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INTRINSIC RELIGIOUS ORIENTATION AND MORAL FOUNDATIONS AMONG MUSLIM ACADEMICS IN MAKASSAR: AN INDIAN OCEAN MUSLIM STUDIES PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract

How Muslims internalize their faith shapes the moral character they bring to their professional lives, yet the lived relationship between intrinsic religious orientation and moral foundations remains underexplored in Indonesian Islamic higher education. This study examines how intrinsic religious orientation manifests in the moral foundations of Muslim academics in Makassar. Using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), six lecturers were screened with an adapted intrinsic–extrinsic religious orientation measure, and four who met the study's operational criterion for dominant intrinsic orientation were selected for in-depth interviews. The analysis identified five group experiential themes: intrinsic religiosity as an internalized source of moral conduct; the lecturer role as an act of worship; spirituality as active coping; psychological burdens associated with expectations of public piety; and the reframing of exhaustion as meaningful. Care and fairness were prominent in participants' moral accounts, while the sacralization of professional work was interpreted in relation to the purity foundation. Authority and loyalty appeared in individual configurations. *Tawakkal* (trust in God) was explicitly articulated by two participants, while three described reframing exhaustion through religious meaning. These findings reveal shared moral concerns expressed through distinct religious and professional experiences. Situated within Makassar's historical connections to Indian Ocean Islamic scholarly networks, the study offers a contextual understanding of lived Islamic morality and recommends further inquiry across religious-orientation types and other Muslim coastal communities.

Keywords: Intrinsic Religious Orientation; Moral Foundations; Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis; Indian Ocean Muslim Studies; Makassar

Abstrak

Bagaimana seorang Muslim menginternalisasi imannya turut membentuk karakter moral dalam kehidupan profesionalnya, tetapi hubungan antara orientasi religiusitas intrinsik dan fondasi moral sebagai pengalaman hidup masih belum banyak dikaji dalam konteks pendidikan tinggi Islam di Indonesia. Penelitian ini mengeksplorasi bagaimana orientasi religiusitas intrinsik termanifestasi dalam fondasi moral akademisi Muslim di Makassar. Menggunakan pendekatan Interpretative

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Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), enam dosen terlebih dahulu menjalani penyaringan dengan instrumen orientasi religiusitas intrinsik–ekstrinsik yang diadaptasi. Empat dosen yang memenuhi kriteria operasional orientasi intrinsik dominan kemudian dipilih untuk diwawancarai secara mendalam. Analisis mengidentifikasi lima tema pengalaman lintas kasus, yaitu religiusitas intrinsik sebagai sumber perilaku moral yang terinternalisasi; pemaknaan peran dosen sebagai ibadah; spiritualitas sebagai koping aktif; beban psikologis yang berkaitan dengan tuntutan citra kesalehan publik; serta pemaknaan ulang kelelahan sebagai sesuatu yang bermakna. Fondasi moral kepedulian (care) dan keadilan (fairness) menonjol dalam pengalaman para partisipan, sedangkan sakralisasi pekerjaan diinterpretasikan dalam kaitannya dengan fondasi kemurnian (purity). Otoritas dan loyalitas muncul dalam konfigurasi individual. Tawakkal diungkapkan secara eksplisit oleh dua partisipan, sementara tiga partisipan memaknai ulang kelelahan melalui nilai-nilai keagamaan. Temuan ini memperlihatkan kesamaan perhatian moral yang diekspresikan melalui pengalaman religius dan profesional yang berbeda. Dengan menempatkan temuan dalam konteks historis jaringan keilmuan Islam Samudra Hindia di Makassar, penelitian ini menawarkan pemahaman kontekstual tentang pengalaman moral Islam dan merekomendasikan pengembangan kajian lintas tipe orientasi religiusitas serta komunitas Muslim pesisir lainnya.

