

## CONSTRUCTION OF STUDENTS' RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE THROUGH *ISLAMIC CHARACTER BUILDING PROGRAM*

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**ABSTRACT:** *Religious character development in Islamic schools still faces challenges in fostering students' religious awareness beyond formal compliance with religious practices. This study aims to examine the process of constructing students' religious experiences and to identify the obstacles in shaping religious experience through the Character Building Islamic Program at MTs Negeri 1 Banyuwangi. This study employed a qualitative approach with a case study design. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation, then analyzed using the interactive model of Miles and Huberman. The findings reveal that students' religious experiences develop through reciprocal interactions between the religious environment of the school, repetitive religious practices, and students' personal meaning-making of socio-religious experiences in daily life. Students' religious experiences evolve from normative involvement toward more reflective and personal religious awareness. The study also identifies several obstacles, including normative religious participation, mechanical religious practices, limited reflective guidance, and the influence of social environments outside the school. These findings indicate that religious character development should not merely emphasize formal habituation, but also provide reflective spaces and personal guidance in shaping students' religious experiences.*

**Keywords:** *religious experience, character building islamic, bandura's social cognitive theory*



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### INTRODUCTION

Islamic education in the contemporary era faces serious challenges in shaping students' religious character in the midst of rapid social change and the strengthening influence of digital culture. An instant and pragmatic lifestyle influences the way students interpret religious values, so that religious knowledge gained at school often does not transform into spiritual awareness and consistent religious practices in daily life. This condition shows the limitations of cognitive-oriented and normative religious learning, which tends to produce formal obedience without being accompanied by the

internalization of values in a reflective and personal way, so that religiosity stops at symbolic and ritualistic aspects <sup>1</sup>.

In the national context, the development of religious character in madrassas is still faced with structural problems, especially the tendency to reduce character education to strengthening discipline and adherence to formal religious practices. This approach ignores students' religious experiences as an internal process that is reflective and meaningful, thus creating a gap between normatively formulated character building policies and the reality of students' religiosity that develops superficially and less sustainably outside the school environment <sup>2</sup>. This emphasizes that the main problem of religious character development does not lie in the existence of the program alone, but in the extent to which the program is experienced and interpreted by students.

The challenge of fostering religious character becomes increasingly complex at the level of Madrasah Tsanawiyah (MTs), when students are in the early adolescence phase marked by the search for self-identity, emotional instability, and the increasing influence of the social environment and digital media. In this phase, the mastery of religious knowledge is often not in line with the consistency of religious behavior, which is seen in the low regularity of worship, weak self-control, and lack of spiritual appreciation in daily life <sup>3</sup>. This condition shows that the pattern of religious coaching that focuses on normative aspects and formal compliance has not been effective in reaching the dimension of students' religious experience in depth.

In response to these challenges, a number of Madrasah Tsanawiyah developed the *Islamic Character Building Program* as a typical school program that seeks to integrate Islamic values into the educational culture. This program is realized through the habituation of daily worship, the example of educators, religious assistance, and the strengthening of manners and morals in students' social interactions. Theoretically, this approach is in line with the character education paradigm that emphasizes the importance of direct

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<sup>1</sup> Tatik Safiqo and Abdul Ghofur, *The Role of Islamic Religious Education Teachers in Shaping the Religious Character of Students in the Digital Era*, March 29, 2025.

<sup>2</sup> Salamah Eka Susanti, "Character Education in Building Moral Intelligence for Early Childhood Thomas Lickona's Perspective," *Trilogy: Journal of Technology, Health, and Humanities* 3, No. 1 (April 2022): 10–17, <https://doi.org/10.33650/Trilogi.V3i1.3396>.

