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## Tarbiyyah Ruhiyah and Deviant Behavior in Islamic Schools: An Empirical Sem-Based Study

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### Abstract

*Deviant behavior among students continues to challenge value-based educational institutions, raising concerns about the effectiveness of spirituality-oriented education in shaping moral self-regulation. This study investigates the role of tarbiyyah ruhiyyah as an internalized spiritual education model in reducing deviant behavior among Islamic secondary school students, with particular emphasis on the differential effects of its core dimensions. Using a quantitative design, survey data were collected from 120 students at a formal Islamic school in Indonesia and analyzed through Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). The findings indicate that spiritually internalized dimensions – namely, individual spiritual strengthening, interaction with the Qur'an, mentoring and moral coaching, and awareness of tazkiyatun nafs – significantly reduce deviant behavior. In contrast, routine religious practices performed without reflective depth show no significant behavioral effect. These results demonstrate that spirituality contributes to moral regulation only when it operates as an internalized, reflective, and relational process rather than as ritual compliance. The study advances moral and character education theory by empirically distinguishing transformative spirituality from ritualistic religiosity and offers practical insights for designing spirituality-based character education programs applicable across diverse cultural and educational contexts.*

**Keywords:** *Tarbiyyah Ruhiyah; Deviant Behavior; Spiritual Education; Moral Mentoring; Islamic Schools.*

## A. Introduction

Deviant behaviour among *madrasah* students—manifested in absenteeism, disrespect toward teachers, neglect of religious obligations, and engagement in socially inappropriate activities—has become a persistent and widely documented concern in contemporary Islamic education (Kamila et al., 2021; Rangkuti, 2021). This phenomenon is particularly troubling because it occurs within institutions whose primary mandate is the moral and spiritual formation of Muslim youth. Beyond immediate disciplinary challenges, such behaviour signals a more profound crisis in moral internalisation that threatens the credibility of Islamic educational institutions as agents of character development. Consequently, deviant behaviour in religiously oriented schools must be understood not merely as a managerial issue, but as a foundational educational problem.

A central paradox emerges from this situation: deviant behaviour persists despite the formal integration of religious subjects within the *madrasah* curriculum (Thoyib et al., 2024). This condition suggests that dominant instructional practices—largely centered on the cognitive transmission of religious knowledge—have limited capacity to translate doctrinal understanding into consistent moral conduct (Abdullah et al., 2025; Amin et al., 2025). In many formal *madrasah* settings, religious education remains focused on external compliance, rule enforcement, and ritual correctness, while insufficiently cultivating internal moral awareness and self-regulation (Mariani et al., 2025; Fatchiatuzahro et al., 2024). As a result, students may demonstrate cognitive mastery of religious concepts without corresponding ethical behaviour, revealing a critical disconnection between religious instruction and moral internalization.

From the perspectives of Islamic education and moral psychology, *tarbiyah ruhiyah* offers an alternative paradigm by prioritizing inner transformation as the foundation of behavioural change. Rooted in the concept of *tazkiyatun nafs*—the purification of the soul—this approach emphasises spiritual discipline, reflective consciousness, and sincere religiosity as drivers of moral action (Khalidbek & Zahed, 2023; Zhu et al., 2020). Theologically and pedagogically, *tazkiyatun nafs* has long been recognised as both a moral framework and an applied educational orientation that integrates spiritual awareness with ethical accountability (Ghofar et al., 2018; Soc. Psychol. Probl. Mod. Soc., 2019). Empirical evidence from *pesantren*-based education



further indicates that spiritually grounded practices can align internal convictions with external moral conduct, fostering discipline and ethical consistency.

