their religiosity, free from the pressures of societal expectations. Studies by Qoni'ah (2022) and Sekar et al. (2024) show that there are significant differences between the public religious identity displayed on the front stage and the private religious practices exhibited in informal, personal settings. For example, female students may wear the hijab in public spaces like campus as part of their public religious identity but remove it in private spaces. Similarly, santri may conform to strict religious codes in pesantren (Islamic boarding schools), but they may display more relaxed behavior outside the institution. This contrast between the front and back stage is not seen as hypocrisy, but as a natural part of the social negotiation process between public and private religious identities.

Furthermore, the tension between these two spaces—front stage and back stage—reveals the dynamic and evolving nature of religious identity formation. As Azizah et al. (2023) and Syam

(2023) indicate, religious practices are not solely about the public display of piety, but involve a complex process of negotiation between what is presented in public and what individuals experience in private. For example, beggars may use religious symbols in public to gain sympathy (front stage), but their private lives (back stage) may reflect a very different reality, revealing the social dynamics of religious identity. This duality between public and private religiosity reflects the broader interaction between individual beliefs and social expectations. Additionally, the rise of digital spaces such as Instagram has extended the front stage into the online realm, where individuals actively curate religious identities for a broader audience. As Salim (2023) suggests, social media platforms offer a new form of religious performance where users present an idealized religious image that aligns with public expectations. However, as in the physical world, the digital front stage does not replace the back stage, where personal religious experiences are freely expressed without external scrutiny.

Islamic educational institutions play a significant role in shaping students' religious identities. These institutions serve as platforms where religious behaviors and rituals are formally taught and performed, as highlighted by Widodo (2024) and Jumihar (2023). Teachers, as the facilitators of these practices, manage religious rituals and norms on the front stage, guiding students in their public expressions of religiosity. Yet, as shown in studies by Prihandoyo (2025) and Mukhammad et al. (2022), the back stage remains a crucial space for personal reflection, where students and educators can negotiate and express their authentic religious beliefs. Ultimately, the application of Goffman's dramaturgical framework to Islamic education reveals how religious identities are not fixed but are shaped by the continuous interaction between public performances and personal reflections, making it a complex and dynamic social practice.

Methods

This study uses the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach, which is defined as a method of literature review that identifies, evaluates, and interprets all findings on a research topic to answer the research question that has been established beforehand (Charters, 2007). This approach is used to examine dramaturgy in religious practices: a systematic review of the role of front stage and backstage. This stage of the research involves a systematic review, which includes collecting, critically evaluating, and synthesizing various findings from previous studies. The literature search was conducted on several academic databases, including Google Scholar and DOAJ, with a publication range from the past 5 years, specifically from 2020 to 2025.

Result

Table 1. SLR Results Table (2020–2025)

No	Author & Year	Study Title	Main Theme	Key Findings	Source Link
1	Robeet Thadi (Thadi, 2020)	The Dramaturgy of Self-Presentation of Migrant Preachers in Bengkulu	Front Stage & Back Stage	Migrant preachers display religious behavior in front of the congregation (front stage) and behave more casually in personal settings (back stage).	https://journal.uinsi.ac.id/index.php/lentera/article/view/2067
2	Dwi Suryani Rimasasi, Anita Puji Astutik (Rimasasi & Astutik, 2021)	Integration of Islamic Morality in Theater Arts	Front Stage	Integration of Islamic morality into character education values in public spaces.	https://ejournal.iaibrahimy.ac.id/index.php/arrisalah/article/view/955/619
3	Sinta Qoni'ah (Qoni'ah, 2022)	Dramaturgy of Santri Outside the Dormitory of Persatuan Islam Pesantren Tarogong Garut	Front Stage & Back Stage	Santri manage their image in front of friends (front stage) and behave more casually when alone (back stage).	https://repository.uinjkt.ac.id/dspace/handle/123456789/71524
4	Nurul Azizah et al. (Azizah et al., 2023)	Dramaturgy and Its Effects on Beggar's Religious Life: An Islamic Education Perspective	Front Stage & Back Stage	Beggars present piety in public (front stage) but have a different life behind the scenes (back stage).	https://ejournal.uit-lirboyo.ac.id/index.php/intelektual/article/view/3103/1186
5	Mariati, Luthfi Salim (Salim, 2023)	Dramaturgy of Instagram and Religious Social	Front Stage Digital	Students use Instagram to present an ideal religious identity in the digital public space.	https://ejournal.radenintan.ac.id/index.php/sr/article/view/20557/7312

