CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Indonesia is known to have the largest Muslim population in a country. Consequently, since the 13th-century Islamic school in Indonesia has been spreading and growing (Muttaqin, et al. 2020). With the growing population of Muslims in Indonesia, also increases the growth of Islamic education which caused an emergence towards different types of Islamic schools. The first one is the oldest and most traditional Islamic school called *pesantren* this institution only focuses on classical Islamic sciences and does not provide secular subjects (Azra, Afrianty and Hefner 2010). The second one is called *madrasah* which is a more modern institution than the *pesantren*, adopting more secular subjects in their education, which aims to understand Islam in a modern perspective rather than the traditional teachings of *pesantren* (H. Azra 2018). The third one is considered as a new trend of Islamic education institution called *Sekolah Islam* or Islamic school. Azra (2018) adds that this new trend of an educational institution is more expensive, provided complete facilities, and based on the advances of science and technology but still is familiar with the tradition of practices in Islam. Thus, the significant differences between *pesantren, madrasah*, and Islamic schools are on the subject matters and facilities. Unlike *pesantren, madrasah* is a transition from traditional teaching such as *pesantren* into a modern one that included secular subjects, however, the Islamic school is much more modern than the *madrasah*

1

because the subjects and facilities support an effective way to learn science, technology alongside Islamic teachings and values.

With the new trends of Islamic schools, there is also high demand in modern Islamic education, especially among the urban middle to high-class Muslim families. Urban Muslim families are aware of the impact of globalization, thus demanding for modernized Islamic education that could provide a high quality of education balancing the secular subjects with the teachings and practices of Islam not only theoretically but also applied in their daily life activities (H. Azra 2018). Further, Islamic schools do not only provide a high quality of education but also implementing a full-day school system aiming to build and improve the discipline, character, and faith of the students (Madjid 2018). Since most urban Muslim parents are working parents they are more likely to choose Islamic school because they need a positive environment for their children. According to Madjid (2018), in order to achieve a positive environment, Islamic schools have innovative and fun learning activities; at the same time, the school must have the students obey the rules with the support of the teachers. Overall, Islamic school provides a high quality of education while building character for the students that fit the value of Islam and implementing the teachings in their daily lives.

However, there are difficulties in applying institutionalized Islamic morals and values towards Islamic school students, especially in a modern urban Muslim society. In a modern era, communication does not only occur in real life but also virtually, with the increasing use of social media it changes significantly toward

2

individuals and groups of Muslim society (Islam 2019). The school that taught highly on Islamic values would expect the students to apply it whether in real life or on social media. The difficulties occur because teenagers use the internet and social media most of the time. After all, it is a convenient platform to gain and share information, thus they are comfortable in using it (Mardiana, Hellystia and Ghufron 2019). Further, the internet is a platform for self-expression, and women are most likely to use the internet as an attempt to examine their gender and religious identities (Goehring 2019). Traditionally women are supposed to be kept in a private sphere; with the new communication technology that emerges creates a new space that changes women's realities by having space for self-expression (Guta and Karolak 2015). Similarly, in the Islamic value, women are limited in appearing to the public spaces which are reinforced through clothing and the expectation to travel with a *mahram* and the expectation not to have an intimate relationship with the opposite sex that is not the *mahram* (Thorpe and Chawansky 2020). Goehring (2019) added that social media is a platform that offers individuals to choose what to share about themselves where the identities are controlled by the individuals. Consequently, females are known to use social media to communicate with peers, and early adolescent females use social media as a space to develop their sense of self (Busch 2016). The difficulties in applying Islamic values and morals towards students are because of the development of social media and the relationship between Muslim students especially female Muslim students. Therefore, the freedom of self-expression in social media

3

emphasized the difficulties of implementing the Islamic values and morals towards female Muslim students.

The focus of this study is female students that go to a private Islamic school however, the informants of this study demand their identity and the school identity to be hidden, and therefore "The X Islamic private school" will be used to describe the school this is because the issue of the study is quite sensitive. The X Islamic private school is an elite private Islamic senior high school, located in the south of Surabaya particularly in the district of Kelurahan Kebonsari, Kecamatan Jambangan. Moreover, Kelurahan Kebonsari is known to be surrounded by middle to high-class housing complex which fits the aim of the private school. Besides being surrounded by housing complex, the school is also near the main road of Surabaya that means the access is easy and the school complex is an urban area. Established in 2005, The X Islamic private school is one of the most expensive schools in the area of South Surabaya, the fees for The X Islamic private school includes, administration fee as much as Rp 500.000 and to enroll into The X Islamic private school parents must pay educational fees such as; *Infaq* or disbursement in the amount of Rp 30.000.000, educational development fund as much as Rp 6.750.000 and education cost for Rp 2.600.000/month.

Besides the expansive fees, the qualities The X Islamic private school are also the reason parents choose the school for their children. Importantly, the school does not only focus on school subjects but also religious practices and education. The X Islamic private school applies values and practices to teach their female students to be independent in practicing Islam. One of which is by telling

4

female students the obligation and importance to preform Sunnah prayer, *Tarawih* prayer, *Duha* prayer not only that, the school also often organize *Iftar* feast for the female students at school (Interview with Informant GD, 20 March 2020). Further, parents also choose schools that can supervise female students thoroughly and have a positive environment for their children. This is shown by the daily activities of female students in The X Islamic private school; the day starts with the female students reciting the Quran and ends the day also by reciting the Quran before going home. Additional to that, females and males students are separated in school and the teachers would not hesitate to keep them separated outside the school, such as on social media or other events (Interview with GD, 21 May 2020). That is the result of having a strong relationship between the teacher and the female students where the teachers are overly thoughtful and concerning the female students. Because of that, the female students feel overly supervised by the teachers, because the supervision does not only occur in school but also occurs on social media particularly Instagram. That is because The X Islamic private school tends to have strict rules about interaction and relationships in social media.