Kata Kunci: *Orientasi Religiusitas Intrinsik; Fondasi Moral; Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis; Indian Ocean Muslim Studies; Makassar*

مستخلص

تُسهم الكيفية التي يستبطن بها المسلم إيمانه في تشكيل طابعه الأخلاقي في حياته المهنية، غير أنّ العلاقة بين التوجّه الديني الجوهري والأسس الأخلاقية، كما تتجلّى في التجارب المعيشة، لا تزال محدودة الدراسة في سياق التعليم العالي الإسلامي بإندونيسيا. تستكشف هذه الدراسة كيفية تجلّي التوجّه الديني الجوهري في الأسس الأخلاقية للأكاديميين المسلمين في مدينة ماكاسار. وباستخدام التحليل الظاهراتي التأويلي(IPA) ، خضع ستة محاضرين لعملية فرز أولية باستخدام مقياس معدّل للتوجّه الديني الجوهري والخارجي، ثم اختير أربعة منهم ممن استوفوا المعيار الإجرائي لغلبة التوجّه الجوهري لإجراء مقابلات معمّقة معهم. وقد حدّد التحليل خمسة محاور خبراتية عبر الحالات، هي: التديّن الجوهري بوصفه مصدراً مستبطنًا للسلوك الأخلاقي؛ وفهم الدور المهني للمحاضر بوصفه عبادة؛ والروحانية بوصفها وسيلة فاعلة للتكيّف؛ والأعباء النفسية المرتبطة بتوقّعات إظهار التقوى أمام الآخرين؛ وإعادة تأويل الإرهاق بوصفه تجربة ذات معنى. وقد برز أساسا الرعاية والإنصاف في التجارب الأخلاقية للمشاركين، في حين فُسّر إضفاء القداسة على العمل المهني في ضوء أساس الطهارة. وظهر بُعدا السلطة والولاء في تشكيلات فردية مختلفة. وقد عبّر مشاركان صراحةً عن مفهوم التوكّل على الله، بينما أعاد ثلاثة مشاركين تأويل الإرهاق في ضوء المعاني الدينية. وتكشف النتائج عن اهتمامات أخلاقية مشتركة تتجلّى من خلال تجارب دينية ومهنية متباينة. ومن خلال وضع هذه النتائج في سياق الروابط التاريخية لماكاسار بشبكات العلم الإسلامي في منطقة المحيط الهندي، تقدّم الدراسة فهمًا سياقيًا للتجربة الأخلاقية الإسلامية، وتوصي بتوسيع البحث ليشمل أنماطًا مختلفة من التوجّه الديني ومجتمعات مسلمة ساحلية أخرى.

الكلمات الرئيسية: التوجّه الديني الجوهري؛ الأسس الأخلاقية؛ التحليل الظاهراتي التأويلي؛ دراسات مسلمي المحيط الهندي؛ ماكاسار.

A. Introduction

How individuals internalize their religion shapes the kind of moral person they become. Within the psychology of religion, religious orientation—the way a person holds their faith rather than the mere fact of holding it—has emerged as a key construct for explaining this process.[1] Research among Iranian Muslims has shown that intrinsic religiosity is associated with several moral foundations and, after controlling for general religiosity and demographic variables, predicts care, authority, and purity.[2] These findings highlight the relevance of religious orientation to moral functioning while raising further questions about how such orientations are experienced and expressed in different Muslim contexts. Understanding these lived experiences is particularly important in culturally distinctive settings, including Muslim communities connected to the Indian Ocean region.

The urgency of this study becomes more pronounced when considered against the local context of Muslim communities in Indonesia, particularly Makassar's historical position within the Indian Ocean region. Historically, Makassar was an important center of maritime trade connecting different parts of the Indonesian archipelago and wider Asian commercial networks.[3] The city is also associated with Syekh Yusuf al-Maqassari, whose intellectual and spiritual journey reflects the wider networks of Islamic scholarship linking Southeast Asia to other Muslim regions.[4] Contemporary Makassar remains a pluralistic urban center in which diverse forms of Islamic practice and social experience coexist.[5] This combination of historical significance and contemporary religious diversity makes Makassar a relevant setting for the present inquiry. Examining how intrinsic religious orientation manifests in the moral foundations of Muslim academics in this setting provides a contextual perspective on religious and moral experience within an Indonesian Muslim community.

[1] A Norenzayan, "Does Religion Make People Moral?," in *Evolved Morality: The Biology and Philosophy of Human Conscience*, 2014, 229–48, https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004263888_018.

[2] M Mikani and S Rasoolzadeh Tabatabaei, "Religious Fundamentalism and Quest as Predictors of Moral Foundations Among Iranian Muslims," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 60, no. 4 (2021): 811–29, https://doi.org/10.1111/jssr.12750.

