

# Religious Belief: An Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis on the Experience of Minority Students in Implementing Religious Education

Zuhdiyah<sup>1</sup>, Nyayu Khodijah<sup>2</sup> & Zulmi Ramdani<sup>3,4</sup>

1) *Faculty of Psychology, Universitas Islam Negeri Raden Fatah Palembang, Indonesia*

2) *Faculty of Teacher and Teaching Education, Universitas Islam Negeri Raden Fatah Palembang, Indonesia*

3) *Institute of Social Sciences, Bursa Uludağ University, Bursa, Turkiye*

4) *Faculty of Psychology, UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung, Indonesia*

## Abstract

This study aims to explore students' minority experiences while participating in religious education (RE). An interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) was used to answer the objective questions. Data were collected using the undergraduates' diaries and in-depth interviews with 9 senior high school students which were selected by purposive sampling. Thematic analysis was used to categorize the information obtained. The result showed the three major themes that emerge in the IPA analysis, which include the strength of faith, basic knowledge, and a sense of religion. The finding interprets that informants have complete belief in the God they worship because of the basic understanding of religion that has been obtained from the family, community, and social media, even informants' religious participation and activities have reached the level of sense. This study explains how the informants stand firm in worshipping their God despite receiving RE in various schools. This study concludes that even though informants are in a minority environment, they can still get religious education that is appropriate to their conditions through diverse activities and upholding the values of differences.

## Keywords

Minorities, religious belief, religious experience, religious education, students

---

**To cite this article:** Zuhdiyah, Z., Khodijah, N., & Ramdani, Z. (2023). Religious Belief: An Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis on the Experience of Minority Students in Implementing Religious Education. *Qualitative Research in Education*, 13(3), pp. 243-261  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.17583/qre.11651>

**Corresponding author:** Zuhdiyah

**Contact address:** zuhdiyah\_uin@radenfatah.ac.id

Qualitative Research in Education  
Volumen 13, Número 3, 28 de octubre de 2024, Páginas 243 – 261  
© Autor(s) 2024

<http://dx.doi.org/10.17583/qre.11651>

# Creencia Religiosa: Un Análisis Fenomenológico Interpretativo Sobre La Experiencia de Estudiantes de Minorías En La Implementación de La Educación

Zuhdiyah<sup>1</sup>, Nyayu Khodijah<sup>2</sup> & Zulmi Ramdani<sup>3,4</sup>

1) *Faculty of Psychology, Universitas Islam Negeri Raden Fatah Palembang, Indonesia*

2) *Faculty of Teacher and Teaching Education, Universitas Islam Negeri Raden Fatah Palembang, Indonesia*

3) *Institute of Social Sciences, Bursa Uludağ University, Bursa, Turkiye*

4) *Faculty of Psychology, UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung, Indonesia*

## Resumen

Este estudio tiene como objetivo explorar las experiencias minoritarias de los estudiantes mientras participan en educación religiosa. Se utilizó un análisis fenomenológico interpretativo para responder las preguntas objetivas. Los datos fueron recolectados utilizando los diarios de los estudiantes universitarios y entrevistas en profundidad con 9 estudiantes de secundaria seleccionados mediante muestreo intencional. Se utilizó el análisis temático para categorizar la información obtenida. Los resultados mostraron los tres temas principales que surgieron en el análisis de la AP, incluidos la fuerza de la fe, el conocimiento básico y el sentido de la religión. El hallazgo interpreta que los informantes tienen una creencia completa en el Dios que adoran debido al conocimiento básico de la religión que han obtenido de la familia, la comunidad y las redes sociales, incluso la participación y actividades religiosas de los informantes han alcanzado el nivel de sentido. Este estudio explica cómo los informantes se mantienen firmes en la adoración a su Dios a pesar de recibir RE en diversos colegios. Este estudio concluye que, aunque los informantes se encuentran en un entorno minoritario, aún pueden obtener una educación religiosa adecuada a sus condiciones a través de diversas actividades y defendiendo los valores de las diferencias.

## Palabras clave

Creencia religiosa, experiencia religiosa, educación religiosa, estudiantes, minorías

---

**Cómo citar este artículo:** Zuhdiyah, Z., Khodijah, N., & Ramdani, Z. (2024). Creencia Religiosa: Un Análisis Fenomenológico Interpretativo Sobre La Experiencia de Estudiantes de Minorías En La Implementación de La Educación *Qualitative Research in Education*, 13(3), pp. 243-261 <http://dx.doi.org/10.17583/qre.11651>

**Correspondencia Autores(s):** Zuhdiyah

**Dirección de contacto:** [zuhdiyah\\_uin@radenfatah.ac.id](mailto:zuhdiyah_uin@radenfatah.ac.id)

The implementation of religious education (RE) became an interesting discussion among the leaders at the international conference “RE21 in the Local-Global World” in Ireland (Nasiri, 2020; Roso, 2017). Since religious education (RE) helps students build an awareness of themselves and others, learning about religion and learning from religion are essential for all students. RE facilitates individuals, groups, and communities’ spiritual, moral, social, and cultural growth. Several countries including Germany, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, and Egypt make RE part of their curriculum in schools (Omar, 2020; Ozhiganova, 2017; Wittmer & Waldhoff, 2019).

Religious education is a critical issue in Germany. Because of the importance of this issue, the existing laws and regulations in this country have included rules to make religious education part of the school curriculum. According to Wittmer and Waldhoff (2019), religious education is necessary because it can shape individual identity and character and prevent conflicts between community groups of different religions. In addition, the German government realizes that religion is a human right of all human beings, including German citizens, so in the realization of guaranteeing these religious rights, religious education is necessary. As explained in several literatures, the development of religious education in Germany is accelerating. This has an impact on existing religious confessions including Roman Catholicism, Protestantism, Islam, and Orthodoxy (Arzheimer, 2024; Llorent-Bedmar et al., 2023; Türkmen, 2024). Meanwhile, those who do not have religious beliefs are not a crucial problem in Germany. They are still given the freedom to believe or not. This is what makes religious tolerance in this country quite good (Arzheimer, 2024; Llorent-Bedmar et al., 2023; Türkmen, 2024).

