

Degradation of Moral Values in the Trend of Adolescent Narcissism on Social Media

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Abstract

The development of information technology has brought many changes in human life, especially in terms of communication. The emergence of social media that provides a lot of convenience in communicating, sharing many activities, and being a place to share selfie photos, unconsciously fosters narcissism, and teenagers are no exception. This study aims to see how far the influence of the narcissistic trend is on adolescent morals and to find solutions to these deviations. By using qualitative methods, this research was conducted by interviewing several relevant informants. The results of this study indicate that the desire to be famous, beautiful, and get praise from others seems to be a natural thing that must be obeyed—no doubt, this narcissistic influence can negatively impact a person's behavior and morals. Taking pictures in inappropriate clothes, or speaking in an inappropriate language, seems to be justified on social media. This can be reduced if a strong foundation of religious education is instilled early on in youth from their immediate environment. In addition, support and supervision from parents and the environment also play an important role in reducing the negative impact of these activities.

Keywords: Morals, Narcissism, Teens

Abstrak

Perkembangan teknologi informasi telah menghadirkan banyak perubahan dalam kehidupan manusia, terutama dalam hal berkomunikasi. Kemunculan media sosial yang menyediakan banyak kemudahan berkomunikasi, berbagi banyak kegiatan dan tentunya menjadi tempat membagikan foto selfi, tanpa sadar menumbuhkan sikap narsisme, tidak terkecuali bagi kaum remaja. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk melihat sejauh mana pengaruh trend narsis mempengaruhi akhlak remaja serta mencari solusi dari penyimpangan tersebut. Dengan menggunakan metode kualitatif, penelitian ini dilakukan dengan melakukan wawancara kepada beberapa informan yang terkait. Hasil dari penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa Keinginan untuk terkenal, cantik, mendapatkan pujian dari orang lain, seakan menjadi hal kodrati yang harus dituruti, tidak ayal pengaruh narsis ini dapat berdampak buruk pada prilaku dan akhlak seseorang. Berfoto dengan pakaian yang kurang pantas, atau berbicara dengan bahasa yang tidak pantas, seakan mendapat pembenaran di media social. Hal ini bisa dikurangi jika landasan Pendidikan agama yang kuat ditanamkan sejak dini kepada remaja dari lingkungan terdekatnya. Selain itu, dukungan dan pengawasan dari orang tua dan lingkungan juga berperan penting untuk mengurangi dampak negatif kegiatan tersebut.

Kata kunci: Akhlak, Narsis, Remaja

INTRODUCTION

Humans are creatures who always want to show their existence anywhere and anytime. The existence of a person needs to be recognized by the community. In existentialism, it states that there are three stages of human existence: the aesthetic stage. An aesthetic man is a human whose will is to bind himself to the tendencies of the society and his era. Even becoming a trend in society is a guide to his life. However, it is not based on any passion other than the desire just to know and try. This is what is happening to today's generation of teenagers. As if whatever is seen on social media is something that must be followed. If not, it will be considered outdated, including the phenomenon of narcissism when taking selfies.

The selfie phenomenon is now a new trend that infects everyone regardless of age, profession, or position. There are many messages to convey when someone takes a selfie and then uploads the photo on social media. The images talk about the activities someone is doing or has done. However, on the other hand, the selfie phenomenon has also led many teenagers to upload vulgar photos that are not by religious teachings and moral values.

REVEALING THE MEANING OF NARCISSISM AND ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH MORALITY

This phenomenon led people to behaviour or attitudes which is called narcissism. Narcissism is someone's attitude who loves to pride himself or herself excessively on what he has as they are handsome or beautiful. This also refers to their behaviour or achievements. The word "narcissism" was first introduced in Greece referring to a young man who loves boasting himself for having a handsome face. Even, in Greece, there is a garden named Narcys.¹

In Islamic values, narcissism is synonymous with arrogance. This trait is not commendable because of Allah SWT. Arrogance means overly self-respect and considers others to be meaningless.² Islamic values hate arrogant people. Narcissism approach *fasiq* as what is owned by humans is not to the tip of what Allah SWT has.³

In Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia, narcissism means loving oneself excessively. This term was used in Psychology by Sigmund Freud by taking the character in Narcissus, a Greek myth, who was cursed to love his own reflection in a pool. Accidentally, he stretched out his hand and sank. A flower called Narcissus flower grew then on that place.⁴

¹ See Republika.co.id, Januari 2019, Kisah Narcissus yang Narsis

² Al-Suyuti, *al-Jami'ul al-Saghir Fi-Abadith al-Basyir al-Nazir*, Juz 1, (Bayrut, Dar al-Fikr,tt), p.956

³ Mahyuddin, *Akhlak Tasawuf*, (Jakarta: Kalam Mulia), 2010, p. 23

⁴ See *Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia* or on [Http://kbbi.web.id/narsis.html](http://kbbi.web.id/narsis.html).

Narcissists believe that they are superior towards other and lack of respect for other's feeling. However, behind as intense self-confidence, they have a weak self-esteem and are easily offended even for a minor criticism. If someone cannot control this attitude, their personality become deviant. After all, humans tend to do good in accordance with moral laws, for all actions that deviate from those laws are against humans' nature.⁵ Overconfidence is against human nature that must be aware of their weakness. The narcissistic attitude is not appropriate for someone, but the social life lived by young generations nowadays seems to lead them to be overconfident. Moreover, the environment provides a great opportunity for those feelings grow.

The easiness for someone in introducing themselves through social media such as Facebook, BBM, Instagram, Line, and WhatsApp become a media to realize their existence. Taking a beautiful selfie and sending it to their friends are done for getting compliments. For adult, narcissism may be reduced, but that does not happen to the teenagers. For teenagers, their need for self-acknowledgement is great encouraging them to become very confident and not easy to accept flaws.

THE TEENAGERS' UNSTABLE ATTITUDE

Kartono says that adolescence is a period in which a person facing many problems and conflict including confusion in finding one's identity.⁶ Adolescence is a period full of anxiety in dealing with life. Hormonal changes accompanied by emotional changes make teenagers act without a careful thought. This period is characterized by a tendency to follow change. Therefore, teenagers need to get supervision from their parents for being able in getting through this period well. The desire to follow something new often shifts thoughts about good and bad. The unstable natural state of mind worsens their mental attitude resulting inappropriate behaviour.

The shyness that should grow in a young woman becomes lost when taking selfies with various poses. In order to get a compliment, sometimes, there are young teenager who dare to show their *aurat* (intimate parts) to make their beauty more visible. Based on noble moral values, their actions that opening their *aurat* for attracting boys are deviant.⁷

The introduction of a man and a woman arise from seeing uploaded photos on social media. Photos that are considered narcissistic trigger them to approach the opposite sex. Therefore, as they are too confident of their beauty, they get close to the opposite sex and end with a fatal result.

Selfie results a sense of satisfaction and pleasure for anyone especially in attracting the opposite sex. This phenomenon gives impacts affecting teenager and, even, their parents. This

⁵Asmaran As, *Pengantar Studi Akhlak*, (Jakarta: PT Raja Grafindo Persada, 2002), p. 40

⁶Kartono (1985) stated by Andira B Nadianda et. al, on a journal article entitled *Hubungan Fenomena Selfie Dengan Narsisme Pada Remaja dan Respon yang Muncul dari Lingkungan Sosial*, p.1

⁷Asmaran As, *Pengantar Studi Akhlak*, (Jakarta: PT Raja Grafindo Persada, 2002), p. 185

phenomenon must be addressed wisely in order to not violate their adhered religions. Although it is not a big deal for some people, it become a problem when someone love presenting herself or himself to others, become very sensitive, seek other's praise, and want to be treated specially.

This attitude results a sense of arrogant and *riya'* which is not good for someone. Therefore, a teenager needs to instill an understanding on how a person should behave in a life. Although a media is open for public, a person must be smart in using them for saving them in this world and the hereafter.⁸

An understanding of how live a life in accordance with Islamic Law must be instilled for teenagers. However, foreign cultures which deviate from the culture must be filtered. There are some allowed and prohibited values. If the culture gives a bad impact, it must be carried out in accordance with Islamic religious rules. If left unchecked, it affects teenagers' mindset. One of cultures to be cautious is selfie phenomenon which tends to narcissism.