Hence, this study focuses on the female Muslim students that study in The X Islamic private school located in the south of Surabaya to reveal the various representations of Muslims on social media especially young Muslims by studying their process of online identity performance through Instagram accounts. Female Muslim students in senior high school are teenagers around the age of 16-18. According to Utomo and Laksmiwati (2019) at the age of 17 until 20 it is the stage of teenagers for self-development and to broaden their relationship with

5

other people, therefore, they need a space to fully express themselves. It is assumed that the existence of strict rules from The X Islamic private school regarding what they want to engage, express and expose about their self in social media limits them to truly express their self because they need to maintain the image of an ideal Muslim student and being a teenager that wants to express themselves fully. This show that adolescent tends to express them to discover their self-identity because at the age 15-18 teenagers have not fully developed their identity. In expressing self-identity Utomo and Laksmiwati (2019) explains teenagers are in the stage that is usually called a social age because teenager's social interactions became clearer and dominant. Thus, teenagers interact using social to maintain relationships and specifically Instagram because they could choose what impression they would like to present through pictures and videos (Hasan and Wibowo 2019).

Therefore, it is assumed that female Muslim students need to fully express themselves but are limited by the school and they must follow the rules. Young teenage females need a space to develop their self-identity when they also spend most of their time interacting through social media, thus they need the freedom to use social media (Busch 2016). There are some reasons Muslim female students need the freedom to negotiate their identity through identity performance which is part of a rebelling act against the strict rules in order to achieve that freedom. According to Petegem, et al (2015) the cause of teenage rebellion is the relation between the adults and the teen, which is often caused by a strict controlling style towards the teen. Besides strict controlling, external causes also influence

6

teenagers to rebel against rules. One of the causes is teenagers often seek for freedom, for the teenager to make the journey to adulthood successful they need to achieve independence (Ganiron, et al. 2017). Peer group also influence the behavior and the tendencies of teenagers to rebel because peer groups or community has a characteristic that is similar (Eldinah and Hasanah 2015). Therefore, teenagers have a sense of belonging and feel that they can achieve freedom through their peer groups or communities. Other cases that influence students to have a rebellion behavior is their physiological mental state. According to Ganrion, et al (2017), the state of being repressed also causes teenagers to tend to rebel; this is because every teenager will experience being repressed before reaching adulthood. However, many adults always assume that the rebelling is because of the traditional teen behavior and adults tend to ignore the fact that pressuring teenagers could also cause them to rebel.

In this case, female Muslim students need to express themselves fully to develop their identity through identity performances. Thus, it is found that the students escape from their school obligations through social media especially Instagram to fully express themselves. In self-expressing, each individual has their own different identity and the ways they create their identity. According to Benage's (2011) every identity posted in social media such as Facebook and Twitter must go through a negotiation of the individual's identity and in those platforms, individuals are able to expand, show and to express the aspects of their identity which would also change over time, thus identity is fluid. Thus, female

7

Muslim students create their identity through identity performances in the online media, specifically Instagram.

1.2   Statement of Problems

Teenagers at the age of senior high school female students being exposed to social media especially Instagram gave them a chance to fully explore and express their self-identity, and maintaining freedom on social media also influenced them in deciding for their identity creation. However, senior high school female students that go to the X Islamic private school have limitations in what they want to expose about themselves because they are bounded with the rules and values of the school and Islam. Thus, with the obligation to follow the rules and values teenagers tend to rebel against it. Thus, this study aims to answer the following question:

1. How do the female students perform their identity as a Muslim student through their Instagram accounts?

1.3   Objectives of the Study

According to the research statement which has been listed above, the purpose of this study is as follows:

1.1 To investigate the identity performance done by senior high school female students of The X Islamic private school through the front stage and back stage of the Instagram accounts

8

1.4 Significance of the Study

The result of this study provides more information regarding the representation of Muslims through social media which also broadens the representation of Muslim identities. Thus, this study contributes to expanding cultural studies in the field of identity, specifically the Muslim student's identity. The research is conducted in order to gain more information regarding Muslim teenagers which will also be useful Islamic schools to build a better relationship between the school and the female students.

1.5 Definition of Key Terms

Identity Performance : People are actors who perform many roles in different kinds of settings based on their interaction in a social context (Pearson 2009).

Front Stage : Front stage is part of the dramaturgical performance whereas the performer is aware that they are performing in front of an audience, the act that they perform is considered as intentional and chosen by the performer, to represent them positively and have meaning towards the audiences (Goffman 1956).

Back Stage : Back stage is a situation or place where the performer can drop their front act and step out of their characters (Goffman 1956).

Self-Presentation : Self-presentation is a person's impression that is managed and created into a certain image that is presented in front of others (Goffman 1956).

9

10

Teenagers : In understanding the youth many use the term adolescence, which is a concept of physical and mental changes that happened to a child that will lead to adulthood, however, the more familiar term is a teenager. (Robinson and Davies 2014)