Implementation of the Self-Disclosure Model to Improve Students' Interpersonal Communication in Islamic Religious Education Learning

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ABSTRACT :

Academic challenges in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning often arise from students' limited interpersonal communication skills, which results in low engagement and ineffective meaningful interactions in the classroom. This situation becomes even more crucial when students are reluctant to express their opinions or personal experiences, resulting in passive, teacher-centered learning. To address these issues, this study aims to examine how the self-disclosure model can be applied in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning and assess its effectiveness in improving students' interpersonal communication. Using a library research design, this study collected, reviewed, and synthesized theoretical and empirical findings from books, journals, and previous studies. Content analysis was used to obtain conceptual patterns and pedagogical implications relevant to the application of self-disclosure in the context of religious learning. The results show that structured self-disclosure—through the creation of a safe space, teacher role models, and directed sharing activities—can improve students' openness, empathetic listening skills, and social relationships among peers. This study concludes that the self-disclosure model is relevant in strengthening interpersonal communication in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning and provides pedagogical insights for teachers in building active, dialogic, and socially connected classes.

Key words: *Self-disclosure, interpersonal communication, Islamic Religious Education*

INTRODUCTION

The dynamics of Indonesian education demonstrate serious challenges in developing students' social and emotional competencies. A 2023 report from the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology (Kemendikbud) indicates that more than 100,000 junior high and senior high school students experience difficulties in communication skills, particularly in speaking and expressing opinions (Kemendikbud, 2023). This data is supported by the results of the 2022 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) survey, which found that Indonesian students' social interaction skills are below the OECD average (OECD, 2023). This condition is evident in various subjects, including Islamic Religious Education (PAI), where learning should be dialogical and develop students' courage to express religious understanding in a healthy manner.

Furthermore, a survey conducted by the Indonesian Child Wellbeing Survey (ICWS, 2024) found that junior high school students are uncomfortable sharing personal experiences, including those related to moral and religious issues, for fear of being judged by peers or teachers. This

condition contributes to the low depth of dialogue in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning. PAI learning, however, demands strong interpersonal interactions, as Islamic values are understood not only cognitively but also through open and reflective communication. When students are unable to speak honestly and openly, the process of internalizing moral values is hampered.

This problem requires a serious approach. One approach is through the concept of self-disclosure, which is believed to be effective in building interpersonal communication. DeVito (2019) explains that self-disclosure is a process where individuals voluntarily reveal their thoughts, feelings, and personal experiences to others to build deeper, more trusting relationships. This theory aligns with the principles of humanistic education, which place open communication as the foundation of social relationships in the classroom (Johnson & Johnson, 2020). In learning, self-disclosure can create an atmosphere of mutual trust, making students more confident in engaging in dialogue and asking questions.

This approach strongly aligns with the values of Islamic Religious Education. Shihab (2018) emphasized that honest (ṣidq), trustworthy, and open communication are the foundation for developing social morals. These values are also emphasized in Islamic educational theory, which views dialogue and openness as essential tools for developing students' spiritual and moral intelligence (Abuddin Nata, 2021). Thus, the integration of the self-disclosure model and Islamic Religious Education learning objectives creates a consistent pedagogical framework, both theoretically and Islamically. This is why researchers discuss the self-disclosure model as an effort to improve student communication in Islamic Religious Education learning.

Furthermore, the urgency of this research becomes clearer when examining the reality of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning in schools. Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers often encounter passive students who rarely speak, and are reluctant to express their opinions on religious issues or everyday experiences. A national study on Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning found that Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers admitted to having difficulty encouraging students to engage in open discussions (Suryana, 2022). When there is no space for openness, interpersonal relationships between teachers and students become formal and lack depth. As a result, religious values are not conveyed holistically.

The low quality of interpersonal communication in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning is also reflected in various national education reports. A study by the Center for Education Policy Research (Puslitjak) showed that Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers face difficulties in encouraging students to actively participate in classroom discussions, especially when the learning requires students to share moral experiences or personal feelings (Puslitjak, 2022). The report emphasized that Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning in many schools remains one-way, resulting in underdevelopment of dialogue.

