

## RESISTANCE OF SHIA MINORITY STUDENTS IN EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS IN JEMBER, EAST JAVA, INDONESIA

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DOI: <http://doi.org/10.69552/mumtaz.v6i1.3736>

Received:  
April 30, 2026

Revised:  
June 23, 2026

Accepted:  
June 25, 2026

Published:  
June, 2026

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### Abstract

Discrimination against religious minorities in educational institutions is a global issue that undermines the principles of a love-based curriculum and ecotheology promoted by the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia. This article investigates the typology of resistance enacted by Shia minority students within Islamic Religious Education classes and youth organizations. Employing a retrospective narrative inquiry, the study explores the past experiences of five Shia minority students regarding their resistance in these educational settings at both school and university levels. To ensure research ethics and protect the confidentiality of individuals from marginalized minority groups, all participant identities and educational institution names are presented using pseudonyms. Participants were recruited through snowball sampling and interviewed using the life story interview method. Field data were analyzed using the resistance theories of Solorzano & Villalpando, Solorzano & Bernal, and McFarland, as well as thematic analysis techniques from Braun and Clarke. The findings indicate that Shia minority students engaged in three forms of resistance: covert, passive, and conformist. This article contributes new insights to the scholarship on Islamic Religious Education and expands understanding of Muslim minority students' resistance, including resistance within educational institutions.

**Keywords:** *Islamic Religious Education; Resistance of Minority Students; Student Organizations; Islamic Religious Education Learning; Shia Minority Students.*

### Abstrak

*Diskriminasi terhadap minoritas agama di lembaga pendidikan telah menjadi isu global yang kontradiktif dengan semangat menerapkan kurikulum berbasis cinta dan ekoteologi yang dilakukan Kementerian Agama Republik Indonesia. Artikel ini*



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*bertujuan untuk mengkaji tipologi resistensi yang dilakukan oleh siswa dan mahasiswa minoritas Syiah dalam pembelajaran Pendidikan Agama Islam dan di organisasi orang muda. Studi retrospective narrative inquiry ini dilakukan pada lima siswa dan mahasiswa minoritas Syiah untuk menggali pengalaman masa lalu mereka saat melakukan resistensi di tengah pembelajaran Pendidikan Agama Islam dan organisasi orang muda yang mereka ikuti selama sekolah dan kuliah di universitas. Semua identitas partisipan dan nama lembaga pendidikan mereka ditulis secara anonim demi pemenuhan etika penelitian dan untuk menjaga kerahasiaan identitas mereka sebagai minoritas-marginal. Para partisipan yang dipilih dengan teknik snowball sampling diwawancarai dengan teknik life story interview. Data lapangan yang terkumpul kemudian dianalisis dengan teori resistensi Solorzano & Villalpando, Solorzano & Bernal, dan McFarland, dengan teknik thematic analysis Braun dan Clarke. Studi ini melaporkan bahwa siswa minoritas Syiah melakukan tiga tipologi resistensi, yakni covert resistance, passive resistance, dan conformist resistance. Artikel ini berhasil melahirkan insight baru dalam body of knowledge pembelajaran Pendidikan Agama Islam dan studi terkait resistensi siswa minoritas agama, sekaligus memperkaya diskursus terkait resistensi siswa minoritas, termasuk resistensi yang dilakukan siswa di lembaga pendidikan.*

**Kata Kunci:** *Pendidikan Agama Islam; Resistensi Siswa Minoritas; Organisasi Mahasiswa; Pembelajaran Pendidikan Islam; Siswa Minoritas Syiah.*

## INTRODUCTION

Over the past three decades, discrimination within educational institutions has emerged as a global issue requiring urgent attention. The aspiration for students to learn peacefully, free from discrimination, and the need to resist its perpetrators remain largely unfulfilled. Resistance to discrimination challenges dominant power structures and may be enacted by organized groups or by vulnerable individuals through everyday, covert actions (Anderl, 2026, pp. 1–25; Lilja, 2022, pp. 202–220).

In Indonesia, Shia followers constitute a vulnerable minority. Over the past decade, this group has experienced discriminatory practices, including restrictive local government regulations, persecution, exclusion, and opposition from religious organizations. (United States Department of State, 2023; Najamuddin et al., 2023, pp. 118–125). These discriminatory practices extend beyond adults to also affect Shia youth within educational institutions. (Ardiansyah, 2022, pp. 316–334).

