

Analysis of PAI Students' Experience in Participating in Campus Organizations and Its Impact on Personal Development

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Abstract: This study aims to find out in depth the experiences of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) students in participating in campus organizations and their impact on self-development from academic, social, leadership, and religiosity aspects. This study uses a qualitative approach with a phenomenological method to explore the meaning of students' experiences directly. Data were obtained through in-depth interviews, field observations, and documentation of PAI students at Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta who are active in various types of campus organizations, both intra and extra. The data analysis technique refers to the Miles and Huberman model which includes three stages, namely data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. Data validity testing was carried out using triangulation techniques, both source and technique triangulation, to ensure the validity and reliability of the research findings. The results of the study showed that students' motivations for joining organizations included developing leadership skills, expanding social networks, gaining teamwork experience, and strengthening understanding and practice of Islamic teachings. Participation in organizations contributes to improving communication skills, time management, responsibility, decision making, and strengthening Islamic values such as trustworthiness, honesty, cooperation, and discipline. The main challenges faced by students include difficulty in managing

time, academic pressure, fatigue, and maintaining consistency of religious values amidst organizational activities. Strategies used to overcome this include creating a regular schedule, setting priorities, and strengthening religious intentions and motivations. In conclusion, campus organizations contribute significantly to the holistic development of PAI students, as long as they are balanced with time management, spiritual awareness, and strong personal commitment in carrying out organizational activities consistently and responsibly.

Keywords: Campus Organization, PAI Student Experiences, Self Development.

Abstrak: Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui secara mendalam pengalaman mahasiswa Pendidikan Agama Islam (PAI) dalam mengikuti organisasi kampus serta dampaknya terhadap pengembangan diri dari aspek akademik, sosial, kepemimpinan, dan religiusitas. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan metode fenomenologi untuk menggali makna pengalaman mahasiswa secara langsung. Data diperoleh melalui wawancara mendalam, observasi lapangan, dan dokumentasi terhadap mahasiswa PAI Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta yang aktif dalam berbagai jenis organisasi kampus, baik intra maupun ekstra. Teknik analisis data mengacu pada model Miles dan Huberman yang mencakup tiga tahap, yaitu reduksi data, penyajian data, dan penarikan kesimpulan. Uji keabsahan data dilakukan dengan teknik triangulasi, baik triangulasi sumber maupun teknik, guna memastikan validitas dan reliabilitas temuan penelitian. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa motivasi mahasiswa bergabung dalam organisasi antara lain untuk mengembangkan kemampuan memimpin, memperluas jaringan sosial, memperoleh pengalaman kerja tim, dan memperkuat pemahaman serta pengamalan ajaran agama Islam. Keikutsertaan dalam organisasi berkontribusi terhadap peningkatan keterampilan komunikasi, manajemen waktu, tanggung jawab, pengambilan keputusan, serta penguatan nilai-nilai keislaman seperti amanah, jujur, kerja sama, dan kedisiplinan. Tantangan utama yang dihadapi mahasiswa meliputi kesulitan dalam membagi waktu, tekanan akademik, kelelahan, dan menjaga konsistensi nilai agama di tengah aktivitas organisasi. Strategi yang digunakan untuk mengatasi hal tersebut antara lain adalah menyusun jadwal teratur, mengatur prioritas, dan memperkuat niat serta motivasi religius. Kesimpulannya, organisasi kampus berkontribusi signifikan dalam pengembangan diri mahasiswa PAI secara holistik, selama diimbangi dengan manajemen waktu, kesadaran spiritual, dan komitmen pribadi yang kuat dalam menjalani aktivitas organisasi secara konsisten dan bertanggung jawab.

Kata Kunci: Organisasi Kampus, Pengalaman Mahasiswa PAI, Pengembangan Diri.

Introduction

As attention to the development of soft skills in higher education increases, student organizations on campus have become one of the important avenues for honing students' social skills, leadership abilities, and character (Nastiti, 2023). On the other hand, many still question the extent to which involvement in organizations can have a positive impact on students, especially those in Islamic Education (PAI) programs. The background of Islamic Education in Indonesia plays a significant role in shaping the character and morals of the younger generation (Pai, 2023). According to data, student involvement in campus organizations has proven to contribute positively to communication skills, responsibility, and decision-making abilities (Khoir, 2024). In the context of Indonesia, Islamic Education (PAI) plays a crucial role in shaping the morals and character of the younger generation (Judrah et al., 2024), making the relevance of PAI students' involvement in campus organizations even more important to study in-depth.

