



Religious Experience Enhances Students' Religious Practice

Muhamad Mansur,¹ Fahrurrozi,² Mohammad Iwan Fitriani,³ Yusuf,⁴

¹UIN Mataram, ² UIN Mataram, ³UIN Mataram, ⁴UIN Mataram

¹muhamadmansur18@gmail.com

ABSTRACT:

This study aims to examine the influence of religious experience on the religious practice of junior high school students in Central Lombok. The method used is a quantitative method with a survey approach. Data was collected through a questionnaire distributed to 426 junior high school students in Central Lombok. Data analysis was carried out using factor analysis to see the influence of independent variables on dependent variables. The results showed the direct influence of religious experience on religious practice with a probability of $p < 0.05$ and a t-statistical value exceeding 1.96. The contribution of religious experience is 29.9%, with a t-statistic of 5.695. The results of the study show that the higher the religious promotion of students, the better the religious activities practiced. The conclusion of this study confirms that religious experience has a significant influence on students' religious practice.

Key words: *religious experience, religious practice, religious activities.*

INTRODUCTION

Religious experience has an important role in shaping character and morals so that they can behave well in daily life (Khozin, Abdul Haris, 2022). Through this experience, students not only get to know religious values in theory but also implement them in daily life (Komalasari & Yakubu, 2023). Activities such as participating in religious activities at school, carrying out joint worship, and involvement in religious communities provide a strong foundation for developing consistent religious practices (Konstantina Giorgos Elsayed, 2023). shows that students who have good religious experiences tend to show more stable religious behavior and become more socially and spiritually responsible individuals (Kholidah, 2022).

However, in reality, not all students have the opportunity or motivation to develop their religious experience optimally. Some students may face obstacles, such as a lack of family support, limited religious activities at school, or negative influences from the social environment (Michaelson et al., 2023a). These obstacles can result in low student involvement in religious practice, thus having an impact on the weak application of religious values in their lives (Major-Smith et al., 2024).

To overcome this problem, schools and teachers need to play an active role in creating programs that can facilitate students' religious experiences effectively, for example, through the implementation of innovative religious activities, such as interactive studies, religious project-based learning, and intensive coaching by teachers or religious guides. In addition, collaboration between schools, families, and communities is also important to ensure that religious values can be applied consistently in various aspects of students' lives.

The authors argue that research is needed to analyze how religious experiences can improve students' religious practices while exploring effective solutions to address existing challenges. Thus,

it is hoped that the results of this study can make a real contribution to strengthening the development of students' religious character in educational institutions.

Methods

This research was carried out from October 2023 to August 2024 in Central Lombok. This research method uses an associative quantitative approach through the survey method and Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) (Agung, 2018). Data was collected by distributing questionnaires to students who were respondents. Data analysis was carried out using Smart Partial Least Squares (Smart PLS) software version 4.0. The population of this study is all students in several schools that run religious activity programs, with a sample of 426 students who are selected representatively. The main instrument used is a questionnaire or questionnaire designed to measure students' religious experiences and their impact on their religious practices. This questionnaire is compiled on a Likert scale of 1-5, which allows for the measurement of students' intensity and perception of the program in a structured manner (Junianto et al., 2020).

Data was collected by distributing questionnaires to students who were respondents. Data analysis was carried out using Smart Partial Least Squares (Smart PLS) software version 4.0 (Hair et al., 2019a), because it is able to analyze measurement models and structural models simultaneously and is suitable for data that is not always normally distributed. The analysis steps include validity and reliability tests using confirmatory factor analysis to check the validity of the construct and reliability of each questionnaire item, structural model analysis to test hypotheses and determine the influence of the religious experience program on students' religious practices, and bootstrapping to test the significance of the influence between the variables analyzed.

Result

Data Responden

Of the total respondents, as many as 426 data were collected based on the following table:

Table 1. Respondent data by gender

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Male	152	35.7	35.7	35.7
Female	274	64.3	64.3	100.0
Total	426	100.0	100.0	

Based on the table above, the gender characteristics of respondents show that out of a total of 426 respondents, female respondents are more dominant than male respondents in this study.

Table 2. Respondent data based on class

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Grade 8	225	52.8	52.8	52.8
Grade 9	201	47.2	47.2	100.0
Total	426	100.0	100.0	

Based on the table above, the characteristics of respondents by class are as follows: out of a total of 426 respondents, the majority of respondents in this study came from grade 8 (eight).