<sup>3</sup> Diana Anastasyah, Abdul Jalil, And Koirul Asfiyak, *Fostering Students' Religious Character Through Religious Activities at Mts Raudlatul Umm, Karangploso, Malang Regency*, 2023; Anjar Fikri Haikal, *Compiled and submitted to the Postgraduate of the State Islamic University Prjo.K.H. Saifuddin Zubri Purwokerto to Meet Some of the Requirements to Obtain a Master of Education Degree*, 2024; Rina Setyaningsih, "Building Character Building of Mts Hidayatul Mubtadiin Students and Its Relevance for the Development of Islamic Religious Education," *At-Ta'dib* 19, No. 1 (June 2024): 93–116, <https://doi.org/10.21111/Attadib.V19i1.11594>.

experience, exemplary, and environmental consistency in the character formation process<sup>4</sup>. However, this conceptual conformity does not fully explain how these religious practices are experienced, interpreted, and internalized by students as meaningful religious experiences.

Various studies show that religious character education in madrassas tends to be more effectively reflected in changes in students' religious attitudes and behaviors than the mastery of cognitive aspects alone, which is manifested through the habituation of worship, internalization of Islamic values, and religious mentoring as part of the school culture with the example of teachers as the main<sup>5</sup> supporting factor. A number of studies also affirm that the learning of Islamic faith, morals, and manners within the framework of character education programs does not only form outward religious behavior, but also becomes a pedagogical space where students internalize values and interpret their religious experiences more deeply through interaction, reflection, and the example of educators<sup>6</sup>. Other research emphasizes the importance of systematic program management so that the religious character education process can run effectively and sustainably<sup>7</sup>. However, most of these studies still position religiosity as the result of observable behavior, so it has not adequately examined how students' religious experiences are constructed as a process of subjective interpretation in the context of the implementation of *the Islamic Character Building Program*.

In the perspective of social-cognitive theory, Bandura asserts that the internalization of values takes place through the mutual interaction between individuals, the environment, and social experiences, especially through the processes of observation, example, and self-

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<sup>4</sup> Muhammad Nurul Mubin, Bintang Muhammad Nur Ikhasan, And Khamim Zarkasi Putro, *Albert Bandura's Cognitive-Social Perspective Approach to Islamic Religious Education Learning*, 2021; Muzawir Munawarsyah, Hujjatul Fakhurridha, And Muqowim Muqowim, "Character Education For Teenagers In The Era Of Society 5.0 Thomas Lickona's Perspective," *Education: Journal of Education and Learning* 5, No. 2 (November 2024): 127–38, <https://doi.org/10.62775/Edukasia.V5i2.984>.

<sup>5</sup> Nurul Huda, "Character Education at Madrasah Tsanawiyah Hasan Jufri Bawean," *Scholar : Journal of Islamic Studies* 2, no. 2 (April 2018), <https://doi.org/10.37348/cendekia.v2i2.32>; Ayu Lestari, *Faculty of Tarbiyah and Teacher Training Sultan Syarif Kasim State Islamic University Riau Pekanbaru 1445 H / 2024 AD*, 2024; Glorya Loloagin, Djoys Anneke Rantung, and Lamhot Naibaho, *The Implementation of Character Education According to Thomas Lickona's Perspective Reviewed from the Role of PAK Educators*, 2023; Maemonah Maemonah, "Implementation of Character Education in Madrasahs/Schools," *Al-Bidayah : Journal of Islamic Basic Education* 7, no. 1 (September 2024), <https://doi.org/10.14421/al-bidayah.v7i1.9055>.

<sup>6</sup> Istiqomah Rahmawati, Moh. Ariz Iqramullah, and Zulkarnain, "Preparing the Generation of the Caliph (A Review of the Caliphate of Adam (as) in Surah Al Baqoroh Verses 30-37)," *At Tuots: Journal of Islamic Education* 3, no. 1 (July 2021): 1–11, <https://doi.org/10.51468/jpi.v3i1.56>.

<sup>7</sup> Surani Surani, Andi Darmawangsa, and Ardi Ardi, "Shaping Future Leaders: Exploring Challenges and Strategies in Character Education at Madrasah Tsanawiyah," *Al-Isblab: Educational Journal* 16, no. 3 (July 2024), <https://doi.org/10.35445/alishlah.v16i3.5236>.

reflection. In line with that, Lickona views character as an integration between moral knowledge, affective involvement, and real actions experienced repeatedly in meaningful social <sup>8</sup> contexts. This perspective emphasizes that the success of religious character development is not measured by formal obedience, but rather by the extent to which religious values are lived and internalized by students.