In East Java Province, Indonesia, the Muslim population generally adheres to *Ahlu al-sunnah wa-al-jamā'ah* (Sunni). At the same time, Shia followers are a marginal minority in several Regencies, including Sampang, Jember, Bondowoso, Situbondo, and Surabaya (Dh & Said, 2024, pp. 1–30). In addition to the small population of followers, Hamid (2012, pp. 339–341) reports that since 2012, the Shia community has been faced with religious conflict that has befallen them in

Sampang Regency. This conflict resulted in the burning of Shia settlements and their expulsion from their hometowns, forcing them to live in refugee camps in Sidoarjo Regency for years (Pamungkas, 2015, pp. 251–278).

Similarly, in Jember Regency, located in East Java Province, Shia followers have also been victims of intolerant practices. Umiarso and Asnawan (2022, pp. 1–12) report that the 2013 tragedy of the expulsion of the minority Shia community in Jember forced Shia followers to live in fear. Nevertheless, GUSDURian, a civil society movement initiated by young people of various faiths, continues to campaign for religious moderation actively, conduct interfaith dialogue, and advocate for minority groups, including Shia, across various regions (Jati et al., 2024, pp. 185–213; Miichi & Kayane, 2020, pp. 51–64).

Empirical research on resistance practices among Muslim minority students has been conducted, though exploration has been limited in the past three years. Abbas & McNeil-Willison reported that Muslim students in four European countries resisted Islamophobic practices in educational institutions by: 1) engaging in open debates with teachers, 2) initiating dialogue to change teachers' attitudes and behavior, 3) campaigning for access to places of worship, and 4) withdrawing from detrimental social relationships (Abbas & McNeil-Willison, 2025, pp. 1–26).

The study of student resistance practices in educational institutions has also garnered scholarly attention. Internationally, Zhang reported that secondary school students in rural China resisted teachers' advice through humorous shouts, mumbling, and unanimous silence (Zhang, 2022, pp. 104–129). In contrast, Sheikh highlighted university students' resistance in Pakistan against the neoliberal government, expressed through protest actions that employed artistic approaches, singing resistance songs, reciting resistance poems, performing resistance theater, and writing resistance opinions. These students also conducted resistance campaigns via social media hashtags, which were adopted by global networks to strengthen solidarity. They formed study circles to critically discuss social realities and the contents of controversial books, facilitated by academic activists, lawyers, police officers, and politicians (Sheikh, 2024, pp. 201–220). Similarly, Alarabiat et al. examined university students' resistance to implementing online learning (Alarabiat et al., 2024, pp. 5421–5446).

In the context of learning implementation in Indonesia, scientists also report forms of student resistance in learning and against school policies. Amrulloh & Maarif reported that students in formal Islamic elementary schools in Indonesia were resistant to a foreign-language learning and evaluation framework based on international standards. These students were reluctant to communicate in a foreign language actively (Amrulloh & Maarif, 2024, pp. 345–362). Similarly, Nashir et al.

also reported resistance among public school students in Indonesia to Islamic Religious Education, which trains students' higher-order thinking skills. Students were resistant when teachers used active learning, were resistant to open discussions and critical thinking, and refused to engage in open discussion of phenomena that challenged their beliefs (Nashir et al., 2025, pp. 235–265). Likewise, students at Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia reported resisting the scientific instruction delivered by their teachers (Mahmud et al., 2025, pp. 247–265).

Although numerous studies have examined the forms of resistance among Muslim minority students and in educational institutions, research specifically focusing on the resistance enacted by Shia minority students in Islamic Religious Education classes and within youth organizations remains limited (research gap). This article addresses this gap by exploring and analyzing the forms of resistance demonstrated by Shia minority students in religious education classes at schools and universities, as well as in the public spaces of youth organizations, utilizing the perspectives of McFarland, Solorzano & Bernal, and Solorzano & Villalpando. The article examines the typology of resistance enacted by Shia minority students in Islamic Religious Education classes and youth organizations, offering novel insights into Islamic Religious Education studies, particularly regarding minority students' experiences.