Research (Khodijah et al., 2024) titled *The Contribution of Organizations to Character Education and Professional Readiness of Students* shows that student organizations have a significant contribution to character education and students' professional readiness through the development of leadership values, responsibility, and teamwork abilities. Meanwhile, (Asnawi et al., 2022), in their study titled *Motivation of Islamic Education Students in Joining Student Organizations at Universitas Islam Makassar*, highlights that PAI students have strong intrinsic and extrinsic motivation to participate in organizations as a means of self-development, strengthening soft skills, expanding relationships, and deepening religious knowledge. This finding indicates that campus organizations are not only a space for self-actualization but also a part of the process of shaping the religious character of PAI students.

Although various studies have shown the general benefits of student participation in campus organizations, there is still a lack of understanding regarding how such involvement specifically impacts students majoring in Islamic Education. Most existing research focuses more on the influence of extracurricular activities on students in general (Nugraha et al., 2023) (Berliana et al., 2023). In fact, the religious identity of PAI students can influence the way they interpret and carry out their roles in organizations, including strengthening religious values and integrating academic and spiritual activities (Syukur et al., 2025). Therefore, it is essential to study further how their experiences in campus organizations can influence self-development, both in terms of professional skills and religious values. This study aims to fill that gap and provide a deeper understanding of how campus organizations play a role in the development of PAI students in Indonesia.

This research aims to describe and understand the experiences of Islamic Education (PAI) students in participating in campus organizations and how those experiences contribute to their personal development. The main focus of this study is to reveal how PAI students perceive their involvement in organizations, particularly in terms of social skills, leadership, and the strengthening of religious values. This research also seeks to identify the types of experiences they have had and the role of organizations in the process of character formation and self-development. Therefore, this study is expected to provide a clearer picture of the role of campus organizations in supporting the learning process and religious development of PAI students, while also filling the gap in research that has rarely been discussed in previous studies.

This research is of significant value because it can provide a clearer understanding of how campus organizations contribute to the process of character formation and self-development of

Islamic Education (PAI) students. The findings of this study are expected to enrich the limited research in this field and serve as a reference for campus authorities and organization mentors to develop more effective programs to support PAI students. Furthermore, this research also opens opportunities for further studies on the impact of organizational activities in the context of education based on religious values.

Methodology

This study uses a qualitative method with a field research approach, which involves conducting research directly at the location to observe and understand the phenomena that occur (Sari et al., 2022). The data collected consists of descriptive data from the experiences, views, and meanings conveyed by the research subjects, namely the students of Islamic Education (PAI) at Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta who are actively involved in campus organizations. A phenomenological approach is used to understand the students' experiences in participating in organizations and the impact on their personal development (Adji, 2024). Data collection techniques are conducted through in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation (Agustini et al., 2024), while data analysis uses the interactive model of Miles & Huberman, which includes data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions (Qomaruddin & Sa'diyah, 2024). The research conclusion is obtained through a continuous analysis process to gain a deeper understanding of the impact of student participation in organizations on their social skills, leadership abilities, and the reinforcement of their Islamic values (Dewi & SH, 2025).

Result and Discussion

The participation of students in Islamic Education (PAI) in campus organizations significantly contributes to their personal development in various aspects, such as social, academic, leadership, emotional, and religiosity. Based on interviews with eight students actively involved in both intra- and extra-campus organizations, it was found that their experiences in organizations not only broadened their horizons and skills but also encouraged changes in character and maturity of thought.

In the initial stage of involvement, students generally face challenges such as awkwardness, lack of self-confidence, difficulty managing time between classes and organization activities, and academic pressures. However, as their involvement and experience increased, they began to show development in terms of self-confidence, communication skills, leadership abilities, and time and emotion management. These concrete experiences align closely with Carl Rogers' principle of experiential learning, which suggests that learning through direct experience is a key process in personal and social development (Zamzami & Putri, 2024).

