

Journal of Health and Behavioral Science, Vol.1, No.1, March 2019, pp. 26~33

## Daily Spiritual Experience and Religious Believe

*R. Pasifikus Christa Wijaya*

Nusa Cendana University

e-mail: [pcwijaya@staf.undana.ac.id](mailto:pcwijaya@staf.undana.ac.id)

**Abstract.** Spiritual experience is often realized as a personal reality that is different from the doctrine of religious beliefs, but whether spiritual experience and religious beliefs are two constructs that are not related to each other is still a subject of debate on this secular oriented world. This study aims to explain the relationship between daily spiritual experience and religious beliefs. The subjects in this study were 69 early adults. The method of data collection in this study was carried out using the Daily Spiritual Experience Scale-Short Form and Religious Belief and Values Scale-Short Form. The results of the research data were analyzed using Pearson product moment correlation technique. The result show a positive relationship between daily spiritual experiences and religious beliefs. Religious beliefs and values can encourage someone to find feelings of love, peace and happiness in their daily spiritual experiences.

**Keywords:** *spiritual experience, religious believe, religiosity, spirituality*

The existence of spirituality is very old and may be as old as human life itself. Spiritual practices have actually merged with people's lives, for example the celebration of birth (and ceremony of death) in Javanese culture, the practice of meditation and prayer. In everyday life, actually spirituality practice is ingrained and we often do it. Humans as cultural agents influence and are influenced by their culture, including by the spirituality that exists in society. The meaning and formation of one's self-concept are also influenced by spirituality found in the culture of the community in which he lives.

Daily spiritual experience is one's perception of the transcendent and one's perception of interaction or involvement with the transcendent in everyday life (Underwood and Teresi, 2002). The center of religious and spiritual experience is a sense of the sacred which makes research on Religiosity and Spirituality distinguishable from research from other areas (Hill et al., 2000).

Holiness is a universal feature of all religious and spiritual experiences. Understanding of the sacred is a perception that is influenced socially about the

ultimate or divine being (Hill et al., 2000). Daily spiritual experience consists of feelings that describe religious experience everyday life. The main purpose of developing this construct is to explain how spiritual feelings can form an integral part of one's daily life (Underwood, 2003).

Beliefs and Values are cognitive domains in religiosity that hold a central role (Idler, 2003). Content of beliefs can describe objects of belief as true or false and evaluate them as good or bad (Rokeach, 1986). Belief is used to identify members of religious groups as "believers" (Idler, 2003). A strict distinction is often made between "people who believe" with "people who do not believe", between "us" with "them" and often taken actions based on this distinction (Rokeach, 1986).

Among members of the same religious group can have disagreements about how their beliefs should be and there can be varying levels of confidence (Idler, 2003). Religious Beliefs and Values are used to evaluate objects of belief and determine how one should and should not behave, or determine whether an end goal is worthy of being achieved.

The case of a dying man who was previously an atheist turned religious by searching for religious leaders at the last moment of his life can be found (Backer, et al., 1982). The level of religiosity in elderly people suddenly rises significantly compared to middle adulthood (Wink and Scott, 2005). Wink and Scott (2005) argue that death anxiety arises when someone believes in the existence of a happy life after death but not in accordance with the practices and religious beliefs they have. Inconsistency in religious practice risks increasing doubts about a happy life after death and raises the idea of punishment after death.

It seems, people try to believe in religious beliefs to get certain spiritual experiences to be free from mental bondage, such as death anxiety. The question arises whether spiritual experience and religious beliefs are two constructs that are not related to each other or actually have a relationship between the two.

### **Method**

Daily Spiritual Experience score was obtained from the Daily Spiritual Experiences-Short Form/DSES (Underwood, 2003). Scores show the frequency of involvement and interaction with the transcendent. The higher the score obtained, the lower the quality of the relationship with the transcendent felt by the subject.

Religious beliefs score was obtained from Belief and Value-Short Form/BVS. The score shows the agreement of the subject with religious and spiritual beliefs and values. The scores obtained reflect the level of religious beliefs and values. After the language has been converted into Indonesian, each measuring instrument is reevaluated in its ability to reveal the desired attributes. The researcher does not reverse the language for each item to evaluate each item.

The Daily Spiritual Experience Short Form reliability coefficient obtained on this research is 0.868. These results indicate a high level of trust in the measurement results. Belief and Value Short Form reliability coefficients obtained are 0.597. These results indicate a moderate level of reliability.

Samples were taken using convenience sampling techniques. The selection of samples is based on subject availability and the willingness of the subjects to be the subject of research. This method is the most common sampling method used in behavioral scientific studies (Frederick, 2009). In this study, the population is active students at the Faculty of Psychology, Sanata Dharma University. Data collection began in March 2010 with a total sample of 69 subjects.