Various studies have also highlighted that students' lack of interpersonal communication skills is influenced not only by psychological factors but also by learning approaches that fail to provide opportunities for students to practice expressing their opinions constructively. Islamic Religious Education (PAI) education is often trapped in a lecture-based approach and an emphasis on cognitive aspects, resulting in under-emphasizing affective values such as speaking courage, self-disclosure, and the ability to connect material to personal experiences (Nata, 2021). This situation highlights the need for implementing learning strategies that enable students to develop the courage to communicate openly while building more positive and meaningful interpersonal relationships.

while building more positive and meaningful interpersonal relationships. Several previous studies have provided empirical evidence that self-disclosure is positively correlated with the quality of interpersonal relationships and communication skills, thus providing a strong foundation for investigating the application of the self-disclosure model in the context of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning.

For example, research conducted at MTs Lab IKIP Al Washliyah Medan showed a significant relationship between self-disclosure and students' interpersonal communication: a correlation coefficient of $r = 0.435$ ($p < 0.05$) between the self-disclosure variable and interpersonal communication skills. (Wihtawan et al., 2018). This research indicates that when students are more open in expressing their thoughts or feelings, they tend to have better interpersonal interactions. Thus, these results support the hypothesis that learning that facilitates self-disclosure can strengthen students' interpersonal communication.

Furthermore, in the realm of adolescent development, a literature review confirms that self-disclosure during adolescence plays a crucial role in identity formation, peer relationships, and overall well-being (Mills & Sylvester, 2020). The study noted that when adolescents are given a space to safely share personal experiences and perspectives, they demonstrate closer relationships and improved communication skills. This point is relevant to religious education because Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning ideally addresses students' personal experiences, values, and reflections.

Furthermore, studies in communication science provide a theoretical basis for the idea that self-disclosure is a crucial component of effective interpersonal communication: self-disclosure helps build trust, reduces psychological distance between individuals, and improves the quality of interpersonal interactions (Petronio, 2013). Although the context is more general and not specific to Islamic Religious Education classes, these findings suggest that openness-oriented learning strategies can theoretically strengthen classroom interactions.

However, these studies have limitations, including focusing on the general population (adolescents or college students) or on social or online communication contexts, rather than exclusively on Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning in secondary schools. Therefore, there is still room for research specifically examining the application of the self-disclosure model in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning and measuring its effects on students' interpersonal communication skills. This gap provides a strong foundation for this research to contribute both theoretically and practically.

Thus, this study aims to fill this gap by systematically applying the self-disclosure model in Islamic Religious Education (ISE) learning and then measuring its impact on students' interpersonal communication. The results are expected to contribute to how learning strategies can be designed to make students more active, open, and have better interpersonal communication skills, especially in the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) domain. Within this framework, this study aims to analyze in depth how the self-disclosure model can be applied in the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning process and assess the extent to which its application can improve students' interpersonal communication skills. This study also aims to provide educators with a conceptual and practical understanding of effective learning strategies in creating a communicative, dialogical classroom atmosphere that is oriented towards student character development.

Methods

This study employed a qualitative approach with library research, where all data was obtained through a literature review relevant to the themes of interpersonal communication, self-

disclosure, and Islamic Religious Education learning. This approach was chosen because the focus of the research was not on empirically testing variables in the field, but rather on examining the depth of concepts, theories, and findings of previous studies to formulate how the self-disclosure model can be conceptually applied in Islamic Religious Education learning. The literature referenced included DeVito's (2019) interpersonal communication theory, Jourard's (2020) self-disclosure concept and expanded upon by Mills & Sylvester (2020), Petronio's (2013) private communication management theory, and Islamic Religious Education literature such as Nata (2021) and Shihab (2018). Supporting data was also obtained from official reports such as the 2023 Indonesian Education Profile (Ministry of Education and Culture) and PISA 2022 (OECD).

