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The effect of life purpose on self-esteem through religiosity in students

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Article Info	Abstract
Keywords: Life purpose; self-esteem; religiosity.	Self-esteem is one of the important aspects in the formation of an individual's personality that affects various dimensions of life, such as social relationships, academic achievements, and mental health. This study aims to analyze the influence of life goals on self-esteem through religiosity. The method used is quantitative with an ex post facto design. The hypothesis test used a path analysis involving 348 students in Jebres District, Surakarta City. The psychological scale instruments Purpose in Life (PIL) Test, Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory (CSEI), Centrality of Religiosity Scale (CRS) were used to collect the necessary data in this study. The results of the analysis showed that life purpose had a significant effect on students' self-esteem ($\beta = 0.196$), ($P < 0.01$), as well as life purpose on religiosity ($\beta = -0.144$), ($P < 0.01$), religiosity on self-esteem ($\beta = 0.387$), ($P < 0.01$) and religiosity did not mediate this relationship ($\beta = -0.056$), (Zsobel = -3.165), ($P < 0.05$). In this regard, the Counselor is expected to facilitate discussions about long-term and short-term goals, as well as help students understand how these achievements can provide a sense of personal satisfaction. As for the next researcher, it is recommended to use other variables as mediators, such as social relationships, peers or family support.

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Introduction

Self-esteem is one of the important aspects in the formation of an individual's personality that affects various dimensions of life, such as social relationships, academic achievements, and mental health. For students, having positive self-esteem is the main capital in facing challenges in the school environment and society. Based on the phenomenon found by researchers in the initial study, low self-esteem in students is still a common thing, especially during increasingly complex and stressful social changes. It is therefore important to identify factors that can improve students' self-esteem.

Coopersmith (1967) describes self-esteem as a fundamental value. In a more concise description, it is an assessment that individuals make about themselves, which is formed from interactions with the environment and the treatment received from others. According to him, the formation of self-esteem is influenced by several aspects, namely individual objectivity (significance), virtue (virtue), individual strength (power) and competence (competence). Although it is often equated with self-concept, self-esteem is part of self-concept. Self-esteem refers to how a person evaluates himself. When a person can accept himself for who he is, he can also appreciate himself. This ability depends on how a person sees, analyzes, evaluates, and assesses his or her own existence (Battle, 1990; Soelton et al., 2020; Wulandari, 2019). A person's level of self-esteem can affect their behavior and how they interact with the world around them.

The importance of developing self-esteem is increasingly relevant in the context of students, where they often face various challenges and pressures that can affect their perspective on themselves. The development of positive self-esteem can help students to better recognize their life goals, thus creating a mutually beneficial relationship between having a life purpose and increasing self-esteem. This can encourage them to make better decisions and develop strong social skills, which in turn will have a positive impact on mental health and overall well-being. Students with high self-esteem tend to be more resilient in the face of failure, as they see it as an opportunity to learn and grow rather than as an obstacle.

However, sometimes self-esteem is often affected by a variety of external factors, including technological advancements, academic pressures, and complex social dynamics. To address these challenges, it is important for schools and parents to create a supportive environment, where students feel valued and accepted without having to compare themselves to others. One of the factors that plays a role in the formation of self-esteem is life purpose. Life goals provide direction, meaning, and motivation that help individuals understand their existence and face life with more confidence.

Viktor Emile Frankl (1964) defines that life's purpose is the most important aspect in the meaning of life, or it can also be called an aspect that builds the meaning of life. Frankl indirectly defines life purpose as "strength from within" as "moral and spiritual principles" as well as "the responsibility that a person has in life" as well as the "reason" for a person's life. Life's purpose is influenced by several factors, including freedom of will, the will to mean and the meaning of life. Bronk in his book divides the aspects of life goals into 4 points, namely commitment, direction and purpose. Achieving this goal is not always easy because it is influenced by various complex factors that shape a person's view of the world. One of the key factors that plays a big role in the search for meaning in life is the existence of religiosity, which includes spirituality, freedom, and responsibility (Bronk, 2014).