In addition, schools in Russia have also implemented religious education. The application of religious education began after the collapse of the Soviet Union government, which still referred to atheism. Next, the application of religious education is seen as necessary as a form of anticipation of the rapid flow of information from social media that can damage the personality of community groups (Ozhiganova, 2017). Some Arab countries such as Saudi Arabia, Sudan, and Egypt, also implement religious education in schools. The purpose of providing religious education is to prevent extremism, prevent doctrines that can damage the country's stability, and ensure political stability from extremist ideologies (Omar, 2020; Ozhiganova, 2017; Wittmer & Waldhoff, 2019).

In the Philippines, students were taught religions and belief systems. However, the learning failed to increase their knowledge (Galingana, 2021), because the teachers' learning methods are still not appropriate, as well as the teaching materials used. Therefore, even though students have a positive attitude toward other religions, it does not mean that these students understand the religion and religious teachings that they have obtained through RE. Moreover, the research conducted Durham et al. (2008) and Santoro (2008) focused on religious education in a world where RE should still contribute to diverse extra-academic goals and incorporate some sort of learning from religion(s) (and particularly the majority religion). Consequently, the significance of religion and belief knowledge can enhance appreciation for the freedom of religion and belief for all individuals.

Therefore, in Indonesia, RE become important for students from kindergarten to university (Arifin, 2016; Hayadin et al., 2019; Mahfud et al., 2019; Parker, 2014). Article 4 paragraph 2

of the Indonesian Regulation Number 55 of 2017 explained that all undergraduates have the right to receive education in line with their religion. Indonesia, as a multicultural society, religious education needs to immediately display tolerant religious teachings through educational curricula to emphasize understanding and efforts to be able to live in the context of religious and cultural differences, both individually and collectively, and not be trapped in primordialism and exclusivity of religious and cultural groups narrow one. Therefore, making better distribution and arrangements is necessary because there is still a shortage of teachers in all schools (Wijayanti & Sutapa, 2015). This condition causes students to continue receiving religious education from teachers with different beliefs (Fuad, 2018; Taruna, 2010). Arat et al. (2021) and Isik et al. (2018) emphasized that this situation makes undergraduates experience confusion and discomfort because it affects their attitudes, motivation, and mental well-being.

The importance of religious education in individual lives has strengthened the role of religion as a foundation for behavior (Toumi & Su, 2023). Moreover, if these rules have become part of an education system. However, facts on the ground show other situations in the implementation of religious education. Especially if these individuals are in a majority environment while they are part of a minority. Of course, this can cause psychological disharmony for both the individual and the environment around him (Shevtsova, 2023; Toumi & Su, 2023). This situation occurs especially in heterogeneous environments and cultures.

Several studies have examined minorities among the majority in the world. First, the research Isik et al. (2018) aimed to investigate factors that could influence the academic motivation of ethnic minority students. They found a wide range of (individual, family-related, school-related, and social) factors that influence the academic motivation of ethnic minority students positively or negatively. Secondly, Glock et al. (2019) explored the influence of cultural diversity on teachers' attitudes towards undergraduates in schools. They found that preservice teachers who anticipated a school with greater cultural variety expressed more implicitly negative attitudes about ethnic minority students than those who envisioned a school with less diversity. Conversely, teachers working in higher-diversity schools held less implicitly negative attitudes about minority students. Third, Arat et al. (2021) examined and explored the factors that affect the minority students' mental well-being in Hong Kong. The factors include (1) social and supportive parents; (2) teenagers' leisure activities; (3) teenagers' sense of humor; (4) teenagers' religious solid convictions; and (5) support from the local Chinese community. The three studies, although discussing minority students, did not examine the life experiences of minority students in terms of their religious beliefs.

In addition, several studies examine the issue of guaranteeing the rights of minority groups. First, Hayadin (2020), Hayadin (2017), Raihani (2016) and Sofanudin (2019) discussed government policies toward minority groups in getting religious education in Indonesia. Next, Mehfooz (2021) and Neo (2021) emphasized that the government guarantees protection and freedom of religion for minority groups in Pakistan and Asia, respectively. Finally, Raihani (2016) asserts that the Indonesian government grants minority rights to religious education in various schools. None of the studies previously mentioned have discussed guaranteeing the right for minorities to receive religious education for their religious minorities.

Muslims living in the West, Europe, and other developed countries as a minority face the Islamic education of children as a common problem. It could be due to several factors such as the unavailability of madrasas in specific locations, the lack of a sufficient number of students

to ensure the complete opening of madrasas, and curricula set by the government that does not focus on Islamic education or does so. In an inadequate manner (non-confessional or based on other beliefs), lack of integration between religious education and secular subjects, the inability of parents to fund their child's education in Islamic schools due to high tuition fees, and the perception that state or secular schools will provide a better education than Islamic school (Musharraf & Nabeel, 2015).

The initial study carried out by researchers on several subjects who were the main research informants provided information that was relevant to the dynamics of religious education in Indonesia. As followers of a minority religion, their diversity in a majority environment means that informants must be able to adapt to the demands of that environment. The decision to display behavior that is different from the majority of course becomes negative stimulation if not controlled properly. The feelings of inferiority that arise are an indicator of discomfort in being in a majority environment. This negative situation becomes greater if the individual is in an intolerant environment. This is what makes their experiences valuable to identify.

The problems described previously are of course related to the religious beliefs held by a person. Strong religious belief will give birth to the principle of consistency for that person, both in normative behavior and about his religion. As in several previous studies that explain the dynamics of individual religious beliefs in heterogeneous contexts (Fox et al., 2024; Mashuri & Osteen, 2023; Whyte & Yucel, 2023).