## **RESEARCH METHODS**

This qualitative research employed a retrospective narrative inquiry design. The study explores the retrospective experiences of Shia minority students as they engage in resistance in Islamic Religious Education classes and in the public spaces of youth organizations during their elementary, secondary, or university education. Connelly and Clandinin (1990, pp. 2–3) emphasize that narrative research enables researchers to interpret and analyze individuals' personal experiences by understanding their perspectives on life events. Narrative inquiry enables in-depth exploration of participants' life experiences through a narrative lens, including their engagement with educational practices. The use of retrospective narrative inquiry, as recommended by Marco-Bojusa et al., is appropriate for exploring participants' past experiences (Marco-Bujosa et al., 2024, pp. 648–671).

During the research process, the first author collected data on Shia youth resistance in Islamic Religious Education classes and in the public spaces of youth organizations from five participants. S01, a key participant, is an eighth-semester male student and the head of a Shia youth organization in Jember Regency, who previously served as the head of PMII. He was recruited through the recommendation of Habib, a prominent Shia figure in Bondowoso Regency (H01,

2022). Subsequent participants were recruited through snowball sampling or chain referral, based on recommendations from key participants. Snowball sampling is considered appropriate for collecting data from hidden populations. The Shia minority students who participated in this study were classified as a hidden population because their life experiences are regarded as secret and they do not wish the public to know (Chenan & Hammond, 2022, pp. 509–525).

The second participant was S02, a male Shia minority student in the 9th grade of a public junior high school. The third participant was S03, a male Shia minority student in the 10th semester of a public university. The fourth participant was S04, a male Shia minority student in the 12th grade of a public senior high school. The fifth participant was S05, a male Shia minority student in the 8th grade of a public junior high school.

Data collection on five Shia youths was conducted by the first author throughout July 2022 using the life story interview technique to facilitate the participants and the first author in reaching a shared interpretation of the participants' experiences. In addition, this technique was chosen to help participants reconstruct their past life experiences (retrospective), which is quite sensitive (Gilliam, 2024, pp. 792–810). Unstructured interviews were conducted by the first author in cafes and in the secretariat hall of the Shia organization in Jember Regency. The first author has published some of the research data on the mimicry of Shia youth in another article (Ardiansyah, 2022, pp. 316–334).

In this study, participants agreed to have their identities written with a pseudonym (Itzik & Walsh, 2023, pp. 705–721), as also done by Ali and Mukherjee (2022, pp. 246–258) in their study of the lives of minority youth. The goal was to protect the privacy of minority and marginalized informants and to comply with research ethics standards, as per the guidelines of Heaton (2021, pp. 123–132) dan Gerrard (2021, pp. 686–702). Furthermore, the authors also disguised the names of the educational institutions where they are currently studying or have studied. Data triangulation was conducted by re-interviewing several participants in the presence of others to ensure that the information they provided was corroborated.

Interview data from five participants were transcribed by playing the audio at 0.25x normal speed and writing it in a MS Word document. To ensure a comprehensive understanding, the interview transcriptions were read multiple times.

Braun and Clarke's (2009, pp. 589–597) thematic analysis was used to analyze the transcribed data, identifying similarities between the resistance data and the resistance theories of Solórzano & Villalpando, Solorzano & Bernal, and McFarland. Parameters were established to identify similar data and to assess the resistance

enacted by participants; relevant segments were coded and categorized according to the resistance criteria in the table (Ytrearne et al., 2026, p. 2639536). This coding facilitated the identification, interpretation, and analysis of the data using the resistance theories applied in this study. The analysis process provided a deeper understanding of the resistance strategies employed by the five minority Shia student participants.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Result

#### Resistance of Shia Minority Students to Islamic Religious Education Teachers

S02, a Shia junior high school student, reported that Nardi, his Islamic Religious Education teacher during his junior high school years, frequently provided normative-dogmatic answers (Sunni version) to S02's questions. Nardi taught S02's Islamic Religious Education class during his 7th and 8th grades. In 7th grade, S02 expressed dissatisfaction with Sunni arguments regarding the permissibility of eating catfish. *"For example, [why] is catfish halal? I asked why it is halal? According to whom, and from where, according to you, is that really a hadith? I asked at length like that,"* he asked. The debate escalated, leading S02 to speak loudly to Nardi, which the teacher perceived as rude. This disagreement arose from S02's dissatisfaction with the Sunni argument that eating catfish was permissible. Following a reprimand from the teacher, delivered through S02's mother, S02 agreed not to argue loudly with his teacher (S02, 2022).