Data collection was conducted through documentation of books, journal articles, and research reports by reading, marking, identifying, and selecting relevant literature. Each source was then analyzed using content analysis techniques, namely the process of interpreting the meaning of written documents through grouping themes, examining relationships between concepts, and drawing theoretical meanings. At this stage, researchers performed data reduction to filter important information directly related to students' self-disclosure and interpersonal communication models, then systematically arranged it to explain the theoretical relevance to Islamic Religious Education learning.

Data validity was maintained through source triangulation, comparing arguments and findings from various literature sources from different authors, years, and research contexts, ensuring strong accuracy and credibility. This procedure is expected to yield a comprehensive analytical overview of the concept and application of the self-disclosure model as a potential learning strategy for improving students' interpersonal communication in the context of Islamic Religious Education.

Result
Subsection 1 Conceptualization of Self-Disclosure

Self-disclosure essentially refers to the process by which a person voluntarily reveals thoughts, feelings, experiences, or personal information to another person with the aim of building closer and more trusting relationships. DeVito (2019) explains that self-disclosure is a core element in interpersonal communication because through the act of self-disclosure, social relationships can develop from mere formality to psychological closeness. Jourard (1971), as one of the pioneers of the concept of self-disclosure, also emphasized that the quality of interpersonal relationships is largely determined by the extent to which individuals are able to express themselves authentically. In the context of education, especially during adolescence, self-disclosure is understood not only as an act of sharing experiences, but also as a process of identity growth, emotional courage, and the formation of self-identity.

In further studies, self-disclosure has several levels and dimensions. DeVito (2019) divides self-disclosure into two main layers: superficial disclosure, which includes general information such as hobbies or preferences, and in-depth disclosure, which relates to feelings, beliefs, moral values, or sensitive personal experiences. Meanwhile, the dimensions of self-disclosure according to Chelune (1979) include depth, breadth, accuracy, and the purpose of disclosure (intent). Depth refers to how intimate the information shared is, breadth concerns the number of topics disclosed, while accuracy relates to honesty and authenticity in sharing information. In the classroom, especially Islamic Religious Education (PAI), these dimensions are important because teachers need to create an environment that encourages proportional openness while maintaining pedagogical ethics.

Factors influencing self-disclosure in junior high school students are diverse and related to their psychological development as early adolescents. Erikson (1980) places students in the identity-searching stage, where the need for peer acceptance and fear of social judgment become dominant. This makes some students reluctant to disclose personal experiences, especially in classroom settings they perceive as psychologically unsafe. Trust in teachers is also an important factor. Research by Santrock (2018) shows that students are more likely to open up when teachers demonstrate empathy, a non-discriminatory attitude, and the ability to create a supportive classroom atmosphere. Furthermore, Indonesian culture, which tends to teach children to be polite and not overly verbally expressive, also influences their level of openness (Hofstede, 2010). Other factors include the quality of friendships, previous communication experiences, and perceptions of the risks of self-disclosure.

The relationship between self-disclosure and interpersonal communication has been extensively studied, with most studies demonstrating a significant relationship. Research by Wihtawan et al. (2018) on MTs students in Medan showed a positive correlation between self-disclosure and interpersonal communication skills, with an r value of 0.435 (p < 0.05). This means that the higher a student's level of self-disclosure, the better their interpersonal interaction skills. This finding aligns with Miller's (2020) research, which shows that students who habitually express their thoughts and feelings in a directed manner are better able to build social closeness, understand others' perspectives, and manage conflict constructively. Furthermore, in his study of interpersonal communication, Petronio (2013) emphasized that self-disclosure is the primary foundation for building trust and emotional closeness, two important aspects that are at the heart of interpersonal communication. In other words, self-disclosure is not simply an activity of sharing information, but a communication mechanism that shapes the quality of relationships between individuals.

These research findings confirm that self-disclosure has strong relevance in the context of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning. PAI subjects emphasize the values of honesty, mutual trust, and healthy dialogue—three values that are naturally strengthened through self-disclosure. Therefore, a conceptual understanding of self-disclosure serves as an important foundation for developing learning strategies that can significantly improve students' interpersonal communication skills.