However, existing studies reveal two important limitations. First, investigations of *tazkiyatun nafs*-based *tarbiyah ruhiyah* have predominantly focused on pesantren contexts, where spiritual immersion is structurally embedded in daily life. Empirical studies examining its implementation within formal *madrasah* institutions—characterised by bureaucratic structures, standardised curricula, and limited spiritual intensity—remain scarce. Second, prior research on spiritual education and student behaviour, while reporting positive outcomes such as emotional regulation, responsibility, and ethical awareness, has been largely descriptive or qualitative in nature (Mukhibat et al., 2024; Pong, 2021; Tolchah & Mu'ammara, 2019). Quantitative studies that statistically differentiate the behavioural effects of specific spiritual components—such as worship routines, Qur'anic engagement, mentoring, and self-reflection—are still limited (Abidin et al., 2023; Çoruh, 2022; Fatah et al., 2022). As a result, spiritual education is often treated as a uniform construct, obscuring the mechanisms through which particular practices succeed or fail in shaping behaviour.

This gap becomes particularly evident in the case of Madrasah Aliyah Al-Mutawally, which provides a relevant empirical setting for examining the effectiveness of *tarbiyah ruhiyah* in a formal institutional context. Despite the implementation of structured spiritual programs—including congregational prayers, Qur'anic recitation (*tadarus*), *dzikir*, religious mentoring, and guided self-reflection—persistent problems related to discipline, obedience in worship, and behavioural regulation continue to be reported (Abdul Gamal et al., 2022; Marotang, 2020). This contradiction raises a critical scholarly question: if spiritual programs are present, why do behavioural problems persist? More importantly, which dimensions of *tarbiyah ruhiyah* function as effective mechanisms of moral self-regulation, and which remain largely ritualistic?

Accordingly, the novelty of this study lies in its explicit empirical differentiation between significant and non-significant spiritual dimensions within a *tarbiyah ruhiyah* model grounded in *tazkiyatun nafs*, as applied in a formal *madrasah* context. By demonstrating that not all spiritual practices function equally in reducing deviant behaviour, this study advances a more precise, testable, and evidence-based framework



of Islamic spiritual education—one that distinguishes transformative religiosity from ritualistic compliance. Using a quantitative approach, this study aims to: (1) examine the effect of *tarbiyah ruhiyah* on deviant behaviour among *madrasah* students; (2) analyse the differential influence of worship routines, Qur'anic engagement, mentoring, and self-purification; and (3) identify specific spiritual dimensions that significantly contribute to behavioural improvement. Through this approach, the study seeks to refine theoretical models of Islamic moral education and provide empirically grounded insights for character education strategies in formal Islamic institutions.

## B. Method

This study employed a quantitative survey design to examine the effect of spiritual education (*tarbiyah ruhiyah*) on reducing deviant behaviour among *madrasah* students (Takona, 2024). The research was conducted at Madrasah Aliyah Al-Mutawally during the 2024/2025 academic year. To ensure proportional representation across grade levels, stratified random sampling was applied, resulting in a total sample of 120 students.

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire developed and adapted from established theoretical constructs of *tarbiyah ruhiyah*, including worship behaviour, Qur'anic engagement, mentoring, and *tazkiyatun nafs*, alongside indicators of deviant behaviour such as absenteeism, disobedience, and moral misconduct (Cheung, 2021). Content validity was assessed through expert judgment, and a pilot test was conducted to examine internal consistency. All constructs demonstrated satisfactory reliability, with Cronbach's alpha values exceeding 0.70, indicating acceptable measurement consistency (Hernández-Campos et al., 2023).

Data collection took place over a two-week period in June 2025, during the 2024/2025 academic year. The collected data were analysed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) with SmartPLS software, which was selected for its suitability in analysing latent constructs with small-to-medium sample sizes and non-normal data distributions (Hair & Alamer, 2022). The measurement and structural models were evaluated using established criteria, including reliability, convergent and discriminant validity, path coefficients, and hypothesis testing.



Ethical considerations were strictly observed in accordance with international research standards for human participant research. Informed consent was obtained from students, their guardians, and participating teachers. Participation was voluntary, and confidentiality and anonymity were ensured through coded responses. Formal institutional approval was granted by the leadership of Madrasah Aliyah Al-Mutawally prior to data collection.