Subjects were asked to respond to existing statements by determining a choice of responses from 6 choices of responses provided according to experience. Each statement is responded to based on the experience of everyday life. A note that allows the subject to replace the word "God" with terms that are more appropriate to the subject's comfort added to the scale filling procedure. The total value is obtained from the sum of all scores on each item statement, so that the range of scores is 6 to 36. The higher the total value, the lower the integration of daily spiritual experiences in the daily life of the subject.

On a religious belief scale, subjects were asked to respond to existing statements by determining a choice of responses from 4 response options provided in accordance with the statement given. The total value is obtained from the sum of all scores on each item statement, so that the range of scores is 4 to 16. The higher the total value, the lower the person's beliefs and values reflect religious and spiritual beliefs and values as the final value of the subject. Final data was analyzed using Pearson correlation. The calculation is done using the SPSS for Windows 16.0 program.

### **Results**

Normality tests were performed on DSES scores through the Kolmogorov-Smirnov One-Sample Test. The results of the normality test show that the distribution of data is normal ( $p > 0.05$ ) with a calculated  $p$  of 0.411. The normality test was performed on the BVS score through the One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test. The results of the normality test indicate that the distribution of data is normal ( $p > 0.05$ ) with a calculated  $p$  of 0.196.

Linearity tests were performed on DSES and BV scores through the Test of Linearity. The results of linearity tests show that the relationship between DSES and BV is linear because the  $p$  obtained is 0.00 in the linearity column. Correlation test between DSES and BV scores shows that there is a relationship between DSES and BV because the  $p$  value obtained is 0.00 with Pearson Correlation of 0.574.

### **Discussion**

The majority of research subjects have a high level of tendency to integrate spiritual experiences in daily life based on the DSES scale. Most subjects feel spiritual experience as an integral part of their lives. The feeling of being transcendent, the existence of transcendent support, harmonious internal conditions and admiration for the nature of creation are experiences experienced by most subjects and are part of their daily experiences.

Table 1.  
DSES Score Distribution

Category	Percentage
High Spiritual Experience	52,17%
Some Spiritual Experience	8,70%
Low Spiritual Experience	39,13%

Most research subjects tend to have high levels of religious and spiritual beliefs and values. The large number of subjects who use religious and spiritual beliefs and values shows that most subjects use religious and spiritual beliefs and values as their personal beliefs and values. This shows that religious and spiritual beliefs and values are important beliefs and values in the lives of most research subjects. Religious and spiritual beliefs and values serve as guidance and information for most subjects to recognize and achieve their final goals. This condition allows most research subjects to feel the functions of religious and spiritual beliefs and values, for example the emergence of the placebo effect in medical treatment, getting cognitive information about positive expectations and a framework of interpretation of human suffering.

Table 2.  
BV Score Distribution

Category	Percentage
High Believe	53,62%
Some Believe	17,39%
Low Believe	28,99%

This study found that age is positively related to religious and spiritual beliefs and values,  $p = 0,08$  and pearson correlation of 0.319. The increase in age is followed by an increase in the level of religious and spiritual beliefs and values. These results indicate that in the age range of 20 years to 27 years, subjects with high age have the highest level of religious and spiritual beliefs and values while subjects with low age have low levels of religious and spiritual beliefs and values.

This study found that daily spiritual experiences are positively related to religious beliefs and values. The increase in daily spiritual experience is followed by an increase in spiritual and religious beliefs and values. Subjects with high levels of integration of spiritual experiences in daily life have high levels of religious beliefs and

values, while subjects with low levels of integration of spiritual experiences in daily life have low levels of religious beliefs and values. Religious beliefs and values can encourage someone to find feelings of love, peace and happiness in daily spiritual experiences.

### **Conclusion**

Spiritual experience is often realized as a personal reality that is different from the doctrine of religious beliefs, but separating the two as opposing entities is not a wise decision. In fact, it is understandable if there are people who are trying to find a more intense spiritual experience by re-exploring the value of religiosity, which provides a framework for meaningful spiritual experience.

### **References**

- Allport, Gordon W., Ross, J. M., *Personal religious orientation and prejudice*, dalam: Malony, H. W., 1977, *Current Perspectives in the Psychology of Religion*, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company
- Alvarado, K. A., Templer, D. I., Bresler, C., Thomas-Dobson, S., 2006, *The relationship of religious variables to death depression and death anxiety*, *Journal of Clinical Psychology*, 51(2), 202 – 204
- Benson, P., 1988, *Effective Christian Education: A National Study of Protestant Congregation*, Minneapolis: Search Institute
- Beshai, J. A., 2006-2007, *Dialogue with donald templer*, *OMEGA*, 54(4), 337-349
- Butt, Trevor W., 2008, *Kelly's legacy in personality theory: Reason to be cheerful*, *Personal Construct Theory and Practice*, 5
- Buttler, R. J., 2006, *Investigating the content of core construct*, *Personal Construct Theory and Practice*, 3
- Chuin, C. L., 2010, *Age, gender, and religiosity as related to death anxiety*, *Sunway Academic Journal*, 6, scribd.com: <http://www.scribd.com/doc/29136692/Age-Gender-and-Religiosity-as-Related-to-Death-Anxiety.html>
- Clements, R., 1998, *Intrinsic religious motivation and attitudes toward death among the elderly*, *Current Psychology: Developmental, Learning, Personality, Social*, 17( 2/3), 237-248

