

The Dynamics of Religiosity among Members of Muslim Minorities in Purbo Jolotigo Talun of Pekalongan Central Java

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Abstract:

This study examines the dynamics of religious awareness, religious experience, religious maturity, religious conversion, and the factors influencing religiosity among Muslim minorities in Purbo, Pekalongan, Central Java, Indonesia. A qualitative descriptive research approach was employed, with informants selected through a snowball sampling technique. The findings reveal several key insights. First, the religious awareness of Muslim minorities in Purbo Hamlet is characterized by a profound sense of faith, which is perceived as a divine gift from Allah (SWT). However, their religious experience is primarily centered on ritual worship, viewed more as an obligatory practice than as a deeply transformative spiritual engagement. Second, religious maturity among the Muslim minority does not fully align with established theoretical criteria, exhibiting distinct characteristics that differentiate it from conventional models. Third, religious conversion occurs in two directions: conversion to Islam and conversion away from Islam, with marriage being the predominant driver of religious shifts. Fourth, the dynamics of religiosity among Muslim minorities in Purbo are shaped by both internal and external factors, including developmental age, subjective religious experiences, education, environmental influences, and cultural norms. These findings contribute to a deeper understanding of the complexities surrounding religious identity within minority communities.

Keywords: Religious Dynamics, Muslim Minorities, Religious Conversion, Religious Maturity

INTRODUCTION

Minorities are social groups that constitute a smaller population compared to the dominant groups within a given community. This phenomenon of domination can manifest in various aspects, including social status, education, employment, wealth, political power, and religious beliefs. Religion, as a core element of human identity, is deeply rooted in individual spiritual experiences and religious consciousness (Daradjat, 2015). While religious belief is inherently personal and should remain free from coercion, minority groups often face pressures to conform their religious practices to align with the norms of the dominant group (Nur'Aini, 2020). In a multi-religious country such as Indonesia (Hoon, 2017), understanding how religious minority groups navigate their religious expressions within the context of a dominant religious framework is a critical area of study. Despite Muslims being religious majority in Indonesia at the national level (Ropi, 2017), they can function as a minority in certain local and provincial contexts. Provinces such as Bali, Papua, West Papua, East Nusa Tenggara (NTT), and North Sulawesi are examples where Hindus and Christians form the religious majority (Aini et al., 2019). While previous studies have extensively examined Muslims as a religious majority (Mashuri et al., 2017a, 2017b) in areas such as radicalism (Mashuri et al., 2016), moderation (Pratama, 2021; Zaduqisti et al., 2020), and tolerance (Agustina, 2016; Mashuri et al., 2014), research on Muslims as a religious minority in Indonesia remains relatively scarce (cf. Parker, 2017). This study aims to address this research gap by exploring the religious dynamics of the Muslim minority in Purbo Hamlet, Jolotigo Village, Talun District, Pekalongan, Central Java.

The Muslim community in Purbo Hamlet faces unique religious challenges, as their status as a minority limits their access to religious and educational facilities. For instance, Muslim children in the village often have no choice but to attend Christian educational institutions due to the absence of Islamic schools in the vicinity. This situation has led to instances where Muslim students are required to participate in Christian religious practices, such as listening to Christian teachings and singing Christian hymns (Interview with the Head of Purbo Hamlet, 2017). The Christian community's dominance in educational and religious institutions is evident by the presence of two churches belonging to the Javanese Christian Church (GKJ), compared to only one mosque. Additionally, Christian foundations operate all the early childhood and elementary schools in the village. Data indicate that approximately 50 students are enrolled in Christian elementary schools, including around 20 Muslim students. Similarly, around ten Muslim children attend Christian kindergartens due to the long distance required to access Islamic educational institutions located outside the village (Interview with the Head of Purbo Hamlet, 2017).

The only non-formal Islamic educational institution in Purbo Hamlet is in a precarious condition, as no one is willing to take on the role of administrator.

Existing literature has extensively explored the concept of religiosity. Suryana and Maryamah (2013), for example, investigated students' religiosity through the development of a religious culture in Palembang State High School 16, although their focus was limited to the school environment and did not address religious minorities. Other studies have examined religiosity within educational settings, such as Susanto's (2014) research on the spiritualization of Islamic education, as well as the work of Zaduqisti (2006) and Zaduqisti et al. (2015), who explored religious maturity among minority communities using Alport's concept. Wartini and Shulkhan (2016) conducted a similar study among the Manislor Ahmadiyah community in Kuningan, West Java. On the international stage, Fiedorowicz (2010) examined the impact of religious components and maturity on prejudice in the United States, while Seo (2014) analyzed Muslim-Christian relations in Salatiga, Java, in the context of religious and political interactions. Despite these contributions, no prior studies have specifically examined the dynamics of Muslim minority religiosity in Purbo Hamlet, Jolotigo Village, Talun District, Pekalongan, Central Java.