Based on the mapping of the study, there is a clear research gap in the study of religious character education in madrasas. First, the research is still dominated by an evaluative approach that focuses on behavioral achievement as the final result of the program. Second, students are more often positioned as objects of coaching, so their role as active subjects in constructing religious meaning receives less attention. Third, there is still limited qualitative research that explains the mechanism of constructing students' religious experiences in the context of formal Islamic education, especially at the Madrasah Tsanawiyah level.

One of the madrasas in Banyuwangi Regency that is a pioneer in the implementation of *the Islamic Character Building Program* is MTs Negeri 1 Banyuwangi. This program was developed as a flagship program that becomes the identity of the madrasah as well as distinguishing it from other educational institutions in an effort to strengthen the religious character of students. Empirically, the existence of the program is manifested in various institutional artifacts, including program planning documents, worship habituation schedules, *mutaba'ah books* of students' religious activities, and visualizations of religious values that are integrated in the rules and physical environment of the madrasah. The implementation of the program is carried out systematically through worship habits, collective religious activities, and the development of manners in the practice of daily school life.

The results of initial observations show that there are variations in the development of students' religiosity, where some have shown the formation of inner awareness in carrying out religious practices, while others are still in the habituation stage. This condition indicates that the student plays the role of an active subject who gradually and contextually constructs his or her religious experience. Operationally, *the Islamic Character Building Program* includes the habit of worship in the form of duha and zuhur prayers in congregation, daily Qur'an tadarus, weekly istighasah, and religious mentoring as a form of *hablum minallah*;

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<sup>8</sup> Mubin, Ikhasan, and Putro, *Albert Bandura's Cognitive-Social Perspective Approach to Islamic Religious Education Learning*; Munawarsyah, Fakhurridha, and Muqowim, "Character Education for Teenagers in the Era of Society 5.0 Thomas Lickona's Perspective."

fostering social manners, routine infaq, and social care activities as a manifestation of *hablum minannas*; as well as the cultivation of discipline, responsibility, and the protection of student behavior in daily school life as an implementation of *HIFDUN NAFS*.

Based on this context, this study aims to understand the process of constructing students' religious experiences through the implementation of *the Islamic Character Building Program* at MTs Negeri 1 Banyuwangi, especially related to the development of students' inner religious awareness in madrasah life. In addition, this study also aims to identify various obstacles in the implementation of *the Islamic Character Building Program* that affect the process of forming and appreciating students' religion.

## METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study design that aims to understand the process of constructing students' religious experiences through the *Islamic Character Building Program*. This approach was chosen because religious experience is seen as the result of a social learning process that is formed through interactions between individuals, environment, and behavior, as posited in Bandura's social-cognitive theory<sup>9</sup>.

The research was carried out at MTs Negeri 1 Banyuwangi which was chosen purposively because it has an *Islamic Character Building Program* that is structured and integrated in various religious activities and involves various educational actors as a model of religious behavior. The research is carried out through several stages, namely initial observation to understand the context of the implementation of the program and the religious conditions of the madrasah, data collection through in-depth interviews, observations, and documentation studies, as well as continuous data analysis and verification during the research process.

The research subjects amounted to 16 informants who were determined through *purposive sampling techniques*, consisting of the head of the madrasah, the head of ma'had, two educators, PHBI coaches, two OSIM administrators, and nine students. The selection of informants is based on their involvement in the implementation of *the Islamic Character Building Program* as well as the ability to provide relevant information regarding the construction of students' religious experiences. Student informants are selected from different grade levels and have varying levels of involvement in the religious activities of the madrasah so that a richer variety of religious experiences can be obtained.

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<sup>9</sup> Albert Bandura, *Social Foundations of Thought and Action: A Social Cognitive Theory*, with Internet Archive (Englewood Cliffs, N.J. : Prentice-Hall, 1986), <http://archive.org/details/socialfoundation0000band>.

