

## The Positive Role of Self-Concept and Religiosity in Reducing the Sense of Alienation in College Students

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### ABSTRACT

This study aimed to empirically explore the influence of self-concept and religiosity on the sense of alienation in university students. The population in this study consisted of 125 students with a purposive sampling technique based on the Slovin formula; 95 students were determined as research subjects. The measurement tool used in this study was a scale compiled by the researcher himself. The scales used were a self-concept scale based on aspects proposed by Hurlock, a religiosity scale based on aspects from Fetzer, and a sense of alienation scale referring to aspects raised by Hurlock. The data analysis method used was multiple regression. The results of the hypothesis analysis showed that the correlation coefficient was 0.745 with  $p = 0.000$  where ( $p < 0.01$ ), meaning that there was a positive and significant influence between self-concept and religiosity in reducing the feeling of alienation in college students.

### INTRODUCTION

International students are part of the academic community in higher education (De Wit & Altbach, 2021). Based on the Government Regulation of the Minister of National Education of the Republic of Indonesia No. 25 of 2007, international students are members of foreign countries who study for higher education in Indonesia (BPK, 2016). UIN (State Islamic University) Jakarta, a state university that implements these rules, has its reasons for international students. Of course, while studying in Indonesia, international students have the exact needs as local students (Beech, 2018). This is because they have academic tasks that must be completed, like local students (Van Horne et al., 2018).

Students who study overseas have a double challenge: to succeed in their studies and to adapt to their living environment (Heng, 2018). This experience can bring many benefits, such as cultural learning and personal growth through cross-cultural adjustment (Yang et al., 2018). Entering into a culture with some differences makes one exist in another culture, whereas in a new environment, one will face different circumstances (Fadhillah et al., 2017; Kannan & Munday, 2018; Syakhrani & Kamil, 2022).

As a result, people have an unexpected adverse reaction to the new environment; this is called culture shock which is described as a dramatic adaptation challenge (Furnham, 2019). Culture shock is a form of psychological discomfort associated with unfavorable emotional responses that lead to feelings of confusion and nervousness that cause mental distress and accompanying difficulties (AlSaleh & Moufakkir, 2019; Furnham, 2019; Pacheco, 2020).

Strange feelings will arise for individuals who feel unprepared in a new environment (McCloughen et al., 2020; Syaputri, 2022; Thompson et al., 2021). This will also cause a sense of

unfamiliarity and it takes a long time for individuals to adjust to new areas (Chatterton & Pusey, 2020; Efendi & Wahyudi, 2021; Hofhuis et al., 2019). A sense of alienation can be seen in thinking, gestures, behavior, and actions when dealing with life problems (Loades et al., 2020; Sihabudin, 2022).

Individuals who cannot overcome problems wisely will be vulnerable and easily affected (Findiani, 2020). International students tend to be more prone to inner conflict within themselves (Cao et al., 2021; Forbes-Mewett & Sawyer, 2019; Ryan & Henderson, 2018), the causes of which are various, one of which is language and academic anxiety (Yu & Moskal, 2019). This condition is even suspected to impact these international students' social and living conditions (Alharbi & Smith, 2018).

The need for initial interaction to start relationships with others (Block et al., 2020; Guzman & Lewis, 2020; Kartikarini & Purwanti, 2022; Skjuve et al., 2021) which, of course, cannot be separated from one's courage in this case, the self-concept. Islam teaches that humans are naturally fitrah (original form), which can have a positive or negative potential, good and bad, the reality of which depends on one's own choices (Hamzah & Yusril, 2023; Marandika, 2018). Meanwhile, the most crucial element of humans is the heart (Saputra et al., 2019).

Human behavior depends on managing his heart (Bariroh, 2019). A person's behavior will be the same as how that person sees himself if a self-concept refers to how a person assesses himself and how much a person thinks he is valuable as an individual (Bello, n.d.; Ismail et al., 2022; Lodi-Smith & DeMarree, 2018; Saraff & Tiwari, 2020; Simanjuntak & Fitriana, 2020). Self-concept is the essential thing in an individual; self-concept is the framework that decides when to socialize in the environment (Roddy et al., 2020).