Several previous studies have been conducted to identify how an individual's religious experience relates to his religious education. First, Niens et al. (2013) examined how adolescents negotiate their religious identities within a complex network of interconnections among their minority religious belief community and the mainstream school culture, as reflected by peer and staff attitudes, school ethos, practices, and religious education. Then, Bennett (2018) found that RE is not that compulsory for non-Muslims in Morocco. Next, Faour (2013) showed that Tunisia teaches Islamic education to all students in public schools with 1.5 credit hours weekly for nine years. Finally, Farooq and Sohail (2019) explored the life experiences of Christian undergraduates in private universities, where Islamic studies were taught as a subject. The first three studies were limited to discussing religious education taught by the majority of teachers, but there was still a guarantee of freedom of religion for the minority. The fourth study explores the life experiences of minorities and the stereotyped behavior they receive among the majority. However, Farooq and Sohail (2019) did not explore specifically and in-depth how the phenomenon of life experience from the aspect of religious beliefs of minorities who received religious learning from their teachers. Based on these studies, the value of novelty in this study can explore in-depth things that are more specific and occur in a more multi-religion context so that the psychological dynamics that occur can be stronger.

Religious beliefs (RB) are information often taught from one generation to another because they affect people's attitudes and behavior. Clarke (2020), Levy and Razin (2012), Paiva et al. (2020), and Saleem et al. (2021) explained that an individual's attitude tends to measure if they participate or adhere to a particular religion in society. Several studies have measured religious belief by assessing people who volunteer to read books and watch television programs in the church. According to Babojonovna (2021) and Eckes (2021), students need to build their RB



by paying attention to the teacher's behavior. This situation makes the minority group survive and interact with a majority religion in society. The minority group in question is those who have different religious beliefs from the majority. For example, two students are Catholic but they are in a class or school environment where students with Islamic religious beliefs dominate. In some situations, the schools they attend use Islamic-based learning every day. This is one of the unique things in this research. Therefore, this study aims to explore the rights of minority students over religious education in all schools. This aim is explained in the research question, namely what kind of psychological experiences the informant experiences and applies when interacting as a minority in a majority environment. It is hoped that this research question will reveal the big picture of aspects of the psychological experiences felt by informants in carrying out religious education.

## Methods

### Research Design

This study used an interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) design to gain individual life experiences (Biggerstaff & Thompson, 2008). The use of this phenomenological design is based on the researcher's goal of wanting to understand more deeply the experiences felt by the informants regarding the values and beliefs they had while receiving religious education. The use of IPA also aims to explore the awareness experiences experienced by informants in facing an event and how they express these experiences into more operational categories. In contrast to the phenomenological descriptive model, interpretive studies emphasize the process of in-depth interpretation of field data combined with existing theoretical schemes (Collins et al., 2023; Keum et al., 2023).

### Informants

Purposive sampling is used to identify informants, ensuring that they represent the community of students in Indonesia who take lessons in religious education in classes where the majority of the religion is different from their beliefs. The use of purposive sampling is very suitable when researchers want to select samples according to predetermined characteristics and objectives (Istiqomah et al., 2023; Ranimpi et al., 2023). An informed consent form that was fully signed was distributed to the informants who had predetermined characteristics. The informants have been informed of the benefits and potential disadvantages of taking part in this study.

Researchers distributed willingness sheets to become informants to several regions in Indonesia. 9 informants were willing to be subjects in this research. Initially, there were about 15 people who were willing to be part of this study. However, after rechecking, 6 people did not meet the criteria to be interviewed. This was because there were informants outside of school age who also filled out the initial survey, so they were not included in the study. The remaining number was enough to be part of qualitative research. As was also done by several previous qualitative studies (Ayuningbudi & Hanami, 2023; Istiqomah et al., 2023). The

informants consisted of 9 students of class XI, considering that the person concerned had at least one year of experience attending religious school lessons. In addition, these nine students come from 3 (three) high schools located in three different regions in Indonesia (west, central, and east), with each high school represented by three students.

### **Data Collection and Technique**

The risks attached to data collection are susceptible because they include the outcome of significant personal and sensitive thoughts, feelings, and experiences. Therefore, the results were presented anonymously and not identified. Data were collected using diaries and in-depth interviews.

#### ***Diary***

Informants were asked to fill out a note form containing information about their religious activities. Harvey (2011) explained this technique helps strengthen the personal experiences of the subject during the study process.

#### ***Interview***

The interview which is recorded and transcribed was conducted to focus on the informant's experiences, thoughts, feelings, and activities during religious education at school. These questions were arranged using a combination of theories described by (Babojonovna, 2021; Clarke, 2020; Eckes, 2021; Levy & Razin, 2012; Paiva et al., 2020; Saleem et al., 2021). The interviews were executed in the Indonesian language and face-to-face mode using audio-recorded media that lasted for 39 to 50 minutes. It was an in-depth and open-ended question that focused on religious beliefs and their implications in people's daily lives. In this interview, the informants were thanked for their participation.

### **Data Analysis**

Data were analyzed, identified, or reported using a thematic analysis because this study focuses on a detailed analysis that provides a more in-depth description (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This thematic analysis is suitable for use in phenomenological research designs because it can reveal with certainty the important components that are inherent and occur in research informants (Jirarattanawanna et al., 2024; Tayal & Sharma, 2023). The steps to be taken in this thematic analysis include understanding the data obtained, coding from existing data, and forming themes or patterns from existing coding. The result will provide relevant information about the identified attributes.

## Results

### Informants' Characteristics

Table 1 below shows that there are 9 subjects involved in this study.