[3] Gerrit Knaap and Heather A Sutherland, *Monsoon Traders: Ships, Skippers and Commodities in Eighteenth-Century Makassar*, vol. 224 (Brill, 2021).

[4] Azyumardi Azra, *The Origins of Islamic Reformism in Southeast Asia: Networks of Malay-Indonesian and Middle Eastern 'Ulamā' in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (Leiden: Brill, 2004).

[5] Das'ad Latif et al., "A Sense of Security in Urban Environments: Discrimination, Diversity and Prospects for Communication Strategies," *Cogent Social Sciences* 11, no. 1 (December 31, 2025), https://doi.org/10.1080/23311886.2025.2472919.

Taken together, the literature reviewed above leaves two gaps unaddressed. Internationally, Mikani and Rasoolzadeh Tabatabaei examined the relationships between religious orientations and moral foundations among Iranian Muslims using a quantitative design, providing important evidence of their associations without examining how these relationships are experienced in everyday professional life.[6] In Indonesia, Arli and Tjiptono identified contrasting relationships between intrinsic and extrinsic religiousness and consumer ethical beliefs, although their study did not engage moral foundations theory or the lived experiences of Muslim academics.[7] Against this backdrop, the present study addresses a specific gap by examining qualitatively how intrinsic religious orientation manifests in the moral foundations of Muslim academics in Makassar. Through an idiographic analysis of four lecturers, it contributes a contextual understanding of how internalized religious values are expressed in professional conduct, moral reasoning, and the interpretation of everyday experiences.

Departing from the gap and novelty outlined above, this study aims to explore and comprehensively understand how intrinsic religious orientation manifests in the moral foundations of Muslim academics-here, four university lecturers-in the city of Makassar. Specifically, this research seeks to examine the subjective experiences and lived understandings of Muslim academics in Makassar in relation to intrinsic religious orientation and how that orientation shapes moral foundation patterns in their daily lives. Through a qualitative approach, this study does not merely aim to document the phenomenon but also to construct a richer and more contextual understanding of how religion genuinely operates in shaping the morality of Muslim individuals, something that cannot be fully captured through quantitative approaches alone.

The theoretical framework employed in this study draws on the religious orientation theory developed by Allport and Ross, which distinguishes between intrinsic religiosity as a sincere and internalized experience of religion as an end in itself, and extrinsic religiosity as the utilization of religion to meet social or personal needs.[8] In subsequent developments, Batson

[6] Mikani and Rasoolzadeh Tabatabaei, "Religious Fundamentalism and Quest as Predictors of Moral Foundations Among Iranian Muslims."

[7] D Arli and F Tjiptono, "The End of Religion? Examining the Role of Religiousness, Materialism, and Long-Term Orientation on Consumer Ethics in Indonesia," *Journal of Business Ethics* 123, no. 3 (2014): 385–400, https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-013-1846-4.

[8] Gordon W. Allport and J. Michael Ross, "Personal Religious Orientation and Prejudice.," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 5, no. 4 (1967): 432–43, https://doi.org/10.1037/h0021212; M Gilimbek and R Rashimbetov, "Adapting Religious Orientation Scales for Muslim Contexts: Theoretical Review," *Bulletin of the LN Gumilyov Eurasian National University. Historical Sciences. Philosophy. Religion Series* 147, no. 2 (2024): 308–20.

added the quest dimension as an orientation characterized by openness and reflective engagement with doubt, a construct that continues to be actively examined in recent research, [9] while Altemeyer and Hunsberger introduced the fundamentalist dimension, which emphasizes adherence to religious teachings regarded as possessing absolute truth, a dimension whose structure has since been re-examined across cultures.[10] These approaches address related but distinct dimensions of religious belief and practice. The present study focuses specifically on intrinsic religious orientation because it concerns the internalization of faith as a guiding principle of everyday life. In their study of Iranian Muslims, Mikani and Rasoolzadeh Tabatabaei found that intrinsic religiosity predicted care, authority, and purity after controlling for general religiosity and demographic variables.[11]

