



## PEDAGOGICAL CONTENT KNOWLEDGE, RELIGIOUS SELF-CONCEPT, AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT: MEDIATION OF INTRINSIC RELIGIOUS ORIENTATION

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**ABSTRACT.** *Academic success in religious studies is a complex phenomenon necessitating a thorough comprehension of pedagogical, psychological, and spiritual elements within educational settings. This study examines the intricate relationship between Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK), Religious Self-Concept, and their impact on academic accomplishment, mediated by Intrinsic Religious Orientation among students in Yogyakarta. A quantitative cross-sectional survey design was utilized including 150 students from senior high schools and Islamic high schools in Yogyakarta. Data were gathered utilizing validated tools that assess Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK), Religious Self-Concept, Intrinsic Religious Orientation, and Academic Achievement. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) using AMOS 24.0 was performed to examine direct and indirect effects, whereas mediation analysis utilized bootstrapping techniques with 5,000 samples. The results indicate substantial direct impacts of Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK) on Academic Achievement ( $\beta = 0.342, p < 0.001$ ) and of Religious Self-Concept on Academic Achievement ( $\beta = 0.186, p = 0.025$ ). Intrinsic Religious Orientation acts as a notable partial mediator in both associations, exhibiting indirect effects of  $\beta = 0.116 (p = 0.006)$  for PCK and  $\beta = 0.177 (p = 0.001)$  for Religious Self-Concept. The model accounts for 68.4% of the variance in Academic Achievement, validating the theoretical synthesis of Shulman's PCK theory with Allport's religious orientation theory within educational frameworks.*

**Keywords:** *Pedagogical Content Knowledge, Religious Self-Concept, Intrinsic Religious Orientation, Academic Achievement,*

**ABSTRAK.** Keberhasilan akademis dalam studi agama merupakan fenomena kompleks yang membutuhkan pemahaman menyeluruh tentang unsur-unsur pedagogis, psikologis, dan spiritual dalam lingkungan pendidikan. Studi ini meneliti hubungan rumit antara Pengetahuan Konten Pedagogis (KTP), Konsep Diri Religius, dan dampaknya terhadap prestasi akademis, yang dimediasi oleh Orientasi Religius Intrinsik di kalangan siswa di Yogyakarta. Desain survei kuantitatif lintas-seksional digunakan, melibatkan 150 siswa dari SMA dan SMA Islam di Yogyakarta. Data dikumpulkan menggunakan instrumen yang telah divalidasi untuk menilai Pengetahuan Konten Pedagogis (KTP), Konsep Diri Religius, Orientasi Religius Intrinsik, dan Prestasi Akademik. Pemodelan Persamaan Struktural (SEM) menggunakan AMOS 24.0 dilakukan untuk menguji efek langsung dan tidak langsung, sedangkan analisis mediasi menggunakan teknik bootstrapping dengan 5.000 sampel. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan dampak langsung yang substansial dari Pengetahuan Konten Pedagogis (PCK) terhadap Prestasi Akademik ( $\beta = 0,342, p < 0,001$ ) dan dari Konsep Diri Religius terhadap Prestasi Akademik ( $\beta = 0,186, p = 0,025$ ). Orientasi Religius Intrinsik bertindak sebagai mediator parsial yang signifikan dalam kedua hubungan tersebut, menunjukkan efek tidak langsung sebesar  $\beta = 0,116 (p = 0,006)$  untuk PCK dan  $\beta = 0,177 (p = 0,001)$  untuk Konsep Diri Religius. Model ini menjelaskan 68,4% varians dalam Prestasi Akademik, memvalidasi sintesis teoretis teori PCK Shulman dengan teori orientasi religius Allport dalam kerangka pendidikan.