Data collection was carried out through in-depth interviews, observations, and documentation studies. Interviews were used to explore how students interpreted the social and religious experiences they experienced while participating in the Islamic Character Building Program. Observations are directed at religious practices, teacher examples, and the dynamics of social interaction that take place in madrasah life. Meanwhile, documentation studies were carried out on various documents related to the implementation of the program, such as schedules of religious activities, mutaba'ah books, madrasah rules, and other supporting documents.

Data analysis was carried out qualitatively-interpretively using the Miles and Huberman interactive analysis model which includes data condensation, data presentation, and conclusion drawing and verification<sup>10</sup>. The analysis process begins with the provision of coding the data from interviews, observations, and documentation. The codes that have common meaning are then grouped into broader categories and further developed into analytical themes that explain the construction process of students' religious experiences and the various obstacles that affect them. The analysis focused on students' personal meanings of religious practices in madrasah life, not on normative assessments of the success of the program.

Thematic interpretation is carried out by utilizing the framework of Bandura's social-cognitive theory, especially the concept of learning through observational *learning*, *reciprocal determinism*, as well as the stages of *attention*, information retention (*retention*), behavioral reproduction (*reproduction*), and motivation (*motivation*). The framework is used to understand the reciprocal relationship between the religious environment of the madrasah, the example of teachers, religious practices, and the personal meaning of students in the process of constructing religious experiences.

To maintain the validity of the data, the research applied source triangulation and method triangulation. Source triangulation was carried out by comparing information obtained from madrasah heads, ma'had heads, educators, PHBI coaches, OSIM administrators, and students. Meanwhile, the triangulation method was carried out by comparing data from interviews, observations, and documentation to ensure the consistency of research findings. Before data collection was carried out, the researcher

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<sup>10</sup> Matthew B. Miles, A. Michael Huberman, and Johnny Saldaña, *Qualitative Data Analysis: A Methods Sourcebook*, Edition 3 (Los Angeles, London, New Delhi, Singapore, Washington DC: Sage, 2014); Qomaruddin Qomaruddin and Halimah Sa'diyah, "A Theoretical Study of Data Analysis Techniques in Qualitative Research: Spradley, Miles and Huberman's Perspective," *Journal of Management, Accounting, and Administration* 1, no. 2 (December 2024): 77–84, <https://doi.org/10.52620/jomaa.v1i2.93>.

obtained permission from the madrasah and explained the purpose of the research to all informants. The participation of informants is voluntary, while the identity of student informants is disguised to maintain the confidentiality of research data.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### The Process of Constructing Students' Religious Experience

The results of the study show that the process of constructing students' religious experiences in the *Islamic Character Building Program* at MTs. Negeri 1 Banyuwangi develops through the reciprocal relationship between the religious environment of the madrasah, religious practices that take place repeatedly, and students' personal experiences in daily life. The religious experience of students develops not only through involvement in religious practices, but through the process of personal interpretation of social and religious experiences in madrasah life. In such context, a strong religious environment does not necessarily automatically result in the deep internalization of religious values in all students.

Based on the results of observations, program documentation, and interviews with informants, the religious atmosphere in the madrasah environment seems to be present in students' daily activities since the morning through the habit of greetings, reciting the Qur'an before learning, and the implementation of congregational prayers that take place regularly. Teachers also provide strengthening of religious values through joint prayer, brief religious motivation, and assistance in students' religious practices in daily life. The findings are in line with the explanation of the Head of Ma'had who stated that various religious activities are carried out in a structured manner as part of the development of students' religious character in the madrasah environment (Head of Ma'had, interview, 2026). The results of the observations also show that there is variation in the construction of students' religious experiences. Some students began to show a more reflective religious appreciation, while others were still at the stage of following the religious habits that prevailed in the madrasah environment.