Complementing this religious orientation framework, Graham et al. developed moral foundations theory, which conceptualizes morality as a system comprising five foundations, namely care, fairness, loyalty, authority, and purity, wherein each individual and community prioritizes these foundations differently according to their cultural and religious backgrounds.[12] Koçak's study further contributes to the measurement of moral orientation by distinguishing religious and secular dimensions of moral values.[13] By integrating these two theoretical frameworks, this study positions intrinsic religious orientation as an analytical lens for understanding how Muslim individuals in the city of Makassar experience, interpret, and express their moral foundations in everyday life. Moral foundations theory has since been refined and tested across diverse cultures, including Muslim societies.[14]

[9] Robert B. Arrowood, Kenneth E. Vail, and Cathy R. Cox, "The Existential Quest: Doubt, Openness, and the Exploration of Religious Uncertainty," *The International Journal for the Psychology of Religion* 32, no. 2 (April 2022): 89–126, https://doi.org/10.1080/10508619.2021.1902647; C. Daniel Batson, "Religion as Prosocial: Agent or Double Agent?," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 15, no. 1 (March 1976): 29, https://doi.org/10.2307/1384312.

[10] Bob Altemeyer and Bruce Hunsberger, "Authoritarianism, Religious Fundamentalism, Quest, and Prejudice," *International Journal for the Psychology of Religion* 2, no. 2 (April 1992): 113–33, https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327582ijpr0202_5; Vassilis Saroglou et al., "Fundamentalism as Dogmatic Belief, Moral Rigorism, and Strong Groupness across Cultures: Dimensionality, Underlying Components, and Related Interreligious Prejudice.," *Psychology of Religion and Spirituality* 14, no. 4 (November 2022): 558–71, https://doi.org/10.1037/rel0000339.

[11] Mikani and Rasoolzadeh Tabatabaei, "Religious Fundamentalism and Quest as Predictors of Moral Foundations Among Iranian Muslims."

[12] Jesse Graham et al., "Mapping the Moral Domain.," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 101, no. 2 (2011): 366–85, https://doi.org/10.1037/a0021847.

[13] Ali Koçak, "Ahlaki Yönelim Ölçeği: Geçerlik ve Güvenirlik Çalışması," *Hitit İlahiyat Dergisi* 24, no. 2 (December 30, 2025): 805–24, https://doi.org/10.14395/hid.1735382.

[14] Nafees Akhtar et al., "Testing the Moral Foundations Questionnaire within a Muslim Society: A Study among Young Adults in Pakistan," *Journal of Religious Education* 71, no. 1 (March 2023): 1–18, https://doi.org/10.1007/s40839-023-00195-z; Mohammad Atari et al., "Morality beyond the WEIRD: How the Nomological Network of Morality Varies across Cultures.," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 125, no. 5 (November 2023): 1157–88, https://doi.org/10.1037/pspp0000470.

B. Method

This study employs a qualitative approach within the methodological framework of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA). IPA was selected because the research questions demand depth of understanding of individuals' subjective experiences rather than the breadth of statistical generalization. The study involved four participants, consistent with the range recommended by Smith, Flowers, and Larkin for IPA studies.[15] The four participants were selected from six screened lecturers on the basis of their higher intrinsic than extrinsic mean scores and the study's operational screening criterion, as detailed below. This selection provided a purposive group for examining the lived religious and moral experiences of lecturers with a relatively strong intrinsic religious orientation.

Participants were selected through a two stage, instrument assisted purposive procedure. In the first stage, six lecturers were screened with a twenty-item operational adaptation of Allport and Ross's Religious Orientation Scale (ROS),[16] adapted for an Indonesian Muslim population in line with recent guidance on adapting such scales for Muslim settings,[17] comprising an intrinsic and an extrinsic subscale rated on a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree); for each respondent an intrinsic mean (I-mean) and an extrinsic mean (E-mean) were computed. Applying an operational threshold of I-mean ≥ 3.68, four lecturers (S01, S02, S04, S06) met the criterion for a dominant intrinsic orientation and were retained as participants PW_1–PW_4, while the remaining two (S03, S05) fell below the threshold and were excluded. In every retained case the intrinsic mean also exceeded the extrinsic mean; conversely, both excluded cases showed the extrinsic mean exceeding the intrinsic mean, consistent with a non-intrinsic profile. The threshold was set within the empirical gap separating the highest-scoring non-selected case (I-mean = 3.57) from the lowest-scoring retained case (I-mean = 3.83), and is an operational, sample-specific criterion rather than a universal norm.