S02 also reported opposing Amira, his female Islamic Education teacher, during grades 3 through 6 of elementary school. He refuted Amira's answers by gossiping about them to his friends in whispers. Amira reprimanded him after learning of the gossip and questioned why S02 had spoken behind her back, urging him to address her directly. *"Why? You don't need to deny it! Why are you speaking so loudly in front of me?"* Amira asked S02, as S02 recounted. Amira's attitude reportedly changed after Aksan, the Islamic Religious Education teacher from grade 2, learned that S02 was a Shia follower who often participated in Shia religious activities and rituals at the Shia Foundation. In addition to resisting teachers, S02 also resisted Risal, a peer from 9th grade, who had misrepresented the teachings and guidance of Shia worship. In response, S02 questioned Risal's sources of information to delegitimize him, using whispers and figurative language. The intention was to help Risal understand S02's perspective as a Shia follower and thereby reduce Risal's animosity toward Shia followers (S02, 2022).

In contrast to S02, during junior high school, S01 attended an Islamic school where the Islamic Religious Education teacher was affiliated with the Salafi group, a

fundamentalist-conservative Sunni sect. The teacher often presented Islamic history that, according to S01, “*tends to be less comprehensive*” and did not accommodate the Shia perspective. The teacher did not inquire about students' identities, including S01's. Consequently, S01 perceived the Islamic history material as Sunni-biased and marginalizing the Shia narrative. S01 resisted by carefully questioning the teacher's version of Islamic history with inquiries such as “*is that true, Sir,*” to avoid revealing his identity. However, instead of receiving a satisfactory response, he was given a normative, formal answer asserting the accuracy of the teacher's account (S01, 2022a).

Unlike S01, S03 found that his teacher repeatedly presented material he considered irrelevant to the Shia perspective. The teacher's historical account of the Karbala incident contradicted the Shia version of history. S03 responded with resignation, although he internally rejected the teacher's narrative (S03, 2022b).

Furthermore, during each final exam, S03 was required to memorize Sunni-style fiqh material to answer the questions provided by his Islamic Education teacher (S03, 2022a). Similarly, S01 chose not to negotiate with his Islamic Education teacher when he was required to memorize the prayer and its movements and to practice Sunni-style prayer (S01, 2022b).

### **Resistance of Shia Minority Students in Student Organizations**

S01, a Shia student at a public university, expressed disappointment with the Islamic Religious Education (IS) course, which he perceived as emphasizing Sunni dogmatic-normative material and religious rites, while lacking respect for diverse identities. Despite this, S01 consistently participated actively in class, attending lectures, submitting assignments, and engaging in discussions. “*I am quite active in class, so my lecturers and classmates generally know that,*” he said (S03, 2022a).

S01 did not exhibit overt resistance to perceived injustices within youth organizations. Instead, he actively participated in the Indonesian Islamic Student Movement (PMII), an external organization affiliated with Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) and practicing the Sunni tradition. Through this involvement, he later served as chairman of the Departmental Student Association (HMJ) and the Faculty Student Executive Board (BEMF). He was elected as an administrator in the reasoning division of the PMII Rayon. This position enabled him to develop a study curriculum for PMII activists, most of whom had a NU background. While leading various intra- and extra-campus organizations, S01 continued to practice Shia worship in secret or perform Sunni worship as necessary. Several close friends were aware of his religious identity. His leadership in PMII enabled the introduction of Shia thinkers' ideas into PMII study materials (S01, 2022a, 2022b).

Similarly, within the student organizations both on- and off campus, S01 presents himself as a scholar focused on developing self-knowledge and exerting significant influence among students at his university. The positive intellectual image he seeks to cultivate is intended to support his continued involvement in the community (S01, 2022a).

### **Resistance of Shia Minority Students to Worship in Educational Institutions**

Shia minority students are frequently compelled to perform Sunni-style prayers in both educational institutions and youth organizations, often necessitating the repetition of their prayers. S03 recounted that while attending a public Islamic junior high school (MTs), he would repeat his prayers after participating in congregational prayer with his Sunni peers. He described waiting until the congregation had finished and the room was quiet before praying alone. However, S03 later learned of a Shia community fatwa permitting him not to repeat his prayers in the Shia style when compelled to perform Sunni prayers at school (S03, 2022b).