El-Menouar and Stiftung (2014) proposed six dimensions of Muslim religiosity: (1) belief, which entails faith in God, the Quran, and supernatural beings such as angels and jinn; (2) ritual, which includes worship, pilgrimage, and fasting; (3) devotion, which refers to personal religious practices such as reciting prayers; (4) experience, which describes a Muslim's spiritual connection with God; (5) knowledge, which pertains to an individual's understanding of Islamic teachings; and (6) consequence, which concerns adherence to religious prohibitions and obligations. Theoretical perspectives on religiosity further highlight the concepts of religious conversion and religious maturity. Jalaludin (2015) describes religious conversion as a fluctuating psychological state concerning one's religious beliefs, while Zaduqisti (2006) defines religious maturity as the development of religious sentiment through experiential learning and adherence to religious principles. Alport (1953) identified six characteristics of religious maturity: differentiation, dynamic adaptability, consistency, comprehensiveness, integration into daily life, and heuristic progression. Stark and Glock (1968) also contributed to the discourse by proposing five dimensions of religiosity—belief, religious practices, experience, religious knowledge, and consequences—which were later adapted into six dimensions by El-Menouar and Stiftung (2014) to better reflect the religiosity of Muslims.

Drawing upon these theoretical foundations, this study aims to explore: (1) the religious awareness and experiences of the Muslim minority in Purbo Hamlet, (2) the religious maturity of the Muslim minority, (3) patterns of religious conversion within the

community, and (4) the factors influencing Muslim minority religiosity. This research investigates the dynamics of religiosity among the Muslim minority in Purbo Hamlet, focusing on religious awareness, religious maturity, and attitudes toward religious conversion. Additionally, the study examines the social and structural factors that shape the religious experiences of this minority group. Employing a qualitative research methodology with a psychological approach, data collection methods include interviews, observations, and document analysis. Interviews were conducted with key informants, including community leaders, religious leaders, and members of the general community, to gain insights into the lived experiences of the Muslim minority. Observations focused on religious and social activities carried out by Muslim minorities, including those involving children and educational institutions. Document analysis included village records, maps, and other relevant sources. Data were analyzed using inductive and descriptive methods, following Neuman's (2000) framework, which emphasizes identifying patterns in qualitative data. Through this approach, the study aims to contribute to the broader discourse on minority religiosity by offering empirical insights into the challenges and adaptations of the Muslim minority in Purbo Hamlet.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Awareness and Muslim Minorities Religiosity Experience in Purbo Hamlet

Religiosity Awareness

Religiosity awareness is both a cognitive and emotional state that shapes an individual's religious beliefs and practices (Jalaluddin, 2014). This awareness manifests as an intrinsic feeling that reinforces faith, particularly among Muslim minorities in Purbo Hamlet. Many members of this community perceive their faith as a divine blessing, which enables them to maintain their Islamic beliefs despite their minority status. They regard their conscience as a guiding force that sustains their commitment to Islam. As Jalaluddin (2014) asserts, personal feelings influence and shape individual beliefs, a phenomenon also evident among the Muslim minority in Purbo Hamlet. Their religious awareness arises from their inner convictions, compelling them to adhere to Islam despite external pressures.

Religious awareness is further expressed through responses to questions concerning their persistence in practicing Islam in a predominantly Christian environment. For instance, one respondent stated, *"Because of faith, I believe in God. When I was in school, my teacher's son wanted to be with me, even though she was wealthy, but I did not like her because she was Christian"* (IW2: 93-96). Another respondent emphasized the deep-rooted nature of their faith, stating, *"From the depths of my heart, I believe in Islam"* (IW3: 95). Similarly, another

informant affirmed their belief as part of their family heritage: *“My family has been Muslim for generations. Islam has always been my belief, and Insha’Allah, I will remain in Islam forever”* (TW1: 10). These statements illustrate that their religiosity is deeply ingrained, evidenced by their unwavering belief in Allah. This is further reinforced through affirmations such as *“I believe”* (TW1: 1) or *“Yes, I do”* when asked, *“Do you believe in Allah SWT?”* (TW2: 1).

A comprehensive explanation was provided by Mr. Widiyanto, who stated:

I believe in faith in God, as demonstrated by performing the five daily prayers and following His commands. I adhere to the six pillars of faith: belief in Allah, in the existence of angels, in God’s scriptures, in the prophets, in the Day of Judgment, and in divine predestination (Qadha and Qadar). Additionally, I uphold the five pillars of Islam: the Shabada, daily prayers, fasting, zakat, and Hajj (TW1: 5-10).