**Kata Kunci:** Pengetahuan Konten Pedagogis, Konsep Diri Religius, Orientasi Religius Intrinsik, Prestasi Akademik, Article History

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## INTRODUCTION

Academic success in religious studies is a multifaceted phenomenon necessitating a profound comprehension of the interplay among pedagogical, psychological, and spiritual elements within the educational environment (Rajiman, 2024; Mala, 2023). In the context of globalization and educational modernization, the framework of religious education confronts the challenge of merging traditional methods with contemporary, evidence-based practices, thereby enhancing learning outcomes that emphasize both cognitive development and the cultivation of students' character and spirituality (Syamsul Aripin & Nana Meily Nurdiansyah, 2022). This complexity necessitates an exhaustive examination of the factors affecting academic achievement in religious education (Horwitz, 2021).

Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK), developed by Shulman in the 1980s, is defined as the synthesis of pedagogy and content, covering the "what" and "how" of teaching (Leijen et al., 2022). This idea is regarded as an absent paradigm in educational research and signifies a teacher's capacity to convey certain learning elements to pupils while accounting for any misconceptions. In the realm of religious education, Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK) is essential as it encompasses both the dissemination of doctrinal knowledge and the cultivation of spiritual comprehension, alongside the practical application of religious principles in daily life (Emery et al., 2022). Investigations into the pedagogical knowledge base of educators in religious and moral education for the evaluation of students' academic achievement underscore the significance of certain pedagogical abilities in this field.

Self-concept is defined as an individual's comprehensive perception of themselves, encompassing both cognitive and affective evaluations (Falk & Sansour, 2024; Jankowski et al., 2022). It is complex and includes self-perceptions across diverse facets of life. Religious self-concept, a distinct aspect of this construct, pertains to an individual's self-perception and assessment within a spiritual and religious framework, including views regarding religious capabilities, spiritual identity, and their function as a religious individual (Aseery, 2024).

This idea is crucial in religious education since it affects students' motivation, engagement, and perseverance in studying religious content (Kitchens & Phillips, 2021). Studies indicate



that religious belief influences the characteristics of self-concept and the correlation between religious belief and psychological adjustment (Anum et al., 2025).

Intrinsic religious orientation, a concept in the psychology of religion, denotes religious motivation rooted in the internalization of religious values and profound spiritual commitment, as opposed to extrinsic religious orientation, which emphasizes the social or personal advantages of religious practice (Mizzi, 2024). Within the realm of education, intrinsic religious orientation serves as a catalyst that compels students to immerse themselves in religious studies, not merely for the attainment of high academic marks, but due to a recognition of the significance of spiritual comprehension in life. This construct is believed to serve as a mediation mechanism connecting the impact of teacher pedagogical content knowledge and students' religious self-concept on academic accomplishment.

Research indicates that significant socioeconomic gaps among religious groups are mostly influenced by the quantity and quality of education they get, underscoring the necessity of enhancing the learning process in religious education.

While prior research has examined the connections between pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) and academic success across different fields, as well as the link between self-concept and academic performance, studies that specifically investigate the interplay among PCK, religious self-concept, and academic achievement in the realm of religious education—incorporating intrinsic religious orientation as a mediating factor remain scarce.

This research gap is substantial given the distinctive attributes of religious education, which encompass not just cognitive elements but also intricate emotive and spiritual dimensions. This study seeks to develop and evaluate a structural model that examines the influence of Pedagogical Content Knowledge and Religious Self-Concept on Academic Achievement in Religious Studies, mediated by Intrinsic Religious Orientation among students in Yogyakarta. The hypothesis posits that intrinsic religious orientation serves as a significant mediating variable that enhances the causal relationship between predictor constructs and outcome variables, thereby offering theoretical contributions to the advancement of comprehensive and evidence-based models of religious education, as well as practical implications for optimizing pedagogical strategies in this field.

This research was conducted in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, involving students from both public



and private senior high schools (SMA) and Islamic high schools (MA), both private and public. The research location was chosen based on Yogyakarta's diverse educational and religious backgrounds, making it relevant for examining the dynamics of religious education learning.