Previous research conducted by Jenny Marcionetti and Jerome Rossier explained that self-esteem has a great influence on the life satisfaction of students who are in the process of having to choose a career to pursue after their education in school (Marcionetti & Rossier, 2021). Not a few feel confused and have a view of how their future career plans will be. In line with research that has been conducted by finding that students with low self-esteem can inhibit themselves, causing them to be quickly satisfied with something that has been done, so that there is no development for themselves to progress (Barutçu Yıldırım & Demir, 2020).

From some of these studies, we can see that there are still many students who have low self-esteem. They tend not to have enough confidence and ability to handle compelling conditions or complete a performance successfully. In addition, religiosity is also known to have a significant contribution to influencing self-esteem. Religiosity includes not only beliefs about religious teachings, but also spiritual practices and values that help individuals feel accepted and have a place in social life. In this context, religiosity can act as a mediator that strengthens the relationship between life purpose and self-esteem. Life goals that are integrated with spiritual values can encourage individuals to believe more in their abilities and feel more valuable.

Religiosity comes from the Latin word *religio*, which is rooted in the word *religare*, which means "to bind." This concept illustrates that every religion or belief system has a set of rules and obligations that its adherents must adhere to (Nuruddaroini et al., 2024). The function of religion for humans, according to Jalaluddin, includes educational functions, rescue functions, peace functions, social supervision functions, transformative functions, creative functions, and sublimate functions. This shows that religiosity not only serves as a personal belief, but also as a guide in interacting with the social world (Suryadi & Hayat, 2021).

In connection with previous research, it was carried out to the extent that life goals and religiosity can affect students' self-esteem. This research can deepen how life goals and religiosity can contribute to improving students' self-esteem and provide a breakthrough to the role of counseling guidance in education, so that it is more optimal.

Method

In this study, an ex-post facto design quantitative method was used. The hypothesis test used a path analysis with 348 respondents spread across 6 high schools in Jebres District, Surakarta City, which was obtained by proportionate cluster random sampling technique. The procedure in this study can be seen in the following figure 1 scheme.

This study uses three psychological scales, namely the Purpose in Life (PIL) Test to measure life goals, consisting of 20 valid items with an r-count between 0.334 and Cronbach's alpha reliability of 0.885 (meaning of life goals 3 items, life direction 3 items, life motivation 3 items, satisfaction with life goals 5 items, the influence of life goals on decision-making 5 items and the contribution of life goals to others 1 item), The Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory (CSEI) to measure self-esteem, contains 24 items (power 6 items, significance 6 items, virtue 6 items and competence 6 items), with a validity r-count between 0.334 and Cronbach's alpha 0.817, and Centrality of Religiosity Scale (CRS) To measure religiosity, it consisted of 15 items (intellectual 3 items, ideology 3 items, public ritualism 3 items, individual ritualism 23 items, appreciation 3 items) with a validity r-count between 0.334 and Cronbach's alpha reliability of 0.815. Each scale uses a scale of 1–5 for each statement, from "Strongly Appropriate" to "Strongly Invalid."