**Table 1**

*Overview of Informants' Characteristics*

Student's Code	Age	Religion	Religious education provided by the school
NPE	17	Hinduism	Protestant Religious Education
CA	16	Catholicism	Islamic Religious Education
YYS	17	Protestantism	Islamic Religious Education
IW	16	Buddhism	Protestant Religious Education
WM	16	Catholicism	Islamic Religious Education
W	15	Buddhism	Catholic Religious Education
KL	17	Hinduism	Islamic Religious Education
LL	17	Islam	Protestant Religious Education
L	17	Protestantism	Islamic Religious Education

Table 1 provides an overview of the informant's characteristics, age, class, religion, and the educational subjects received in school. Of a total of 9 informants, 1 is Muslim and the remaining comprised 2 each are Hindus, Buddhists, Catholics, and Protestants respectively. The informant's name acronyms are NPE, CA, YYS, IW, WM, W, KL, LL, and L which consist of 5, 1, and 3 that studied Islamic, Catholic, and Protestant religious education respectively.

### Description of the Informants' Daily Activities and Contextualization of the Interview

Of a total of 9 informants, 3 participated in religious activities that were performed outside of school premises. The remaining students comprised 1 and 2 each occasionally and fully, precisely, as well as failed to be involved in RE respectively. A total of 4, informants each occasionally and fully performed religious activities respectively, while the remaining 1 failed to carry out these actions. Therefore, this study ensures all students are involved not only in their religion but also in others. The results showed that 8 informants took religious education and the remaining 1 occasionally received it. All informants participated in the RE because they paid close attention and properly listened to it. However, 8 students explained that their faith stands firmly, but the remaining 1 admitted that their religious beliefs were shaken because some materials had been memorized. A total of 5 informants emphasized they received RE in places of worship, while the remaining comprises 1 each learns independently, through social media, by participating in extra-curricular activities, and through parents and Quran



teachers. Furthermore, 6, 1, and 2 students fully and occasionally, as well as failed to participate in doing assignments. A total of 3 and 6 undergraduates fully and failed to be involved in religious activities.

### Themes of the Main Research

The research results describe the psychological experiences felt by the informants during the interaction process when implementing religious education. This study indicated that there are three themes including (a) strength of faith, (b) basic knowledge, and (c) sense of religion which each has two or three subordinates. These three aspects are a description of the informant's religious beliefs. Table 2 provides an overview of the themes and code obtained.

**Table 2**

*Overview of Superordinate and Subordinate Themes*

Themes	Codes
Strength of faith	pray diligently
	believe wholeheartedly
	tolerance in religion
Religious knowledge	learn from teachers and religious leaders
	learn through social media
	learn with parents
Sense of religion	the pleasure of worship
	spirit in religious activities
	enthusiasm in religious activities

### *Strength of Faith*

The results showed that the informants have good faith to participate in religious education despite having different beliefs. Although a few students failed to understand what was being taught in school, all of them were present and actively listened to the teacher's explanations.

**Pray Diligently.** The informants were not forced to actively participate in religious activities because the teachers allowed the undergraduates to pray in line with their respective religions and beliefs. According to NPE, “*We are always invited to pray according to our respective religions and beliefs*”. In the record of CA, eight out of nine informants do always pray, “In the morning, I listen to the meditations given by Romo which is a nickname of Catholic priests. After that, I listen to meditations on social media, Sunday school, and pray”. According to W notes, “I do always pray at the monastery”. Therefore, the interviews and diaries showed that worship activities in the form of prayers always make the informants’ faith strong.

**Believe Wholeheartedly.** In the notes of YYS, WM, W, and L, belief in God only makes the informants feel that the other religious education received at school is unable to shake their faith. Based on YYS, "the miracles received made me believe that the God I served is real". In the note of WM, "I only follow learning activities just to increase my knowledge". According to W, "I am not influenced because I believe in the teachings of my religion". In the diary, L indicated "My faith does not waver because it is firm". These statements showed that the basis of belief makes people's faith to become strong.

Although, L explained that he almost wavered due to the education received from the religious teacher, "It was almost shaky for converts because they can perform ablution, memorize several verses, and fast. However, I finally relaxed while following religious education because I surrendered to God by faith". L's confession indicated that the belief in God's power tends to increase when the faith has been shaken.

**Tolerance in Religion.** KL showed that his faith is firm because religious teachers always develop the principle of tolerance while carrying out the learning process. "Religious education teachers highly respect the existence of other religions by referring to them during explanations". Also, IW admitted that people have their own beliefs but still need to respect each other. "I remain in my faith, but still follow the tolerance of fellow human beings despite having different beliefs".

### ***Religious Knowledge***

A total of 9 minority informants receive religious education that is different from their beliefs. Based on the results of interviews and diaries, the knowledge obtained only meets the demands of school regulations.

**Learn from Teachers and Religious Leaders.** The following informants explained people have to obtain a basic knowledge of religion not only from teachers at school but also from leaders in their respective places of worship. According to NPE, "I studied with a Hindu religious teacher who was always in the temple on the Pasraman Sunday". Based on IW, "I studied with Pastor Gunawan". In the notes of YYS, "Yes, there are extra-curricular religious activities twice in a week directly taught by Romo". WM explained "I learn the knowledge that I believe in my place of worship". According to W, "Yes, I studied with the teacher at the monastery". Based on KL, "I learn with a religion teacher at the temple". LL indicated "I study the knowledge that I believe in my place of worship because I learned religion with my Quran teacher". The eight informants admitted that they had studied and gained knowledge in their respective religious circles or communities.

**Learn from Social Media.** Learning is not only limited to classes but also be gained through social media. CA explained "Yes, I study my religious knowledge through social media. The Catholic Romo do give reha or reflection daily". This kind of media is YouTube or Instagram which contains devotional content by priests or religious leaders.

**Learn to Be Independent.** The informants do not only obtain basic knowledge from religious teachers or leaders but also through independent learning. According to the following informants, this type of learning tends to be performed by reading books or discussing with friends who have the same beliefs. YYS explained, "I learn from conversations with fellow friends who are equally curious". In the note of WM, "I study by reading books". L emphasized that "I am still studying my religion by going to church every Sunday".

### *The Sense of Religion*

Religion is not only related to believing in God or not but is also a matter of feeling while worshipping. Based on the diaries for two weeks, 9 informants had reached the level of sweetness of worship to actively participate in various religious activities.

