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## Religious Value Internalization through Youth Religious Activities: Strengthening Faith and Character Development in Community-Based Education

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### ABSTRAK

The rapid development of globalization and technology has created both opportunities and challenges for youth, particularly regarding moral degradation, secular lifestyles, and weakening religious adherence. Within this context, strengthening religiosity through structured community-based initiatives becomes crucial. This study aims to explore the internalization of religious values among Muslim adolescents through organized religious activities in Lubuk Kumbang Village, Karang Jaya District, South Sumatra, Indonesia, emphasizing the role of community participation in fostering faith and character development. Employing a qualitative descriptive design, data were collected through interviews with religious leaders, village officials, parents, and youth participants, supplemented by observation and documentation. The findings reveal that religious value internalization is achieved through daily practices such as congregational prayer, Qur'an recitation, and participation in Islamic learning centers; weekly activities including Friday prayer, Islamic study circles, recitation groups, and hadroh performances; monthly gatherings such as communal pengajian; and annual observances during Ramadan, zakat distribution, Eid celebrations, and Qurban rituals. These activities contribute significantly to enhancing adolescents' religious knowledge, discipline, moral responsibility, and social behavior, while simultaneously fostering solidarity and spiritual resilience within the community. In conclusion, the study demonstrates that youth religious activities not only function as cultural traditions but also as transformative educational practices that bridge family, school, and society in cultivating spiritual awareness and ethical conduct. The implications underscore the need for sustainable community-based programs to institutionalize religious values as a preventive strategy against moral decline in the era of globalization, reinforcing that faith-driven education remains vital for shaping resilient, responsible, and spiritually grounded youth.

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**Keywords :** *Character development, Community-based education, Indonesia, Qualitative research, Religious value internalization, Youth religious activities.*

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### INTRODUCTION

The rapid advancement of globalization and technology has significantly influenced the moral landscape of youth, particularly in Muslim-majority societies. While access to knowledge and communication technologies has created opportunities for learning and interaction, it has also brought challenges such as exposure to secular values, hedonistic lifestyles, and weakening religious commitments (Nata, 2013). This moral decline is especially visible among adolescents, a stage of life characterized by identity crisis and high vulnerability to external

influences. Families and schools often struggle to provide consistent moral guidance, leaving community-based religious institutions with an important role. Religious activities in mosques, such as Qur'an recitation, prayer gatherings, and Islamic study circles, serve as crucial platforms for instilling spiritual discipline and ethical awareness (Sudarsono, 2012). Therefore, examining how youth religious activities contribute to the internalization of religious values is highly urgent.

Adolescence is a critical period in which young people transition from dependence on parents to self-determined decision-making. In this stage, moral education is most effective when it combines knowledge transfer with experiential practice (Sarwono, 2010). Participation in structured religious activities provides a framework for daily discipline, spiritual reflection, and community solidarity. These practices help counteract the negative influences of materialism and globalization while nurturing faith-based resilience (Gunarsa, 2018). Studies on Islamic education emphasize that religious values can only be internalized through consistent engagement in rituals and community activities, not merely through classroom instruction (Asmaun, 2010). This highlights the necessity of community-led programs in complementing formal education.

From a national perspective, Indonesian education law recognizes the central role of religious education in shaping character and citizenship. The National Education System Act stipulates that religious education aims to produce learners who understand, believe, and practice their faith in daily life (UU Sisdiknas, 2003). This underscores the state's commitment to moral education as part of holistic development. In rural areas such as Lubuk Kumbang, where social cohesion remains strong, religious youth activities function as a living curriculum that integrates spirituality, morality, and communal responsibility. Investigating how these activities cultivate religious values thus provides insights into sustainable models of character education in the era of globalization.