Similar to S03, S04 also chose to repeat the Dhuhr prayer after performing it in congregation with his peers. *“Ordinary prayers [as Sunni prayers], but later I will pray Dhuhr and Asr again at home,”* he explained. Occasionally, S04 would clasp his hands under his chest during school prayers to appear as though he was performing the Sunni prayer, albeit with slight modification. He stated, *“So, if we pray like this (with our arms crossed), we think it's not valid. If I had lowered my arms a bit earlier, it would still be permissible. It's like taqiyah.”* This passive resistance was intended to avoid arousing suspicion among classmates. S04 believed that openly performing Shia-style prayer, with hands straight down and a turban, would draw attention. This concern intensified after hearing a sermon on social media that described the characteristics of Shia prayer, including, *“If you find someone praying, but there is a tissue in front of him, then that person is suspected of being a Shia follower.”* S04 feared that praying in a turban would reveal his identity (S04, 2022).

S05 reported a similar experience, stating that he was compelled to mimic Sunni-style prayer movements during congregational Dhuhr prayers at school. He explained, *“...at school. Yes, usually, if there's an activity, I join in the prayers. But like prayers, the prayers aren't like praying something, like crossing one's arms [crossing one's arms] In Sunni prayers, for example, the intention is to pray the Dhuhr prayer. If I don't, I'm like, what's the point? Just go through the motions. I'll pray at home, like that.”* S05 considered the Sunni prayer performed at school, with arms crossed, to be invalid. Consequently, he only imitated the Dhuhr prayer movements at school and repeated the prayer at home in the Shia style (S05, 2022).

S01 had a different experience. While interacting with PMII student members, he frequently avoided participating in congregational prayers with his Sunni peers. As a Shia minority among Sunni PMII members, he often chose to pray alone in a separate prayer room, even though this sometimes diminished his sense of devotion. *“So, for example, I wanted to pray, and my friends had already prayed, so I went to the back. There was a small prayer room. But I ended up feeling less devout,”* he said (S01, 2022b).

Meanwhile, S03 adopted a different strategy. While studying at MTs, he occasionally avoided participating in congregational Zuhur prayers with his peers, which followed Sunni practices, and at times even led them. S03 approached invitations to Sunni-style prayer with careful calculation and caution to avoid revealing his Shia identity. He emphasized, *“I’d rather play it safe”* (S03, 2022b).

Unlike S01 and S03, S02 once declined to lead prayers when his Islamic Education teacher requested it in elementary school. Rather than refusing openly, he declined politely, promising to fulfill the request the following week. He recounted, *“I was asked to lead the prayer. I didn’t refuse [openly], but [said I would be ready] next week, Ma’am,”* he said (S02, 2022).

## Discussion

This study identified three forms of resistance enacted by Shia minority students within Islamic Religious Education classes and in public spaces associated with youth organizations. The first form, *‘covert resistance’*, included debating and criticizing the Islamic Religious Education teacher, remaining silent while accepting Sunni-oriented material perceived as marginalizing Shia teachings, being compelled to memorize Islamic jurisprudence content and Sunni prayer procedures, blending in during prayer by adopting the Sunni hand-folding style but positioning the hands lower than customary, and declining to lead congregational prayers.

The second form, *‘passive resistance’*, involved quietly discussing or criticizing the material presented by the Islamic Religious Education teacher and expressing disapproval of intolerant students in hushed tones. The third form, *‘conformist resistance’*, was demonstrated by students who outwardly appeared to participate in class attendance and discussions actively, cultivated an image as campus intellectuals, assumed leadership roles in both internal and external youth organizations, incorporated the perspectives of Shiite scholars into the curriculum of Sunni youth organizations they led, declined invitations to participate in Sunni-style congregational prayers, or repeated prayers in the Shiite tradition at home after being compelled to join Sunni-style congregational prayers.