Based on the results of the research, the process began to appear since students entered the madrasah environment through the habit of greeting between teachers and students every morning. These interactions present a social experience that makes some students feel more cared for and accepted in the madrasah environment. The situation then continues through various religious practices that are present repeatedly in the life of the madrasah, such as tadarus of the Qur'an before learning, duha and zuhur prayers in

congregation, prayers before and after learning, religious motivation from teachers, brief studies after the duha prayer, to the involvement of students in religious collective activities such as Friday istighasah, Ramadan flash Islamic boarding schools, daughtership activities, one day one khatam, Friday infak, as well as the commemoration of Islamic holidays such as the Prophet's Birthday, Isra Mi'raj, and Muharam. These various religious practices not only shape the regularity of students' behavior, but also present a religious environment that brings together students with religious values, customs, and experiences continuously in daily life.

However, religious practices that take place continuously do not always result in the same religious appreciation, because in the early stages some students still participate in religious activities, especially based on the demands of madrasah rules and teacher supervision. One of the students said, "I used to participate in duha prayers because I was afraid of being reprimanded if I didn't participate" (Rafif, interview, 2026). However, continuous engagement slowly brings about a more personalized inner experience. The same student then revealed, "Now if I haven't prayed, it feels like something is missing" (Rafif, interview, 2026). This situation shows a shift from normative adherence to religious involvement which is beginning to be interpreted as a personal need in daily life.

A similar religious experience also develops through the involvement of students in the Qur'anic tadarus every morning. One of the students said, "If you haven't learned, it feels like you're not ready to learn" (Aulia, interview, 2026). In some students, religious experiences develop into reflections on everyday behavior. One of the students revealed, "Sometimes after joking about being late, I keep remembering to finish participating in the study so I feel guilty myself" (Kholil, interview, 2026). This experience shows the beginning of moral awareness and discomfort when the behavior carried out is considered contrary to the religious values that they have received in the madrasah environment.

In addition to daily religious practices, a more reflective religious experience also develops through student involvement in religious collective activities that present an emotional atmosphere and togetherness. Some students admitted that it was easier to feel calm, introspect, and were encouraged to improve their behavior after participating in activities such as istighasah together and Ramadan flash boarding schools. One of the students said, "When Ramadan is over, I think more often about my own worship and habits" (Farel, interview, 2026). The experience shows that students' involvement in collective religious practice not only shapes the regularity of religious behavior, but also

presents a space for reflection that encourages the emergence of a more personal religious appreciation.

This condition shows that students do not fully accept religious values passively, but continue to interpret and adapt their religious experiences according to the social dynamics they face in their daily lives. Thus, the construction of the student's religious experience does not take place primarily through adherence to formal religious practices, but through the reciprocal relationship between the religious environment, social experiences, and the student's personal meaning in daily life.

The findings of the study show that the religious experience of students in the *Islamic Character Building Program* at MTs. Negeri 1 Banyuwangi develops through the reciprocal relationship between the religious environment of the madrasah, religious practices that take place repeatedly, and students' personal interpretation of the socio-religious experiences they experience in their daily lives. In this context, students' religious experiences develop through personal interpretations of the socio-religious experiences experienced in madrasah life, so that formal religious practices are not always directly proportional to the depth of students' religious experiences. These findings show that students' religiosity cannot be reduced solely as an apparent regularity of religious behavior, but needs to be understood as a process of meaning that develops dynamically and personally.

In the perspective of Bandura's social-cognitive theory, the process shows the existence of a *reciprocal determinism mechanism*, which is the reciprocal relationship between the social environment, behavior, and personal conditions of students in the formation of religious experiences. The religious environment of the madrasah provides a space for social observation through the example of teachers, habituation of religious practices, and religious culture that is consistently present in daily school life. However, the results of the study show that students do not passively accept these experiences, but rather interpret and adapt them to their personal experiences and social dynamics. These findings expand on previous research that placed students' religiosity more as a result of habitual religious behavior, as this study suggests that religious experience develops through a process of negotiation of meaning that takes place continuously in the social interactions of madrasah life<sup>11</sup>.

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<sup>11</sup> Munawarsyah, Fakhruddin, and Muqowim, "Character Education for Teenagers in the Era of Society 5.0 Thomas Lickona's Perspective."