This testimony highlights the significance of religious awareness, which not only shapes their faith but also influences their understanding of Islamic teachings. However, while some respondents demonstrated a comprehensive understanding of their beliefs, others exhibited partial or limited knowledge. For example, one informant admitted, *“I don’t know about the five pillars of Islam, but I understand that there are five important principles that I must obey”* (TW3: 6). Another participant expressed a practical approach to religious observance, stating, *“At least I perform my prayers (Salah)”* (TW2: 6). Similarly, another respondent explained, *“I believe in faith in God, as evidenced by praying and following His commands”* (TW3: 2-4). Mrs. Suparti, a housewife, remarked, *“I believe in faith in God, as demonstrated by His provisions, my destined spouse, and the inevitability of death. I pray five times a day and follow His commands, but I do not memorize the six pillars of faith or the five pillars of Islam”* (TW4: 4). Her statement illustrates a gap in cognitive religious awareness, where individuals practice their faith based on personal convictions rather than formal religious knowledge.

Beyond intellectual belief, religious awareness is also expressed through feelings of divine affection and guidance. When asked whether they felt loved by God, respondents provided answers such as: *“I feel it—when I was sick, He healed me; when I faced difficulties, He showed me the way”* (TW1: 59-62). Another stated, *“The most important thing is that I am healthy, not hospitalized, and my family is in good health, Alhamdulillah”* (TW1: 41-42). Other responses emphasized gratitude: *“There are many blessings, such as good health and no illness”* (TW3: 38) and *“Alhamdulillah, He loves and blesses me”* (TW4: 49). These statements reflect a common perception that divine love is manifested through tangible blessings such as health and sustenance.

Additionally, some respondents attribute their faith to their lineage, reinforcing their sense of religious obligation. Many emphasize that they remain Muslim due to their ancestors practicing Islam, and they feel compelled to maintain this religious identity. This

generational transmission of faith further solidifies their commitment to Islam, as reflected in their affirmations of belief in Allah, the existence of angels, the divine scriptures, the prophets, the Day of Judgment, and Qadha and Qadar.

Jalaluddin (2015) asserts that religious awareness is reinforced through religious actions (*amaliah*). According to this perspective, engaging in religious activities fosters spiritual fulfillment and a sense of divine connection. Ahyadi (1995) describes this as a divine experience, characterized by inner peace, tranquility, and a yearning for God. However, Muslim minorities in Purbo Hamlet do not explicitly articulate these experiences. Instead, they demonstrate their faith through religious observances such as daily prayers, fasting, zakat, and the pilgrimage to Mecca. These practices, while deeply ingrained, may not always be accompanied by a structured theological understanding, indicating variations in levels of religious awareness within the community.

Religious Experience

Religious experience can be understood as an integral component of religious awareness, where individuals internalize their faith through feelings, beliefs, and religious practices (Jalaluddin, 2014). When individuals actively engage in religious rituals, they cultivate experiences that reinforce their spiritual identity. However, the religious experiences of the Muslim minority in Purbo Hamlet are predominantly centered on ritual practices rather than transcendental encounters. Respondents describe their religious experiences in terms of daily and ritual worship, rather than profound moments of spiritual connection. This contrasts with O’Dea’s (1996) perspective, which defines religious experience as a response to sacred events that invoke reverence and a sense of transcendence.

The respondents’ narratives highlight their adherence to religious practices as a fundamental aspect of their identity. For example, one respondent stated, “*Like other Muslims, I pray five times a day, fast, and face no obstacles in worship*” (TW1: 21-22). However, another respondent acknowledged that external constraints sometimes impede religious practices: “*If there are no obstacles, I pray. But if I encounter difficulties, I do not*” (TW3: 7-9). These statements indicate that while religious practices are observed, they are not always prioritized under challenging circumstances, revealing a pragmatic approach to worship.

During Ramadan, respondents describe a heightened religious atmosphere, but their focus tends to remain on external factors such as dietary changes and physical routines, rather than spiritual transcendence. One respondent noted, “*There are differences; we do not get enough sleep at night, we have to prepare food for our children, and we must be careful since there are two religions here*” (TW2: 13-17). Another stated, “*It is better in Ramadan; things that usually do not happen become more likely to occur*” (TW3: 19). Despite these observations, their reflections

do not convey a deeply transformative spiritual experience. Some respondents maintain a neutral stance, as reflected in the statement, “*Fasting is just a normal practice, there are no obstacles, and we respect each other*” (TW3: 14-15). Others exhibit conditional religiosity, stating, “*InshaAllah, I will pray, but if I am tired or face obstacles, I will not*” (TW4: 11-12). This suggests that while religious observance is acknowledged, it does not always translate into profound spiritual engagement.