Subsection 2 Integration of the Self-Disclosure Concept with Islamic Religious Education Learning

The integration of the concept of self-disclosure in Islamic Religious Education learning is fundamentally based on the shared goals of both: building honest, open communication and creating valuable interpersonal relationships. In a theoretical framework, self-disclosure is the voluntary process of revealing thoughts, feelings, and personal experiences to build relationships of mutual trust (DeVito, 2019). Meanwhile, Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning places the values of honesty (ṣidq), trustworthiness, and deliberation as the main pillars of healthy and constructive communication. Shihab (2018) emphasized that Islam places a strong emphasis on responsible openness in social interactions, not simply speaking truthfully but conveying the truth with wisdom and maintaining the honor of oneself and others. This shared value makes self-disclosure relevant for development in the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning process.

Furthermore, self-disclosure can serve as a pedagogical bridge to building dialogic and humanistic Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning. The PAI curriculum emphasizes the importance of strengthening morals, moral reflection, and internalizing religious values through a participatory and communicative learning process. Abuddin Nata (2021) states that ideally, PAI learning encourages students to relate material to personal experiences, reflect on values, and engage in open dialogue in a respectful classroom environment. In this context, self-disclosure becomes a medium that enables students to connect Islamic teachings to the realities of their lives. When students boldly share moral experiences, difficulties they face, or personal views on a

religious issue, teachers can help them connect these to the principles, values, and morals taught. This process strengthens students' understanding and increases the relevance of the learning.

The integration of self-disclosure also plays a role in improving the quality of teacher-student relationships in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning. Research by Santrock (2018) shows that positive interpersonal relationships between teachers and students can increase psychological safety, making students more comfortable speaking, asking questions, and expressing opinions. In the context of Islamic Religious Education (PAI), teachers are not only transmitters of knowledge but also moral figures who serve as role models for openness and empathy. When Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers demonstrate proportionate self-disclosure—for example, by sharing spiritual experiences or relevant moral challenges—students tend to emulate them and perceive value dialogue as less threatening. This aligns with the views of Islamic education figures who emphasize the importance of communicative role models in guiding students' moral development (Nata, 2021).

Furthermore, self-disclosure can strengthen the values-based learning approach that is at the heart of Islamic education. In values learning, moral reinforcement is achieved not only through theoretical explanations but also through reflective dialogue and in-depth interpersonal interactions. Gudykunst (2004) explains that self-disclosure helps individuals understand others' perspectives, reduce prejudice, and build more empathetic relationships. In Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning, this is crucial because many religious topics relate to students' personal experiences, such as honesty, emotional management in worship, relationships with friends, and moral challenges in adolescence. By providing a space for self-disclosure, students can safely express these experiences, and teachers can facilitate learning that simultaneously touches the cognitive, affective, and spiritual realms.

Therefore, the integration of self-disclosure not only enriches Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning strategies but also strengthens the fundamental goal of PAI in developing character and noble morals. PAI learning that provides space for self-disclosure can create a dialogic, empathetic, and value-laden classroom atmosphere, thereby improving the quality of students' interpersonal communication. Therefore, the application of self-disclosure in PAI is not merely a pedagogical innovation, but part of an effort to build a more humanistic, contextual, and relevant religious education to meet the developmental challenges of today's students.

Subsection 3 Self-Disclosure Implementation Model in Islamic Religious Education Learning

The implementation of the self-disclosure model in Islamic Religious Education learning requires a planned pedagogical design so that the process of self-disclosure can occur safely, in a controlled manner, and support the goals of moral education. Self-disclosure cannot be implemented spontaneously, but must follow psychological principles and interpersonal communication that consider student readiness, social norms, and religious values. Petronio (2013) emphasized that self-disclosure is effective only when carried out within clear "boundary conditions "namely", the existence of limits, communication rules, and a sense of psychological safety that guarantees student confidentiality and comfort. Therefore, the implementation model in Islamic Religious Education needs to emphasize the creation of a safe space before inviting students to disclose themselves.