Respondents' condition based on religious experience

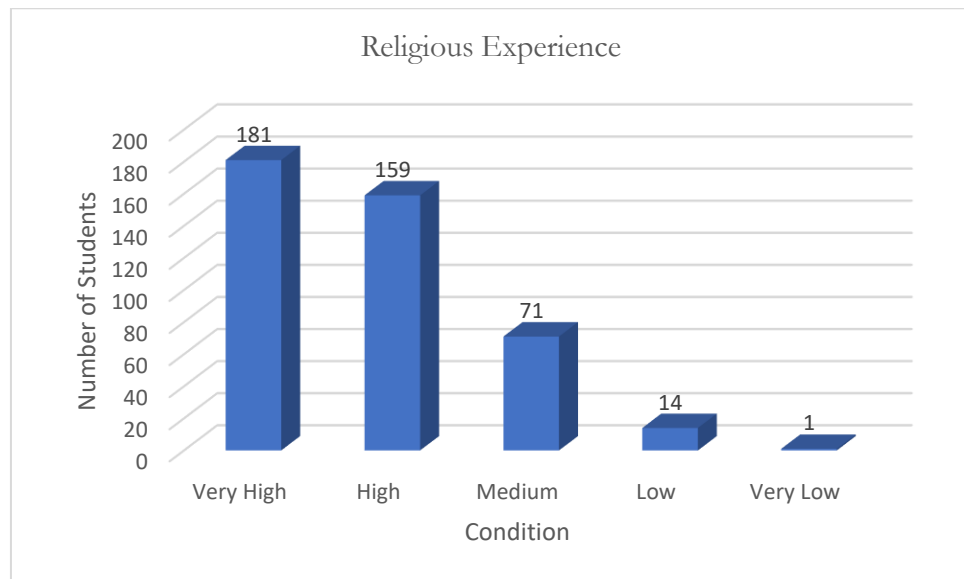


Diagram 1. Conditions of students' religious experience

The diagram above shows that the religious experience of the majority of students is "very high," which is as many as 181 students, while students who have "low" and "very low" religious experience have several reasons for their experience, including: (1) considering that the prayers offered have not been answered, (2) still considering that the worship that has been carried out does not guarantee tranquility, (3) students are less interested in participating in religious activities.

Respondents' conditions based on religious activities

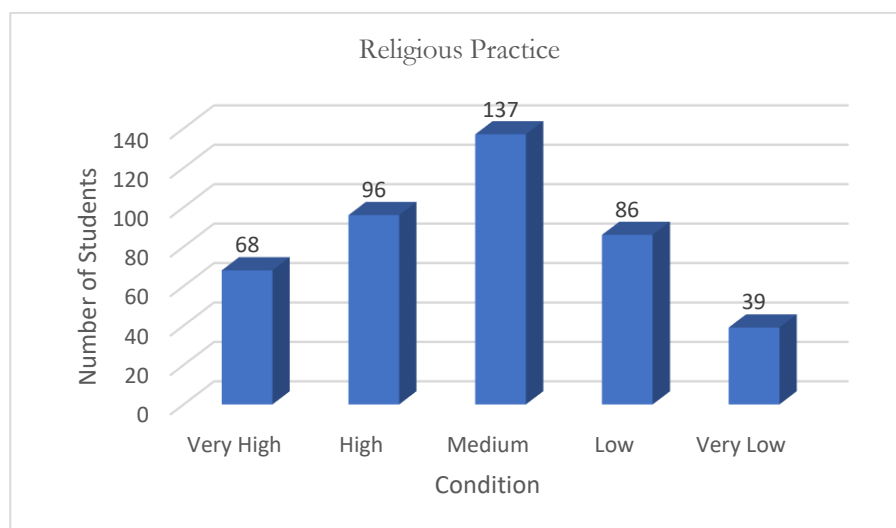


Diagram 2. Conditions of students' religious practice

The diagram above shows that most students are classified as "medium," namely, as many as 137 students who are enthusiastic to participate in religious activities both at school and outside

school. While the students are classified as very low, namely 39 students, this is due to several reasons: (1) Not liking to participate in mutual cooperation activities, (2) Likes to procrastinate prayer time, (3) Not doing dhikr after prayer.