A transcendent experience was expressed by only one respondent, who stated, “*I perform worship with sincerity. Ramadan is a month of grace, full of blessings and forgiveness, unlike any other month*” (TW1: 30-33). However, such statements were limited to Ramadan and did not extend to other times of the year. This observation aligns with Jalaluddin (2014) and Daradjat (2015), who argue that religious experience is cultivated through belief, practice, and feeling. Yet, as Fiedorowicz (2010) posits, religious experience should ideally lead to a transformation in one’s worldview. In contrast, the religious experiences of the Muslim minority in Purbo Hamlet appear to be routine-based, lacking the profound impact necessary for transformative spiritual development.

Wuff (1997), cited in Fiedorowicz (2010), posits that religious belief directly affects an individual’s biological and psychological well-being. The case of Purbo Hamlet illustrates that, despite their minority status, Muslim respondents find solace in their faith, which they associate with good health and survival. Their narratives align with Hamidi (2010), who asserts that religion provides meaning and function in human life by fostering an interactive and dialectical relationship within pluralistic societies. However, the level of spiritual internalization in Purbo Hamlet has not fully reached the state of *Ihsan*, the highest level of faith in Islam. Ahyadi (2001) explains that *Ihsan* is achieved when individuals develop an awareness of God’s transcendence, recognizing that He is beyond human comprehension. In contrast, religious practice in Purbo Hamlet often lacks this level of depth, as exemplified by the observation that many residents neglect prayer, even during religious gatherings such as *pengajian*, *tablilan*, or *yasinan*.

Robertson (1988) describes religious experience as a dimension encompassing beliefs, rituals, scriptures, and traditions, which provide adherents with a sense of expectation and fulfillment. The Muslim minority in Purbo Hamlet exhibits this through their emphasis on religious harmony and tolerance. Their religious experience is not characterized by conflict but by coexistence, where communal relationships with the Christian majority remain peaceful. Ali (2003) delineates tolerance as an attitude existing along a spectrum, ranging from exclusivism (rejecting other beliefs) to pluralism (actively engaging with diverse religious perspectives). The Muslim minority in Purbo Hamlet

demonstrates a balanced approach, holding firm to their own religious truth while respecting the beliefs of Christian majority and maintaining social harmony.

Al-Qardhawi (1985) categorizes tolerance into three levels: (1) granting others the freedom to practice their religion without facilitating its observance, (2) allowing individuals to follow their religious duties without coercion, and (3) respecting religious practices that may contradict one's own beliefs. The community in Purbo Hamlet exemplifies the third form of tolerance, particularly within the educational context. Christian schools accommodate Muslim minority children, although they do not necessarily offer opportunities for them to practice Islamic teachings. On the other hand, the Christian majority refrains from coercing Muslim residents into engaging in activities prohibited in Islam, such as consuming pork. As one respondent remarked, during Christmas celebrations, pork was prepared but it was never offered to Muslim guests out of respect.

Rasjidi (1965) identifies three sources of religious experience: (1) narratives from individuals who have encountered the divine, (2) autobiographies of religious figures, and (3) collections of prayers and hymns. In Purbo Hamlet, religious experience is predominantly conveyed through verbal testimonies from respondents, encompassing cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions of religiosity. These testimonies reflect the coexistence of faith and societal integration, where religious practices are shaped by both personal conviction and the socio-religious dynamics of their community.

The Maturity of Minority Muslim Religion in Purbo Hamlet

Differentiation

Religious maturity involves an individual's ability to embrace their faith through observation, critical reflection, and an open-minded perspective. This capacity is demonstrated when respondents express their reasoning for prioritizing Islam in their lives. One respondent stated, "*Islam is more important...*" and justified this claim by explaining how personal observations led them to value Islamic teachings over Christianity: "*From elementary school, I joined Christianity, but Alhamdulillah, I later attended an Islamic boarding school to understand both Christianity and Islam*" (TW2: 49-53). However, while some respondents exhibit an informed understanding of their faith, others display a lack of objective reasoning. One respondent stated, "*For me, the first important thing is Islam, then I just follow the situation here—if there are a lot of NU (Nahdlatul Ulama) members, then I am NU too*" (TW3: 42-43). This illustrates a social conformity rather than a deeply reasoned religious stance.

Dynamic Character

A dynamic religious character is characterized by self-regulated behavior, shaped by religious teachings that foster autonomy and independence. However, this quality is not fully evident among the Muslim minority in Purbo Hamlet. For instance, statements such

as, "...if there are a lot of NU members, I am NU too" (IW3: 43) and "...if there is an opportunity, I will join my friends in the mosque, but I have small children" (IW4: 43), suggest that religious adherence is influenced more by situational factors rather than personal conviction. Additionally, some respondents acknowledge their limited religious understanding: "I still lack religious knowledge, and in my family, adherence to Islam is not yet 100%" (IW2: 44-45). Even religious leaders express concerns regarding the community's level of religious comprehension, stating that fasting is often performed as a social practice rather than as an informed religious obligation: "Fasting is carried out more as a cultural practice rather than as an understanding of the pillars of Islam" (IW7: 12-14).