The primary problem underlying this research is the limited empirical understanding of the factors influencing student academic achievement in religious education, particularly the relationship between teachers' Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK), students' religious self-concept, and intrinsic religious motivation. Most previous research tends to examine these factors separately and has not integrated them into a comprehensive structural model.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### ***Pedagogical Content Knowledge in Religious Education***

Shulman initially suggested the concept of Pedagogical subject Knowledge (PCK) as a fourth essential category in teacher training, alongside subject knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, and curricular knowledge (Janković et al., 2024). Recent research indicates the emergence of a fourth knowledge domain, termed "pedagogical content knowledge (PCK)," which is deemed as significant as the existing three domains, prompting the establishment of courses aimed at imparting this knowledge within teacher training programs. In the realm of religious education, Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK) is essential as it entails the intricate amalgamation of doctrinal content with instructional strategies that correspond to the nature of spiritual learning (Agathangelou & Charalambous, 2021).

Effective instruction in religious education at both elementary and secondary levels facilitates long-term retention of the intended content by pupils (Umansky & Avelar, 2023). The selected pedagogical style in religious education classes must facilitate students in developing knowledge specific to the discipline. This underscores the significance of a profound comprehension of PCK within the realm of religious education, which possesses distinct attributes relative to other disciplines.

A study investigating the pedagogical content knowledge of religious and moral education instructors in evaluating students' academic performance employed a correlational research design elementary schools as participants, revealing a significant correlation between



teachers' PCK and students' academic success in religious education (Sulistiani et al., 2024).

### ***Religious Self-Identity and Scholarly Success***

Self-concept, being a multifaceted construct, significantly influences several elements of an individual's life, including academic performance (Yang & Wong, 2020). In a religious environment, religious self-concept is a distinct dimension that affects students' motivation and participation in the study of religious material. Horwitz's investigation on religious habitus, self-concept, and women's educational performance reveals a multifaceted relationship between religious identity and academic success (Horwitz et al., 2022).

Extensive research in educational literature has concentrated on the correlation between religiosity and academic ability (Burrows et al., 2017). The significant socioeconomic gaps across American religious groups are mostly influenced by the level and quality of education individuals attain (Mijs & Roe, 2021). The findings suggest that religious elements significantly influence educational outcomes, which can be elucidated through several psychological and social mechanisms.

Longitudinal studies indicate that more religious adolescents achieve higher GPAs in high school, even when controlling for familial fixed variables (Horwitz et al., 2020). Due to their elevated GPAs in high school, more religious teenagers attain more years of schooling 14 years subsequent to the assessment of their religiosity. (Sârbu et al., 2021) These findings offer robust empirical evidence of a beneficial correlation between religiosity and sustained academic success.

The mechanism elucidating the correlation between religiosity and academic achievement encompasses several mediating elements. Generally, religious youngsters consume less alcohol, partake in reduced sexual behavior, and experience greater parental supervision (Buchtova et al., 2020). These variables somewhat elucidate the superior academic performance of religious children.

Nonetheless, the model indicates the existence of other elements beyond these considerations. This suggests that inherent elements of religiosity directly affect academic performance.



### ***Intrinsic Religious Orientation as a Mediating Factor***

Intrinsic religious orientation, a concept established in the psychology of religion, has continuously shown correlations with numerous good outcomes in persons' lives (Cohen & Johnson, 2017). The Religious Orientation Scale (ROS) assesses intrinsic religiousness (religion as an ultimate goal) and extrinsic religiousness (religion as a way to achieve certain objectives, such as companionship or solace) (Tomás et al., 2025). This distinction is crucial for comprehending the mechanisms that govern the impact of religiosity on academic performance.

The impact of religion on well-being seems contingent upon religious orientation, with intrinsic orientation linked to favorable results and extrinsic orientation correlated with neutral or adverse consequences. The findings suggest that various kinds of religiosity exert differing effects on individual accomplishment, with intrinsic orientation demonstrating superior attributes in fostering positive outcomes.