### C. Results and Discussion

This study investigated the influence of *tarbiyyah ruhiyyah* and its dimensions on deviant behavior among students at Madrasah Aliyah Al-Mutawally. Using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM-PLS), the relationships between six constructs: daily worship, Qur'anic interaction, individual spiritual strengthening, mentoring and moral coaching, *tazkiyatun nafs* awareness, and overall *tarbiyyah ruhiyyah* were tested against deviant behavior. The findings are presented below according to each theoretical construct, supported by quantitative results.

#### 1. Results

##### a. Measurement quality and model fit assessment

Prior to evaluating the structural relationships, the adequacy of the measurement and structural models was evaluated using reliability, validity, and overall model fit criteria. Construct reliability and convergent validity were tested to ensure internal consistency and adequate variance explanation by the indicators. In addition, global model fit indices, including SRMR, d\_ULS, d\_G, the Chi-square statistic, and NFI, were used to assess how well the proposed model fit the observed data. These assessments work together to provide a crucial methodological basis, ensuring that future structural findings are grounded in a reliable, valid, and well-specified model.

Table 1. Construct reliability and convergent validity

No.	Construct	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability (CR)	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)	Assessment
1.	Tarbiyyah Ruhiyyah	0.91	0.93	0.68	Reliable & Valid



No.	Construct	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability (CR)	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)	Assessment
2.	Daily Worship	0.78	0.84	0.52	Reliable & Valid
3.	Interaction with the Qur'an	0.86	0.90	0.64	Reliable & Valid
4.	Individual Spiritual Strengthening	0.89	0.92	0.70	Reliable & Valid
5.	Mentoring and Coaching of Morals	0.85	0.89	0.61	Reliable & Valid
6.	Tazkiyatun Nafs Awareness	0.90	0.93	0.69	Reliable & Valid
7.	Deviant Behavior	0.88	0.91	0.66	Reliable & Valid

Table 1 shows the results of the concept reliability and convergent validity assessments. Cronbach's Alpha values for all constructs range from 0.78 to 0.91, which is above the minimum requirement of 0.70. The Composite Reliability (CR) scores across all constructions range from 0.84 to 0.93, indicating acceptable internal consistency. Furthermore, the average variance extracted (AVE) values for all constructs are greater than 0.50, ranging from 0.52 to 0.70. These findings show that each construct accounts for a sufficient proportion of the variance in its indicators, demonstrating that the measurement model meets the criteria for construct reliability and convergent validity.

Following the reliability and validity assessments, the overall suitability of the structural model was evaluated using global fit indices to assess how well the proposed model fit the observed data.

*Table 2. Model fit summary*

No.	Fit Index	Value	Recommended Threshold
1.	SRMR	0.062	≤ 0.08
2.	d_ULS	0.843	≤ 95% bootstrap quantile
3.	d_G	0.612	≤ 95% bootstrap quantile
4.	Chi-Square	412.376	Descriptive (PLS-SEM)
5.	NFI	0.912	≥ 0.90



The model fit indices are presented in Table 2. The Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) value is 0.062, which is below the recommended threshold of 0.08. The  $d_{ULS}$  value is 0.843, and the  $d_G$  value is 0.612, both of which fall within acceptable limits based on the 95% bootstrap quantile criterion. The Chi-square statistic is 412.376 and is reported descriptively, as it is not used as a primary fit criterion in PLS-SEM. In addition, the Normed Fit Index (NFI) value of 0.912 exceeds the recommended minimum of 0.90. Overall, these results indicate that the structural model provides an acceptable fit to the observed data.

### b. Structural Model Explanatory

Beyond path significance, the structural model was evaluated using R-square ( $R^2$ ) and F-square ( $f^2$ ) statistics. R-square indicates the proportion of variance in the endogenous construct explained by the predictors, while F-square assesses the relative effect size of each exogenous variable in contributing to that explained variance.