Consistency

Consistency in religious observance refers to a stable commitment to fulfilling religious duties. However, in Purbo Hamlet, this consistency is not always maintained. Ustadz Fahmi observed that only about 20% of residents regularly perform their five daily prayers, while the majority neglect this obligation: "...praying five times daily is still rare; only about 20% of residents are considered devout, while the rest do not pay much attention to their prayers" (IW7: 28). This inconsistency is further reflected in individual testimonies: "Sometimes, when I have problems, I pray" (IW7: 28), and "InshaAllah, I obey, but if I am tired or encounter obstacles, I do not" (IW4: 11-12). These statements suggest that religious observance is often conditional rather than habitual.

Comprehensiveness

A comprehensive religious perspective involves a broad, universal, and tolerant outlook. However, in Purbo Hamlet, religious understanding remains limited. Ustadz Fahmi stated, "The religious understanding of Muslim residents in Purbo is very low" (IW7: 2). Many respondents acknowledged their lack of full understanding regarding key aspects of their faith, as evidenced by one individual's statement: "I do not understand the meaning of prayer recitations, I just follow the Imam" (IW6: 15). Additionally, while zakat fitr is commonly practiced, some residents lack clarity regarding its principles, as one respondent stated: "People here use 2.5 kg of rice for zakat fitr, but if they do not have rice, they use money" (IW6: 61-62).

Although respondents verbally express a commitment to tolerance, this sometimes results in syncretic practices that blend Islamic and Christian teachings. For instance, children attending Christian schools become more familiar with Christian teachings than Islamic doctrines. One respondent shared how Christian prayers and hymns were emphasized at school: "Every morning, Christian prayers were recited, and we had to memorize Bible verses" (IW6: observations). During Christmas celebrations, Muslim children were invited

to participate, with some attending mainly for the material benefits: *“You can get snacks, gifts, and transport money”* (TW6: 28).

Integration

For religious maturity to be fully integrated into daily life, faith must be consistently practiced across all aspects of life. In Purbo Hamlet, religious integration is observed in certain daily habits, but it remains incomplete. Respondents mentioned practices such as reciting *bismillah* before meals and engaging in *dhikir*: *“Especially children—before eating and sleeping, they recite bismillah, and they enjoy reciting Asmaul Husna”* (TW2: 30-31). However, while such practices indicate some level of integration, responses such as *“InshaAllah”* when asked regarding religious habits suggest a lack of strong commitment. Additionally, some respondents struggle to align religious values with daily responsibilities: *“No, I am often busy, especially with work, but if I have problems, I ask Allah”* (TW2: 25-27).

Heuristic Development

A heuristic approach to religiosity entails continuous self-improvement and the acknowledgment of religious limitations. While some respondents recognize their lack of religious knowledge, there is little effort to enhance understanding. One respondent stated, *“I still lack religious knowledge, and in my family, adherence to Islam is not yet 100%”* (TW2: 44-45). Similarly, religious leaders note a lack of enthusiasm for religious activities, with *“weekly tablilan gatherings having minimal impact on religious stability”* (TW7: 22-26). The low motivation to pursue Islamic education further reflects this issue, with many parents opting to send their children to Christian schools rather than making efforts to enroll them in state or Islamic schools (TW5: 55-57).

Moreover, attempts to establish Islamic education institutions in Purbo Hamlet have been met with skepticism. One respondent stated, *“I hope for an Islamic school here, but I am pessimistic because who will teach? I once invited a teacher, but they did not feel comfortable here”* (TW2: 33-34). While there is a desire to strengthen Islamic education, the lack of practical efforts indicates that religious maturity remains underdeveloped.

Conclusion

The religious maturity of the Muslim minority in Purbo Hamlet remains incomplete. While some aspects, such as differentiation and tolerance, are present, other dimensions—such as dynamic character, consistency, comprehensiveness, integration, and heuristic development—remain underdeveloped. The findings suggest that religious adherence is often influenced more by external circumstances rather than by intrinsic conviction. This indicates that religious maturity, as conceptualized by Allport (1953) and Ahyadi (2001), has not been fully realized among the Muslim minority in Purbo Hamlet. Although communal harmony with the Christian majority is effectively maintained, the

internal development of religious knowledge and practice requires further cultivation to achieve a more comprehensive level of religious maturity.