Investigations exploring the mediation between intrinsic religiosity and other psychological outcomes have elucidated the mechanisms behind these effects (Morton et al., 2017). The inverse correlation between intrinsic religiousness and hostility is mediated by the degree of sanctification in an individual's pursuits, whereas the association between intrinsic religiousness and anxiety and depression is controlled by religious coping mechanisms. This study concentrated on psychological results; however, a comparable mediation pattern is expected in regard to academic achievement.

The Study Demands-Resources (SD-R) paradigm posits that environmental resources enhance study resources, leading to favorable academic outcomes, whereas religious practice, as a component of environmental resources, fosters good lifestyle behaviors and contributes to excellent academic performance (Bakker & Mostert, 2024). This theoretical paradigm posits that intrinsic religious orientation may serve as a mediator between instructional elements and academic accomplishment.

### ***Research Deficiency and Theoretical Contributions***

While the literature has individually examined the associations between pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) and academic achievement, religious self-concept and educational



outcomes, as well as intrinsic religious orientation and various psychological variables, there remains a paucity of research that integratively analyzes the interactions among these three constructs within the realm of religious education.

Research suggests that the association between religion and mathematics learning results is indirect and potentially mediated by factors such as time management and learning motivation, highlighting the intricacy of this relationship that necessitates further mediation research (Wild & Neef, 2023).

Research uncovers a paradox between religiosity and religious tradition: adolescents exhibiting heightened religiosity attain superior academic performance, exhibit reduced truancy in high school, and pursue more years of higher education; however, the underlying mechanisms elucidating this phenomena remain inadequately comprehended (Kavadias et al., 2024).

This constraint presents an opportunity to formulate a more extensive theoretical model that integrates various mediators in the association between pedagogical elements, individual factors, and academic accomplishment within the realm of religious education.

### ***Conceptual Framework***

State This study employs a theoretical framework that synthesizes Shulman's Pedagogical Content Knowledge Theory (Hubbard, 2018) with Allport's Religious Orientation Theory (Gorsuch, 2019). The PCK Theory elucidates the connection between pedagogical knowledge and academic success, whereas the Religious Orientation Theory offers insights into the intrinsic aspect of religiosity as an internal motivator affecting academic performance.

The conceptual model employs Social Cognitive Theory (Schunk & DiBenedetto, 2020), highlighting the reciprocal interplay among personal (religious self-concept), behavioral (academic achievement), and environmental (pedagogical content knowledge) factors, further supported by Self-Concept Theory (Fernández-Bustos et al., 2019), which elucidates the hierarchical and multidimensional nature of self-concept across academic and religious dimensions.



The data analysis employed Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) alongside Baron & Kenny's Mediation Analysis (Osman et al., 2022) to evaluate the path coefficients of the direct relationship between Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK) and Religious Self-Concept on Academic Achievement, while also assessing the mediating influence of Intrinsic Religious Orientation in this relationship, thereby facilitating a concurrent examination of the causal mechanisms that inform academic achievement in religious studies.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This study employed a quantitative methodology utilizing a cross-sectional survey design to examine the causal links among the research variables. This design was selected due to its capacity for data collection from a substantial sample within a brief timeframe and its appropriateness for evaluating intricate structural models with numerous predictors and mediators. The study population comprised students in Yogyakarta enrolled in Islamic Religious Education. The sampling method employed was stratified random sampling, utilizing stratification by type to guarantee sample representativeness.

The sample size was calculated with the Krejcie & Morgan formula with a 5% margin of error, yielding a minimum of 150 respondents. To account for non-response and satisfy SEM standards (a minimum 10:1 ratio for each estimated parameter), the target sample was established at 212 students.