Table 3. R-Square ( $R^2$ ) Value

	R Square	R Square Adjusted
Deviant Behavior	0.780	0.768

Table 3 presents the R-square ( $R^2$ ) and adjusted R-square values for the endogenous construct. The R-square value for Deviant Behavior is 0.780, indicating that the exogenous variables included in the model collectively explain 78.0% of the variance in this construct, which reflects a substantial level of predictive accuracy. This high R-square value suggests that the model captures the key determinants influencing deviant behavior and that the relationships specified in the structural framework are empirically robust. The adjusted R-square value is 0.768, showing a slightly reduced but still highly consistent level of explained variance after accounting for the number of predictors included in the model. The relatively small difference between the R-square and adjusted R-square values further indicates that the model is not overfitted and that each predictor contributes meaningfully to the overall explanation. Taken together, these results demonstrate that the structural model possesses strong explanatory power for deviant behavior and provides a reliable empirical basis for interpreting the effects of the exogenous variables within the proposed analytical framework.



Meanwhile, building on the strong explanatory power indicated by the R-square results, the analysis was extended to examine the relative contribution of each exogenous construct. This was achieved through the f-square effect-size assessment, which provides insight into the magnitude of influence each predictor exerts on the endogenous variable in the structural model.

Table 4. F-Square ( $f^2$ ) Effect Size

No.	Exogenous Variable	f-Square ( $f^2$ )	Effect Size
1.	Tarbiyah Ruhiyah	0.62	Large
2.	Daily Worship	0.01	Small / Negligible
3.	Interaction with the Qur'an	0.18	Medium
4.	Individual Spiritual Strengthening	0.41	Large
5.	Mentoring and Coaching of Morals	0.29	Medium
6.	Tazkiyatun Nafs Awareness	0.55	Large

Table 4 presents the f-square ( $f^2$ ) effect size values for each exogenous variable in the structural model. *Tarbiyah Ruhiyah* shows a large effect size ( $f^2 = 0.62$ ) on deviant behaviour. Daily Worship has a small to negligible effect size ( $f^2 = 0.01$ ). Interaction with the Qur'an demonstrates a medium effect size ( $f^2 = 0.18$ ). Individual Spiritual Strengthening exhibits a large effect size ( $f^2 = 0.41$ ), while Mentoring and Coaching of Morals shows a medium effect size ( $f^2 = 0.29$ ). Finally, *Tazkiyatun Nafs Awareness* presents a large effect size ( $f^2 = 0.55$ ). These results indicate varying degrees of contribution of the exogenous variables to the explained variance in deviant behaviour.

After determining the structural model's explanatory power, the analysis focused on the specific hypothesised relationships by evaluating the direction, magnitude, and significance of the structural path coefficients among the constructs.

### c. Structural Path Relationships

Following the evaluation of measurement quality and model fit, the structural relationships among constructs were examined through path coefficient analysis. Path coefficients indicate the direction, magnitude, and statistical significance of the hypothesized relationships, providing empirical evidence on how each exogenous construct is associated with the endogenous variable within the proposed model.



Table 5. Path coefficients of the structural model

No.	Hypothesis	Structural Path	Path Coefficient ( $\beta$ )	T-Statistic	P-Value	Decision
1.	H1	Tarbiyyah Ruhhiyyah → Deviant Behavior	-0.752	10.743	0.000	Supported
2.	H2	Daily Worship → Deviant Behavior	-0.082	0.837	0.402	Not Supported
3.	H3	Interaction with the Qur'an → Deviant Behavior	-0.394	4.864	0.000	Supported
4.	H4	Individual Spiritual Strengthening → Deviant Behavior	-0.615	8.425	0.000	Supported
5.	H5	Mentoring and Coaching of Morals → Deviant Behavior	-0.481	5.726	0.000	Supported
6.	H6	Tazkiyatun Nafs Awareness → Deviant Behavior	-0.701	10.309	0.000	Supported

Table 5 presents the results of the structural path analysis testing the proposed hypotheses. The analysis indicates that the majority of hypothesized relationships exhibit statistically significant path coefficients, whereas one path does not.