**The Pleasure of Worship.** According to the following informants, worship tends to bring pleasure in the form of peace of mind. This is indicated in the note KL "*I find peace*", and LL as well as L "*Yes, I become calm*". The following informants showed pleasure of worship brings not only peace of mind but also other feelings. CA explained, "Besides being calm, I feel solemn, enthusiastic, joyful, and happy". In the note of YYS, "I feel peaceful, joyful, and become motivated, as well as happy while getting to know God". IW emphasized that "we feel happy because we can see our ancestors even through photos". According to WM, "I feel very excited and happy". These statements showed that the informants have a feeling in their hearts while carrying out worship activities. This kind of feeling is in the form of solemnity, enthusiasm, joy, enjoyment, spirit, and happiness.

**Spirit in Religious Activities.** Religion is not only limited to belief but is reflected in the realization of actual actions. The informants usually carry out these activities in the form of meditation, reading the Bible or the Quran, and praying as follows. CA explained, "In the morning, I listen to the reha or meditation given by Romo. After that, I pray and listen to reflections on social media". In the note of LL, "I do normally pray and recite". Also, the informants carry out weekly actions in Sunday school by practicing and singing spiritual songs, making prayers, full moon, and tilem (worship carried out to purify the spirit and soul). There are annual activities including Easter commemorations, Nyepi, and Ramadan fasting.

**Enthusiasm in Religious Activities.** According to CA, religious activities tend not to be separated from the people's participation which is the involvement of organizations. The informants explained that he "participated in Catholic youth gatherings to discuss church and future until sunset". This shows that involvement in places of worship is another form of participation. In the diary notes of CA, IW, W, WM, and KL, "cheerful Saturday at church, listening to sermons, praying for ancestors (Vihara), praying at the monastery, Easter activities, and Silent ceremony, piodalan temple, regular Sunday prayers, full moon & Tilem are all forms of participation".

## Discussion

This study was conducted between March and April 2022 to contribute to students' life experiences while receiving religious education (RE) from teachers and classmates of different faiths. The experience of being a minority puts a lot of pressure on students to be able to grow and develop to achieve their happiness at school. However, research results show that individuals who can process any pressure into positive things can successfully accept and reconcile with the situation they experience. It is in line with several previous studies, which also mentioned that painful experiences at school could be a moment for someone to get better peace of mind (Farooq & Sohail, 2019; Moulin, 2011; Novis-Deutsch & Lifshitz, 2016).

The fundamental thing in strengthening the informants' religious beliefs begins with a firm belief that all behaviors and situations are solely attributable to the quality of the connections between the informants and their God. The informants in this study have a strong belief despite having different religious education because the majority of them are praying diligently. Worship consistently can provide power for students to continue to believe in what they are doing. According to (Brown, 2020), fervent prayer strengthens faith because it lifts the mind and soul to God. Meanwhile, Froese and Jones (2021) explained the importance of prayer on religious beliefs, while Zarzycka and Krok (2021) indicating that it positively collaborates with well-being. These statements indicate that the closeness between informants and God is the best way to strengthen their beliefs so that they continuously experience unity in their behavior.

Furthermore, the informants' faith is based on RE which is developed by teachers who adhere to the principle of tolerance in society. These teachers respect the existence of other religions by referring to them during explanations. Of course, the existence of someone with a different religion can lead to severe conflicts and differences in the harmonization of relationships. However, the appreciation of these differences becomes a significant capital felt by informants so that they can survive and their position is accepted without exception. This result is in line with Fadhli and Sirait (2019) that tolerance affects the religiosity of students. Babii (2020) indicated the process of forming RE through tolerance, freedom of conscience, and belief.

The second finding places students' religious knowledge as necessary for strengthening their beliefs. Generally, the informants are not affected because they have basic knowledge obtained from parents, teachers, and religious leaders in society. Few of the informants explained they studied independently by reading their Bible & Quran and listening to meditation on social media. This basic knowledge obtained from the closest environment, family, and houses of worship makes humans realize their duties and obligations as God's creatures.

Informants successfully gained acceptance of their condition in minority situations because of the combination of learning processes they got from many sources of social support, as described earlier. As a form of social support, the people around them provide great support and motivation to survive in these conditions. Moreover, all of the informants involved in this study are those in the late adolescent developmental level, so the technological knowledge they gain during their interaction may become a valuable learning resource. Several studies showed the role of the family in instilling RE in children (Abidin et al., 2021; Ananda, 2017; Angkouw & Simon, 2020; Aran & Nayebkabar, 2018; Rambe, 2020; Susilawati, 2020; Zega, 2021). Smith (2021) illustrated that the transmission of faith affects students' religiosity. According to

Hopizal and Fahrurrazi (2020), Rusydiyah et al. (2020), and Tsourlaki (2020), social media helps to strengthen undergraduates' basic knowledge.

It is interesting when the informants wanted to learn many things about religion, even though it differed from what they believed. Diversity provides quite an extreme stimulus for some people, but most informants can make it a place of learning. For example, many of the sacred moments they experience during learning are along with the life values of the people around them. It constructs students' religious knowledge better and can make them the right choice.

The last theme in this study illustrates that a regular habituation process is needed to support religious beliefs and students' daily knowledge. Fun religious activities are one of those routine habits. The informants in this study always feel enthusiastic, calm, happy, joyful, and solemn while participating in various religious activities in society. Eryilmaz (2015) indicated a relationship between this type of participation and the students' subjective well-being. Also, Saleem et al. (2021) showed that involvement in religious activities, prayers, and beliefs is positively related to undergraduates' mental health. Plumwongrot and Pholphirul (2021) emphasized adolescents who participate in Buddhist activities positively affect Thai self-esteem.

Ultimately, the themes obtained in this study provide a clear and continuous illustration. All informants know the good conditions they are currently experiencing through such a dynamic process. Some of them almost felt hopeless and wanted to get out of the situation reluctantly, but the three major themes that emerged in this study made the process easier. Religious belief is considered a source of inner strength that will not be felt for granted but requires strong interaction with the Creator. Then, religious knowledge becomes a source of cognitive reinforcement that helps rationalize that minority is just a term. Finally, the feeling of calm and strong desire is what makes the informants survive and enjoy the situation they are experiencing.