Data analysis employed Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) utilizing AMOS 24.0 software. The analytical phases comprised: (1) Descriptive analysis to delineate respondent characteristics and variable distribution; (2) Measurement model assessment via Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) to evaluate validity and reliability; (3) Structural model examination to assess direct and indirect effects; (4) Mediation analysis employing a bootstrapping procedure with 5000 bootstrap samples to ascertain the significance of mediation effects. Model fit assessment utilizing various indices:  $\chi^2/df < 3.0$ ,  $CFI \geq 0.90$ ,  $TLI \geq 0.90$ ,  $RMSEA \leq 0.08$ , and  $SRMR \leq 0.08$ .



RESULTS

Table 1. Correlation analysis and descriptive statistics

Characteristic	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	68	45.3
	Female	82	54.7
Age	16 years	48	32.0
	17 years	76	50.7
	18 years	26	17.3
School Type	Public SHS	60	40.0
	Private SHS	40	26.7
	Public MHS	33	22.0
	Private MHS	17	11.3
Total		150	100.0

All variables exhibit normal distribution features, according to the descriptive analysis, with skewness and kurtosis values falling within an acceptable range of  $\pm 2.0$ . Scores for Academic Achievement ranged from 76.5 to 94.8 (M=84.23, SD=4.67), Pedagogical Content Knowledge ranged from 2.14 to 4.86 (M=3.72, SD=0.58), Religious Self-Concept ranged from 2.33 to 4.92 (M=3.89, SD=0.52), and Intrinsic Religious Orientation ranged from 2.45 to 4.95 (M=4.12, SD=0.48).

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics and Correlation Matrix

Variable	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4
1. PCK	3.62	0.58	1			
2. Religious Self-Concept	3.89	0.54	0.523**	1		
3. Intrinsic Religious Orientation	4.12	0.48	.467**	.612**	1	
4. Academic Achievement	84.23	4.67	.586**	.498**	.624**	1

Note: \*\* p < 0.01, N = 150

All of the variables have statistically significant positive relationships, according to the correlation analysis. The two variables showed the strongest correlation: Academic Achievement and Pedagogical Content Knowledge (r =.586, p < 0.01) and Intrinsic Religious Orientation (r =.624, p < 0.01). These results offer early proof in favor of the relationships that the structural model postulates.



Assessment of Measurement Models

The measurement model's validity and reliability were evaluated using confirmatory factor analysis (CFA).  $\chi^2/df = 2.84 (< 3.0)$ , CFI = 0.921 (> 0.90), TLI = 0.908 (> 0.90), RMSEA = 0.089 (acceptable), and SRMR = 0.078 (< 0.08) are the results that show good model fit indices. Convergent validity was demonstrated by all factor loadings, which ranged from 0.678 to 0.892 and exceeded the cutoff of 0.60. Convergent validity and construct reliability were confirmed by the average variance extracted (AVE) values, which varied from 0.562 to 0.697, and the composite reliability (CR) values, which ranged from 0.834 to 0.901.

Table 3. Measurement Model Fit Indices and Reliability

Table with 7 columns: Construct, Items, Factor Loadings Range, CR, AVE, Cronbach's alpha. Rows include Pedagogical Content Knowledge, Religious Self-Concept, Intrinsic Religious Orientation, and Academic Achievement.

Note: CR = Composite Reliability, AVE = Average Variance Extracted

Testing Hypotheses and Structural Models

The direct and indirect effects between variables were investigated using the structural equation model. A satisfactory fit to the data was shown by the structural model:  $\chi^2/df = 2.76$ , CFI = 0.926, TLI = 0.914, RMSEA = 0.087, and SRMR = 0.074. The mediation hypothesis is supported by the route analysis results, which show notable direct impacts.

Table 4. Direct Effects and Path Coefficient

Table with 7 columns: Hypothesized Path, Standardized Coefficient (beta), S.E, t-value, p-value, Result. Rows include H1: PCK -> Academic Achievement, H2: Religious Self-Concept -> Academic Achievement, H3: PCK -> Intrinsic Religious Orientation, H4: Religious Self-Concept -> Intrinsic Religious Orientation, H5: Intrinsic Religious Orientation -> Academic Achievement.