Minority Muslim Conversion in Purbo Hamlet

Religious conversion refers to the process by which an individual or group transitions from one religious belief system to another, often influenced by personal, social, or structural factors. In Purbo Hamlet, religious conversion is a phenomenon that occurs in both directions: some individuals convert to Islam, while others leave Islam for Christianity. In order to explore this phenomenon, respondents were asked concerning cases of religious conversion in their community. Their responses varied, with some stating that conversions occur but are infrequent: *“There are cases of conversion, though not many. Some individuals who have converted include Ms. Tuvub, Mak Anab, Ms. Khuni, Suparjo, Mrs. Marsih, Mrs. Martini, Mrs. Karyati, Mrs. Saminah, and Mas Puji”* (TW1: 97-100). Another respondent noted, *“Conversions are not common, but recently, someone embraced Islam. However, most conversions occur when Christians from Semarang move here”* (TW3: 66-68).

Further insights suggest that religious conversions in Purbo Hamlet predominantly involve individuals from outside the community, rather than local residents. As one resident noted: *“Conversions occur, but usually among those from outside Purbo Hamlet, such as from Pekalongan. People from this village who were raised Muslim generally do not convert directly to Christianity”* (TW4: 84-88).

A significant case of conversion was reported in 2015, illustrating how interfaith marriages often lead to religious transitions. One respondent shared:

In 2015, a man from Semarang, originally Muslim, married a Christian woman from Purbo Hamlet. Initially, they had an Islamic wedding in Semarang, but after moving here, they converted to Christianity. Their household registration (KK) was also updated to reflect their conversion. Most of these cases involve men converting due to marriage (TW2: 74-80).

The role of marriage in religious conversion is widely acknowledged. Ustadz Fahmi explained, *“Muslims who convert to Christianity often do so due to marital ties. For example, a Christian man from Purbo Hamlet marries a Muslim woman from another village, and she eventually converts to Christianity to settle in Purbo Hamlet”* (TW7: 50-52). Similarly, Mrs. Suprihatin, the Chairperson of the Community Health Center, observed: *“Conversions frequently occur among Muslims from Semarang who marry Christian women from Purbo Hamlet. Initially, they marry according to Islamic rites, but after relocating, they convert to Christianity and update their official documents accordingly”* (TW6: 14-19).

Several key factors contribute to religious conversion in Purbo Hamlet. One prominent factor is economic security. As one respondent noted: *“It is often due to employment. In some cases, individuals convert because their livelihood depends on it. The economic stability*

of both men and women plays a role, particularly if employment opportunities require Christian affiliation” (TW2: 84-86). Another crucial factor is emotional attachment and love. Raihan’s mother stated, “The primary reason for religious conversion is love” (TW2: 84-86). This was further reinforced by another respondent, “Even if a person’s parents have performed the pilgrimage (Haji), if they fall in love with someone from a different religion, they are likely to convert” (TW4: 11-12).

Interfaith relationships, particularly those leading to pregnancy before marriage, further contribute to religious conversion. Ustadz Manto highlighted this dynamic:

Religious conversion often begins with premarital relationships. Many cases involve Christian women from Purbo Hamlet and Muslim men from Jolotigo, Batang, or Pekalongan. When the woman becomes pregnant, the couple marries according to Christian customs, which often lead to the Muslim partner’s conversion (TW6: 14-19).

Religious conversion in Purbo Hamlet is influenced by various social, economic, and relational factors. The most common reasons for conversion include interfaith marriages, economic pressures, and emotional bonds. While some individuals convert to Islam, most cases involve Muslims transitioning to Christianity, primarily due to marital ties and social integration. The findings suggest that religious conversion in Purbo Hamlet is not solely a theological shift, but is deeply embedded in broader socio-cultural and economic dynamics. These patterns underscore the need for further research on how religious identity adapts within minority communities and the role of social structures in shaping religious transitions.

The Factors Influencing the Dynamics of Minority Religion in Purbo Hamlet

The dynamics of religious life encompass multiple dimensions, including religious awareness, religious experience, religious maturity, and religious conversion. Religious maturity, in particular, is shaped by both internal and external factors. Internal factors include developmental age and subjective religious experience, while external factors encompass education, environment, and culture (Zaduqisti, 2006). Understanding these influences provides valuable insight into the unique challenges faced by the Muslim minority in Purbo Hamlet.