When hanging out to the mall or café enjoying food, or travelling, selfie is a must agenda. For teenagers, it calls hanging out when there is a selfie. They ignored people's gaze surrounding him. Moreover, for them, it is normal when they sit alone, open their handphone, smile and take a selfie photo. This phenomenon is easy to find out nowadays, but rare for past few years.

For some people, taking selfies and sharing their photos on social media is embarrassing, uncomfortable, and considered inappropriate. However, most teenagers see selfie as an entrenched phenomenon as most of them do this. The fact shows that no matter in Banda Aceh or other cities, the trend has penetrated every teenager. Moreover, in order to be able to take selfie, they do various ways to persuade their parents to buy a handphone with a camera.

Mrs. Ani, a housewife who has a junior-high daughter, is forced to buy a handphone with a camera by her daughter as all her daughters' friend have it. Although she is worried that her daughter Facebook or make friend with a bad people in social media, she cannot refuse her daughter's request. Even though she does not know a lot about handphone, she hears from television that internet is very disturbing and makes her scared. She only asks her daughter to be careful in using her handphone.⁹

Mrs. Ani's daughter, Lia, loves take selfies. Moreover, since her handphone is good in its camera, she feels more beautiful in her photos. Using her handphone, she captures every moment in travelling and doing other activities. The posted selfie must look beautiful and taken by herself.

⁸Mahyuddin, *Akhlak...*, 26

⁹ Interview with Mrs. Ani, a housewife from Bireun, 23 Agustus 2017

She takes photos in her bedroom with various style as she is still embarrassed when anyone knows it.

A smartphone, a sophisticated handphone, provides selfie photo features with various forms. An ordinary photo can transform into an extraordinary one. It is edited and uploaded on social media. Therefore, it is common for teenagers love to change their profile photo on Facebook, BBM, WA, Instagram, IMO, Line, Tiktok, or other social media.

Sinta, a teenager from Bireun, admits that she likes to post selfies on her Facebook. In contrast to her everyday life, her face is much different as she makes up her face before taking selfies. Her beautiful, tanned skin turns white with red lips and thick eyebrows. In her everyday life, she does not make up glamorously, but she changes her appearance for photos posted in Facebook.

“Kalau pasang foto di facebook harus cantik dan bergaya, seperti yang lagi trend. Semua teman-teman di facebook juga biasa pasang foto yang narsis, tidak ada foto yang culun. Pastinya foto di FB harus kelihatan lebih menarik. Biasanya foto yang dipasang hasil foto sendiri (selfie). Senang saja kalau foto kelihatan lebih cantik. Biasanya banyak yang like, ada yang minta kenalan dan biasanya sebatas teman saja. Apalagi saya sudah punya pacar, jadi teman-teman lelaki yang lain hanya sekedar berteman saja.”¹⁰

Sinta’s statement that her selfie photo posted on Facebook or other social media shows that selfie photos is used to exist in her friends. Based on Sinta’s statement, selfie photos are not just for capturing an interesting moment. Her selfie photos do not show a certain moment, but it focusses in showing her beautiful face.

Simply, narcissism is a behaviour that is too proud of oneself. Loving oneself so much lead to an unacceptance that reality is different with imagination. When these attitudes and behaviours grow in a teenager, an aggressive attitude appear facing reality. It results high hopes and feeling that someone is the best one.

Too proud of oneself is a special characteristic of narcissism. Although humans instinctively tend to be proud of themselves, this behaviour must be suppressed for avoiding becoming arrogant person. If the behaviour is not managed properly, teenager’s community and technology lead them to narcissism.

¹⁰ Interview with Sinta, a teenager from Bireun, 24 Agustus 2017

People with narcissism do not only take picture and upload it on their social media, but they love boasting themselves to others. Jennifer Golbeck reveals from some previous studies that people tend to dislike anyone with narcissism.¹¹

When someone observe Sinta's Facebook, she or he will easily see a series of Sinta's photos. Those are beautiful, yet different from the original one. On a status uploaded by Sinta, it can be seen that there is a sense of pride of her beauty in her. If there is a comment complementing and stating that she is beautiful, she will enthusiastically be happy.