Therefore, this study becomes interesting because it considers the overall religious experiences of the informants. The informants believed that RE for minority students was not problematic due to its failure to shake their beliefs. Further studies need to be performed to understand the religious beliefs of younger groups who tend to be more susceptible to being swayed by faith. Moreover, the informants selected are not perceived as a minority because they have much power in responding to RE in school. This study's results showed that students have strong religious beliefs in the form of faith, knowledge, and taste. The informants are not only involved in learning but also work on questions and other tasks, as well as participate in various activities both at school and outside.

### **Conclusion and Limitation**

This study emphasizes that informants' beliefs appear in the strength of faith, basic knowledge, and sense of religion. Meanwhile, the strength of faith is due to the frequent chanting of prayers, unquestioning belief, and teachings full of tolerance, while the basis of knowledge which is obtained from the family, society, and social media causes the informants to stand firmly in God. The informants become calm, peaceful, tranquil, and happy while carrying out religious activities. The results of this study can answer the research objectives that have been determined. The religious experience of a minority is felt differently by each individual. However, the conclusion of the study strengthens that even though they are in a minority environment, with the positive characteristics they have and supported by other factors they can grow and develop according to the religious belief they adhere to.

This study has various limitations including the subject religion was not fully represented. The use of more subjects will further confirm the research results. RE must be studied in more depth by involving more processes, activities, points of view, and exploration of variables, thereby enriching the interconnection of research results. The data mining process needs to pay attention to other informants who understand and interact directly with the subject. Further studies need to use these limitations to make the conclusions obtained to become comprehensive.



### References

- Abidin, J., Akil, & Nurlaeli, A. (2021). The role of parents and teachers in the governance of Islamic religious education and children's character education at SMP IT Al Istiqomah Global School Karawang. *ENDLESS: International Journal of Future Studies*. <https://doi.org/10.54783/endless.v4i2.72>
- Ananda, R. (2017). Implementasi nilai-nilai moral dan agama pada anak usia dini. *Jurnal Obsesi: Jurnal Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini*. <https://doi.org/10.31004/obsesi.v1i1.28>
- Angkouw, S. R., & Simon, S. (2020). Peranan orang tua dalam pendidikan agama kristen terhadap pertumbuhan rohani anak. *SHAMAYIM: Jurnal Teologi Dan Pendidikan Kristiani*. <https://doi.org/10.51615/sha.v1i1.3>
- Aran, H., & Nayebkabar, M. (2018). Role of parents in religious and social education of children. *International Journal of Multicultural and Multireligious Understanding*. <https://doi.org/10.18415/ijmmu.v5i3.347>
- Arat, G., Jordan, L. P., & Wong, P. W. C. (2021). Exploring the culturally specific factors of mental health in South Asian minority students in Hong Kong. *European Journal of Social Work*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13691457.2019.1605978>
- Arifin, S. (2016). Islamic religious education and radicalism in Indonesia: Strategy of de-radicalization through strengthening the living values education. *Indonesian Journal of Islam and Muslim Societies*. <https://doi.org/10.18326/ijims.v6i1.93-126>
- Arzheimer, K. (2024). The links between basic human values and political secularism: Evidence from Germany. *European Journal of Political Research*, 63(1), 370–382. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1475-6765.12585>
- Ayuningbudi, F. H. W., & Hanami, Y. (2023). Bullying and social support in elementary school students: A qualitative study. *Psymphatic: Jurnal Ilmiah Psikologi*, 10(2), 137–146. <https://doi.org/10.15575/psy.v10i2.29451>
- Babii, M. (2020). Religious tolerance, freedom of conscience, freedom of religion and belief in the period of establishment of Christianity. *Religious Freedom*. <https://doi.org/10.32420/rs.2020.24.1783>
- Babojonovna, A. S. (2021). Building religious beliefs in primary school pupils. *ASIAN JOURNAL OF MULTIDIMENSIONAL RESEARCH*. <https://doi.org/10.5958/2278-4853.2021.00421.3>
- Bennett, C. (2018). *Education of religious minorities in Muslim countries*. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-64683-1\\_10](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-64683-1_10)
- Biggerstaff, D., & Thompson, A. R. (2008). Interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA): A qualitative methodology of choice in healthcare research. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14780880802314304>
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77–101. <https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa>
- Brown, R. F. (2020). Prayer. In *the oxford handbook of Christian monasticism*. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199689736.013.2>
- Clarke, S. (2020). Straight out of Durkheim? Haidt's neo-Durkheimian account of religion and the cognitive science of religion. *Sophia*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11841-018-0650-0>