First, the path from *Tarbiyyah Ruhhiyyah* to Deviant Behaviour shows a negative and statistically significant coefficient ( $\beta = -0.752$ ;  $T = 10.743$ ;  $p = 0.000$ ), supporting Hypothesis 1. In contrast, the path from Daily Worship to Deviant Behaviour is negative but not statistically significant ( $\beta = -0.082$ ;  $T = 0.837$ ;  $p = 0.402$ ). Accordingly, Hypothesis 2 is not supported.

Furthermore, the path from Interaction with the Qur'an to Deviant Behaviour demonstrates a statistically significant negative relationship ( $\beta = -0.394$ ;  $T = 4.864$ ;  $p = 0.000$ ), providing support for Hypothesis 3. Similarly, Individual Spiritual Strengthening shows a significant negative association with Deviant Behaviour ( $\beta = -0.615$ ;  $T = 8.425$ ;  $p = 0.000$ ), which means supporting Hypothesis 4.



In addition, the path from Mentoring and Coaching of Morals to Deviant Behaviour is statistically significant and negative ( $\beta = -0.481$ ;  $T = 5.726$ ;  $p = 0.000$ ), indicating support for Hypothesis 5. Finally, *Tazkiyatun Nafs* Awareness exhibits a strong and statistically significant negative relationship with Deviant Behaviour ( $\beta = -0.701$ ;  $T = 10.309$ ;  $p = 0.000$ ), thereby supporting Hypothesis 6.

Overall, five of the six hypothesized structural paths are supported by the empirical data, while one path is not statistically significant.

## 2. Discussion

The findings of this study demonstrate that *tarbiyyah ruhiyyah* operates as a significant determinant of students' deviant behaviour when examined through its internalized spiritual dimensions (Isgandarova, 2019; Saqib et al., 2020). Specifically, interaction with the Qur'an, individual spiritual strengthening, mentoring and moral coaching, and awareness of *tazkiyatun nafs* exhibit statistically significant negative effects on deviant behaviour, whereas routine daily worship practices show no statistically meaningful influence. This empirical pattern indicates that spiritual engagement does not function uniformly as a behavioural regulator. Instead, the effectiveness of spiritual education depends on the degree to which religious practices are internalized as reflective, self-regulating moral dispositions rather than performed as procedural obligations (Obaid et al., 2024; Aminudin & Hasan, 2025). The distinction observed in this study provides concrete evidence that internalized spirituality and ritual observance operate through different psychological and pedagogical mechanisms in shaping student behaviour.

These findings align with social cognitive theory, which emphasizes that behaviour is shaped through internal cognitive processes developed via observation, modelling, and reinforcement within meaningful social contexts (Schunk & DiBenedetto, 2020; Vygotsky & Cole, 2018). Within this framework, mentoring, moral coaching, and communal spiritual engagement serve as critical mediating environments through which values are transformed into internal moral controls. From a sociocultural perspective, Vygotsky's concept of guided participation further explains how moral norms and ethical standards are internalized through sustained interaction with more knowledgeable others (Adeniyi & Olufemi-Adeniyi, 2023; Junaid et al., 2025). In this



sense, the significant role of mentoring and relational spiritual engagement identified in this study underscores the importance of socially mediated learning processes in moral development. Conversely, the non-significant role of daily worship practices reinforces theoretical distinctions between ritualistic religiosity and intrinsic or internalized religiosity, as consistently documented in moral psychology and religious education research (Anastasia et al., 2020; Comer & Schwartz, 2020; Saha & Eyemoon, 2020; Sokolovskaya, 2020). These findings suggest that ritual acts, when detached from reflective meaning-making and relational guidance, may lack the transformative capacity required to regulate behaviour.

Furthermore, the prominence of *tazkiyatun nafs* and individual spiritual strengthening resonates strongly with classical Islamic moral theory, particularly Al-Ghazali's assertion that ethical reform begins with inner purification rather than external discipline alone (Mahatma, 2023; Susanto et al., 2024). Within this tradition, moral transformation is conceived as an inward process that reshapes intention, self-awareness, and conscience before manifesting in outward conduct. The results of this study also converge with self-determination theory, which posits that sustained moral consistency emerges when individuals experience autonomy, competence, and relatedness as intrinsic motivational conditions (Ribeiro & da Silva, 2022; Sun, 2023). The convergence between Islamic moral philosophy and contemporary psychological theory highlights the interdisciplinary relevance of *tarbiyyah ruhhiyyah* as a framework for understanding moral self-regulation across educational and cultural contexts.