In the second stage, these four participants were interviewed in depth. Because orientation was established by screening prior to, and independently of, the interviews that were subsequently analyzed, the classification of orientation did not depend on the researcher's interpretation of the analytic data. The screening results are summarized in Table 1. The use of

[15] Jonathan A Smith, Paul Flowers, and Michael Larkin, *Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis: Theory, Method and Research*, 2nd ed. (London: SAGE Publications, 2022).
[16] Allport and Ross, "Personal Religious Orientation and Prejudice."
[17] Gilimbek and Rashimbetov, "Adapting Religious Orientation Scales for Muslim Contexts: Theoretical Review."

a brief intrinsic-extrinsic orientation measure for screening is consistent with recent applications of the religious-orientation framework.[18]

The participant characteristics in this study comprised adult Muslim academics (university lecturers) residing in the city of Makassar, who were active in religious practice and capable of articulating reflective understanding of their religious and moral experiences. Recruitment was conducted through purposive and snowball sampling via Islamic higher education institutions in Makassar, with the following inclusion criteria: (a) self-identification as Muslim; (b) age between 35 and 65 years; (c) residence in the city of Makassar; and (d) willingness to participate in in-depth interviews and to provide documented informed consent. To ensure transparency while preserving confidentiality, the demographic profile of the four participants is summarized in Table 2, with each participant identified by the participant codes PW_1 through PW_4 (arbitrary codes assigned for anonymity, not the participants' initials).

Table 1.
Screening Results of the Religious Orientation Measure

Screening ID	I-mean	E-mean	I-mean ≥ 3.68	Outcome	Participant ID
S01	4.22	3.09	Yes	Selected	PW_1
S02	3.91	3.36	Yes	Selected	PW_2
S03	3.57	3.72	No	Excluded	-
S04	4.08	3.18	Yes	Selected	PW_3
S05	3.44	3.91	No	Excluded	-
S06	3.83	3.45	Yes	Selected	PW_4

Source: *Authors' screening data.*

S01-S06 denote the six screened lecturers. The four meeting the criterion (I-mean ≥ 3.68, with the intrinsic mean also exceeding the extrinsic mean) were retained and are designated PW_1-PW_4 in Table 2 and throughout the analysis; S03 and S05 fell below the threshold and were not interviewed. I-mean is the mean of the intrinsic items and E-mean the mean of the extrinsic items, each rated on a five-point scale (1-5). The threshold I-mean ≥ 3.68 is an operational, sample-specific criterion, not a universal cut-off.

[18] Ömer Taha Sözer and Mehmet Eskin, "Religiosity, Identity Confusion, and Psychological Well-Being in Turkish University Students: The Moderating Role of Religious Orientation," *Journal of Religion and Health* 62, no. 2 (April 2023): 984–1006, https://doi.org/10.1007/s10943-022-01625-2.

Table 2.
Demographic Profile of the Participants

Participant Code	Gender	Age Range	Faculty / Discipline	Teaching Experience	I-mean	Religious Orientation
PW_1	Female	37 years	Faculty of Da'wah and Communication (Islamic Guidance and Counseling)	11 years	4.22	Intrinsic
PW_2	Male	43 years	Faculty of Ushuluddin (Aqidah and Islamic Philosophy)	18 years	3.91	Intrinsic
PW_3	Male	35 years	Faculty of Sharia and Law (Islamic Law)	8 years	4.08	Intrinsic
PW_4	Male	51 years	Faculty of Science and Technology (Mathematics/Natural Sciences)	24 years	3.83	Intrinsic

Source: *Authors' participant records.*

Data were collected through semi-structured in-depth interviews, which constitute the primary instrument in IPA research.[19] The interview guide was developed on the basis of intrinsic religious orientation and the five moral foundations of care, fairness, loyalty, authority, and purity [20], with questions designed to be open-ended and exploratory so as to provide participants with the broadest possible space to express their religious and moral experiences spontaneously. Each interview lasted between 60 and 90 minutes and was conducted in Indonesian in accordance with participants' comfort, in order to maximize depth of expression. All interview sessions were audio-recorded with participants' consent and subsequently transcribed verbatim as the basis for analysis. The interview excerpts presented in English throughout this article are translations of the original Indonesian-language interview material.