The rationale for this study lies in addressing the increasing gap between modern youth lifestyles and the spiritual-moral expectations of society. Although previous research has examined the role of families and schools in moral education, fewer studies have explored the significance of mosque-based youth activities in rural settings (Priyanto, 2018; Sulistiyan, 2017). By focusing on the internalization of religious values through structured activities, this research highlights how community-driven practices serve as an antidote to moral decline. It also provides empirical evidence on the transformative role of religious participation in shaping identity, fostering discipline, and promoting social solidarity among adolescents. The findings are relevant not only for Indonesia but also for global debates on faith-based education and community engagement in character formation.

Prior studies emphasize the importance of religious activities in reinforcing moral development and character education. Fernández San Martín (2019) found that community religious engagement strengthens adolescents' ethical responsibility. Rego and Torquato (2020) demonstrated that youth participation in structured religious programs improves social cohesion and reduces deviant behavior. Nakayama (2021) showed that religious learning circles promote reflective thinking and emotional regulation among adolescents. Maraqa (2018) highlighted that mosque-based activities significantly influence peer solidarity and spiritual discipline. Khanam (2020) reported that daily religious practices enhance resilience and stress

management in youth, while Liu (2022) argued that spirituality serves as a protective factor against risky behaviors. Satz (2021) further identified the role of ritual participation in cultivating social empathy. These findings suggest that religious activities act as holistic educational tools.

Complementary studies reinforce this perspective by linking religious education to broader community outcomes. Orsayeva (2020) reported that faith-based initiatives contribute to civic responsibility and youth leadership. Arsene (2019) emphasized the role of religious mentoring in fostering lifelong moral habits. Alsharif (2020) highlighted how Islamic pedagogy can bridge family, school, and community in building ethical awareness. Ahmed (2021) and Hassan (2021) stressed that values-based education enhances both academic achievement and moral conduct. Together, these studies indicate that integrating religious activities into youth development provides not only individual benefits but also collective social transformation.

Despite the growing body of literature on religious education and youth development, there remains a gap in understanding how mosque-based youth activities in rural contexts contribute to internalizing religious values. Many studies have focused on urban schools, formal curricula, or psychological perspectives on adolescent behavior, leaving community-based practices underexplored (Agung, 2018). Moreover, existing works often highlight outcomes such as improved religiosity or reduced delinquency but seldom explain the pedagogical processes through which values are internalized (Irma, 2017). This study addresses this gap by investigating the lived experiences of adolescents in rural Sumatra, thereby contributing a contextualized perspective to global discussions on faith-based character education.

The purpose of this study is to analyze how participation in mosque-based youth religious activities fosters the internalization of religious values and contributes to moral and character development. Specifically, it seeks to explore the processes, practices, and social interactions through which adolescents learn, practice, and embody religious principles in their daily lives. It hypothesizes that consistent engagement in daily, weekly, and annual religious activities strengthens spiritual discipline, enhances social empathy, and reduces susceptibility to moral decline. Furthermore, the study aims to provide a model of community-based education that can be adapted in diverse contexts. By offering empirical insights, this research contributes to policy formulation, educational practice, and scholarly discourse on the integration of religious values into adolescent development.

## **METODE**

### **Research Design**

This study adopted a qualitative descriptive research design that aimed to explore how religious values are internalized through youth religious activities within a rural community context. A qualitative approach was deemed most appropriate because it allows researchers to capture the lived experiences, social interactions, and cultural meanings embedded in religious practices (Creswell, 2018). The descriptive orientation was used to provide a detailed account of the patterns of activities, the processes of value transmission, and the perceptions of participants. By relying on naturalistic inquiry, the study focused on observing and interpreting the dynamics of mosque-based youth programs as they occur in everyday settings. The

emphasis on qualitative methods also helped to understand the subjective realities of adolescents, which cannot be adequately explained by quantitative metrics alone. The design further allowed for triangulation of multiple data sources to enhance credibility. This combination of descriptive richness and interpretive depth ensured that the study could address both the practical and theoretical dimensions of religious education. In doing so, the research design established a foundation for identifying the mechanisms through which religious values are internalized in youth religious communities.