The principal theoretical contribution of this study lies in its empirical differentiation between spiritual dimensions that function as effective moral regulators and those that do not. By demonstrating that ritual worship alone does not significantly reduce deviant behaviour without deeper spiritual internalization, this study challenges long-standing assumptions in Islamic education that equate religious compliance with moral transformation (Abdullah et al., 2025; Thoyib et al., 2024). Rather than conceptualizing *tarbiyyah ruhhiyyah* as a collection of religious activities, the findings reposition it as a structured pedagogical process of internal moral development grounded in reflection, mentoring, and self-purification. This refinement advances Islamic educational theory while also contributing to broader scholarly debates on spirituality-based moral pedagogy within the social sciences (Fatchiatuzahro et al., 2024; Amin et al., 2025; Mariani et al., 2025).



From an educational management perspective, the findings underscore the need to reorient spiritual programs away from routine ritual enforcement toward reflective, relational, and transformative practices. Worship activities should be pedagogically framed as instruments for cultivating *taqwa*, *adab*, and moral consciousness rather than treated as administrative requirements. The integration of *halaqah tazkiyah*, guided contemplation, mentoring dialogue, and structured Qur'anic reflection has the potential to enhance the moral efficacy of spiritual education (Muslimin & Ruswandi, 2022; Musthofa & Illahi, 2023; Ridwan, 2018; Stimpson & Calvert, 2021; Tambak et al., 2023; Thalgi, 2019). Educational leaders are therefore encouraged to prioritize spiritual depth and relational engagement over procedural compliance when designing student development programs.

Moreover, individual spiritual strengthening further reinforces moral self-regulation by cultivating intrinsic religiosity, emotional regulation, and metacognitive awareness. Consistent with prior research, students who engage in personal reflection, self-monitoring, and spiritual introspection demonstrate greater capacity to resist deviant impulses and align their behaviour with internal moral standards (Çavuşoğlu et al., 2023; Hassi et al., 2021). These practices enhance ethical consistency by shifting moral motivation from external surveillance to internal conviction, echoing psychological findings on the role of self-awareness and emotional regulation in behavioural control (Eriksen & Bru, 2023; Fraser-Pearce, 2022; Nik Abdullah et al., 2018; Rashid & Ratten, 2022).

Relational dimensions of spirituality, particularly mentoring and moral coaching, also emerge as essential mechanisms of moral formation. Guided interactions with spiritual mentors enable students to navigate ethical dilemmas through reflective dialogue, modelling, and emotional support, consistent with Vygotsky's theory of social development and contemporary mentoring research (Azizah et al., 2022; Qasserras, 2024; Ulyani, 2022). At the deepest level, *tazkiyatun nafs* represents the core transformative process through which external discipline evolves into internal moral accountability. Echoing Al-Ghazali's classical framework and modern psychological insights on mindfulness and self-awareness, self-purification fosters enduring character change rooted in conscience rather than behavioural compliance alone (Grushkoa et al., 2019; Mutholingah & Zain, 2021).



Although situated within an Indonesian *madrasah* context, the implications of this study extend to value-based and character education systems globally. Conceptually, *tarbiyyah ruhiyyah* can be understood as a universal moral education framework emphasizing inner transformation, reflective practice, and relational guidance. These principles are compatible with global character education models that prioritize moral self-regulation, ethical identity formation, and meaning-centered learning (Yaakob et al., 2022; Peletu et al., 2023; Rihmer et al., 2017). As such, the framework contributes to cross-cultural discussions on spirituality as a pedagogical resource for ethical development beyond religious institutions.