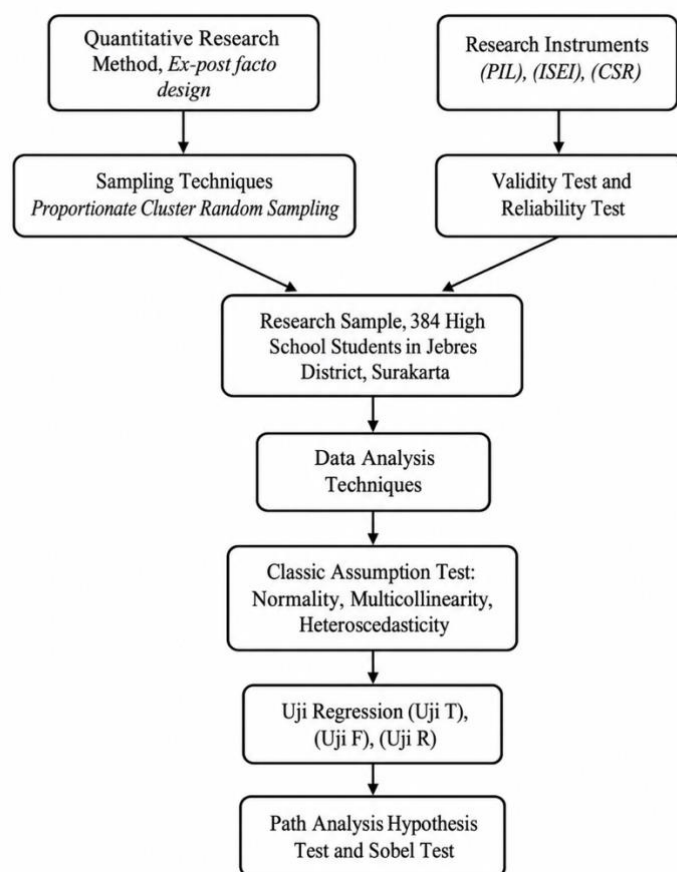


Figure 1. Research Scheme

The data collected in this study were analysed using a classical assumption test consisting of a normality test, a multicollinearity test, and a heteroscedasticity test, then a hypothesis test by using the regression test of linear path analysis and the sobel test in the SPSS 25.0 program. Regression testing uses two models, namely the first regression test to analyse the influence between life goals on self-esteem, the second regression test to analyse the indirect influence between life goals on self-esteem through religiosity in students.

Results and Discussion

The results of the data analysis present a description of data related to the intercorrelation of the mean and standard deviation of life goals, self-esteem and religiosity. The results of the descriptive analysis show the mean value and the Standard Deviation value according to table 1.

Table 1. Descriptive Analysis of Data

Variable	N	Mean	SD
Life purpose	348	0.421	7.861
Self-esteem	348	0.350	6.535
Religiosity	348	0.327	6.109

The results of descriptive statistics showed that *the mean* value was smaller than the standard deviation on all variables, this showed that the data values tended to be centred close to the mean and not spread too far. This condition can be interpreted as a stable representation of data, where the variation around the average value is not too large. In other words, most of the data is around the mean, which reflects the consistency and homogeneity of the data within the variables measured. The results of the path analysis test and the sobel test can be seen in table 2.

Table 2. Results of Path Analysis and Sobel Test

Predictor	β	t	p	R	R^2	F	p
Criterion:							
Religiosity				0.144	0.018	7.373	< 0.01
Life purpose	-0,144	-2.715	< 0.05				

Criterion: Self-esteem		0.407	0.161	34/337	< 0.01
Life purpose	0.196	3.938	< 0.01		
Religiosity	0.387	7.784	< 0.01		
Mediator	β	Zsobel	HERSELF	<i>p</i>	
Life purpose – Religiosity – Self-esteem	-0.056	3.165	0.041	< 0.05	

Based on the results of regression analysis according to table 2. shows that, (1) There is a direct relationship between life goals and self-esteem ($\beta = 0.196$), ($p < 0.01$), (2) There is a direct relationship between life goals and religiosity ($\beta = -0.144$), ($p < 0.01$), (3) There is a direct relationship between religiosity and self-esteem ($\beta = 0.387$), ($p < 0.01$) (4) There is an indirect relationship between life goals and doros prices through religiosity ($\beta = -0.056$), (Zsobel = -3.165), ($p < 0.05$).

The Influence of Life Purpose on Student Religiosity

The influence between life purpose and religiosity in students reflects a variety of diverse views. Life goals are often considered as aspects that provide direction, meaning, and motivation in life, but they actually contribute to religiosity, which is a person's beliefs, practices, and commitments to their religion or spiritual beliefs.