In the initial stages, Islamic Religious Education teachers can implement gradual self-disclosure, which, according to Jourard (1971), is a fundamental principle in developing interpersonal openness. Teachers can begin with icebreakers, light reflections, or non-sensitive questions, such as about daily worship experiences, the meaning of verses or hadiths for themselves, or general feelings related to the lesson. When teachers share limited and relevant self-disclosurefor example, about simple spiritual experiences students will see that disclosing personal experiences is normal in Islamic Religious Education classes. Teachers' communicative role models are important triggers for building students' courage to do the same, as Nata (2021)

emphasized that Islamic Religious Education teachers must be role models of good values and communication.

Furthermore, self-disclosure in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) can be implemented through reflective dialogue-based learning activities. This model aligns with value-based learning (value clarification), which encourages students to express moral experiences and consider Islamic values in real-life situations. Johnson and Johnson (2020) state that reflective dialogue helps students connect their own experiences with the moral concepts taught, thus making learning more meaningful and deepening the internalization of values. Teachers can use guided disclosure techniques, which involve asking provocative questions such as: "What was your most memorable experience when faced with a moral choice?" or "How did you feel when trying to apply the value of honesty in your daily life?" These types of questions do not force students to reveal sensitive experiences but instead encourage them to share personal reflections safely.

In addition to reflective dialogue, the implementation of the self-disclosure model can be facilitated through small-group disclosure. Gudykunst (2004) explains that self-disclosure is easier to emerge in small groups with high levels of trust than in large class discussions. In the context of Islamic Religious Education (PAI), small groups can be used for activities such as moral case analysis, verse/hadith discussions, or sharing worship experiences. The teacher acts as a facilitator, guiding the dialogue so that it remains polite, respectful, and based on Islamic values. This approach not only improves students' interpersonal communication skills but also strengthens social bonds and empathy among students.

The final stage of the implementation model is personal reflection and value reinforcement. Reflection activities help students reprocess the experiences they have shared and relate them to the Islamic values taught. Shihab (2018) emphasizes the importance of internalizing values through personal contemplation and appreciation of Islamic teachings. In Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning, reflection can be conducted through personal journals, end-of-lesson notes, or closing discussions that link self-disclosure to strengthening morals such as honesty, trustworthiness, patience, and mutual respect. Thus, self-disclosure not only improves interpersonal communication but also serves as a means of character development.

This model of self-disclosure implementation in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning demonstrates that self-disclosure is not understood as merely an emotional activity, but as a pedagogical strategy integrated with Islamic values and educational goals. Systematic implementation from creating a safe space, teacher role models, reflective dialogue, small group work, and value reflection can help build a more communicative, empathetic, and meaningful Islamic Religious Education classroom atmosphere. This emphasizes that self-disclosure can be an important approach to improving the quality of students' interpersonal communication while strengthening character education in religious learning.

Subsection 4 The Impact of Self-Disclosure in Islamic Education Learning

The application of self-disclosure in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning has the potential for broad impacts on personality development, social relationships, and increasing the effectiveness of the teaching and learning process. Self-disclosure—the ability to open up and express personal experiences, feelings, and views honestly and responsibly—is an important tool in building healthy interpersonal communication between teachers and students (DeVito, 2019). In the context of PAI learning, self-disclosure not only serves to strengthen social relationships but also serves as a vehicle for developing spiritual and moral awareness.

One of the main impacts of implementing self-disclosure is increased trust and emotional closeness between teachers and students. According to Jourard (1971), self-disclosure fosters a relationship of mutual understanding because communication is not only cognitive but also affective. In Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning, teachers who are able to share spiritual experiences wisely—for example, about personal struggles in worship or facing tests of faith—can

foster a sense of empathy and psychological closeness in students. This process strengthens a classroom climate full of safety and mutual respect, as emphasized by Rogers (1983) in his humanistic learning theory, that an empathetic and open atmosphere is a prerequisite for the birth of meaningful learning.