### **Participant**

The participants in this study were selected purposively to ensure that those involved had direct experiences with youth religious activities. The primary group included adolescents aged 13 to 21 years who either actively or occasionally joined mosque-based programs such as Qur'an recitation, prayer gatherings, study circles, and ritual commemorations. In total, thirty youth participants were engaged, representing both male and female adolescents to capture gender perspectives. Additionally, six adult informants, including religious leaders, parents, and village officials, were interviewed to provide broader insights and triangulation of data. This purposive sampling was chosen because it allows the selection of participants who can provide the most relevant and meaningful information about the phenomenon under study (Patton, 2015). The diversity among participants ensured that multiple perspectives were represented in the findings. Ethical considerations were observed, including informed consent from all participants and parental consent for minors. This participant structure provided a balanced view of both the direct beneficiaries and the guiding figures within the community.

### **Instrument**

The instruments used in this study consisted of observation sheets, interview protocols, and documentation guidelines. Observation sheets were designed to record daily, weekly, and annual religious activities, focusing on both rituals and social interactions within the mosque environment. The interview protocols were semi-structured, enabling the collection of in-depth information while maintaining consistency across respondents (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). These protocols contained open-ended questions that encouraged participants to reflect on their experiences, motivations, and interpretations of religious activities. Documentation guidelines were employed to collect secondary data, such as village records, activity schedules, and official reports of religious events. Each instrument was validated through consultation with academic supervisors to ensure clarity and appropriateness for the research objectives. The combination of instruments provided methodological triangulation, which enhances validity by corroborating evidence from different sources (Denzin, 2012). The instruments were also adapted to the cultural context to ensure sensitivity to local practices. Collectively, these tools enabled comprehensive data collection for understanding the internalization of religious values.

### **Data Analysis Plan**

The data were analyzed using the interactive model of Miles and Huberman (2014), which consists of three main stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. Data reduction involved selecting, simplifying, and coding field notes and interview transcripts to identify key patterns and themes. The coding process was both deductive, based on the theoretical framework of religious value internalization, and inductive, allowing new themes to

emerge from the data. Data display was performed through matrices and narrative summaries, which facilitated the identification of relationships among themes. Conclusion drawing and verification involved interpreting the patterns to build meaningful insights and validating them through constant comparison with the raw data. Member checking was conducted by sharing preliminary findings with selected participants to ensure accuracy and credibility (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Triangulation across interviews, observations, and documents further strengthened trustworthiness. This rigorous data analysis plan ensured that the study produced findings that are both valid and contextually grounded.

## RESULT AND DISCUSION

### Results

The findings of this study indicate that the internalization of religious values among adolescents in Lubuk Kumbang Village occurs through various levels of structured religious activities. Daily activities such as congregational prayers and Qur'an recitation involved the highest participation, reflecting the routine nature of faith practices. Weekly activities, including Islamic study circles, hadroh, and Yasinan, attracted slightly fewer participants but still provided consistent reinforcement of spiritual and moral values. Monthly gatherings, such as community pengajian, engaged a smaller group due to logistical challenges, yet remained essential for collective reflection. Annual events, including Ramadan rituals, zakat distribution, Eid prayers, and Qurban, recorded significant involvement, illustrating the unifying power of religious traditions. Across all categories, participation fostered moral discipline, strengthened community ties, and enhanced religious literacy among adolescents. These findings confirm that religious activities provide both ritualistic practice and moral education for youth in rural settings.