Shia minority students resisted Islamic Religious Education teachers who taught the doctrine of Sunni Fiqh and the history of Sunni Islam. For example, S02 resisted the Sunni Fiqh doctrine presented by Nardi, his teacher, in Islamic Religious Education. S02 expressed dissatisfaction because Sunni Fiqh permitted the consumption of catfish, whereas his Shia beliefs prohibited it. His debate with Nardi regarding the permissibility of eating catfish constituted '*covert resistance*'. S02 voiced his disagreement with the teacher's opinion in a polite manner while ensuring that his actions did not compromise her safety. According to Solórzano and Villalpando, such resistance is often enacted by minorities who perceive threats to their identity and foundational beliefs (Solórzano & Villalpando, 1998, pp. 217–218).

Similarly, S02's criticism and covert gossip expressing dissatisfaction toward Amira, the female Islamic Religious Education teacher who taught him in elementary school, exemplify '*passive resistance*'. Likewise, S02's disapproval and criticism directed at Risal, a peer who exhibited intolerance during junior high school, conveyed through whispered remarks to minimize risk, also represent '*passive resistance*' (McFarland, 2001, pp. 612–678, 2004, pp. 1249–1318).

The responses of S01 and S03 to the Islamic history narrative presented by the Islamic Religious Education teacher, which both perceived as discrediting the Shia version of history, exemplified '*covert resistance*'. Rather than openly protesting, S01 and S03 either carefully questioned the teacher's perspective or remained silent, accepting the narrative with resignation, despite internal disagreement. They did not explicitly reject the teacher's explanation; instead, they engaged in subtle forms of resistance, such as posing cautious questions or ignoring the teacher's disregard for their concerns (Solórzano & Villalpando, 1998, pp. 217–218).

Similarly, when S03 and S01 memorized material on Islamic jurisprudence and Sunni-style worship practices as instructed by the Islamic Religious Education teacher, their compliance represented '*covert resistance*' through pseudo-obedience. Although they appeared silent and followed instructions to memorize Sunni-style Fiqh content and prayer movements, they internally rejected these practices. For example, S01 outwardly performed Sunni-style prayers as directed, despite privately maintaining a commitment to Shia-style prayer (Solórzano & Villalpando, 1998, pp. 217–218).

Shia students demonstrate resistance in Islamic Religious Education classes and student organizations at universities. For example, S01 actively participates in classroom discussions, presents himself as an intellectual within student organizations, holds strategic positions in both internal and external campus groups, and incorporates the perspectives of Shia scholars into study materials at

PMII. These actions represent forms of '*conformist resistance*'. S01 states that his resistance aims to help peers in PMII, a Sunni student organization, better understand Shia thought, thereby reducing suspicion toward Shia students without resorting to overt acts of resistance (Solorzano & Bernal, 2001, pp. 316–320). According to Scott, S01's efforts to cultivate and maintain an intellectual image enable continued involvement in activities and social rituals, as well as sustained support from fellow students (Scott, 2000, pp. 32–33).

The acts of resistance demonstrated by Shia students during worship reflect their capacity to navigate religious differences. For example, S03, S04, and S05 participate in congregational prayers with their peers by following Sunni prayer procedures, thereby adapting to Sunni prayer laws that differ from their own Shia practices. Subsequently, they discreetly repeat their prayers either in the same location when it is quieter or at home. These behaviors exemplify '*conformist resistance*' (Solorzano & Bernal, 2001, pp. 316–320).

S04's act of performing Shia-style prayers while folding the hands to mimic Sunni prayer movements is interpreted by Scott as a strategy for presenting a *public transcript* that conceals S04's actual practice of Shiite prayers (*hidden transcript*), which he performs daily (Scott, 1985, pp. x and 6, 1990, p. 317). This resistance is classified as covert because S04 carries it out discreetly and in ways that are not easily observed, thereby conforming to the expectations of students and teachers despite internal objections (Solórzano & Villalpando, 1998, pp. 217–218).

S01's avoidance of Sunni-style prayer, S03's alternating acceptance and avoidance when invited to Sunni-style prayer, and S02's polite refusal of the teacher's request to lead Sunni-style prayer each represent distinct forms of resistance to invitations to participate in Sunni-style congregational prayer. These behaviors exemplify '*conformist resistance*' to peer invitations to engage in Sunni-style prayer (Solorzano & Bernal, 2001, pp. 316–320).