Research shows that students who have a clear life purpose tend to have higher levels of religiosity, as life purpose can be a medium for individuals to reflect on the spiritual values they believe in. These findings show that life goals not only provide a more structured direction, but can also strengthen students' relationship with their spiritual beliefs, creating a synergy between life purpose and religiosity.

Previous research has suggested that life goals are closely related to a person's level of religious involvement. In their view, individuals who have a clear purpose in life tend to be more involved in religious practice because it provides a strong foundation for interpreting spiritual beliefs more deeply. This discovery confirms the importance of life purpose as the main dimension in building a more meaningful relationship with the spiritual aspect (Park et al., 2012). These results are in line with research that life goals that include aspects such as virtue, devotion, or spiritual pursuit can strengthen a person's relationship with their religious beliefs. However, this depends on how individuals define their life goals and the extent to which they associate those goals with their religious beliefs.

In addition, individuals who have a clear purpose in life tend to be more involved in various religious activities, such as praying or worshipping regularly. This engagement is not just about performing rituals, but rather about a profound experience in which the individual feels connected to something greater than themselves, be it God, spiritual values, or universal meanings that transcend everyday life. This shows that there is a relationship between the search for meaning or purpose in life and the need for transcendental relationships, where religious activities become a means to strengthen these relationships. Thus, life goals not only guide individuals in personal achievement, but also strengthen their connection to spiritual beliefs, giving them a deeper sense of fulfillment (Ashcraft & Krause, 2007). The impact of religiosity by responsive life goals in this study provides evidence that the two roles complement each other, so that students in high school who have life goals show higher religiosity.

The Effect of Life Purpose on Self Esteem in Students

Life purpose is an important element in the formation of a person's personality and psychological well-being. Meanwhile, self-esteem is a person's belief in their worth and ability. It reflects how individuals value themselves and how much they feel valued in their environment.

These findings confirm that students who have a clear life purpose tend to have higher levels of self-esteem than those who do not have a definite direction in life. This is supported by the findings stating that individuals who have a clear purpose in life tend to have more self-control and optimism, which has a positive impact on their self-esteem. This research supports the hypothesis that life goals play a role in building a person's self-esteem, because individuals who feel their lives have a clear and meaningful purpose, will be more confident and self-respecting (Snyder & Lopez, 2005).

Other previous research, such as psychological well-being, also found a link between achieving life goals and self-esteem. Ryff argues that individuals who feel they have a purpose in life that is related to personal

achievement and contribution to society tend to have higher self-esteem. In the context of students, this can be seen from how students who have life goals related to self-development or long-term goals such as career, education, or social contribution, will be better able to maintain their sense of self-worth (Ryff, 1989).

In line with research, it was found that individuals who have meaningful life goals not only feel happier, but also show higher levels of self-esteem. This research supports the idea that life goals provide clear direction and meaning, which can help students feel more valued and confident in themselves, thus building stronger self-esteem (Steger et al., 2006).

Overall, it shows that life goals play an important role in building self-esteem in students. Meaningful life goals provide a clear direction and encourage individuals to grow, which increases self-confidence and self-esteem. However, it is important to consider the context and other factors that can affect this relationship, such as social support and the realism of the goals set.

The Effect of Religiosity on Student Self Esteem

Research on the relationship between religiosity and self-esteem in students shows that religiosity has a significant influence on their self-esteem. Religiosity, which includes the depth of a person's beliefs, practices, and commitment to religion or spiritual beliefs can affect how a person views himself. Various studies support that religiosity plays an important role in building and strengthening students' self-esteem, both through strengthening their sense of identity, social support, and providing a deeper meaning in life.

Research conducted by Yang found that religiosity is positively related to an individual's mental health and self-esteem. The study shows that individuals who are actively involved in religious activities or have strong spiritual beliefs tend to have higher self-esteem. This can happen because religiosity gives individuals a sense of acceptance, value, and protection by a greater power (such as God or the teachings of their religion). On the other hand, religious beliefs often teach positive values about oneself and life achievements, which can reinforce a positive perception of oneself.