In the framework of Howard Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences, it is emphasized that human intelligence is not singular (Amin & Zainal Said, 2024) but consists of various complementary forms (Nurzaidah & Ruslaini, 2025). In the context of PAI students involved in organizations, at least five forms of intelligence appear prominently (Subroto, 2023). For example, interpersonal intelligence develops through social interaction and conflict mediation among members, while intrapersonal intelligence is seen in students' self-reflection on their strengths and weaknesses. In addition, students also develop verbal-linguistic intelligence through the preparation of reports, proposals, and presentations. Physical activities such as social events enhance kinesthetic intelligence. In the context of PAI students, it is also important to highlight spiritual intelligence as

an extension of Gardner's theory, emphasizing the practice of Islamic values in organizational life, such as honesty, trustworthiness, and ukhuwah Islamiyah (WARDANI, n.d.).

Carl Rogers' theory of self-development asserts that personal development is a continuous process marked by openness to experience, personal responsibility, and the ability to make decisions (Diwyarthi et al., 2025). This is reflected in students who are actively involved in organizations, as they demonstrate growth in character and personal autonomy through their ability to make decisions, set priorities, and manage time and emotions. The active involvement in organizations also provides space for experiential learning, which, according to Rogers, is crucial in shaping a mature personality. Through roles and responsibilities in organizations, students learn to set priorities, manage time, and handle emotions and social pressures (Aulia et al., 2024). This process encourages the growth of personal autonomy and emotional maturity. According to Rogers' view, students who experience optimal self-development will be able to face the realities of life, confront challenges, and show resilience in dealing with organizational obstacles (Virlia et al., 2025).

These findings are also supported by research (Khodijah et al., 2024) which shows that campus organizations play an important role in character education and students' professional readiness. Organizations are not only places for skill development but also serve as a means of nurturing ethical and religious values. A similar finding is presented by (Asnawi et al., 2022), which states that the motivation of PAI students to engage in organizations arises from both intrinsic drive and environmental influences, leading to the growth of responsibility, self-confidence, and religious awareness. Various forms of experiences describing the affective, social, and spiritual development of students during their participation in organizations can be seen in the following table:

Tabel 1. Forms of Affective Development Observed During Organizational Involvement

No	Affective Aspect	Description of Student Behavior in the Organization	Example of Student Experience
1	Acceptance	Realizing the importance of Islamic values such as responsibility and etiquette.	AF started to practice discipline and politeness in expressing opinions after being impressed by the organizational culture.
2	Response	Actively expressing ideas and moderating discussions.	FSA was initially nervous when becoming a moderator but is now accustomed and confident in leading discussions.
3	Evaluation	Valuing honesty and teamwork in carrying out responsibilities.	NNI is proud to have led a committee and considers that experience very valuable for the future.
4	Organizing	Setting priorities and making decisions based on values.	MM chose to attend an important organizational meeting over a family event as a form of responsibility.
5	Characterization	Organizational values are embedded in daily life.	QNM applies organizational discipline in his academic life, including arriving on time and completing assignments early.

In addition to the affective dimension, the benefits of involvement in organizations are also evident in academic and social aspects. Students feel more prepared to speak in public, think critically, and interact with diverse individuals. Emotionally, they become more patient, able to manage conflicts, and stable in handling pressure. This reinforces the idea that campus organizations serve as an effective social laboratory in balancing cognitive, affective, and spiritual development, especially in the context of PAI students who bring religious values into every activity.

The findings of this study enrich the understanding that student involvement in organizations has a wide-ranging impact on the formation of a holistic personality. Practically, these findings can serve as a basis for campus administrators and organization mentors to design more contextual and in-depth development programs for PAI students. Additionally, the approach based on the theories of Gardner and Rogers opens opportunities for further research exploring the integration of multiple intelligences and religious experiences in organizational activities.

For future research directions, it is suggested that a broader exploration be conducted comparing the experiences of PAI students with those from other academic programs in the same organization, and how religious backgrounds influence perceptions and outcomes of involvement in campus organizations.