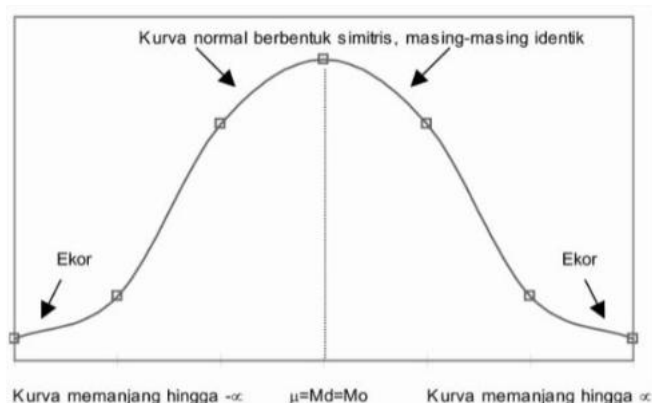


Figure 1. Normal Curve

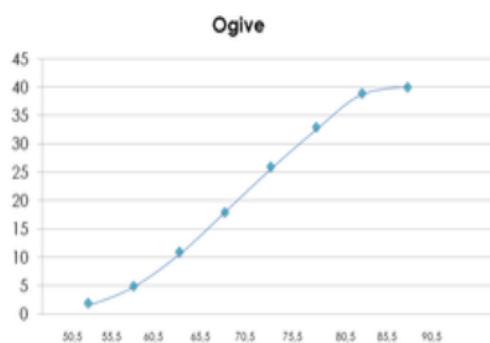


Figure 2. Positive Ogive Curve

Unlike physical development, which follows a predictable trajectory, spiritual and religious development progresses throughout an individual's life, theoretically increasing with age. In theory, as individuals grow older, their religious maturity should also develop. However, this pattern is not evident among the Muslim minority in Purbo Hamlet. As discussed in previous sections, religious maturity is not always observed, even among adults and the elderly in the community. This phenomenon is closely linked to personal experiences and subjective religious understanding, as explained by Jalaluddin (1997).

Life experiences, particularly crises and personal hardships, can significantly impact religious development. Jalaluddin (1997) argues that adversity often leads individuals to seek solace in religion, potentially strengthening their faith. However, among the Muslim minority in Purbo Hamlet, subjective religious experiences appear to have had minimal impact on deepening religious maturity. One possible reason for this is the perceived ineffectiveness of religious propagation in the area. Despite efforts by religious educators from outside the community, their presence has not significantly altered the religious dynamics. Additionally, the challenges posed by the Christian majority in Purbo Hamlet further complicate the effectiveness of religious outreach efforts.

Education plays a crucial role in shaping religious understanding and maturity. A study conducted in Finland on adolescents and young adults (Ulfa, 2005) found that individuals with access to education exhibited a higher level of religious development compared to those without it. Education facilitates critical thinking, enabling individuals to derive deeper meaning from their religious beliefs. However, for Muslim minority children in Purbo Hamlet, access to education that aligns with their religious beliefs is severely limited. Due to the absence of Islamic schools in the village, they are compelled to attend Christian elementary schools. This lack of religiously compatible education hampers their ability to develop a strong foundation in Islamic teachings, ultimately restricting their religious growth.

Religious development is also shaped by environmental factors, including family, peer groups, and the broader social context. The family, as the primary unit of socialization, plays a fundamental role in shaping an individual's personality, including their religious beliefs. However, beyond the family, peer influence is equally significant. Individuals tend to conform to the behaviors and practices of their peers, a phenomenon commonly referred to as social conformity. In Purbo Hamlet, this conformity is evident, as members of the Muslim minority often participate in Christian practices due to the overwhelming influence of the majority. The dominant religious environment exerts pressure on minorities, shaping their religious behaviors and, in some cases, leading to assimilation.

Cultural norms and traditions significantly impact individual religious behavior. Established social norms often guide individuals toward behaviors that align with the dominant cultural framework. However, individuals with a strong foundation in their religious beliefs are more likely to maintain their religious identity despite cultural pressures. In Purbo Hamlet, the dominant Christian culture influences the religious dynamics of the Muslim minority, shaping their religious expressions and behaviors. While some individuals resist cultural assimilation, others adapt by incorporating elements of the majority religion into their daily lives.

Religious dynamics in Purbo Hamlet are also influenced by conversion trends, particularly those driven by marriage and economic factors. Research by Rosyid (2013) highlights several internal factors contributing to religious conversion, including personality, emotional conflicts, and personal beliefs regarding religious truth. External factors include family influence, social environment, interfaith relationships, economic status, and marriage. The findings in this study align with Rosyid's framework, as many religious conversions in Purbo Hamlet are driven by marriage and economic necessity.

Further supporting this perspective, Kincaid and Schram (1987) argue that individuals tend to adopt behaviors and beliefs that have been previously useful or

rewarding to them. Similarly, Rohmah (2013) suggests that religious behavioral changes are shaped by both internal motivations—such as faith and reasoning—and external reinforcements. These theories provide a useful framework for analyzing religious conversion and adaptation among Muslim minorities in Purbo Hamlet. By considering both psychological and sociocultural dimensions, this framework highlights how religious identity is not static but fluid, shaped by individual experiences and community pressures. Such a perspective allows for a deeper understanding of why certain individuals may shift their religious expressions or affiliations in specific contexts.