- Collins, R., Vallières, F., & McDermott, G. (2023). The experiences of post-ICU covid-19 survivors: An Existential Perspective using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis. *Qualitative Health Research*, 33(7), 589–600. <https://doi.org/10.1177/10497323231164556>
- Durham, W. C., Ferrari, S., & Santoro, S. (2008). The Toledo guiding principles on teaching about religion and beliefs in public schools. *Security and Human Rights*. <https://doi.org/10.1163/187502308785851778>
- Eckes, S. E. (2021). Pronouns and preferred names: When public school teachers' religious beliefs conflict with school directives. *Educational Researcher*. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X20943198>
- Eryilmaz, A. (2015). Investigation of the relations between religious activities and subjective well-being of high school students. *Kuram ve Uygulamada Egitim Bilimleri*. <https://doi.org/10.12738/estp.2015.2.2327>
- Fadhli, M. N., & Sirait, S. (2019). Religious tolerance: Perspective of teachers from different religions in elementary education (SD) remaja parakan Temanggung. *Sunan Kalijaga International Journal on Islamic Educational Research*. <https://doi.org/10.14421/skijier.2018.2018.21.02>
- Faour, M. (2013). Teaching religion in Egypt and Tunisia. A challenge to citizenship education. In *Policies and Politics of Teaching Religion*. [https://doi.org/10.5771/9783845251158\\_19](https://doi.org/10.5771/9783845251158_19)
- Farooq, A., & Sohail, T. (2019). Conceptualization of religious belonging of Christian youth in higher education institutions. *Journal of Islamic Thought and Civilization*. <https://doi.org/10.32350/jitc.92.13>
- Fox, J., Eisenstein, M., & Breslawski, J. (2024). State Support for religion and social trust. *Political Studies*, 72(1), 322–342. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00323217221102826>
- Froese, P., & Jones, R. (2021). The sociology of prayer: Dimensions and mechanisms. *Social Sciences*. <https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci10010015>
- Fuad, A. J. (2018). Pendidikan agama pada siswa muslim dan non-muslim di SMAN 1 Tanjunganom Nganjuk. *AL-WIJDÁN: Journal of Islamic Education*, III(April).
- Galingana, K. J. (2021). Learning world religions and belief systems in the context of senior high school students in a philippine schools division. *Instabright International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research*. <https://doi.org/10.52877/instabright.003.02.0070>
- Glock, S., Kovacs, C., & Pit-ten Cate, I. (2019). Teachers' attitudes towards ethnic minority students: Effects of schools' cultural diversity. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*. <https://doi.org/10.1111/bjep.12248>
- Harvey, L. (2011). Intimate reflections: Private diaries in qualitative research. *Qualitative Research*, 11(6), 664–682. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1468794111415959>
- Hayadin, H. (2020). Advocating minority religious student rights in schools. *EDUKASI: Jurnal Penelitian Pendidikan Agama Dan Keagamaan*. <https://doi.org/10.32729/edukasi.v18i2.808>
- Hayadin, H., Mastiyah, I., Muntafa, F., & Zada, H. (2019). Inclusivism of religious education teachers in Indonesia. *Analisa: Journal of Social Science and Religion*. <https://doi.org/10.18784/analisa.v4i01.791>
- Hayadin, H. O. (2017). Layanan pendidikan agama sesuai agama siswa di sekolah. *EDUKASI: Jurnal Penelitian Pendidikan Agama Dan Keagamaan*. <https://doi.org/10.32729/edukasi.v1i1.62>

- Hopizal, H., & Fahrurrazi, F. (2020). Umma application: Digital da'wah and the young generation in the era of disruption. *Kawanua International Journal of Multicultural Studies*. <https://doi.org/10.30984/kijms.v1i2.11>
- Isik, U., Tahir, O. El, Meeter, M., Heymans, M. W., Jansma, E. P., Croiset, G., & Kusurkar, R. A. (2018). Factors influencing academic motivation of ethnic minority students: A Review. *SAGE Open*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244018785412>
- Istiqomah, N. Q., Abidin, Z., & Candoruk, A. (2023). Quality of life in the community of women with polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS): A Phenomenology Study. *Psymphatic: Jurnal Ilmiah Psikologi*, 10(2), 123–136. <https://doi.org/10.15575/psy.v10i2.28829>
- Jirarattanawanna, N., Vattanaamorn, S., & Kwalamthan, W. (2024). The provisions of learning experiences in the early childhood development centers against the covid-19 pandemic. *Qualitative Research in Education*, 13(1), 1–18. <https://doi.org/10.17583/qre.12376>
- Keum, B. T., Ahn, L. H., Choi, A. Y., Choudhry, A., Nguyen, M., Meizys, G. M., Chu, A., & Hearn, M. (2023). Asian American men's gendered racial socialization and fragmented masculinity: Interpretive phenomenological analysis. *The Counseling Psychologist*, 51(5), 684–718. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00110000231170310>
- Levy, G., & Razin, R. (2012). Religious beliefs, religious participation, and cooperation. *American Economic Journal: Microeconomics*. <https://doi.org/10.1257/mic.4.3.121>
- Llorent-Bedmar, V., Torres-Zaragoza, L., & Sánchez-Lissen, E. (2023). The use of religious signs in schools in Germany, France, England and Spain: The Islamic Veil. *Religions*, 14(1), 101. <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel14010101>
- Mahfud, C., Prasetyawati, N., Agustin, D. S. Y., Suarmini, N. W., & Hendrajati, E. (2019). The urgency of civic education and religious character education for early childhood in Indonesia. *Elementary: Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan Dasar*. <https://doi.org/10.32332/elementary.v5i1.1496>
- Mashuri, A., & Osteen, C. (2023). Threat by association, Islamic puritanism and conspiracy beliefs explain a religious majority group's collective protest against religious minority groups. *Psychology and Developing Societies*, 35(1), 169–196. <https://doi.org/10.1177/09713336231152312>
- Mehfooz, M. (2021). Religious freedom in Pakistan: A case study of religious minorities. *Religions*. <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel12010051>
- Moulin, D. (2011). Giving voice to “the silent minority”: The experience of religious students in secondary school religious education lessons. *British Journal of Religious Education*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01416200.2011.595916>
- Musharraf, M., & Nabeel, F. (2015). Schooling options for Muslim children living in muslim-minority countries—A thematic literature review. *Online Submission*.
- Nasiri, N. (2020). Urgensi pendidikan agama islam di era globalisasi. *Jurnal Keislaman*. <https://doi.org/10.54298/jk.v3i1.3117>
- Neo, J. L. (2021). Religious minorities in Asia: Between the Scylla of minority protection and Charybdis of religious freedom rights? *Religions*. <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel12100881>
- Niens, U., Mawhinney, A., Richardson, N., & Chiba, Y. (2013). Acculturation and religion in schools: The views of young people from minority belief backgrounds. *British Educational Research Journal*. <https://doi.org/10.1002/berj.3016>