The results of the study also show that religious practices that take place repeatedly allow students to experience the stages of *attention*, retention, behavioral reproduction, and motivation as explained by Bandura. In the early stages, some students follow religious practices because of the encouragement of rules and supervision by teachers. However, ongoing engagement slowly results in a change in the way students interpret their religious practices. Religious practices that were originally understood as formal obligations began to develop into personal needs and part of students' religious consciousness in daily life. These findings show that the internalization of religious values does not take place instantaneously, but develops through social experiences that are experienced repeatedly and interpreted personally by students. These findings strengthen the research of Loloagin, Rantung, and Naibaho which emphasizes that character education in the Lickona perspective is not enough to be realized through strengthening discipline and habituation of behavior, but also requires a process of appreciation and internalization of values by students.<sup>12</sup>

These findings can also be understood through the perspective of Lickona's character education which emphasizes the integration between moral *knowing*, moral *feeling*, and moral *action* in the process of internalizing values. In the context of this study, religious practices that are carried out repeatedly not only shape students' religious behavior, but also encourage the development of more personal religious awareness and appreciation. This can be seen when religious practices that were originally carried out due to the demands of rules and supervision are gradually interpreted as religious needs in daily life. Thus, students' religious experiences develop not only through behavioral habituation, but also through a process of internalizing values that take place reflectively.

In addition to daily religious practices, the results of the study also show that students' religious experiences develop through involvement in religious collective activities that present emotional experiences and social togetherness. Activities such as istighasah, Ramadan flash boarding schools, and Islamic holiday commemorations present an emotional atmosphere that encourages some students to reflect on themselves, evaluate behavior, and build a more personal religious awareness. In this context, religious experience develops not only through the regularity of carrying out religious practices, but also through emotional engagement and collective social experiences that allow students to

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<sup>12</sup> Scented, scented, and smelled, *The Implementation of Character Education According to Thomas Lickona's Perspective Reviewed from the Role of PAK Educators*.

interpret religious practices more reflectively. These findings reinforce research<sup>13</sup> showing that the internalization of religious values develops through social interactions, emotional experiences, and self-reflection that take place in educational settings.

Thus, this study shows that students' religious experiences cannot be understood solely as the result of habituation of formal religious practices, but as a process of constructing religious experiences that develop through the reciprocal relationship between the religious environment of the madrasah, social experiences, emotional involvement, and students' personal meaning. These findings are in line with previous research that emphasized the importance of the social environment in the formation of students' religiosity, but expands on those findings by showing that students not only reproduce observed religious behaviors, but actively interpret and construct religious meanings based on their experiences. In the perspective of Bandura's social-cognitive theory, the process shows the important role of interactions between individuals, behaviors, and the social environment, while in the perspective of social construction, religious experience is understood as the result of meaning that continues to evolve through social interaction and personal reflection. Theoretically, these findings enrich the study of Islamic education by placing students as active subjects in the construction of religious experience, rather than simply passive recipients of religious character development.

### **Obstacles in the Construction of Religious Experience**

The results of the study show that the construction of students' religious experiences does not always take place in a linear manner, although madrasahs have built a religious environment through various religious practices. Based on the observations, some students showed active and reflective involvement in religious activities, while others still showed involvement influenced by certain situations, such as teacher supervision or group atmosphere. The findings were strengthened by the results of interviews showing that the development of students' religious experiences is influenced by personal, social, and pedagogical factors. Based on the results of these observations and interviews, there are several obstacles that affect the construction of students' religious experiences in madrasah life.

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<sup>13</sup> Istiqomah Rahmawati, Moh. Ariz Iqramullah, and Zulkarnain, "Preparing the Generation of the Caliph (A Review of the Caliphate of Adam (In Surah Al Baqoroh Verses 30-37))."

First, the religious involvement of some students is still normative. Some students follow religious practices just to fulfill the obligations of the madrasah and the supervision of teachers. In some situations, students seem to be less focused when tadarus and congregational prayers take place, especially when the group atmosphere starts to get crowded. One of the students said, "If your friends are crowded, they usually join the crowd too" (Rizkia, interview, 2026). This condition shows that the consistency of students' religious behavior is not completely born from personal awareness, but is still influenced by social relations and external control in the madrasah environment.