The irregularities in religious practices observed in Purbo Hamlet can also be examined through the contingency theory proposed by Title and Welch (1983). This theory posits that religious inconsistencies arise due to social or situational factors. Three primary situational factors contribute to religious inconsistency:

1. Perception of Religious Non-Adherence Among Peers: Individuals are less likely to strictly adhere to religious practices if they perceive that their peers do not follow religious norms consistently.
2. Ambiguity in Religious Norms: If religious teachings and expectations are unclear or conflicting, individuals may experience difficulty in maintaining consistent religious practices.
3. Influence of a Dominant Religious Group: The presence of a large number of adherents from a different religion within an individual's immediate environment can lead to gradual religious assimilation or inconsistencies in religious adherence.

Applying this framework to Purbo Hamlet, it becomes evident that the religious inconsistency among the Muslim minority is influenced by the overwhelming presence of the Christian majority, ambiguous religious reinforcement, and the perception that strict religious adherence is not a communal priority. This situation creates a complex social environment where religious identity becomes negotiable, and religious practices are adapted to maintain harmony with the dominant group. Furthermore, limited access to religious education and leadership may also contribute to the weakening of consistent Islamic practice within the minority group. The religious dynamics of the Muslim minority in Purbo Hamlet are shaped by a complex interplay of internal and external factors. While personal experiences and developmental age play a role in shaping religious maturity, environmental influences—such as education, social norms, and economic conditions—have a profound impact on religious behavior. The dominance of Christian cultural and educational institutions has significantly constrained the religious development of the Muslim minority, leading to both assimilation and inconsistencies in religious practices. Furthermore, socioeconomic pressures and interfaith marriages have contributed to cases

of religious conversion. These findings highlight the intricate relationship between religious identity and social structures, underscoring the need for further exploration into how minority religious communities navigate their faith in pluralistic societies.

CONCLUSION

This study provides comprehensive insights into the dynamics of religiosity among Muslim minorities in Purbo Hamlet. The findings address key research questions regarding religious awareness, experience, maturity, conversion, and the factors influencing religious life within this minority community.

First, the religious awareness of Muslim minorities in Purbo Hamlet is deeply rooted in their belief that their faith in Islam is a divine blessing. Despite being a minority, they remain steadfast in their adherence to Islam, perceiving their *aqeedah* as a manifestation of divine grace. Their religious experience, however, is largely ritualistic, centered on performing worship as a religious obligation rather than as a deeply transformative spiritual engagement. Their participation in religious practices appears to be driven more by tradition and social conformity than by an intrinsic, reflective commitment to faith.

Second, the religious maturity of Muslim minorities in Purbo Hamlet does not fully align with established theoretical frameworks. While they demonstrate differentiation by recognizing Islam as their chosen faith after various life experiences, other dimensions of religious maturity—such as dynamic character, consistency, comprehensiveness, and integration—remain underdeveloped. Their religious behavior lacks autonomous motivation and is often shaped by external factors, such as peer influence and community expectations. Only a small fraction (approximately 20%) of residents exhibits consistent religious observance, while the majority engage in religious practices irregularly. A limited understanding of fundamental religious principles, such as *zakat fitr* and daily prayers, further reflects the lack of comprehensive religious knowledge. Additionally, their religious life is not fully integrated into their daily existence, as evidenced by the absence of motivation to seek religiously aligned education for their children, which ultimately hampers their religious development.

Third, religious conversion within the Purbo community occurs in two directions—conversion to Islam and conversion away from Islam. However, the predominant pattern involves Muslim men from Semarang or Salatiga converting to Christianity after marrying Christian women from Purbo Hamlet. The primary driver of religious conversion is marriage, where men adopt their wives' religion as part of their integration into the local community. Economic factors also play a role in conversion, particularly when the female

partner has higher socioeconomic and educational status, leading the male partner to adopt her religious affiliation for social and financial stability.

Fourth, the dynamics of religiosity in Purbo Hamlet are shaped by both internal and external factors. Internal factors include developmental age and subjective religious experiences, while external factors encompass education, environmental influences, and cultural norms. The limited access to Islamic education significantly impacts religious development among Muslim minorities, as they are compelled to attend Christian schools due to the absence of alternative institutions. Environmental influences, particularly the dominance of the Christian majority, further shape religious behaviors, leading to instances of religious assimilation or adaptation. Cultural norms reinforce these dynamics by embedding religious practices within broader societal structures that prioritize the majority religion over minority faith traditions.

This study highlights the need for further research to provide a more nuanced understanding of religious dynamics among Muslim minorities. Future studies should explore the long-term effects of interfaith marriages on religious identity and examine how minority religious communities navigate challenges in preserving their faith. Additionally, further investigation is needed into the role of education in shaping religious consciousness, particularly in contexts where minority groups face systemic limitations in accessing religiously aligned educational opportunities. By exploring these aspects in greater detail, future research can contribute to a broader discourse on religious minorities and their resilience in maintaining religious identity amid sociocultural and structural constraints.

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