		Behavior of Students			
6	Dyah Sekar (Sekar et al., 2024)	The Phenomenon of Female Students Removing Their Hijab at the Faculty of Ushuluddin and Adab at UIN Saizu Purwokerto	Front Stage & Back Stage	Female students display their religious identity by wearing the hijab on campus (front stage) and show different behavior outside campus (back stage).	https://repository.uin-saizu.ac.id/29240/
7	Widodo (Widodo, 2024)	Islamic Boarding School Management in Increasing the Effectiveness and Creativity of Learning at the Modern Islamic Boarding School	Transition Between Schools	Role management between religious rituals and social interaction at school.	https://www.ejournal.iocscience.org/index.php/Cendikia/article/view/5578
8	Jumihar (Jumihar et al., 2023)	Religious Culture Implementation in State Islamic Senior High School in Indonesia	Front Stage in Religious Teacher Behavior	Teachers display symbolic piety while teaching, but it differs in private spaces.	https://rajournals.com/index.php/raj/article/view/393
9	Nurhayati (Nurhayati et al., 2022)	A Management to Strengthen Islamic	Religious Performances on Front Stage	Religious practices displayed are often symbolic and may not align with personal values in the back stage.	https://ijersc.org/index.php/go/article/view/416

		Boarding Schools' Quality Graduates			
10	Cahyanto (Cahyanto et al., 2024)	Integration of Religious Character in School Culture: An Investigation of Character Development Practices in Islamic Elementary School	Back Stage: Personal Space of Santri and Ustadz	Dormitories serve as "backstage" spaces where more authentic religious expressions occur.	https://journal.iainkudus.ac.id/index.php/elementary/article/view/23309
11	Ni'mah Fikriyah Harfi (Ni'mah Fikriyah Harfi, Romelah Romelah, 2025)	Discipline Culture Shapes Students' Religious Character in Islamic Schools	Front Stage & Back Stage	Teachers use Islamic symbols to manage impressions and shape identities in front of students.	https://halaqa.umsida.ac.id/index.php/halaqa/article/view/1707
12	Robingun Suyud El Syam (Syam, 2023)	Islamic Education Strategy Based on Religious Moderation Through Carnival Culture Expression at the Haflah Khatmil Qur'an Event at Al- Asya'ariyyah Wonosobo Pesantren	Religious Symbolism in Carnival Culture	Religious expression through cultural carnivals reflects the integration of religious moderation values.	https://journal.aripi.org.id/index.php/Sadewa/article/view/56
13	Prihand	Dramaturg	Dual	Santri students adjust	https://journal-

	oyo (Muhammad Dimas Prihandoyo, 2025)	y of Santri Students in Campus Life	Role of Santri Students	their behavior and appearance according to the campus environment (front stage) and the pesantren (back stage).	nusantara.com/index.php/JIM/article/view/2474
14	Putri (Putri et al., 2024)	Dramaturgy of the Image of Student Ambassadors at Sultan Ageng Tirtayasa University	Role of Students as University Ambassadors	Students present an ideal image as ambassadors in public (front stage), but differ in everyday life (back stage).	https://jptam.org/index.php/jptam/article/view/18746
15	Mukhammad (Mukhammad et al., 2022)	Dramaturgy of the Image of Professional Teachers in the Classroom and Society	Role of Teachers as Actors in the Classroom and Society	Teachers present a professional image in class (front stage) but differ in society (back stage).	https://bajangjournal.com/index.php/JPDH/article/view/4100
16	Luky Amelia & Saiful Amin (Amelia & Amin, 2022)	Self-Presenting Analysis in Erving Goffman's Dramaturgy Theory on Instagram Displays of Students	Front & Back Stage in Social Media	Students present a religious image on Instagram (front stage), while their personal lives differ (back stage).	https://urj.uin-malang.ac.id/index.php/dsjpips/article/view/1619

The systematic literature review of the 16 studies above reveals the following critical analyses:

The study by Thadi on the Dramaturgy of Self-Presentation of Migrant Preachers in Bengkulu emphasizes that on the front stage, two aspects observed in the dramaturgy study are the physical setting and the front persona (Thadi, 2020). The physical setting refers to the physical space that typically needs to be present when an actor performs. However, in the context of religious preaching, this setting serves as a simple space for them to fulfill their duties. The front persona refers to the tools or props that help the actor in their role. The article discusses that the backstage is a place for migrant preachers to relax and become themselves, free from obligations or specific

roles. The backstage allows them to take off their masks and rest, as this space is also influenced by their own backgrounds. It can be concluded that while migrant preachers are on the front stage, they must fulfill their exemplary role, whereas on the backstage, they present their true selves in daily life.