Religion is essential to distinguish humans from other creatures (Supriadi, 2018). Religious life is a reflection of human thinking life itself (Nirwana, 2020). Religious attitudes must also be fulfilled appropriately so that the person within the individual can feel calm (Evola, 2018; Ghaibi et al., 2022; Rohmah, 2020). This religious attitude is called religiosity; by having a religious attitude, a person can believe, recognize, understand, know, and also apply the teachings of the religion he believes in in everyday life (Bowie, 2021; Hamid, 2020; Malone & Dadswell, 2018; Sari, 2019; Utami & Setiawati, 2018).

The research results of Agarwala et al. (2019) stated that religiosity affects consumers, such as materialism, intolerance, ethics, and risk aversion. This also impacts consumer's attitudes toward products and economic shopping behavior. Research conducted by Ardi et al. (2021) on "religious schema and tolerance towards alienated groups in Indonesia" shows a need to increase tolerance and reassess religiosity to reduce alienation.

Findings from research conducted by Sharif et al. (2018) stated that after controlling for demographic and health characteristics, positive and negative religious coping behaviors were significantly associated with the experience of death and depression. There was an interaction effect between negative religious coping and the extent of the disease with a significant positive relationship to the experience of death and depression. The purpose of this research led to the influence of self-concept and religiosity on the sense of alienation in college students.

## METHODS

This research used a mixed method research approach, where researchers combined both qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis methods in a single study. It allowed researchers to understand complex phenomena qualitatively as well as to explain these phenomena through numbers, charts, and fundamental statistical analysis (Creswell, 1999; Leech et al., 2010). Explaining the results of interviews and observations strengthens the research results obtained in qualitative research (Bazeley, 2018).

The population of this study comprised international UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta students, with a total of 125 active students. The characteristics of the population determined in this

study were undergraduate students who are still registered as international students who are actively participating in the learning process, physically and psychologically healthy, residing in the ma'had UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta and boarding houses around the ma'had.

The purposive sampling technique was used due to the characteristics of the smaller sample (Nurlan, 2019). The sample was obtained by using the Slovin formula. There were ninety-five students chosen as the sample in this research. The data collection procedure can be carried out in two stages (Rashid et al., 2019; Supena et al., 2021). The first stage of preparation was where the researcher carried out procedures related to administration, such as submitting a research application letter to the UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Postgraduate Campus addressed to the International Cooperation Service Center (PLKI), receiving confirmation from the PLKI as the manager explicitly assigned to serve international students, and asking permission from the head of the PLKI to research international students. The second stage was the implementation of research, which was carried out in Ma'had and boarding houses around Ma'had.

In quantitative data, researchers spread the scale according to the number of research respondents (Aithal & Aithal, 2020), there are 95 respondents. In quantitative data, researchers used three scales as data collection tools. These research scales consisted of a self-concept scale based on aspects of Hurlock's self-concept, a religiosity scale based on the dimensions of Fetzer's Multidimensional Measurement of Religiousness and Spirituality for Use in Health Research, and a sense of alienation scale based on aspects of Hurlock's sense of alienation, where each scale has five alternative answers. Each answer was scored according to the type of statement. Statements that did not support (unfavorable) were given an inverse value from statements that supported (favorable). Alternative answers and scores can be seen in Table 1 below.

**Table 1.** Alternative Answers and Scaled Item Scores

<b>Favorable Statement</b>	<b>Item Score</b>	<b>Unfavorable Statement</b>
STS (Strong Disagree)	1	SS (Strongly Agree)
TS (Disagree)	2	S (Agree)
AS (Somewhat Agree)	3	AS (Somewhat Agree)
S (Agree)	4	TS (Disagree)
SS (Strongly Agree)	5	STS (Strong Disagree)

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The researchers' findings indicated that international students' problems were related to the interaction of the social environment in the form of action. This action was also related to self-concept, where self-concept shaped how international students behave and start. A positive self-concept will judge things as good and accept the situation, but a negative self-concept tends to be unable to accept the situation (Roney et al., 2022).