In addition to audio recordings, the researcher maintained field notes throughout the data collection process to document contextual observations, nonverbal cues, and analytical reflections that developed during the interviews. All data collection procedures were carried out in accordance with research ethics principles, encompassing voluntary participation, confidentiality of identity, and participants' right to withdraw at any time without consequence.[21] To deepen the data and to allow for clarification of emerging interpretations, a

[19] Smith, Flowers, and Larkin, *Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis: Theory, Method and Research*.
[20] Graham et al., "Mapping the Moral Domain."
[21] Stella R. Taquette and Luciana Maria Borges da Matta Souza, "Ethical Dilemmas in Qualitative Research: A Critical Literature Review," *International Journal of Qualitative Methods* 21 (April 2022),

brief follow-up interview (a form of member checking, or respondent validation) was conducted with each participant after preliminary analysis of the first interview, during which initial interpretive impressions were shared and participants were invited to confirm, elaborate, or correct them.

Data were analyzed following the IPA analytical procedures as outlined by Smith, Flowers, and Larkin, proceeding through six stages in an iterative manner.[22] In the first stage, the researcher re-read each transcript while simultaneously listening to the audio recording, in order to immerse deeply in each participant's narrative before proceeding to the next stage. In the second stage, the researcher conducted initial noting by providing exploratory commentary on the transcripts at three levels simultaneously. The descriptive level served to record what participants said; the linguistic level attended to word choices, metaphors, and pauses in speech. For instance, when a participant within a single narrative simultaneously employed the words "worship", "patience", "values", "pressure", and "must", the researcher did not merely note the presence of these words but rather interrogated whether the participant was expressing that his or her moral foundations derived from an intrinsic religious orientation that had become part of his or her identity, rather than a response to institutional pressure. The conceptual level began to interrogate the meaning and significance underlying participants' narratives. For example, when a participant stated "Allah does not ask us not to be tired; what is asked of us is that we remain honest," the researcher did not stop at that statement but instead interrogated the deeper meaning behind it, namely whether this redefinition of worship from "not being tired" to "remaining honest" reflected a moral foundation of honesty that had been deeply internalized as a marker of mature intrinsic religious orientation rather than mere compliance with formal rules.

In the third stage, exploratory notes were developed into experiential statements by abstracting and clustering related annotations into coherent conceptual units. For instance, upon finding that several participants independently expressed things such as "teaching with sincere intention is worship," "I no longer separate work from worship," and "every task carried out with itqan holds the value of worship," these annotations were grouped into a single coherent experiential statement that could be named "sacralization of professional roles as an expression

https://doi.org/10.1177/16094069221078731; Siti Roshaidai Mohd Arifin, "Ethical Considerations in Qualitative Study," *International Journal of Care Scholars* 1, no. 2 (2018): 30–33.