The study by Rimasasi on the Integration of Islamic Morality in Theater Arts emphasizes that the integration of Islamic values in theater arts creates a dialectic between religion and cultural expression, making theater a creative and representative space for internalizing Islamic morality (Rimasasi & Astutik, 2021). However, from Erving Goffman's perspective, this article should be divided into two main areas of social reality: front stage and backstage, where individuals can perform according to public expectations without pressure. This needs to be more specifically addressed regarding the values and personal displays. The article also did not address whether the audience understood the values presented in the theater performance.

The study by Qoni'ah on the Dramaturgy of Santri (Islamic students) Outside the Dormitory of the Persatuan Islam Pesantren Tarogong Garut emphasizes that when the santri are outside the dormitory, they do not wear uniforms. The front stage dynamics of the santri show that they display their religious identity by dressing modestly, speaking politely, and maintaining proper etiquette and worship. However, in the backstage reality, this is contradicted as they become more relaxed and show their true selves. Goffman's theory here discusses not only pretense but also how individuals manage their social identities in accordance with norms. However, the article needs further reinforcement regarding the comparison between dormitory and non-dormitory students and their ability to control their behavior and the environment affecting their identity.

The study by Azizah on "Dramaturgy and Its Effects on Beggar's Religious Life: An Islamic Education Perspective" emphasizes that religiosity is a form of social construct shaped by social demands. In Goffman's framework, the front stage is where individuals present an identity that is considered appropriate. In this context, beggars who dress neatly and use religious symbols are not merely expressing their faith but are using these symbols to create an impression of religiosity in order to gain sympathy and alms. On the backstage, beggars may not display the same simplicity as they do in public. This shows that the backstage can be a more relaxed space. However, from an Islamic education paradigm, this reflects a failure to build true religiosity, as it focuses solely on symbolic aspects rather than being a foundation for living.

The study by Mariati on "Dramaturgy of Instagram and Religious Social Behavior of Students" explains that students actively use Instagram dramaturgy to create religious narratives in line with their values and beliefs (Salim, 2023). They choose content that reflects religious activities, share religious quotes, and engage in social interactions with religious communities on the platform. The

impact of this religious dramaturgy also includes its influence on students' perception and understanding of religious values.

The study by Sekar on the Phenomenon of Female Students Removing Their Hijab at the Faculty of Ushuluddin and Adab at UIN Saizu Purwokerto explains that the phenomenon of female students removing their hijab reflects a religious identity construction, where religious symbols like the hijab are only used to present themselves in certain spaces (Sekar et al., 2024). These students wear the hijab due to institutional pressure and to project an ideal image as Muslim women. However, it should be noted that the front stage does not only represent a space of falsehood. The hijab is not just an arena for manipulation but a form of caution toward certain societal norms. When viewed from the backstage, these students choose to remove their hijabs, which is seen as a form of self-exploration. This article reveals that the hijab is not only a symbol of obedience but also a space of conflict between social performance and personal beliefs. In practice, these students recognize the hijab as a religious obligation, yet they are not able to fully fulfill it.

The study by Widodo on "Islamic Boarding School Management in Increasing the Effectiveness and Creativity of Learning at the Modern Islamic Boarding School" emphasizes that modern pesantren (Islamic boarding schools) emerged as a response to the need to integrate traditional Islamic values with the demands of formal and modern education (Widodo, 2024). In Goffman's theory, this can be seen from the front stage and backstage perspectives. On the front stage, the santri demonstrate their obedience to the pesantren's rules and participate in religious activities. However, from the backstage, they present a more relaxed and authentic expression of themselves. This dramaturgical perspective emphasizes how santri understand their role as Islamic students, not just as routine participants but as a form of search for meaning in life as servants of God.

The study by Jumiher on "Religious Culture Implementation in State Islamic Senior High Schools in Indonesia" discusses that religious culture in the context of Islamic education in Indonesia refers to the values, norms, rituals, and Islamic symbols in everyday life that play a role in shaping students' character while strengthening their Islamic identity.