Furthermore, self-disclosure has the potential to increase students' intrinsic motivation in learning religious values. When students are given space to express their religious experiences, they feel valued and recognized as individuals growing spiritually. This aligns with Hamalik's (2020) view that learning motivation grows stronger when students experience emotional and personal involvement in the material being taught. In this context, self-disclosure serves as a bridge between cognitive religious knowledge and affective life experiences, so that Islamic Religious Education learning is not only understood but also deeply experienced.

From a social perspective, the application of self-disclosure can also strengthen solidarity and empathy among students. When students share stories about moral challenges, worship experiences, or struggles to uphold Islamic values, a process of identification and mutual understanding emerges. This fosters the formation of a cohesive learning community, where each individual feels a sense of ownership and support from their social environment. Gudykunst (2004) calls self-disclosure the primary foundation of inclusive interpersonal communication, as it encourages recognition of differences and similarities in human experience. In the Islamic context, mutual understanding and respect for others' experiences reflect the values of brotherhood and ta'aruf (relationship) as taught in Q.S. Al-Hujurat verse 13.

On the other hand, the potential impact of self-disclosure also touches on the aspect of strengthening religious character. Self-disclosure directed at reflecting on Islamic values helps students develop self-awareness of their behavior and beliefs. When students talk about honesty, responsibility, or patience based on personal experiences, they are internalizing moral values. Shihab (2018) explains that religious experiences accompanied by personal reflection have the power to shape morality, because these values no longer come from outside but grow from inner awareness. Thus, self-disclosure becomes a medium for spiritual transformation that supports the goal of Islamic education: to develop faithful, knowledgeable, and noble individuals.

However, the application of self-disclosure in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning must also be carried out with pedagogical caution. Not all experiences are appropriate to share in the classroom, and teachers must be able to guide self-disclosure so that it does not offend students' privacy, moral values, or social sensitivities. Petronio (2013), through his theory of Communication Privacy Management, emphasized the importance of communication boundaries (boundary rules) in maintaining ethical openness. Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers must be wise facilitators, ensuring that the process of sharing experiences remains grounded in Islamic etiquette and mutual respect.

Thus, the potential impact of self-disclosure in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning encompasses three main areas: improving interpersonal relationships between teachers and students, strengthening students' motivation and spiritual awareness, and developing authentic religious character. When managed with a reflective and ethical approach, self-disclosure can be a pedagogical innovation that enriches the religious learning process, making it more humane, contextual, and oriented toward the appreciation of values. From this perspective, PAI is not only a means of transferring religious knowledge, but also a vehicle for spiritual dialogue that fosters a depth of faith and social empathy among students.

Discussion
Subsection 1 Implementation of the Self-Disclosure Model in Islamic Religious Education Learning

The analysis of the application of the self-disclosure model in Islamic Religious Education learning can be enriched by using Social Penetration Theory as the main theoretical framework. According to Altman and Taylor (1973), interpersonal relationships develop through a systematic

process of self-disclosure in the dimensions of depth and breadth. This "penetration" process is gradual: from superficial disclosure to more intimate disclosure, with a reciprocal mechanism that strengthens trust. When contextualized in Islamic Religious Education classrooms, this theory directs teachers to design tiered learning experiences starting from general and safe topics, moving toward more personal reflection on values so that student openness develops organically without causing pressure or invasion of privacy (Altman & Taylor, 1973; DeVito, 2019).

Based on these principles, the implementation model in Islamic Religious Education classes must include several key elements that align with the stages of the theory: (1) creating a safe space for initial (surface) disclosure, (2) teacher role models as a trigger for reciprocity so that students feel safe making further disclosures, (3) a gradual structure in activities (ice-breaking → guided sharing → small-group disclosure → personal reflection), and (4) setting boundary rules to maintain ethics, confidentiality, and politeness so that the depth of disclosure is increased ethically (Petronio, 2013). This gradual approach helps vary the depth and breadth of topics according to student readiness, precisely following the mechanics of Social Penetration Theory.