- Novis-Deutsch, N., & Lifshitz, C. (2016). When Bible and science interact: Teachers' pedagogic and value challenges in teaching religious minority students in higher education settings. *Teaching in Higher Education*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13562517.2016.1160216>
- Omar, M. T. M. (2020). Religious education in the Arab World: Saudi Arabia, Sudan and Egypt as Models. *English Language Teaching*. <https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v13n12p27>
- Ozhiganova, A. (2017). Teaching about religion in school: The pursuit of neutrality and the "culture wars". Introduction. *Gosudarstvo, Religii, Tserkov' v Rossii i Za Rubezhom/State, Religion and Church in Russia and Worldwide*. <https://doi.org/10.22394/2073-7203-2017-35-4-7-29>
- Paiva, L. E. B., Sousa, E. S., Lima, T. C. B., & Da Silva, D. (2020). Planned behavior and religious beliefs as antecedents to entrepreneurial intention: A study with university students. *Revista de Administracao Mackenzie*. <https://doi.org/10.1590/1678-6971/eRAMG200022>
- Parker, L. (2014). Religious education for peaceful coexistence in Indonesia? *South East Asia Research*. <https://doi.org/10.5367/sear.2014.0231>
- Plumwongrot, P., & Pholphirul, P. (2021). Participating in religious activities and adolescents' self-esteem: Empirical evidence from buddhist adolescents in Thailand. *International Journal of Adolescence and Youth*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02673843.2021.1890161>
- Raihani. (2016). Minority right to attend religious education in Indonesia. *Al-Jami'ah*. <https://doi.org/10.14421/ajis.2015.531.1-26>
- Rambe, E. (2020). Penerapan metode dakwah orang tua dalam menanamkan nilai-nilai agama kepada anak di Desa Aek Goti Kec. Silangkitang Kab. Labuhanbatu Selatan. *WARAQAT: Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Keislaman*. <https://doi.org/10.51590/waraqat.v2i2.64>
- Ranimpi, Y. Y., Hyde, M., & Opreacu, F. (2023). Perceptions of mental health and poverty in East Nusa Tenggara-Indonesia: An Indigenous Psychology Approach. *Psymphatic: Jurnal Ilmiah Psikologi*, 10(1), 67–76. <https://doi.org/10.15575/psy.v10i1.20675>
- Roso, C. G. (2017). Religious education in a global–local world. *International Journal of Christianity & Education*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2056997117699575>
- Rusdiyah, E. F., Sa'diyah, H., & Azizah, M. (2020). The millennial kiais: Contemporary Indonesian dakwah activism through social media. *Epistemé: Jurnal Pengembangan Ilmu Keislaman*.
- Saleem, T., Saleem, S., Mushtaq, R., & Gul, S. (2021). Belief salience, religious activities, frequency of prayer offering, religious offering preference and mental health: A study of religiosity among Muslim Students. *Journal of Religion and Health*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10943-020-01046-z>
- Santoro, S. (2008). Toledo guiding principles on teaching about religions and beliefs in public schools: Executive summary 1. *Intercultural Education*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14675980701852459>
- Shevtsova, M. (2023). Religion, nation, state, and anti-gender politics in Georgia and Ukraine. *Problems of Post-Communism*, 70(2), 163–174. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10758216.2022.2085581>
- Smith, J. (2021). Transmission of faith in families: The influence of religious ideology. *Sociology of Religion: A Quarterly Review*. <https://doi.org/10.1093/socrel/sraa045>

- Sofanudin, A. (2019). Kebijakan kementerian agama dalam pelayanan pendidikan agama kelompok minoritas. *Penamas*. <https://doi.org/10.31330/penamas.v32i1.284>
- Susilawati, L. R. (2020). Peran orangtua tunggal dalam menerapkan pendidikan agama Hindu pada anak. *Widya Genitri: Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan, Agama Dan Kebudayaan Hindu*. <https://doi.org/10.36417/widyagenitri.v11i3.363>
- Taruna, M. M. (2010). Pelaksanaan pendidikan agama di SMA Katolik Soverdi Kabupaten Badung Bali. *Analisa*, 17(2), 275. <https://doi.org/10.18784/analisa.v17i2.43>
- Tayal, N., & Sharma, N. (2023). Dwelling into the role of ahamkara in academic performance: A qualitative inquiry. *Qualitative Research in Education*, 12(2), 83–115. <https://doi.org/10.17583/qre.10269>
- Toumi, S., & Su, Z. (2023). Islamic values and human resources management: A qualitative study of grocery stores in the Quebec province. *International Journal of Cross-Cultural Management*, 23(1), 79–112. <https://doi.org/10.1177/14705958221136691>
- Tsourlaki, S. (2020). Khaled Abou El Fadl and Amina Wadud's (re) politicisation of the mosque and employment of social media as a means of shaping religious identity based on values of progressive Islam. *Contemporary Islam*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11562-020-00453-z>
- Türkmen, G. (2024). Categorical astigmatism: On ethnicity, religion, nationality, and class in the study of migrants in Europe. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 1–24. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870.2024.2328326>
- Whyte, S., & Yucel, S. (2023). Australian muslim identities and the question of intra-muslim dialogue. *Religions*, 14(2), 233. <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel14020233>
- Wijayanti, W., & Sutapa, M. (2015). Penataan dan pemerataan guru: Analisis kebutuhan, ketersediaan, dan kecukupan guru di Kabupaten Purbalingga Jawa Tengah. *Teknodika*.
- Wittmer, F., & Waldhoff, C. (2019). Religious education in Germany in light of religious diversity: Constitutional requirements for religious education. In *German Law Journal*. <https://doi.org/10.1017/glj.2019.76>
- Zarzycka, B., & Krok, D. (2021). Disclosure to God as a mediator between private prayer and psychological well-being in a Christian Sample. *Journal of Religion and Health*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10943-020-01107-3>
- Zega, Y. K. (2021). Pendidikan agama kristen dalam keluarga: Upaya membangun spiritualitas remaja Generasi Z. *JURNAL LUXNOS*. <https://doi.org/10.47304/jl.v7i1.145>