According to S01 and S03, their resistance stemmed from the belief that accepting invitations to pray in a non-Shia manner conflicted with Shia religious law. In contrast, S02's polite refusal of the teacher's request to lead Sunni prayer, accompanied by a promise to be ready the following week, constitutes '*covert resistance*' from the perspective of Solórzano and Villalpando (1998, pp. 217–218).

**Table 1.** Typology of Resistance of Shia Minority Students

Category	Details	Resistance
<b>Resistance Demonstrated by Shia Minority Students Toward Islamic Religious Education Teachers</b>	1. Engaging in debate with the Islamic Religious Education teacher and critically examining the Sunni interpretation of Islamic jurisprudence (S02).	<i>Covert resistance</i>
	2. Whispering among peers about the Islamic Religious Education teacher's opinions (S02).	<i>Passive resistance</i>
	3. Expressing criticism in whispers to peers who display intolerance toward Shia beliefs, in order to minimize potential risks (S02).	<i>Passive resistance</i>
	4. Criticizing and questioning the Sunni version of history when it diverges from the Shia historical narrative (S01).	<i>Covert resistance</i>
	5. Participants reported silently accepting historical material that discredits Shia history, despite experiencing deep rejection and disapproval (S03).	<i>Covert resistance</i>
	6. Participants were required to memorize Sunni-style Fiqh material in order to answer questions on Islamic Religious Education examinations (S03).	<i>Covert resistance</i>
	7. Participants were compelled to memorize prayer texts and prayer movements and to practice Sunni-style prayers, although they privately resisted these practices (S01).	<i>Covert resistance</i>
<b>Resistance of Shia Minority Students in Student Organizations</b>	1. Actively participating in Islamic Religious Education classes, consistently attending lectures, and submitting all assignments to present the image of a diligent and engaged student (S01).	<i>Conformist resistance</i>
	2. Cultivating an identity as a student scholar (S01).	<i>Conformist resistance</i>
	3. Securing strategic positions within both internal and external campus youth organizations (S01).	<i>Conformist resistance</i>
	4. Discreetly incorporating the perspectives of Shia scholars into the study materials of the moderate Sunni youth	<i>Conformist resistance</i>

	organization under his leadership (S01).	
<b>Resistance of Shia Minority Students to Worship in Educational Institutions</b>	1. Participates in Sunni-style congregational prayer and secretly repeat it with the Shia prayer when the prayer room is empty (S03). (S03)	<i>Conformist resistance</i>
	2. Participates in Sunni-style congregational prayers and silently repeat Shia-style prayers at home (S03, S04, and S05). (S03, S04, dan S05)	<i>Conformist resistance</i>
	3. Pretend to perform the Sunni prayer by clasping his hands in front of your body, but modify the position of his hands to be lower (below your chest) (S04).	<i>Covert resistance</i>
	4. Avoiding Sunni congregational prayers and performing individual prayers elsewhere (S01 dan S03).	<i>Conformist resistance</i>
	5. Refused to lead prayer (salat) and promised to be willing to be a leader next week (S02).	<i>Covert resistance</i>

As members of the Muslim minority, Shia students have experienced both intentional and unintentional discrimination from teachers, peers, and members of student organizations. Consequently, they have engaged in multiple forms of resistance, employing a range of creative strategies (Ebabuye & Asgedom, 2024, p. 2351748).

In Indonesia, despite Muslims constituting the majority, Shia minority students have experienced injustice and marginalization, prompting them to adopt various forms of resistance. These responses include both overt actions, such as mass demonstrations (Solórzano & Villalpando, 1998, pp. 217–218), and more covert, less risky strategies (McFarland, 2001, p. 613, 2004, p. 1252). Shia minority students employ these strategies in Islamic Religious Education classes, youth organizations, and during worship, carefully considering the associated risks.

The resistance demonstrated by Shia minority students in this article offers new perspectives compared with the study of resistance among Muslim minority students by Abbas & McNeil-Willison (2025, pp. 1–26). Rather than resisting Islamophobia from the non-Muslim majority, Shia students resisted members of student organizations who failed to acknowledge their beliefs. Additionally, Shia students opposed the Sunni-oriented Islamic jurisprudence and historical content presented by their Islamic Religious Education teacher, as well as the teacher's online learning format (Alarabiat et al., 2024, pp. 5421–5446).