Data Validity and Reliability Test

To ensure the feasibility of the model as a measurement, an analysis of the data collected is carried out. This includes the latent relationship between variables and their indicators. There are three types of measurements that will be used to assess eligibility: Convergent validity, Reliability, and Discriminant validity.

The feasibility is carried out through the evaluation of the measurement model. The measurement model in this study consists of reflective and formative measurement models where the variables of religious experience are measured reflectively, while religious practices are measured aromatically (Hair et al., 2019). The evaluation of the reflective measurement model consists of a loading factor of ≥ 70 , composite reliability ≥ 70 , and average variance extracted (AVE ≥ 50) as well as the validity of the discipline, namely the formal and lacker criteria and HTMT (Heterotrait Monotrait Ratio) below 0.90. Evaluation of the formative measurement model seen from the significance of the outer weight and no multicollinearity between the measurements seen from the outer VIF below 5 (Hair et al., 2021).

Table 3. Outer Weight, outer loading and Outer VIF tables

Variable	Measurement Indicators	Indicator	Outer Weight	P-Value Outer weight	Outer Loading	P-Value Outer Loading	Outer VIF
Religious Practices	Y-1	Maintaining solidarity	0.234	0.000	0.780	0.000	1.894
	Y-2	Strengthening social bonds	0.212	0.000	0.702	0.000	1.583
	Y-3	Promotes a sense of unity	0.267	0.000	0.848	0.000	2.328
	Y-4	Worship	0.245	0.000	0.796	0.000	1.926
	Y-5	Practice or malinvestment	0.277	0.000	0.889	0.000	2.898

Based on the table above, the results of the analysis on religious practices, with indicators: maintaining solidarity (Y-1), strengthening social ties (Y-2), encouraging a sense of unity (Y-3), worship (religious) (Y-4), practicing (manifestation) (Y-5), having an outer loading above 0.70 means that it contributes significantly to the improvement of religious practice.

An examination of the formative measurement model shows that all the outer VIF values are less than 5, which means that there is no multicollinearity between the measurement items. All indicators with outer loading above 0.50 are maintained in the model according to the theory and formative measurement procedure recommended by Hair et al. (2021).

Thus, the results of this analysis show that various indicators have a significant influence on self-regulation and religious practices, with some indicators showing a stronger influence than others.

Tabel 4. Tabel outer loading, Composite Reliability dan AVE

Variable	Indikator Pengukuran	Indikator	Outer Loading	Composite Reliability	AVE
	X-1	Feeling close to the Divine	0.827	0.915	0.703

Religious Experience	X-2	Feeling that prayers are answered	0.857
	X-3	Feeling calm and happy	0.870
	X-4	Surrender positively	0.800
	X-5	Feeling happy to participate in religious activities	0.848
	X-6	Feeling grateful	0.827

Based on the table above, all indicators for the variable "religious experience" have an outer loading value above 0.7, which indicates good validity. The variable "religious experience" has a composite reliability (CR) value of 0.915 and an AVE of 0.703, which indicates good internal consistency and convergent validity.

Table 4. Causal Relationship Between Variables

Path	Path Coefsiens	T Statistik	p-value	F square	Results
Religious Experiences → Religious Practices	0.299	5.695	0.000	0.113	Significant Influence

Based on the table above, the results of data analysis conducted on junior high school students in Central Lombok, using Structural Equation Modeling analysis, the t-static value exceeded 1.96. In addition, if the p-value is below 0.05 (5%), it indicates the influence of the variable that affects.

Discussion

Empirical findings, however, show a very significant relationship between religious experience and individual religious practices. With a path coefficient of 0.299 and a p-value of 0.000, as well as a belief interval (0.196 - 0.402) that showed a consistent influence, these findings confirm that spiritual experiences play an important role in influencing religious practice. An F square of 0.113 further shows that religious experience has a considerable impact on shaping a person's religious behavior. This is reflected in factors such as feeling close to the Divine, feeling prayers answered, and feelings of calm and happiness, all of which contribute significantly to religious practice, including maintaining social solidarity, strengthening social bonds, promoting a sense of unity, and enhancing religious worship and practice.

These results are in line with previous research by Emile Durkheim, who found that people with religious affiliations were more likely to feel satisfied with their lives, which were perceived as more meaningful. This suggests that spiritual experiences, which involve a deep connection with the Divine and feelings of gratitude, increase an individual's happiness and strengthen their commitment to socially beneficial religious practices (Konstantina Giorgos Elsayed, 2023).