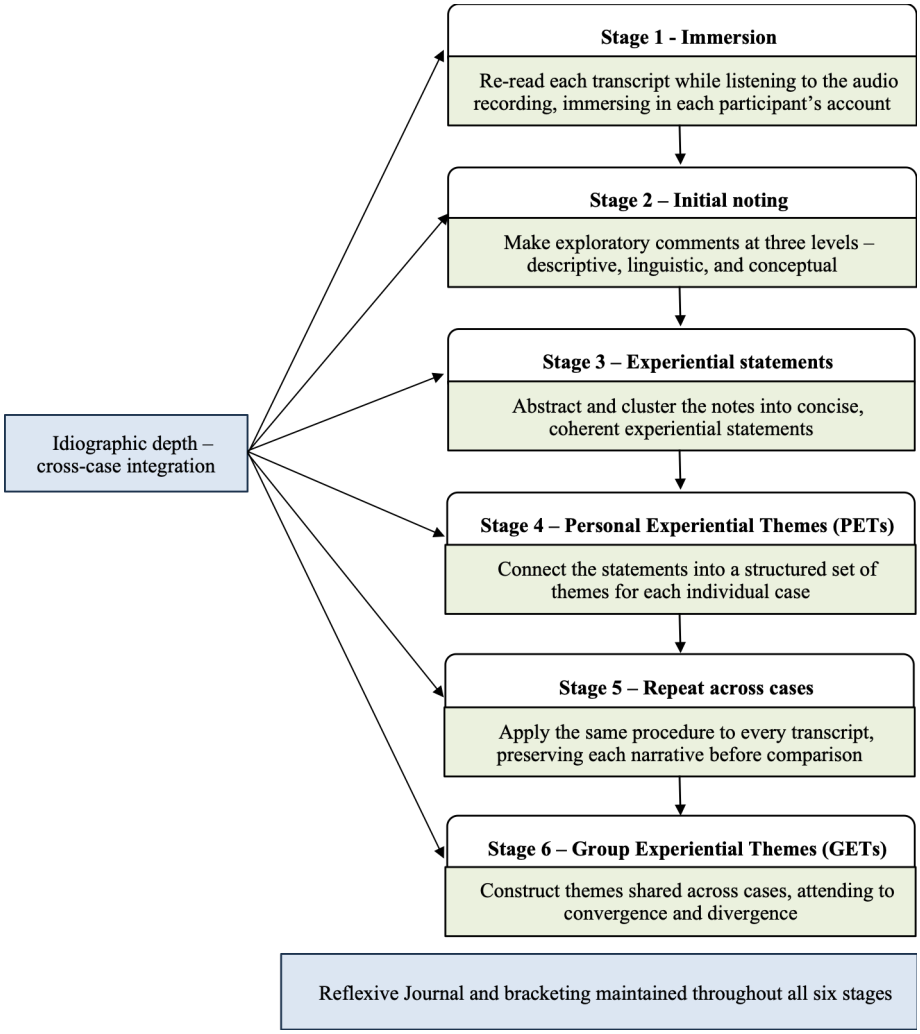
[22] Smith, Flowers, and Larkin, *Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis: Theory, Method and Research*.

of moral foundations," an experiential theme developed through iterative interpretation of the participants' accounts.

In the fourth stage, connections among the experiential statements were identified and organized into a structured set of personal experiential themes for each individual case. For the first participant, the themes of emotion regulation as a conscious choice, layered burdens of institutional expectations, and spirituality as a stabilizer together formed a narrative of an individual sustaining themselves amid pressure by drawing upon a sense of calm rooted in religious practice. For the second participant, the themes of Amanah (trustworthiness), mature patience, and the need to be heard mutually illuminated one another, portraying a religiosity experienced not as an escape but as an active moral standard. For the third participant, the themes of sacralization of professional roles, honesty as worship, and *tawakkal* as the release of control formed a narrative of an individual who understood exhaustion not as failure but as part of an honest act of devotion. For the fourth participant, the themes of *itqan* (conscientious excellence), integration of faith and scientific reasoning, and *tawakkal* understood in mathematical terms depicted a moral foundation built not through formal compliance but through a lived experience in which belief and scientific thinking had become unified.

In the fifth stage, the same process was consistently repeated for each subsequent transcript while preserving the integrity of each individual's narrative before cross-case comparisons were undertaken. In the sixth stage, group experiential themes were constructed by attending simultaneously to two aspects, namely convergence in the form of experiences shared across participants, and divergence in the form of configurations of religiosity and moral foundations that were unique to particular individuals. Throughout the entire analytical process, the researcher maintained a reflexive journal to document each analytical decision and interpretive position as it developed, consistent with IPA's hermeneutic commitment. These six analytical stages are summarized in Figure 1.

Figure 1.
The six-stage IPA analytical procedure



Source: *Authors' illustration based on Smith, Flowers, and Larkin (2022)*

Table 3.
Data Corpus of the Cross-Participant IPA Analysis

Analytical Aspect	**PW_1**	**PW_2**	**PW_3**	**PW_4**
Religious Orientation	Intrinsic	Intrinsic	Intrinsic	Intrinsic
Primary Religious Practice or Concept	Dhuha prayer before teaching	Dhuha prayer and the concept of amanah	Nighttime Quranic recitation and intention	Itqan and maqashid al-shariah
Dominant Islamic Value	Hilm and patience	Amanah dan tawadhu'	Niyyah and tawakkal	Itqan dan tawakkal
Most Salient Moral Foundation(s)	Care (with authority)	Fairness (with loyalty)	Fairness expressed as honesty, and care	Purity and fairness