Second, religious practices tend to be carried out routinely without always accompanied by a deep religious appreciation. One of the students revealed, "Sometimes it's like walking because every day is done continuously" (Rafif, interview, 2026). In some conditions, religious habits that are too routine-oriented have the potential to make religious practices understood as administrative obligations of the madrasah, not as religious experiences that are interpreted reflectively.

Third, the process of strengthening religiosity in madrasahs also faces limitations in assisting and strengthening students' religious reflection. The dense learning activities and the large number of students cause teachers to not always be able to monitor the development of each student's religious experience in depth. As a result, the strengthening of religiosity in some conditions is more oriented towards the regularity of the implementation of activities rather than the deepening of religious meaning experienced by students.

Fourth, the social environment outside the madrasah also affects the sustainability of students' religious experiences. Some students admitted that it was easier to maintain the regularity of worship when they were in the madrasah environment than when they were outside the madrasah. One of the students said, "In a madrasah it is easier to participate in worship because the atmosphere is supportive, but outside it is sometimes different" (Farel, interview, 2026). The situation shows that students' religious experiences are still in the process of negotiating between the religious values acquired in the madrasah and the social realities they face outside the madrasah environment.

Overall, the findings of the study show that the obstacles in the construction of students' religious experiences are related to the reciprocal relationship between students' personal conditions, social environment, and patterns of strengthening religiosity in

madrasah. Thus, students' religious experiences cannot be understood solely as the result of formal habituation, but as a process of meaning that develops dynamically in daily life.

The results of the study show that the construction of students' religious experiences does not always develop in a linear manner, although madrasahs have built a religious environment through a variety of religious practices that take place in a structured and repetitive manner. The religious experience of students develops through the reciprocal relationship between personal conditions, the social environment, and the strengthening of religiosity that takes place in the life of the madrasah. In the perspective of Bandura's social-cognitive theory, the internalization of religious values develops through dynamic interactions between individuals, behaviors, and social environments<sup>14</sup>.

First, the religious involvement of some students is still at the stage of normative compliance which is influenced by teacher supervision and social strengthening in the madrasah environment. Religious practices tend to be carried out as a form of adjustment to the rules and religious culture of the madrasah, so that student involvement has not fully developed into a personal and reflective religious awareness. In the perspective of Bandura's social-cognitive theory, religious behavior develops through processes of observation, imitation, and social reinforcement in the learning environment<sup>15</sup>. In the context of this study, the religious environment of madrasahs forms the regularity of students' religious behavior through habituation and social reinforcement that is carried out repeatedly. However, the regularity of this behavior is not always followed by a deep religious appreciation because some students still carry out religious practices as a form of adaptation to religious norms in the madrasah environment. These findings suggest that students' religious experiences are not adequately understood through indicators of religious behavior regularity alone as previous research tends to be more oriented towards formal behavioral achievements<sup>16</sup>. These conditions show that students not only reproduce observed religious behaviors, but also interpret their religious involvement according to the social experiences they face.

Second, religious practices that take place regularly do not always bring a deep religious appreciation to all students. Religious habits do form behavioral order and strengthen the religious culture of the madrasah, but in some conditions it also has the

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<sup>14</sup> Bandura, *Social Foundations of Thought and Action*.

<sup>15</sup> Bandura.

<sup>16</sup> Scented, scented, and smelled, *The Implementation of Character Education According to Thomas Lickona's Perspective Reviewed from the Role of PAK Educators*; Maemonah, "Implementation of Character Education in Madrasah/School."

potential to make religious activities carried out as a daily routine without being accompanied by deep religious reflection and meaning in daily life. The phenomenon suggests that the intensity of religious practice does not automatically result in reflective religious experiences. In Lickona's perspective, character education is not only concerned with the formation of moral behavior, but also involves the affective dimension and personal awareness of the values that are<sup>17</sup> practiced. Therefore, the strengthening of religiosity that is too oriented to the routine of religious practice has the potential to result in formal obedience if it is not accompanied by adequate room for reflection. Reflection allows students to understand religious practices not only as a worship routine, but also as part of moral and social experiences in everyday life. Thus, students' religious experiences require not only religious practices that take place consistently, but also reflective spaces that help students build religious meaning in a more personal way.