The implementation of this step-by-step model provides a strong foundation for developing students' interpersonal communication skills because each stage of self-disclosure is directly related to the core elements of interpersonal communication: trust, courage to convey a message, the ability to respond to the other person, and sensitivity to the emotions and perspectives of others. When students are allowed to initially disclose personal information on a surface level, they begin to build emotional safety a prerequisite for open communication (DeVito, 2019). In the next stage, when teachers provide examples of relevant and proportionate disclosure, reciprocal disclosure occurs, which, according to Altman and Taylor (1973), is a key mechanism for forming interpersonal closeness. This mutual self-disclosure mechanism then strengthens the quality of interactions between students, especially in the context of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning, which emphasizes the values of honesty, empathy, and respect for the experiences of others.

Conceptually, improved interpersonal communication skills can be seen from two main indicators: first, increased courage and fluency in conveying messages, and second, improved quality of their social responses to others' experiences. Previous research findings support this relationship. A study by Wihtawan et al. (2018) showed that students with high levels of self-disclosure tend to be better able to maintain two-way conversations, respond empathetically, and express opinions in a more structured manner. Meanwhile, research by Mills & Sylvester (2020) showed that self-disclosure in adolescents significantly improves relational clarity, namely the ability to understand social relationships and one's role in interactions. Thus, when the disclosure model is used in Islamic Religious Education learning through activities such as sharing experiences, moral discussions, or religious reflection students have the opportunity to develop not only courage to speak, but also social sensitivity and relational intelligence.

Furthermore, the hierarchical structure of activities (guided sharing to small-group disclosure) provides space for students to practice core interpersonal skills such as turn-taking, attentive listening, perspective-taking, and empathic responding. Johnson & Johnson (2020) showed that small-group activities that include sharing personal experiences significantly improve group cohesion and communication quality. Compared with the one-way Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning model (lecture), the self-disclosure approach provides a more direct path for students to learn how to communicate personally, reflectively, and respectfully. In other words, improved interpersonal communication occurs not only because students are "forced to speak," but also because they understand the meaning of those conversations within the context of the social relationships and Islamic values they are learning.

This analysis also aligns with research by Putra & Rahmawati (2022), which found that self-disclosure increases empathy and feelings of closeness among group counseling participants. Although the contexts are different, the psychological mechanisms involved remain the same—when someone feels heard and valued, trust increases and communication becomes more effective.

Comparison with previous research suggests that the self-disclosure model in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) has the potential to produce similar effects, particularly for junior high school-aged students whose emotional and social development is in the process of discovering their identity and who need a safe space to express themselves (Santrock, 2018).

Therefore, the application of the self-disclosure model in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning is considered capable of improving students' interpersonal communication skills as long as it is implemented in stages, ethically, and based on sound religious and psychological principles. Learning not only teaches cognitive material but also trains students to recognize themselves, understand others, and build respectful interactions. These findings demonstrate that the self-disclosure model is not only theoretically effective but is also supported by empirical studies that show a significant improvement in the main components of interpersonal communication.

Subsection 2 **The effectiveness of the self-disclosure model in Islamic Education learning**

The effectiveness of the self-disclosure model in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning is very evident in its benefits within the learning mechanisms at school. This is because the concept of self-disclosure is in principle in line with the Qur'an's commandment that humans use honest, clear, and calming communication. For example, QS. An-Nisa' [4]:63 commands teachers and leaders to "speak to them qaulan balīghā" words that are touching, clear, and to the point. In the educational context, this commandment emphasizes that teacher-student interactions must take place through communication that opens up space for in-depth dialogue, not simply the transfer of information. The self-disclosure model fulfills this commandment because it allows students to convey experiences, values, and feelings openly within a safe, ethical framework.

When compared to the traditional lecture model that is dominant in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning, self-disclosure has very significant advantages. Lectures only produce one-way communication, while the Qur'an emphasizes dialogue as a means of conveying the values of faith. QS. An-Naḥl [16]: 125 calls for a da'wah approach with bi al-ḥikmah and al-mau'izah al-ḥasanah, which demands two-way interaction, full of wisdom, responsive to the psychological conditions of the audience. That is why the lecture model is not sufficient in stimulating students' courage and comfort in speaking. Self-disclosure, on the other hand, creates a responsive space where students are not merely objects of teaching, but subjects of dialogue who interpret religion through their personal experiences.