PAI Students' Experience in Campus Organizations

The experience of Islamic Education (PAI) students in campus organizations is diverse and reflects a significant process of character building, social skills, and intellectual maturity. Based on field research, PAI students are actively involved in intra-campus organizations such as the Student Association of Programs and the Student Executive Board, as well as extra-campus organizations such as da'wah communities and Islamic youth organizations. Activities include group discussions, leadership training, program planning and execution, social service, and religious events.

These experiences are not limited to administrative tasks but also provide opportunities for students to learn social interaction, manage emotions, and enhance critical and creative thinking skills. For example, some students shared how they learned to resolve conflicts between members, negotiate with various parties, lead meetings, and implement work programs amidst the challenges faced.

In relation to Howard Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences, these student experiences are highly relevant. Gardner asserts that human intelligence is not limited to logical-mathematical and verbal-linguistic intelligence but also includes interpersonal, intrapersonal, kinesthetic, visual-spatial, musical, and naturalistic intelligences (Subroto, 2023).

The Role of Campus Organizations in PAI Students' Self-Development

Carl Rogers (1995) once said, "The good life is a process, not a state of being. It is a direction, not a destination." This means that self-development is an ongoing process, not something that is completed in a short time. Rogers explains that a person who develops well is one who is open to new experiences, able to make decisions independently, and takes responsibility for their life (Diwyarthi et al., 2025).

For Islamic Education (PAI) students, campus organizations are a crucial place to aid in this self-development process. The field research results show that by actively participating in organizations, students not only learn theory but also gain direct and valuable experiences. For

example, they participate in meetings, leadership training, event organizing, and solving various organizational problems. All of this helps students to learn many things beyond the classroom.

Many PAI students who initially felt insecure or nervous about speaking in public became more courageous and accustomed to expressing their opinions after getting involved in organizations. They also learned how to cooperate with others, lead teams, and build extensive networks. This aligns with Rogers' view that new experiences are essential for a person's development. Campus organizations also provide students with a place to showcase their talents and interests (Yolanda et al., 2024). For instance, some students enjoy public speaking, writing, or organizing events. In the organization, they have the opportunity to practice these skills directly. Many of them say that their experience in organizations has made them more confident and better prepared to face the workforce in the future.

Furthermore, campus organizations serve as a good learning ground for applying Islamic values (Zidan, n.d.). PAI students learn about amanah (responsibility), ukhuwah (brotherhood), musyawarah (discussions and collective decision-making), and ikhlas (sincerity). All of these are essential for building a strong and professional character. Throughout their organizational journey, students also face challenges such as resolving conflicts, dealing with event failures, or adapting to changes. Although these situations can be difficult, these experiences teach them to become more resilient and capable of solving problems.

This research concludes that campus organizations play a significant role in helping PAI students develop holistically. Students should not only focus on completing their education but should also be expected to provide solutions to various societal issues (Surakarta, 2024). It's not just about gaining knowledge, but also about shaping personality and skills that will be useful for the future. As Rogers stated, self-development requires an ongoing process, and campus organizations are one of the best places to undergo that process.

Conclusion

This study concludes that the involvement of Islamic Education (PAI) students in campus organizations significantly contributes to their personal development. The findings demonstrate that organizational experiences have a positive impact on the social, academic, leadership, and religious aspects of PAI students. Students show increased self-confidence, communication skills, time management, leadership abilities, and the strengthening of Islamic values. This process reinforces the idea that campus organizations serve as a strategic platform in shaping students' character comprehensively, as explained in Howard Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences and Carl Rogers' theory of self-development. The implications of these findings are important for the development of character education in religiously-based higher education institutions. Campus organizations not only train professional skills but also reinforce ethical values, responsibility, and Islamic spirituality. Therefore, campuses, faculty mentors, and organization managers need to design organizational programs that are not only technical but also grounded in Islamic values and character. Structured mentoring and continuous training are strongly recommended to ensure that students' self-development is more directed and has a long-term impact.

For future research, it is recommended to conduct a comparative study between PAI students and students from other departments in terms of their campus organization experiences to see how religious backgrounds influence their meaning and outcomes. Longitudinal studies are also suggested

to assess the long-term impact of campus organizations on students' professional readiness and graduate integrity.

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