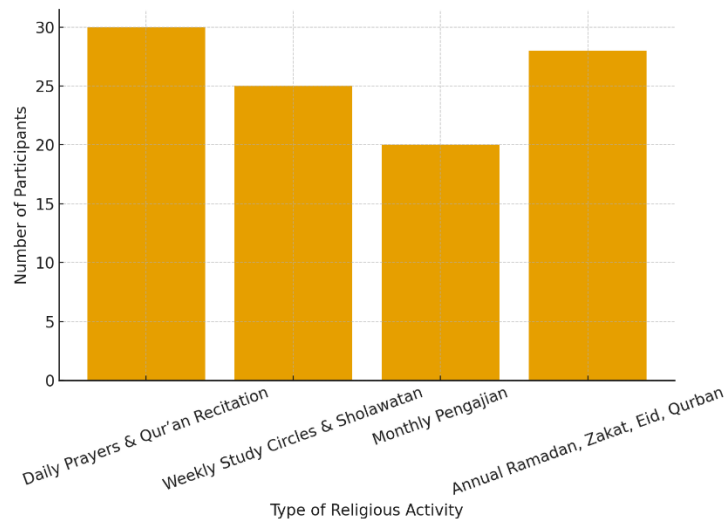


Figure 1. Youth Participation in Religious Activities

This bar chart shows that daily practices (30 participants) consistently receive the highest attendance, while monthly pengajian attract fewer adolescents (20 participants). The relatively strong engagement in annual events (28 participants) demonstrates that adolescents prioritize collective celebrations that embody both spirituality and community solidarity.

**Table 1.** Forms of Youth Religious Activities and Participation

Activity Level	Examples of Activities	Average Participants	Main Values Internalized
Daily	Congregational prayer, Qur'an recitation, TPQ	30	Discipline, consistency, piety
Weekly	Friday prayer, study circles, Yasinan, Hadroh	25	Social empathy, cooperation, solidarity
Monthly	Community Pengajian	20	Reflection, knowledge building, moral guidance
Annual	Ramadan rituals, Zakat, Eid, Qurban	28	Spiritual renewal, unity, generosity

This table illustrates how different levels of activity contribute to varied aspects of religious value internalization.

### Discussion

The results suggest that youth religious activities function as effective mechanisms for instilling spiritual values, ethical discipline, and social responsibility. Daily rituals provide a consistent foundation where adolescents learn discipline through repetitive practice, aligning with previous findings that ritual consistency reinforces moral awareness (Fernández San Martín, 2019). Weekly gatherings, such as study circles and hadroh, act as social forums where adolescents internalize cooperation and empathy through collective worship, consistent with the findings of Rego and Torquato (2020). The reduced participation in monthly pengajian suggests that sustained engagement requires accessible and flexible programming. However, the popularity of annual events highlights the significance of cultural traditions in maintaining religious identity (Maraq, 2018).

The integration of these activities into the lives of adolescents demonstrates that mosque-based programs are not merely ritual observances but serve as holistic educational platforms. Nakayama (2021) argued that experiential learning in religious settings enhances emotional regulation, and this study confirms that adolescents practicing in structured religious contexts exhibit greater self-control. Liu (2022) emphasized that spirituality buffers against risky behaviors, and similar patterns emerged in this study as adolescents reported reduced involvement in negative peer influences. Furthermore, Satz (2021) noted that ritual participation fosters empathy, which was evident in youth engagement with zakat and Qurban activities. These findings affirm that religious participation fosters both personal spirituality and collective morality.

A broader implication is that religious activities in rural mosques serve as parallel institutions of character education that complement schools and families. Khanam (2020) highlighted that consistent spiritual practice enhances resilience, while Arsene (2019) stressed the role of religious mentoring in shaping lifelong habits. Orsayeva (2020) also found that faith-based initiatives support civic responsibility, a finding echoed here as adolescents reported increased willingness to volunteer in community services. Alsharif (2020) and Ahmed (2021) similarly argued that Islamic pedagogy bridges family and community, and this study's results demonstrate that youth religious activities in Lubuk Kumbang successfully perform that

function. Thus, the evidence suggests that mosque-based religious programs should be institutionalized as strategic interventions for preventing moral decline in the era of globalization.