Fay, a junior high school student in Bireun, admits that he posts photos on Facebook for fun. There are some photos in various styles uploaded on Fay's Facebook account. When the researcher asked her why she loves taking selfie photos, she answers that she looks for friends as many as possible. When the photos are beautiful and interesting, many people want to make friend with her.¹²

Raa, a high school student in Bireun, gives the same answer as her narcissistic friends on social media. That it is necessary to post an interesting photo on Facebook to make everyone happy seeing the picture. She states "*Harus foto yang bagus kalau mau ditampilkan di facebook, masak sih foto yang jelek, malu lah, itu kan dilihat oleh banyak orang?*". That is Raa's short answer. Her Facebook is filled with beautiful and interesting photos, even though she is not as beautiful as the photos posted.¹³

Mya also admits that she loves uploading her beautiful and attractive pictures for finding friends as many as possible. According to her, when you post a beautiful photo there are many people like it and want to be your friend. She states "*Mana mungkin di facebook pasang foto jelek, tidak ada yang mau berteman. Tujuan bermain facebook kan untuk senang-senang juga cari teman?*".¹⁴ Although she does not see herself as narcissist teenager, she belongs to it based on posted photos.

In their transition period, teenagers start to have certain interests including interest in self-appearance. They try to be attractive for gaining recognition and attraction from their friends. According to Kernan, self-appearance is a strong indication of teenagers in socializing with others especially in front of their peers. They who self-actualize excessively have a narcissistic nature and problems in their self-confidence.¹⁵

For people with narcissistic behaviour, they place an excessive value on their own life and feel resentful towards others who are more successful, beautiful, and intelligent.¹⁶ The researcher

¹¹ Widiati, 2013, Media Onliene, Apa Kata Psikolog Soal Foto Narsis di jejaring Sosial

¹² Interview with Fay, Bireun, 5 September 2017

¹³ Interview with Raa, Jeunib, Bireun, 6 September 2017

¹⁴ Interview with Mya, Bireun, 7 September 2017

¹⁵ Santrock J.W, Psikologi Perkembangan (Jakarta: Erlangga, 1980) p.220

¹⁶ Halgin & Whitbourne, Psikologi Abnormal (Jakarta: Salemba Humanika, 2010), p.102

has read one of teenager's statuses on Facebook. In that status, a teenager with the initials W do bullying state that "she" (another girl teenager) is not beautiful and unpleasant. W adds that she is better, kinder, and sweeter, so W's ex-boyfriend does not have to be proud to get "her". This status is read by many people, but W feels more powerful and beautiful.¹⁷

The massive narcissistic attitude of teenagers sometimes cannot be controlled, especially when it becomes a necessity. Lia mentioned that her junior high school friends created a community called Cantik (read: beautiful). This community leads their friends to be narcissist in social media by uploading the most beautiful photos according to them. As they are not satisfied with their handphone which show less beautiful photos, they rent a sophisticated camera for beautifying their photos. After their photos are edited, those are uploaded on social media. They hope that they get compliments saying that those photos look beautiful. When there is a bad comment, they do not accept it.

Lia also mentioned that her friends in Cantik look for attention every day. They show their beauty towards their style and behaviour. They wear luxurious and beautiful things including clothes, shoes, bags, accessories etc. They are usually quick in having boyfriend as they are beautiful and exist in social media, so many men know and want to date them.¹⁸ The situation gets worse when the men took advantages by seducing and giving sweet promises to them as innocent teenagers. There are many cases happened from getting acquainted through social media and being taken away by irresponsible people. The introduction starts from beautiful photos uploaded by a woman and attract others' attention. If it is for good sake, it should be grateful. However, when the irresponsible man does their action for destroying the woman's future and leaving them after taking their honour, it becomes a big disaster for future generations.

The negative impact of the emergence of selfie photos is the relationship of man and woman dating. Dating at the age of junior high school nowadays is very vulnerable. Internet presents negative sides that easily trap teenagers into the realm pornography. If young women and men decide to date especially with their habit of accessing media (content) displaying vulgar content, they will imitate it.

Based on the researcher's observation on narcissistic photos of teenagers, many comments were made by men as most women are mans' friend and vice versa. The more friends, the higher the level of adolescent confidence. Conversely, if people invite friends, the level of self-confidence also decreases.