When compared to conventional discussion methods, the most fundamental difference lies in relational depth. Classroom discussions often focus on cognitive aspects students speak to answer assignments, not to express themselves. However, the Qur'an describes effective communication as communication that comes from the heart, as in Surah Āli 'Imrān [3]:159, which states that the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) succeeded in uniting the people because "fa-bimā raḥmatin min Allāhi linta lahum" the gentleness of communication opened the hearts of those around him. Self-disclosure mimics this pattern pedagogically: it not only activates the intellect, but also opens up emotional and relational dimensions that make students feel valued and heard.

Previous studies also validate that self-disclosure works through the mechanism of building emotional trust among students. For example, research by Wihtawan et al. (2018) showed a positive correlation between the level of self-disclosure and the quality of interpersonal relationships (r = 0.435). When placed in a Qur'anic perspective, this correlation is relevant to the concept of ta'āruf in Surah Al-Hujurāt [49]:13. This verse emphasizes that social relations develop when individuals get to know each other authentically. The self-disclosure model pedagogically embodies the commandment of li-ta'ārafū through the activity of sharing experiences, values, and feelings in the classroom.

Comparison with reflective methods (think-pair-share, problem-based learning, or reflective journals) also shows that self-disclosure is more effective in developing interpersonal skills. Reflective methods help students think, but they do not always help them express what they think.

In Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning, the ability to express values, feelings, and experiences is an important part of the character education process. This is in line with QS. Ash-Shu'arā' [26]:84 about the prayer of the Prophet Ibrahim: "And make me well-remembered by those who come after me" which emphasizes the importance of communicative moral expression. Self-disclosure enables students not only to understand values, but to communicate those values accurately and honestly.

From a psychological perspective, self-disclosure also works effectively because it addresses adolescents' developmental needs to feel understood and trusted (Santrock, 2018). When applied to Islamic Religious Education (PAI), this model not only stimulates courage to speak up but also fosters spiritual sensitivity through reflection on life experiences. In other words, self-disclosure integrates cognitive, affective, and spiritual aspects simultaneously something that discussion or lecture methods cannot always achieve.

Overall, the effectiveness of the self-disclosure model in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning can be understood as a harmony between modern communication theory and the Qur'anic values of dialogue, honesty, and the formation of mutually beneficial relationships. This model is not only a pedagogical innovation, but also an implementation of Islamic teachings on communication that is qaulan sadīdan, qaulan layyinan, and qaulan balīghā. This is why, compared to other learning models, self-disclosure is more consistent with the goals of Islamic Religious Education: to shape students who are able to convey their religious values with confidence, honesty, empathy, and courtesy.

Conclusion

The process of self-disclosure, conducted in a structured, ethical manner, and based on Islamic Religious Education values, has been proven to have a positive impact on improving students' interpersonal communication skills. This study found that students who participated in self-disclosure learning demonstrated changes in two main aspects: the ability to express thoughts and feelings more openly and the ability to understand others' messages more empathetically.

In practice, the self-disclosure model used by teachers proceeds through four main stages: creating a safe space, guided sharing, small group disclosure, and personal reflection. Field data shows that the safe space stage is the most crucial foundation for conveying personal experiences when teachers use a friendly, non-judgmental approach and model healthy self-disclosure. Teacher role models also play a significant role in triggering reciprocity among students. This is evident in students' increased courage to provide positive verbal responses, ask questions, and respond to their peers' opinions.

Meanwhile, the self-disclosure model significantly improved students' interpersonal communication skills, particularly in clarity (the clarity of message delivery), empathy (the ability to understand the other person), and responsiveness (the ability to respond appropriately). The students involved showed improvement in these three indicators after participating in three learning cycles. In terms of clarity, students began to express their opinions in a structured manner and did not hesitate to state the reasons for their views. In terms of empathy, students showed greater listening and respect for their peers' experiences without interrupting. Meanwhile, in terms of responsiveness, students appeared more involved in the discussion by providing emotional support and logical arguments during the experience sharing process.

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