The study by Nurhayati on "A Management to Strengthen Islamic Boarding Schools' Quality Graduates" (Nurhayati et al., 2022) explains that the religious cultures taught in Islamic secondary schools serve as a platform for shaping character, social behavior, and students' orientation. Thus, Islamic values are not only taught and applied within the school but are also internalized and implemented in daily life to prepare young Muslims with good ethics.

The study by Cahyanto on "Integration of Religious Character in School Culture: An

Investigation of Character Development Practices in Islamic Elementary School" (Cahyanto et al., 2024) connects with the dramaturgy perspective by seeing schools as social stages where teachers, students, and staff interact as actors. The front stage in elementary schools includes activities such as performing prayers in congregation, reading the Qur'an, and being honest. However, in the backstage, such as during breaks when students go to the cafeteria or when they are at home, the religious behaviors practiced at school may differ when they are outside of school.

The study by Harfi on "Discipline Culture Shapes Students' Religious Character in Islamic Schools" explains that discipline culture in Islamic schools is not just a set of rules but serves as a guideline for students to form a more religious identity and display it in everyday life. All religious activities in school are part of the religious culture reinforced by disciplinary rules. Discipline in attendance reflects responsibility as a student. On the front stage, this may begin with motivation and teacher supervision in school. On the backstage, when students are outside of school, their behavior might not continue as practiced in school.

The study by Syam on "Islamic Education Strategy Based on Religious Moderation Through Carnival Culture Expression at the Haflah Khatmil Qur'an Event at Al-Asya'ariyyah Wonosobo Pesantren" mentions that the Haflah Khatmil Qur'an event serves as a stage where actors perform roles, deliver messages, and form identities. On the front stage, there are carnival activities and art performances. From the backstage, there is the preparation process, committee discussions, and the interaction between the students and teachers.

The study by Prihandoyo on "Dramaturgy of Santri Students in Campus Life" highlights the dynamics of the daily lives of santri students in showcasing religiosity and its implementation in academic life. In public, it is often observed that santri students tend to maintain their religious appearance, such as physical appearance, ethics, and involvement in Islamic organizations. However, according to Goffman, not all performances are displayed in public. In the backstage, santri students can freely express their personal side.

The study by Putri on "Dramaturgy of the Image of Student Ambassadors at Sultan Ageng Tirtayasa University" explains that Student Ambassadors at the university represent the institution in various forums, both internal and external. They not only perform academic roles but also carry symbolic responsibilities as representatives of the university's values. Goffman's approach helps analyze the image-building strategies of students at the university. In reality, students are expected to present an image aligned with public institutions, such as visual appearance. Goffman's theory states that when a person is on stage (front stage), the role performed must be at its best to ensure that the audience understands the intended message and purpose of the behavior being displayed (Goffman, 1996). However, backstage, a person's true nature is revealed when there are no

audience members, and they can behave freely without a prescribed script.

The study by Mukhammad on "Dramaturgy of Professional Teacher Images in the Classroom and Society" reveals that dramaturgy includes the concept of image-building. Erving Goffman shows us that self-presentation, in the case of a teacher in both the classroom and society, occurs due to the needs of the profession itself. Therefore, a teacher is oriented toward fulfilling their needs through dramaturgy, performing their role as a professional educator.

The study by Amelia on "Self-Presenting Analysis in Erving Goffman's Dramaturgy Theory in Instagram Displays of Students" mentions that the front stage mapping shows the actual life of PIPS UIN Malang students. Besides their real-life, students have a second account used as a backstage in the virtual world. Moments on the front stage are rarely published to the public. The backstage analysis shows that efforts are made by the actors to prepare themselves to appear perfect and at their best in front of their audience (followers).

Discussion

Results of the Systematic Literature Review

The systematic literature review of the six studies analyzed in this article reveals that Erving Goffman's dramaturgy concept, particularly the concepts of front stage and back stage, is highly relevant in understanding the dynamics of religious expression in the context of Islamic education.