The importance of religious practices as a means to prevent bad behavior and increase goodness. Religious experiences, which foster peace of mind, will naturally encourage individuals to be more consistent in their worship and practice religious teachings in their daily lives (Yamane, 2000). In addition, religious practices based on spiritual experiences such as serenity and closeness to Allah will strengthen faith and increase motivation to continue to carry out worship consistently (Michaelson et al., 2023b).

Overall, these findings suggest that religious experiences have a significant impact on encouraging religious practice, both in terms of personal worship and social contribution,

reinforcing the view that spirituality plays a central role in meaningful religious life (Murphy et al., 2022). These results are consistent with theories that state that an individual's religious experience has a direct effect on their religious practice (Małkosa et al., 2022). Religious experiences include learning, spiritual experiences, and involvement in religious activities that can strengthen commitment and adherence to religious practices (Elsayed et al., 2023). Glock and Stark's theory of religious behavior states that religious experiences affect the dimensions of beliefs, practices, experiences, knowledge, and consequences related to religion (Tudoran & Neagoe, 2023).

Thus, several relevant findings can be identified from the results found in the relationship between religious experience and religious practice:

1. The Relevance of Spiritual Experience and Religious Practice.

These findings support the theory that spiritual experiences, as described in various studies of religious psychology, play a significant role in shaping an individual's religious behavior (van der Merwe & Habron, 2015). Profound religious experiences, such as a sense of closeness to the Divine and feelings of gratitude, provide emotional and cognitive encouragement that strengthens one's commitment to religious practice (Lehtsaar, 2002). This is in line with the view that spiritual experience is not only an isolated individual dimension but also directly impacts concrete social and religious behavior (Li & Lerner, 2013).

2. Religious Experience as a Driver of Religious Behavior.

These findings also support the theory of religious functionalism put forward by Bronislaw Malinowski, in which religion has a practical function in everyday life (Sidky, 2015). Religious experiences provide a sense of calm and happiness, as well as motivation to participate in religious activities, which ultimately strengthens social solidarity and community bonds. This suggests that spiritual experiences are not only relevant for the emotional well-being of individuals but are also important in encouraging active participation in religious and social life (Ferguson et al., 2018).

3. The Significance of Religious Experience in Nurturing Community.

Émile Durkheim's theory of the social function of religion is also reinforced by these findings. Strong religious experiences not only influence an individual's religious behavior but also play a role in strengthening social bonds within religious communities (D'Orsi & Dei, 2018).

With the rise of religious practices such as worship and the practice of religious values, spiritual experiences help to maintain social solidarity and encourage a sense of unity among community members. In conclusion, the findings of this study show that religious experience has a significant impact on encouraging religious practice, which includes personal, social, and collective dimensions.

Conclusion

Religious experiences have a significant and diverse impact on encouraging religious practice, both at the personal and social levels and reinforce the view that spirituality is an important factor in shaping meaningful religious behavior for individuals and society, especially for students, contributing 29.9% of the influence.