According to the association between happiness, religiosity, and psychological well-being, it was found that individuals who were more religious tended to report higher levels of happiness and felt more valued by themselves. They stated that religiosity can help individuals to overcome life's difficulties, feel more satisfied with themselves, and have a positive outlook on the future (Biswas-Diener et al., 2011).

Similarly, research also supports the idea that religiosity has a significant influence on self-esteem. They found that religiosity provides a sense of control and emotional stability, which is essential for the development of self-esteem in adolescence. Students who are active in religious practices tend to have a greater sense of security because they feel supported by the religious community and believe that their lives have a deeper meaning. In its conclusion that religious students often feel more valued, accepted, and empowered by their beliefs, which in turn strengthens their self-esteem. However, it is important to note that authentic religiosity and practiced in a profound way has more effect on self-esteem than religiosity that is purely ritualistic or driven by external pressures. Therefore, religiosity that provides meaning and inner peace has more potential to strengthen self-esteem in students (Smith, 1994).

The Role of Religiosity in Mediating Life Purpose and Self Esteem in Students

Some studies have found that life goals have a positive impact on self-esteem, while religiosity is also considered an important factor in shaping self-esteem. However, the results of the study showing that religiosity does not mediate the relationship between life goals and self-esteem in students leads to a more complex understanding of the interaction between these three variables. These results indicate that although religiosity has a relationship with self-esteem, it does not play a significant role as a mediator in the relationship between life purpose and self-esteem in students.

Research shows that life goals are related to psychological well-being, including self-esteem. This study reveals that individuals who have clear and meaningful life goals are more likely to have higher self-esteem. However, the results found do not support the idea that religiosity acts as a mediator in this relationship (Steger et al., 2006).

In line with what is put forward by about psychological well-being also found that life goals have a significant impact on psychological well-being and self-esteem, but religiosity has not been shown to play an important role as a mediator in these relationships. Ryff emphasizes that achieving meaningful life goals is related to increased self-esteem, but it is more related to self-development, personal achievement, and the search for meaning, which does not necessarily depend on religious factors (Ryff, 1989).

Based on the analysis of the results of the research and discussion above, it was found that religiosity does not mediate the relationship between life goals and students' self-esteem, providing an understanding that the influence of religiosity is more direct and separate from the influence of life goals. Meaningful life goals and

personal accomplishments have a more direct effect on self-esteem, while religiosity can serve as a factor that supports or strengthens self-esteem without having to act as an intermediary in the relationship between life goals and self-esteem. On the other hand, counselors are expected to facilitate discussions about long-term and short-term goals, as well as how these achievements can provide a sense of personal satisfaction. This guidance that focuses on developing life goals can be complemented by self-reflection exercises to help students understand their strengths and potential. Learning about how to set and plan life goals, as well as providing strategies to achieve them, can be very effective in improving students' self-esteem.

However, this study has limitations in the form of a population scope that only involves certain levels of education, namely high school students (SMA) or equivalent, so the results obtained may not be generalized to other age groups or education levels. Furthermore, the aspects of religiosity measured in this study only include general dimensions, such as involvement in religious activities or spiritual beliefs as a whole.

Additionally, the study has not considered external factors that may affect students' self-esteem or religiosity, such as the influence of family environment, peers, or broader social experiences. In this study, it was also found that religiosity did not play a significant role as a mediator in the relationship between life goals and students' self-esteem. Thus, researchers can then engage a wider sample by considering factors that have not yet been measured or identified in this study.

Conclusion

This study concludes that life goals have a significant influence on religiosity. In addition, religiosity has a positive effect on self-esteem and life goals have an effect on self-esteem. However, religiosity does not function as a mediator that has a significant effect on the relationship between life goals and self-esteem in students, these findings show that students who have life goals, have high self-esteem without the role or influence of religiosity. The implications for guidance and counseling can design programs that help students avoid external environmental disturbances that can lower their self-esteem. The program may include an approach that integrates the reflection of spiritual values with meaningful life goals.

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