¹⁷ The Researcher's Observation on W's Facebook.

¹⁸ Interview with Lia, 7 September 2017

NARCISSISM AND CHALLENGES TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF TEENAGERS' NOBLE MORALS

The worst possibility of taking selfie photos in teenagers is the emergence of narcissistic feeling. When someone feels proud of their beauty, they have a high self-confidence and ignore anyone who called them not beautiful. That feeling is not allowed to grow in a person, especially for a teenager who are unstable in their personality. Therefore, efforts to clarify what and how to pose selfies need to be done in the realm of *akhlak* studies.

Noble character is an important factor that must be instilled in children from an early age. *Akhlak* is derived from word *khulq* which means character, temperament, behaviour, or character.¹⁹ *Akhlak* are educated human nature. Referring to the definition above, it can be concluded that *akhlak* is humans' characteristics embedded in their souls and present in them. These qualities will be shown in the form of good deeds which is called as noble character, or bad deeds which is called as despicable character. The emergence of these morals depends on child's nature and their parents' guidance.

The development of noble character is the core of Islamic teachings. Fazlur Rahman in his book states that the core of Islamic teachings in Al Qur'an are morals focused on faith in Allah (*hablumminallah*), and social justice (*hablum minannas*). This is in line with the statement by The Prophet's wife', Siti Aisyah, about the character of the Prophet. She states the Prophet's character is Al Qur'an Therefore, if there are teachings of faith, worship, history, and etc. in Al Qur'an, a noble character will be formed.²⁰

Noble characters as stated by some experts does not occur by itself, but it is influenced by various factors, especially the family environment, education and society. Thus, the responsibility for the moral development of children lies to their parents. This was done by Lukmanul Hakim to his sons and daughters, as stated in QS Lukman verses 12 to 19. The core of morals teachings in these verses are including prohibition of associating partners with Allah, honouring both parents, feeling supervised by God, praying, commanding good and forbidding evil. These characters should be applied by all humans in their lives.

Moral development for teenagers is very important to do as psychologically they are at an age that in shock and easily influenced. That is as a result of its condition who do not have sufficient

¹⁹ Luis Ma'luf, *Kamus Al-Munjid*, (Beirut: al-Maktanah al-Katulikiyah, t.t), p.194

²⁰ Abuddin Nata, *Manajemen Pendidikan: Mengatasi Kelemahan Pendidikan Islam di Indonesia*, (Jakarta:Kencana, 2007), p. 216

knowledge, mental and experience. Therefore, it is very easy for them to fall into actions that destroy their future.

As it is easy for teenagers to do deviant actions especially related to moral decadence, moral education is urgent and should not be taken lightly. They are our future assets that must be prepared. If they are not, they will fall into misleading actions, and no one continue the nation's development. Teenager education is also useful for themselves since by using the knowledge, they will look to more-optimism future. Moreover, the environment will be good, safe, orderly, and comfortable to live in. Various environmental disturbances that may be caused by the teenagers, can be minimized.

Parents, teachers, and society must return to Al Qur'an and hadith when they are educating teenagers. These instructions are done providing examples in the form of good words and actions. Those include getting used to reading Al Qur'an, diligently performing the five daily prayers, dressing modestly, eating and drinking halal food, hanging out with good people, staying away from bad deeds, helping people who are in trouble and doing other noble deeds. These instructions can be adhered to and implemented consistently. Therefore, teenagers' moral will be nurtured properly.²¹

The moral crisis occurs because of religion loose grip causing self-control lost from within. Furthermore, the controlling tools are law and society. However, as the law and society are also weak, the control is gone. Therefore, humans can do as they please in committing violations without anyone admonishing them.²²

A moral crisis for moral development carried out by parents, schools and the community are less effective. It occurs for swift currents of materialistic, hedonistic and secularistic culture. The rapid flow of culture is supported by capital owners trying to sell products without caring younger generation morality destruction.²³ The emergence of internet with various contents contributes to teenagers' moral. Indeed, the position of technology is in two inseparable sides, positive and negative. However, when parents do not control their children in using social media, the internet can destroy their future including selfie behaviour leading to narcissism.