This was also related to how international students made decisions. When international students make decisions, there would be an influence of religious values that would be applied accidentally. Religion can neutralize behavior so that when the individual decides on something, this person would think about whether it would produce something worthwhile or not, which ultimately achieved his desire, the farthest from feeling unappreciated, uncomfortable, and so on, especially avoiding feelings unfamiliar with something or a new environment that he is familiar with (Temple et al., 2018).

After statistical analysis, it was found that the contribution of self-concept and religiosity as a whole to a sense of alienation in international students at UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta as follows: the correlation value (R) was 0.863, or 86.3%, with an R square value of 0.745, or 74.5%, meaning that the contribution of self-concept and religiosity as a whole to a sense of alienation was 74.5%. In comparison, the remaining 25.5% was influenced by other aspects that can influence a sense of alienation, as seen in Table 2.

**Table 2.** Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. The error in the Estimate
1	.863a	.745	.708	4.738

a. Predictors: (Constant), Organizational, psychological aspect\_KD, Forgiveness, Values, physical aspect\_KD, Beliefs, Commitment, Religious Coping, Meaning, Religious Support, Daily Experiences, Private Practice

In the results of the ANOVA regression analysis of a sense of alienation, it can be seen that the significance value contained in this study or the value of the influence of self-concept and religiosity on a sense of alienation was 0.000. This showed that the overall relationship between self-concept and religiosity towards a sense of alienation was at a significant value of 94%, or  $0.000 < 0.05$ . The conclusion was that the aspects contained in the self-concept and religiosity variables can significantly predict a sense of alienation, as seen in Table 3.

**Table 3.** Annova

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	5383.649	12	448.637	19.988	.000
Residual	1840.499	82	22.445		
Total	7224.147	94			

a. Predictors: (Constant), Organizational, psychological aspect\_KD, Forgiveness, Values, physical aspect\_KD, Beliefs, Commitment, Religious Coping, Meaning, Religious Support, Daily Experiences, Private Practice

b. Dependent Variable: A Sense of Alienation

One of the factors that cause individuals to experience a sense of alienation is language and cultural differences. This is in line with what happened to the three research informants in this study; the three teenage research informants were students from various countries studying at UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta. This is in line with research conducted by [Cristobal Salinas \(2022\)](#) on the experiences of Middle Eastern Muslim male students of higher education in the United States, which suggested that Middle Eastern Muslim male students of US higher education must fight negative perceptions of Middle Eastern, Muslim men, and experience opposing social and academic challenges. However, despite the challenges, Islamophobia, and xenophobia, Middle Eastern Muslim male students expressed how their families and the religion of Islam influenced them to commit to education.

If individuals can do this well, it will indirectly produce cognitive understanding, leading to intercultural communication competence. This happens because positive communication has been created with the new cultural environment, which was in line with a research conducted by [Dalimunthe \(2022\)](#). If you want to obtain intercultural communication competence, international students need much time. This is due to the need for good intercultural communication among international students, such as awareness and desire to know, learn, understand, and respond to every phenomenon of cultural interaction.

When individuals entered a social relationship, they tend to feel strange in the new cultural environment, so they must adapt and adjust. In addition, factors that tend to occur early in the minds and thoughts of international students entering a new cultural environment are the emergence of stereotypical thoughts, prejudice, uncertainty, anxiety, or discriminatory attitude (racism) toward the new culture against him.

This eventually made them discover the new culture's characteristic patterns, language, customs, food, and the meanings of symbols used by the culture. This situation was reflected in the research conducted by Bahfiarti on Malaysian students in Makassar. The study's results revealed that the similarity of Malay cultural roots and the typography of the same region still gave rise to feelings of culture shock. The difference in cultural background raised uncertainty and anxiety in Malaysian students as migrant students in Makassar City.