More broadly, the conclusions of this study apply to value-based organizations operating across diverse cultural, religious, and educational contexts, not only Indonesian *madrasahs*. The *tarbiyyah ruhiyyah* approach offers a moral training framework centred on inner spirituality rather than doctrinal transmission alone (Saruhan, 2025; Setiawan et al., 2024). Its emphasis on self-purification, reflective practice, relational mentoring, and meaningful engagement with moral texts aligns with global educational approaches that emphasize ethical self-regulation, identity formation, and purposeful meaning-making (Vynohradova, 2019; Saifullah & Nurjanah, 2024). These principles may also be adapted to pluralistic or non-religious settings, suggesting that spirituality – when internalized and pedagogically structured – can serve as a universal moral resource enriching psychological and educational models of ethical development (Nurjanah et al., 2025; Jannana et al., 2025; Yahdi et al., 2025).

Despite its contributions, several limitations warrant consideration. The cross-sectional design limits causal inference and fails to capture the long-term effects of spiritual interventions. The reliance on self-reported data introduces potential social desirability bias, while the focus on a single institution limits the generalizability of the findings. Nevertheless, the study's conceptual strength lies in its empirical distinction between spiritual characteristics that exert a significant influence on deviant behaviour and those that do not. The finding that ritual worship alone does not automatically reduce deviant behaviour without deeper spiritual internalization challenges entrenched assumptions in Islamic education and reinforces a central implication of the proposed model: spiritual practices function as effective moral regulators only when embedded within reflective, relational, and transformative pedagogical frameworks.



#### D. Conclusion

This study demonstrates that *tarbiyyah ruhiyyah* reduces deviant behaviour among *madrasah* students only when it functions as a process of spiritual internalization rather than as a routine ritual practice. The findings reveal that spiritually reflective dimensions—such as meaningful engagement with the Qur'an, individual spiritual strengthening, mentoring and moral coaching, and awareness of *tazkiyatun nafs*—significantly enhance moral self-regulation, while daily worship practices performed without reflective depth show no meaningful behavioural effect. These results confirm that behavioural transformation in Islamic education is driven primarily by inner moral development rather than by the frequency of ritual observance.

From a theoretical perspective, this study makes a clear contribution to Islamic education scholarship by empirically distinguishing between ritualistic religiosity and transformative religiosity within the *tarbiyyah ruhiyyah* framework. By demonstrating that only internalized spiritual dimensions operate as effective moral regulators, the study refines existing models of spiritual education and strengthens their alignment with broader moral development theories that emphasize internalization, reflective reasoning, and socially mediated learning. This contribution advances the conceptual understanding of spiritual pedagogy by shifting the focus from procedural religious compliance toward evidence-based models of inner moral transformation.

In terms of future research, several directions emerge from the limitations identified in this study. Longitudinal research designs are needed to examine the sustainability and long-term impact of spiritually internalized educational interventions on student behaviour. In addition, expanding empirical investigation across multiple institutions, regions, and cultural contexts would enhance the generalizability of the findings. Comparative studies that examine variations in institutional culture, mentoring practices, and spiritual pedagogy would further clarify the specific conditions under which *tarbiyyah ruhiyyah* becomes behaviourally transformative. Future research may also benefit from mixed-methods approaches to capture the dynamic interaction between spiritual experience, moral cognition, and behavioural change.

Spiritual education reduces deviant behaviour not through the quantity of religious practice, but through the depth of spiritual internalization. When *tarbiyyah ruhiyyah* is enacted as a reflective, relational, and transformative educational process,



it provides a robust foundation for moral self-regulation and character development. This perspective offers a compelling framework for strengthening Islamic education and contributes to broader global discussions on spirituality as a meaningful resource for ethical formation in contemporary education.

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### **Declaration of Competing Interest**

The authors declare no conflict of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

### **Declaration of Generative AI**

The authors declare that artificial intelligence tools were used solely to assist with language refinement and clarity of expression during manuscript preparation. All substantive content, data analysis, interpretation of findings, and scholarly arguments were developed by the authors, who take full responsibility for the integrity and originality of the work.

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