- Duff, R. W., 1995, *Age density, religiosity and death anxiety in retirement communities*, Review of Religious Research, 37(1)
- Edmondson, D., Park, C. L., Chaudoir, S. R. and Wortmann, J. H., 2008, Death without God: religious struggle, death concerns, and depression in the terminally ill., Psychological Science 19, no. 8: 754-758.
- Fetzer Institute, National Institute on Aging Working Group, 2003, *Multidimensional Measurement of Religiousness/Spirituality for Use in Health Research: A Report of the Fetzer Institute/National Institute on Aging Working Group*, Michigan: John E. Fetzer Institute
- Frederick J. G., Lori-Ann B. F., *Research Methods for the Behavioral Sciences*, Wadsworth: Cengage Learning Inc, 2009
- George, Linda K., Larson, David B., Koenig, Harold G., McCullough, Michael E., 2000, *Spirituality and health: what we know, what we need to know*, Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology, 19, 1, 102-116
- Green, B., 2004, *Personal construct psychology and content analysis*, Personal Construct Theory and Practice, 1
- Green, B., 2008, *Musing about constructs*, Personal Construct Theory and Practice, 5
- Hill, Peter C., Pargament, Kenneth I., Hood, Ralph W. Jr., McCullough, Michael E., Swyers, James P., Larson, David B., Zinnbauer, Brian J., 2000, *Conceptualizing religion and spirituality: points of commonality, points of departure*, Journal for the Theory of Social Behavior 30:1, 0021-8308
- Homby, A. S., 1995, *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English*, Oxford: Oxford Press
- Hufford, David J., 2009, *An analysis of the field of spirituality, religion and health (S/RH)*, Journal of the Society for Psychical Research 73, 4: 223-230
- Idler, Ellen, *Beliefs*, dalam: Fetzer Institute, National Institute on Aging Working Group, 2003, *Multidimensional Measurement of Religiousness/Spirituality for Use in Health Research: A Report of the Fetzer Institute/National Institute on Aging Working Group*, Michigan: John E. Fetzer Institute
- Idler, Ellen, *Values*, dalam: Fetzer Institute, National Institute on Aging Working Group, 2003, *Multidimensional Measurement of Religiousness/Spirituality for Use in Health Research: A Report of the Fetzer Institute/National Institute on Aging Working Group*, Michigan: John E. Fetzer Institute
- Krieger, S., Epting, F., Leitner, L.M., 1974, *Personal construct, threat, and attitudes toward death*, Omega: Journal of Death and Dying, 5, 299
- Lester, D., 2009, *Emotions in personal construct theory: A review*, Personal Construct Theory and Practice, 6

- Mangunwijaya, Y. B., 1999, *Manusia Pascamodern, Semesta, dan Tuhan: Renungan Filsafat Hidup Manusia Modern*, Yogyakarta: Penerbit Kanisius
- Miller, William R., Thoresen, Carl E., 2003, *Spirituality, religion, and health: an emerging research field*, American Psychological Association Inc., Vol. 58 No. 1, 24-35, DOI: 10.1037/0003-066X.58.1.24
- Nelson, L. D., Cantrell, C. H., 1980, *Religiosity and death anxiety: a multi-dimensional analysis*, Review of Religious Research, 21(2), 148-157
- Rokeach, Milton, 1986, *Belief, Attitudes, and Values: A Theory of Organization and Change*, California: Jossey-Bass Inc. Publishers
- Underwood, L., Teresi J., 2002, *The daily spiritual experience scale: development, theoretical description, reliability, exploratory factor analysis, and preliminary construct validity using health-related data*, Annals of Behavioral Medicine, 24, 1: 22-33
- Underwood, Lynn G., *Daily Spiritual Experiences*, dalam: Fetzer Institute, National Institute on Aging Working Group, 2003, *Multidimensional Measurement of Religiousness/Spirituality for Use in Health Research: A Report of the Fetzer Institute/National Institute on Aging Working Group*, Michigan: John E. Fetzer Institute
- Whitehead, Alfred N., 2009, *Mencari Tuhan Sepanjang Jaman: dari Agama-Kesukuan hingga Agama-Universal*, Bandung: Penerbit Mizan
- Wink, P., Scott, J., 2005, *Does religiousness buffer against the fear of death and dying in late adulthood: findings from a longitudinal study*, Journal of Gerontology: Psychological Sciences, 60B(4), 207-214