Bibliography

- Agung, A. A. G. (2018). Metodologi Penelitian Kuantitatif (Perspektif Manajemen Pendidikan). *Universitas Pendidikan Ganesha*.
<https://scholar.google.com/scholar?cluster=16635617613994944513&hl=en&oi=scholar>
- D'Orsi, L., & Dei, F. (2018). What is a rite? Émile Durkheim, a hundred years later. *Open Information Science*, 2(1), 115–126. <https://doi.org/10.1515/opis-2018-0009>
- Elsayed, K. G., Lestari, A. A., & Brougham, F. A. (2023). Role of Religion in Shaping Ethical and Moral Values Among the Youths in Athens, Greece. *Journal of Sociology, Psychology & Religious Studies*, 5(1), 11–20. <https://doi.org/10.53819/81018102t5153>
- Ferguson, M. A., Nielsen, J. A., King, J. B., Dai, L., Giangrasso, D. M., Holman, R., Korenberg, J. R., & Anderson, J. S. (2018). Reward, salience, and attentional networks are activated by religious experience in devout Mormons. *Social Neuroscience*, 13(1), 104–116. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17470919.2016.1257437>
- Hair, J. F., Hult, G. T. M., Ringle, C. M., Sarstedt, M., Danks, N. P., & Ray, S. (2021). *Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) Using R: A Workbook*. Springer International Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-80519-7>
- Hair, J. F., Risher, J. J., Sarstedt, M., & Ringle, C. M. (2019). When to use and how to report the results of PLS-SEM. *European Business Review*, 31(1), 2–24. <https://doi.org/10.1108/EBR-11-2018-0203>
- Junianto, M., Bashori, K., & Hidayah, N. (2020). Validitas dan Reliabilitas Skala Student Engagement. *Jurnal RAP (Riset Aktual Psikologi Universitas Negeri Padang)*, 11(2), 139. <https://doi.org/10.24036/rapun.v11i2.109771>
- Kholidah, L. N. (2022). Improving Students' Social Responsibility via Islamic Religious Education and Social Problem-Based Learning. *Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam (Journal of Islamic Education Studies)*, 10(2), 163–182. <https://doi.org/10.15642/jpai.2022.10.2.163-182>
- Khozin, Abdul Haris, A. (2022). Jurnal pendidikan Islam. *Jurnal Pendidikan Islam*, 1(3), 327–346.
- Komalasari, M., & Yakubu, A. B. (2023). Implementation of Student Character Formation Through Islamic Religious Education. *At-Tadzkiir: Islamic Education Journal*, 2(1), 52–64. <https://doi.org/10.59373/attadzkiir.v2i1.16>
- Konstantina Giorgos Elsayed, A. A. L. & F. A. B. (2023). Role of Religion in Shaping Ethical and Moral Values Among the Youths in Athens, Greece. *Journal of Sociology, Psychology & Religious Studies*, 5(1), 11–20. <https://doi.org/10.53819/81018102t5153>
- Lehtsaar, T. (2002). The Relationships between Religious Experiences and the Rest of Life Experience. An Autobiographical Study. *Trames. Journal of the Humanities and Social Sciences*, 6(1), 79. <https://doi.org/10.3176/tr.2002.1.06>
- Li, Y., & Lerner, R. M. (2013). Interrelations of Behavioral, Emotional, and Cognitive School Engagement in High School Students. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 42(1), 20–32. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10964-012-9857-5>
- Major-Smith, D., Morgan, J., Halstead, I., Tohidinik, H. R., Goulding, N., Iles-Caven, Y., Golding, J., & Northstone, K. (2024). Demographic and socioeconomic predictors of religious/spiritual beliefs and behaviours in a prospective cohort study (ALSPAC) in

- Southwest England: Results from the offspring generation. *Wellcome Open Research*, 7, 1–28. <https://doi.org/10.12688/wellcomeopenres.18517.3>
- Mąkosa, P. M., Zając, M., & Zakrzewski, G. (2022). Opting out of Religious Education and the Religiosity of Youth in Poland: A Qualitative Analysis. *Religions*, 13(10), 906. <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel13100906>
- Michaelson, V., King, N., Patte, K. A., Gardner, P., & Pickett, W. (2023a). Connections associated with a healthy spirituality: Are these unrecognized intermediary determinants that shape health inequities in Canadian young people? *BMC Public Health*, 23(1), 1–10. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-023-16060-5>
- Michaelson, V., King, N., Patte, K. A., Gardner, P., & Pickett, W. (2023b). Connections associated with a healthy spirituality: Are these unrecognized intermediary determinants that shape health inequities in Canadian young people? *BMC Public Health*, 23(1), 1167. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-023-16060-5>
- Murphy, J., Jones, F. W., Nigbur, D., & Gee, K. (2022). Living in a world with God: An interpretative phenomenological exploration of the religious experiences of five Baptists in Britain. *Europe's Journal of Psychology*, 18(2), 154–167. <https://doi.org/10.5964/ejop.3119>
- Sidky, H. (2015). *Religion*. Peter Lang US. <https://doi.org/10.3726/978-1-4539-1486-1>
- Tudoran, M. A., & Neagoe, A. (2023). The Association Between Religiosity and Social Behaviour Among Children: A Romanian Perspective. *European Review Of Applied Sociology*, 16(26), 8–15. <https://doi.org/10.2478/eras-2023-0002>
- van der Merwe, L., & Habron, J. (2015). A Conceptual Model of Spirituality in Music Education. *Journal of Research in Music Education*, 63(1), 47–69. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022429415575314>
- Yamane, D. (2000). Narrative and Religious Experience. *Sociology of Religion*, 61(2), 171. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3712284>

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Thank you to all parties who have helped provide data, input and suggestions to be able to streamline this research so as to provide benefits for readers and as a reference for future researchers