The findings demonstrate that Pedagogical Content Knowledge exerts a substantial direct influence on Academic Achievement (beta = 0.342, p < 0.001), accounting for 11.7% of the variance. The Religious Self-Concept exhibits a notable albeit lesser direct impact on





Academic Achievement ( $\beta = 0.186, p = 0.025$ ), accounting for 3.5% of the variance. Both predictors exert a significant influence on Intrinsic Religious Orientation, with Religious Self-Concept demonstrating a more pronounced effect ( $\beta = 0.456, p < 0.001$ ) in comparison to PCK ( $\beta = 0.298, p < 0.001$ ). The model accounts for 68.4% of the variance in Academic Achievement ( $R^2 = 0.684$ ).

**Table 5.** Indirect Effects and Mediation Analysis

Indirect Path	Point Estimate	Bootstrap SE	95% CI		p-value	Mediation Type
			Lower	Upper		
PCK → IRO → Academic Achievement	0.116	0.042	0.035	0.203	0.006	Partial
RSC → IRO → Academic Achievement	0.177	0.051	0.081	0.284	0.001	Partial

Note: IRO = Intrinsic Religious Orientation, RSC = Religious Self-Concept, CI = Confidence Interval

The indirect effect of PCK on Academic Achievement via Intrinsic Religious Orientation is statistically significant ( $\beta = 0.116, p = 0.006, 95\% \text{ CI } [0.035, 0.203]$ ), suggesting partial mediation as both direct and indirect effects are significant.

The indirect effect of Religious Self-Concept on Academic Achievement via Intrinsic Religious Orientation is substantial ( $\beta = 0.177, p = 0.001, 95\% \text{ CI } [0.081, 0.284]$ ), indicating partial mediation. The cumulative impact of PCK on Academic Achievement is 0.458 (comprising a direct effect of 0.342 and an indirect effect of 0.116), whereas the total effect of Religious Self-Concept is 0.363 (including a direct effect of 0.186 and an indirect effect of 0.177).

## DISCUSSIONS

### *Interpretation of Models and Theoretical Consequences*

The results offer strong empirical validation for the suggested theoretical model, indicating that students' academic performance in religious studies is highly influenced by educational elements and individual psychological aspects. The significant direct effect of Pedagogical topic Knowledge ( $\beta = 0.342$ ) underscores the essential role of instructors' capacity to amalgamate topic knowledge with pedagogical proficiency in religious education settings. This discovery corresponds with Shulman's PCK hypothesis, indicating that when educators



have an in-depth comprehension of effectively teaching religious subject, children exhibit enhanced academic achievement (König et al., 2022).

The substantial influence of Religious Self-Concept ( $\beta = 0.186$ ) as a predictor of academic performance highlights the significance of students' self-perception in religious contexts. Students who view themselves as competent and confident in religious circumstances generally attain superior academic results, aligning with self-concept theory's assertions regarding the impact of domain-specific self-perceptions on performance in corresponding fields (Shamir et al., 2018).

The mediation analysis demonstrates significant theoretical contributions. Intrinsic Religious Orientation functions as a crucial mediator, elucidating the processes by which both PCK and Religious Self-Concept affect academic accomplishment.

The more pronounced indirect effect of Religious Self-Concept via Intrinsic Religious Orientation ( $\beta = 0.177$ ) in contrast to PCK ( $\beta = 0.116$ ) indicates that internal religious motivation is more significantly influenced by students' self-perceptions than by external educational elements. This finding corroborates Allport's differentiation between intrinsic and extrinsic religious orientations, illustrating that intrinsic religious motivation—defined by internalized religious values and authentic spiritual commitment—functions as a vital psychological mechanism that converts both pedagogical quality and self-concept into enhanced academic performance (Park, 2021).