Third, the construction of students' religious experiences in madrassas also faces limitations in assisting and strengthening religious reflection intensively. The limitations of personal pedagogical interaction cause the strengthening of religiosity in some conditions to be more oriented towards collective order than the deepening of students' religious experience individually. In Bandura's social-cognitive theory, the success of social learning is influenced by the quality of the social model, the reinforcement process, and the personal involvement of students during the learning process<sup>18</sup>. In the context of this study, the limitations of mentoring cause the development of students' religious experiences to take place at different levels according to their personal motivation and the quality of social interaction they experience in the madrasah environment. The findings show that strengthening religiosity is not enough to be done through collective habituation alone, but also requires more personalized pedagogical interaction so that students are able to build religious experiences in a more profound and meaningful way.

Fourth, the sustainability of students' religious experiences is also influenced by the social environment outside the madrasah. Some students have difficulty maintaining the consistency of religious practices when they are outside the religious environment of the madrasah. This condition shows that students' religious experiences are still in the process of negotiating between the religious values obtained in the madrasah and the social realities they face in daily life. This phenomenon reinforces *Bandura's concept of reciprocal determinism*

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<sup>17</sup> Thomas Lickona, *Educating for Character: How Our Schools Can Teach Respect and Responsibility*, Bantam Trade Paperback Ed edition (Bantam, 1992).

<sup>18</sup> Bandura, *Social Foundations of Thought and Action*.

which asserts that individual behavior develops through the reciprocal relationship between personal, behavioral, and social environmental factors<sup>19</sup>. In the context of this study, the religious environment of the madrasah serves as the initial space for the formation of students' religious experiences, but the sustainability of religious appreciation remains influenced by the ability of students to maintain and interpret religious values in a broader social context.

Overall, the findings of the study show that obstacles in the construction of students' religious experiences are not only related to the intensity of religious practice, but are also influenced by the process of personal meaning, the quality of pedagogical assistance, and the dynamics of the social environment faced by students. These findings show that students' religiosity does not develop linearly through formal habituation alone, but through the process of negotiation of meaning that takes place in the interaction between individuals and their environment. The results of this study expand the study of religious character education which has been more oriented towards the achievement of religious behavior by showing that religious experience is a dynamic, reflective, and contextual social construction. Theoretically, these findings strengthen the relevance of Bandura's social-cognitive theory while showing that the formation of religious experience requires space for reflection and personal meaning so that religious values can be lived more deeply in daily life.

Theoretically, this study shows that the construction of students' religious experiences can be understood through the integration of Bandura's social-cognitive theory and Lickona's theory of character education. Bandura's theory explains how the religious environment, exemplary, and social reinforcement shape students' religious behavior, while Lickona's theory helps explain the process of internalizing values until they develop into a more personal religious experience. These findings show that students' religious experiences are the result of the interaction between the social learning process and reflection on socio-religious experiences experienced in daily life.

## **CONCLUSION**

This study shows that the construction of students' religious experiences in the Islamic Character Building Program at MTs Negeri 1 Banyuwangi develops through the reciprocal relationship between the religious environment of the madrasah, religious

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<sup>19</sup> Bandura.

practices that take place repeatedly, and students' personal meanings of socio-religious experiences in daily life. This process does not take place solely through adherence to formal religious practices, but also through the process of personal interpretation of social experiences and religious practices in madrasah life. Students' religious experiences evolve from normative engagement to more reflective and personal religious appreciation.

The study also found several obstacles in the construction of students' religious experiences. These obstacles are mainly related to the strong normative compliance, the tendency of mechanical religious practices, the limitations of reflective mentoring, and the influence of the social environment outside the madrasah. The findings confirm that students' religious experiences are a dynamic process and do not always develop in a linear manner. Therefore, the development of religious character in madrassas needs to be not only oriented to formal habituation, but also to provide a space for reflection and social experience that allows students to build religious appreciation in a more personal and meaningful way.

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