Cultural differences often make it difficult for international students to interact and establish close relationships with local students because they were used to living in their previous cultural environment ([Govinda & Hanami, 2023](#)). Cultural differences caused individuals to have difficulty

adjusting and to hinder their intercultural communication competence. Such circumstances included feeling treated differently in interacting with locals, not mastering the Indonesian language well, and being uncomfortable with existing cultural differences.

The hindrance of effective communication occurred due to differences in communication behavior, which can lead to differences in perception. This situation required individuals to play an active role in understanding various information about the new cultural environment to carry out intercultural interactions better to produce effective communication with the new cultural environment. However, what needs to be remembered was how good the interaction is depends on the motivation and willingness of each individual to address, understand, process, and respond to every communication stimulus received from the new environment.

Research conducted by [Muwaga \(2020\)](#) found research findings that the social environment indirectly affected adolescent sexual self-regulation. Thus, self-concept is also inseparable from the meaning of humans, who always behave to meet their needs. His nature as a human being encourages him to constantly make changes along with the changing needs of his life that continue to run. As humans, the needs are the same: clothing, food, and shelter, but the way to achieve fulfillment is not the same. Not all individuals successfully meet their needs; some are constrained by materials or something else.

They are describing something important for someone in directing their life, as well as a tool to direct that life and, in other words, seeing how a person's behavior is pouring a view of religious meaning into his life. By living various religious values, humans can respond to all life's difficulties well; all things take time, cannot be instantaneous, and need awareness, patience, and prayer. With high awareness and good judgment, it will have a positive impact. This is also in line with what Farihah stated that religiosity will affect a sense of optimism, resignation, etc.

This also aligns with research conducted by [Utami \(2022\)](#), which stated that religious beliefs and spiritual intelligence simultaneously and significantly affected self-regulation. In other words, religious beliefs and spiritual intelligence strongly predicted the level of self-regulation. In addition, spiritual intelligence partly has a significant effect on self-regulation, where the higher the spiritual intelligence, the higher the self-regulation, and religious beliefs have a significant positive effect on self-regulation.

Regarding social change, religion will be a very effective tool to encourage change if, in society, there are no other motives that rival religion as a motivator of action. When religious impulses still underlie all human activities, then at that time, religion will quickly become a driver of change, and vice versa. To address the factors contributing to international students' cultural, social, academic, and psychological adjustment, international students' early life experiences, resilience, self-efficacy, spirituality, social support, coping styles, personality, emotional intelligence, and culture are essential to the adjustment process.

This is also in line with the research conducted by [Kenia et al. \(2023\)](#); based on the research findings, it is known that religiosity impacted academic fraud. In addition, Islamic religiosity and perceived behavioral control affected student academic fraud.

Every human being who lives on the surface of this earth must need religion. This seems to have become a decree of God (sunnatullah). Religion here is made as norms or rules that each adherent must carry out to get peace and happiness in their daily activities. The attitude of religiosity can shape how individuals relate to various cultures of life and existing systems.

This study supported previous findings, which conclude that religiosity weakens the positive influence of life stress. The role of religiosity as a moderator of the role of life stress on observed behavior has also been carried out by several researchers.

## CONCLUSION

Self-concept on physical aspects has a positive impact on the sense of alienation. Similarly, perceived religiosity also positively influenced the sense of alienation. Furthermore, self-concept and perceived religiosity influenced international students' sense of alienation. The implications of this



study were significant to optimize the self-concept and religiosity of international students so that they do not feel foreign when studying in other countries.

This research is expected to provide input and contributions for students and researchers in advance in understanding the self-concept and religiosity of international students. It is recommended for international students that physicality is not for comparison, but things that must be accepted and grateful, sunnatullah that must be maintained. Our fellow humans complement each other. To future researchers who are interested in the problems carried out by the author, it is recommended to expand and deepen the study in research, especially those related to self-concept as well as religiosity formed in international students, not only knowing the self-concept and religiosity, but it is also advisable to deepen the ability to understand cases in the field regarding the sense of alienation in international students so that the findings obtained become more diverse.

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