This study's findings present strong evidence for the intricate interaction among pedagogical, psychological, and motivational elements influencing academic accomplishment in religious studies, with considerable theoretical and practical ramifications for religious education. The significant direct impact of Pedagogical Content Knowledge on academic achievement ( $\beta = 0.342$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) validates prior studies investigating the pedagogical knowledge of Religious and Moral Education instructors in evaluating student performance.

These studies revealed substantial correlations between teacher pedagogical proficiency and student success, employing a correlational research design with basic schools as subjects (Gess-Newsome et al., 2019). This supports Shulman's theoretical framework, which asserts that PCK is the distinctive professional knowledge that differentiates effective educators



from content specialists. The notable correlation between Religious Self-Concept and academic achievement ( $\beta = 0.186$ ,  $p = 0.025$ ) corroborates previous studies suggesting that religious belief influences aspects of self-concept.

This relationship between religious belief and psychological adjustment can be elucidated through self-concept mechanisms. Furthermore, self-concept clarity has emerged as a significant predictor of life meaning and self-esteem, with intrinsic religious orientation acting as a predictor of life meaning. The most theoretically significant finding is the mediating role of Intrinsic Religious Orientation, wherein the effects of religiosity on well-being seem contingent upon religious orientation; intrinsic orientation correlates with positive outcomes, while extrinsic orientation is associated with neutral or negative outcomes.

This pattern extends to academic domains by illustrating that intrinsic religious motivation functions as a vital psychological mechanism that converts external pedagogical quality and internal self-perceptions into enhanced academic performance. The more pronounced indirect effect of Religious Self-Concept via Intrinsic Religious Orientation ( $\beta = 0.177$ ) in contrast to PCK ( $\beta = 0.116$ ) offers significant insights, indicating that although effective teaching can augment intrinsic religious motivation, students' self-assessments of their religious competence exert a greater influence on cultivating intrinsic religious orientation, consistent with self-determination theory, which underscores the importance of perceived competence in enhancing intrinsic motivation.

The partial mediation pattern reveals various mechanisms by which pedagogical and self-concept factors affect academic achievement. This is corroborated by research highlighting the mediating role of religiosity in the relationship between self-concept clarity and favorable outcomes (Coutts et al., 2023). The model's explanation of 68.4% variance in academic achievement indicates strong predictive validity, suggesting that the integration of Shulman's PCK theory with Allport's religious orientation theory offers a comprehensive framework for understanding learning outcomes in religious contexts.

Practical implications underscore the importance of investing in teacher professional development that emphasizes pedagogical content knowledge, fostering intrinsic religious



motivation through authentic engagement strategies, and implementing interventions that enhance students' religious self-concept and competence.

## CONCLUSIONS

This study offers substantial empirical evidence regarding the intricate mechanisms influencing academic achievement in religious education, indicating that students' academic success is significantly influenced by pedagogical factors and individual psychological constructs mediated by intrinsic religious motivation. The results affirm that Pedagogical Content Knowledge is a vital factor in academic success, corroborating Shulman's theoretical model that emphasizes the necessity of specialized teaching knowledge for effective educational results.

Religious Self-Concept serves as a crucial predictor, affirming the significance of domain-specific self-perceptions in academic settings. Intrinsic Religious Orientation serves as a crucial mediating mechanism that converts both exterior pedagogical quality and internal self-perceptions into improved academic achievement, with more pronounced mediation effects noted for Religious Self-Concept in comparison to PCK.

The partial mediation pattern reveals various pathways by which educational and psychological factors affect learning outcomes, indicating that effective religious education necessitates integrated strategies that focus on teacher competence, student self-concept development, and the cultivation of intrinsic motivation.

These findings provide substantial theoretical contributions by merging pedagogical and psychological theories within religious education contexts, while also offering practical implications for teacher professional development, curriculum design, and student-centered interventions intended to enhance both cognitive and spiritual aspects of religious learning. Future research ought to investigate longitudinal correlations, cross-cultural validity, and supplementary mediating processes to enhance comprehension of academic accomplishment within religious education settings.

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