Rather than responding to these two conditions with resignation, Shia minority students engaged in various forms of resistance, *'covert, conformist'*, and *'passive'* resistance. These approaches differ from the student resistance to teachers described by Zhang, which involved actions such as making humorous shouts, mumbling, or remaining silent in unison (Zhang, 2022, pp. 104–129). In contrast, this article documents that a Shia minority student practiced *'passive resistance'* by quietly gossiping about the Islamic Religious Education teacher and criticizing a peer who perpetrated intolerance. These criticisms were delivered in a relaxed manner, in a whisper to prevent classmates from overhearing.

In the context of university student resistance, the findings presented here differ from those of Sheikh, who documented resistance through art-based protest actions and social media campaigns. In contrast, this article demonstrates that Shia minority students engaged in *'conformist resistance'* by constructing scholarly identities and utilizing study forums as sites of resistance. A recent finding, while similar to Sheikh's, reveals that a minority Shia student used PMII's study forum, a Sunni student organization, to covertly incorporate Shia scholars' ideas into study materials (Sheikh, 2024, pp. 201–220).

Within the context of student resistance in Indonesia, the findings presented here differ from those of Amrulloh and Ma'arif (2024, pp. 345–362) and Mahmud et al. (2025, pp. 247–265). While all three studies document forms of student resistance, this study identifies students' reluctance to lead congregational prayers as an example of *'conformist'* or *'covert resistance'*, rather than reluctance to communicate in a foreign language, as observed by Amrulloh and Ma'arif, or resistance to scientific learning, as reported by Mahmud et al. Furthermore, although the findings align with those of Nashir et al., who reported student resistance to Islamic Religious Education, this study specifically highlights resistance to the teacher's Sunni-oriented material rather than to critical learning (Nashir et al., 2025, pp. 235–265).

This article presents new findings on the attitudes of Muslim minority students toward individuals who discriminate against them. While Abbas and McNeil-Willison reported that Muslim students resisted Islamophobic practices by debating teachers' arguments, initiating dialogue to influence teachers' attitudes and behaviors, campaigning for a place of worship, and distancing themselves from those who caused harm (Abbas & McNeil-Willison, 2025, pp. 1–26), the present study finds that Shia minority students engaged in sporadic, *'covert resistance'* that was disorganized, secretive, and highly calculated. This resistance involved pseudo-compliance, silent denial, and submissive demeanor. Their actions served as camouflage (*public transcript*), concealing their true attitudes, which remained

hidden (*hidden transcript*) (Scott, 1985, pp. x and 6, 1990, p. 317). However, such '*covert resistance*' was ultimately ineffective in challenging the injustice imposed by the dominant group.

## CONCLUSION

This article identifies three typologies of resistance exhibited by Shia minority students within Islamic Religious Education and youth organizations: '*covert resistance*', '*passive resistance*', and '*conformist resistance*'. Shia minority students represent a minority among the predominantly Sunni Islamic Religious Education students, university students, and teachers. The study contributes new insights to the literature on Islamic Religious Education and expands understanding of Muslim minority students' resistance, including resistance within educational institutions.

Although the resistance carried out by Shia minority students in Islamic Religious Education classes and youth organizations is an excellent example of how Muslim minority students in Indonesia carry out resistance, the authors argues that the findings related to the forms of resistance and various types of resistance strategies carried out by religious minority students in Indonesia is a concept that still requires further development and exploration through broader participant involvement and other research methods.

The authors recommends that Islamic Religious Education subject educators 1) identify the various ideological variants and various schools of Islamic jurisprudence of their students, so that the identity of students with religious minority backgrounds is known to teachers to be respected, 2) differentiate students from different religious tradition backgrounds, 3) celebrate differences in religious traditions in Islamic Religious Education classes, and 4) implement a curriculum based on love and ecotheology in Islamic Religious Education learning by making students aware that the universe is inhabited by adherents of various faiths, including Islam, which have diverse spiritual and ethical values.

Rather than being perfect, this article's limitation lies in the limited number of Shia minority students available as informants, as the authors had difficulty accessing them from other regions. Therefore, the authors recommend that future researchers explore similar data on Shia minority students from other regions of Indonesia, including those living in former conflict areas, such as Sampang Regency.

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