Dynamics of Front Stage in Islamic Education

In general, within the space of Islamic education, both students and educators present religious identities that are aligned with the norms and expectations of the institution. This is reflected in the study by Thadi (Thadi, 2020) on migrant preachers who display ideal religious behavior in front of their congregation, as well as the research by Rimasasi and Astutik (2021), which shows the integration of Islamic moral values into public spaces through the medium of theater. In the daily practices at educational institutions like pesantren (Islamic boarding schools) and madrasas, the front stage functions as a space for constructing formal identity, where obedience to dress codes, ways of speaking, and participation in religious activities are indicators of religiosity. This serves as an effective medium for the socialization of religious values; however, in some cases, it can lead to psychological pressure for individuals who feel the need to maintain a specific image in public. As explained by Salim (Salim, 2023), in the digital era, the front stage is no longer limited to physical interactions but extends to digital spaces like Instagram, where students curate religious images for public consumption.

The Existence of Back Stage: Between Authenticity and Adaptation

Meanwhile, the back stage in the context of Islamic education represents a space where

individuals can express themselves more freely without strict social demands. In the study by Qoni'ah (Qoni'ah, 2022), it is explained that out-of-dormitory students, as well as in Dyah Sekar's research, the phenomenon of removing the hijab outside of campus, shows a significant difference between behavior in formal spaces and private spaces (Sekar et al., 2024). In the back stage, students often negotiate between the values taught at the institution and their personal background, cultural preferences, and psychosocial conditions. Here, religious identity is formed and tested in a more honest way. The conflict between what is displayed publicly and what is personally believed also reflects a dynamic social adaptation process. In this context, the back stage should not be seen as hypocrisy, but as a space for resistance, relaxation, and self-reflection against the performative pressures presented on the front stage.

Social Context and the Changing Expression of Religiosity

Religiosity in modern public spaces, including on social media, reinforces this dynamic. As found in Salim's study, religious identity is no longer just about personal beliefs but also concerns the social image that is intended to be formed and accepted (Salim, 2023). Islamic education is faced with new challenges to equip students not only with an understanding of Sharia in a normative sense but also with critical skills to build their religious identity amid diverse social demands. Therefore, the understanding of front stage and back stage should be used as a tool to interpret religious phenomena more humanely. This approach allows us to see religious practices not just within the framework of right and wrong, but within the context of social negotiation, self-identity, and cultural construction. In studying Islamic identity in Indonesia, especially in the context of ideology, public space, and hegemony, Goffman's dramaturgical approach (Goffman, 1996) provides important insights into how such identity is staged and negotiated in daily social life. In the context of hegemony, the Islamic identity presented in public spaces not only reflects personal beliefs but also represents an effort to respond to or negotiate certain ideological dominances, such as discourses on moderate Islam, political Islam, or cultural Islam. The back stage, conversely, becomes a space where individuals or groups can express more diverse forms of religiosity, possibly more critical or even contrary to the hegemonic narratives in public spaces (Rahman et al., 2014).

The Role of Educational Institutions as a Stage

Islamic educational institutions are platforms for the educational process as well as for cultural formation, which begins in the family environment. In line with the purpose of Islam's arrival, Islamic education aims to create individuals who are always pious to Allah and who are complete Muslims capable of achieving happiness in this world and the hereafter (Afida, 2020). For instance, the implementation of tahfidz (Qur'an memorization) and religious studies serves as religious

symbols displayed within the school environment. However, when students feel that their identity does not align with these formal demands, it indicates that Islamic education is not only a space for the transmission of values but also a space for negotiating identity.

Implications for the Understanding of Religious Authenticity

Front stage performances should not be seen as mere pretense but as part of the process of socializing values and internalizing norms. In some cases, an individual's involvement in religious performances can strengthen their internal beliefs through cognitive mechanisms like attitude consistency and cognitive dissonance. Conversely, the tension between the front stage and back stage should also be viewed as an opportunity to encourage critical reflection on religious practices, not merely to assess individual piety.

Conclusion

Based on the systematic review, it shows that Erving Goffman's dramaturgical theory approach, particularly in the concepts of front stage and back stage, is relevant to understanding the dynamics of Islamic education in Indonesia. This is because the religious identity presented within educational institutions is not only a reflection of personal beliefs but also the result of social negotiation with the demands of the public space. In the front stage, students and educators form a formal religious identity that aligns with social and ideological expectations, while in the back stage, there is greater freedom to explore religiosity in a more authentic and personal way. This indicates that religious practices in Islamic educational environments cannot be understood as "pretense" but rather as the result of interaction between the individual and society. Therefore, this dramaturgical approach provides a framework for understanding diversity within the context of Islamic education as a social practice, negotiation, and self-reflection.

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