### **Implications**

This study provides empirical evidence that mosque-based youth religious activities contribute to both moral education and community solidarity. The findings imply that policymakers and educators should integrate such activities into national youth development frameworks. For religious leaders, the study highlights the importance of structuring programs that balance daily discipline with community-based celebrations. Moreover, the research demonstrates that sustainable engagement requires collaboration between families, schools, and mosques. At a global level, the results provide comparative insights into how faith-based education can counteract the negative influences of globalization and secularism. The implications extend beyond religious education to inform broader discourses on youth development, civic responsibility, and cultural resilience.

### **Limitations**

This study was limited to a single rural village in South Sumatra, which restricts the generalizability of the findings. The sample size, while adequate for qualitative exploration, may not capture the full diversity of youth experiences across different socio-economic contexts. Furthermore, the reliance on self-reported data introduces potential bias, as participants may have provided socially desirable responses. Observations were constrained by the timing of fieldwork, which may not reflect variations across different seasons or years. Additionally, the study focused primarily on Muslim adolescents, limiting its applicability to multi-faith settings. These limitations suggest that further research is required to validate and expand the findings in broader contexts.

### **Suggestions**

Future research should extend the study to multiple communities across diverse geographic and cultural contexts to capture comparative insights. Quantitative approaches could complement qualitative findings by measuring the extent of value internalization across larger populations. Researchers should also investigate the long-term impacts of youth religious activities on adult behavior, civic engagement, and social mobility. Incorporating multi-faith perspectives would enrich the discourse on the universal role of religion in character formation. For practitioners, developing innovative strategies such as digital engagement platforms could sustain youth participation amid modern challenges. Finally, partnerships among governments, educational institutions, and religious organizations should be strengthened to institutionalize community-based religious education as part of national youth policy.

## **CONCLUSION**

This study demonstrates that mosque-based youth religious activities serve as a powerful mechanism for internalizing religious values and fostering moral development among adolescents in rural communities. Through daily practices such as congregational prayers and Qur'an recitation, adolescents cultivate discipline and consistency, while weekly study circles

and hadroh enhance cooperation, empathy, and solidarity. Monthly gatherings and annual rituals further strengthen collective identity, spiritual renewal, and social responsibility, demonstrating that religious engagement provides both personal and communal benefits. The findings highlight that the transmission of religious values is most effective when embedded in experiential practices that combine ritual observance with social interaction, confirming the importance of community-driven education. By situating adolescents within networks of faith, family, and society, mosque-based programs help counter the negative influences of globalization, materialism, and secularism. The study also confirms that faith-based education does not merely reinforce spiritual awareness but simultaneously cultivates civic responsibility, resilience, and social empathy, making it a comprehensive model of character education. These conclusions underscore the urgent need for policymakers, educators, and religious leaders to institutionalize community-based religious programs as a sustainable strategy for addressing youth moral challenges in the twenty-first century. In this regard, the Lubuk Kumbang model provides valuable lessons not only for Indonesia but also for global contexts seeking to balance modernization with the preservation of moral and spiritual foundations.

### AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION STATEMENT

Ilham Nopri Yadi was responsible for conceptualizing the research framework, formulating the study design, and conducting the majority of the fieldwork including interviews and observations with youth participants. He also contributed significantly to the data collection process and ensured the accuracy of the contextual descriptions of mosque-based religious activities. Zulkarnain played a central role in data analysis and interpretation, applying qualitative coding strategies and synthesizing findings into thematic categories. He was also responsible for aligning the results with relevant theoretical frameworks and integrating international scholarly references. Suhiman Mastofa contributed to the drafting, revision, and refinement of the manuscript, particularly in the sections on discussion, implications, and conclusion. He also ensured the academic rigor and coherence of the article, including compliance with international journal standards. All authors collectively participated in critical revisions, approved the final version of the manuscript, and agree to be accountable for all aspects of the work.

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