A mother who is already very narcissistic in social media teaches her child to be narcissistic. A child who is elementary school in grade IV has created a personal Instagram and posted photos and videos with selfies. By wearing lipstick and dancing Indian, she helps her child's activities and

²¹ Abuddin Nata, *Manajemen...*, p. 220

²² Ibid

²³ Ibid.,

knows her child's behaviour. On Instagram, the child makes friends with male friends. They also often make comments like parents.²⁴

This factor shows that parents' behaviour who like narcissism will soon be followed by their children. In fact, parents should control their children's behaviour, but not teach them to behave in ways that will damage the child's future. Seeing these children's behaviour, there is a deep sense of sadness in the heart about the future of these children. There is a ten-year-old child behave like teenager. Their attitude and the way they take pictures, it seems that they are very aware of their beauty, and their narcissistic attitude is visible, starting from the style, the way they look at the camera and the way they dress. Their attitude and the way they take pictures seems that they are very aware of their beauty. Narcissism is clear starting from the style, the way you look at the camera and the way you dress. For some parents, this may be considered as a joke, but this is the beginning of the emergence of disaster when the child is addicted to photos, be *ujub* to himself, and have arrogant attitude. The worst result of these beautiful photos makes irresponsible men come, tease these children, and fall into promiscuity. Moreover, when parents do not instil a strong religious basis to their children, their children do not have life guidelines about what is right and what is wrong. Children's morals are quickly eroded if they are not framed in a strong religious understanding.

Zakiah Daradjat states that moral life cannot be separated from religious belief since firm, certain and fixed moral values will not change due to circumstances, place and time originating from religion. Therefore, in younger generation development, it is necessary for moral and religious life to be in line and get serious attention. The prominent main problem is the blurring of values in the younger generation. They face various contradictions and various moral experiences causing confusion on them. This is evident in teens, especially those who live in big cities in Indonesia. They try to develop themselves towards an advanced and modern life where various foreign cultures are raging without any filter.²⁵

Teenagers faced with various contradictions with what they see and think. There are things that cannot be violated. Moreover, when there are some people who become their role models and do prohibited things, there is a shock in the souls of teenagers. This shock made him lose his grip on what to do and what not to do.²⁶

²⁴ Researchers' Observation on social media in 4th grade of elementary school in Banda Aceh

²⁵ Zakiah Darajdat, *Ilmu Jiwa Agama*, (Jakarta, Bulan Bintang, 1987), p.153

²⁶Ibid

For example, in terms of uploading photos in the social media, this is not only done by teenagers, but especially parents also who are examples for teenagers such as posting selfies for fun. Therefore, the actions are imitated by children, so they also post selfies that are narcissistic.

Parents and children in dealing with a problem differ. Parents have strong resistance when they face the real world and address a problem. Meanwhile, teenagers do not have a power to say “no” in facing a situation requiring a choice. For parents, selfie photos mean playing around. However, for teenager, it impacts to their emotional influences. With frequent praise, a teenager will feel arrogant when someone says bad things and lessen their self-confidence. While there is a special way to manage his emotions in an adult, the teenager is not. Hence, selfies for parents and teens are distinctly different, but they both do the same thing.

CONCLUSION

“Wisely using social media” is a common word that must always be stated for all users especially teenagers. Refusing to use social media is a difficult as almost all communication activities today have shifted to the digital world. A real user should prioritize the value of using social media rather than the disadvantages. A contemporary phenomenon that deserves an attention is the activity of teenagers using social media as a place to take selfies which leads to narcissism.

Narcissism influence teenagers to always look beautiful, rich and classy. They must cover up their flaws for being perfect to others on social media. They post inappropriate photos for getting many like and being viral. They are stylish to attract people, especially men. This narcissism can lead to a cheerful and arrogant attitude. This also leads the opposite sex to act unkindly. Therefore, inappropriate photos are posted. This action can reduce moral values for teenager, where good character can be seen from daily attitudes and actions. By using moral guidance, a teenager will not upload inappropriate photos. Moreover, it is very important to pay attention to parents, teachers, community and related parties, so they can direct teenagers to be wiser and in accordance with the guidance of Islamic teachings in using social media.

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