Meaning of Work	*"Every effort to educate that is carried out with sincere intention is worship"*	*"I no longer separate work from worship"*	*"When I teach while exhausted, I remind myself: this is worship, not merely a work obligation"*	*"every task performed with itqan carries the value of worship"*
Meaning of Exhaustion	Managed through journaling and afternoon walks	Needing to be heard, not advised	A mark of honest earnestness	A limit accepted through mathematical *tawakkal*
Experience of Tawakkal	Not explicitly invoked	Not explicitly invoked	The release of control after striving with honesty	A system of equations that has no solution is not a failure
Institutional Pressure	Layered expectations felt like wearing many masks	Colleagues' unhelpful reactions during burnout	Social panopticon as a lecturer in Islamic law	Proving that science and Islam are not in contradiction
Personal Experiential Themes	Emotion regulation as a conscious choice; layered institutional expectations; spirituality as a stabilizer	Amanah as a sustaining moral foundation; mature patience; the need to be heard	Sacralization of professional roles; honesty as worship; *tawakkal* as release of control	Itqan as an internal moral standard; integration of faith and scientific reasoning; *tawakkal* in mathematical terms

Source: *Authors' analysis of screening results and interview data.*

Consistent with IPA's idiographic commitment, the matrix summarizes meaning rather than frequency; no prevalence counts are reported. In this analysis, participants' references to honesty were interpreted in relation to the fairness foundation in moral foundations theory.[23] The trustworthiness of this study was supported through procedures consistent with established criteria for qualitative research.[24] These procedures also align with Yardley's criteria of sensitivity to context, commitment and rigor, transparency and coherence, and impact.[25] Credibility was pursued through sustained engagement with participants' narratives and member checking. Summaries of interview findings were shared with all four participants; three confirmed the interpretations, while one proposed minor clarifications to the wording of a quoted passage, which were incorporated. Recent guidance on quality and validity in IPA also informed these procedures.[26]

[23] Graham et al., "Mapping the Moral Domain."
[24] Norman A Stahl and James R King, "Expanding Approaches for Research: Understanding and Using Trustworthiness in Qualitative Research," *Journal of Developmental Education* 44, no. 1 (2020): 26–28.
[25] Lucy Yardley, "Dilemmas in Qualitative Health Research," *Psychology & Health* 15, no. 2 (March 2000): 215–28, https://doi.org/10.1080/08870440008400302.
[26] Jonathan A. Smith and Isabella E. Nizza, *Essentials of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis.* (Washington: American Psychological Association, 2022), https://doi.org/10.1037/0000259-000.

To strengthen interpretive credibility rather than establish inter-rater reliability, which sits uneasily with IPA's interpretative commitments, a second researcher experienced in IPA (a qualitative-methods colleague not involved in data collection) independently examined two of the four cases. The researcher then engaged the lead analyst in peer debriefing to assess whether interpretations were adequately grounded in participants' accounts and to refine the experiential themes through dialogue.[27] A reflective journal was maintained throughout the research process. Transferability was established through thick description of participants' narratives and the socio-religious context of the city of Makassar, enabling readers to assess the extent to which the findings are relevant to other urban Muslim contexts. Dependability was ensured through a transparent audit trail of the entire analytical process, from initial noting through to the construction of final themes. Confirmability was strengthened by grounding interpretive claims in translated excerpts from participants' interview accounts, allowing readers to assess the coherence between the presented evidence and the interpretations.

The researcher recognizes that reflexive positioning cannot be separated from the interpretive process.[28] As a lecturer who works daily in an Islamic religious higher education environment, the researcher did not approach this study as a neutral outsider to the themes of religiosity and morality. The researcher possesses direct experience of how Islamic values are lived, taught, and debated in religious academic contexts, including the tensions between institutional demands and the personal experience of faith. This experience brings a sensitivity that would not be available to a researcher entirely unfamiliar with that context, while simultaneously carrying the risk that the researcher might too readily feel that understanding has been achieved before fully listening to each participant's narrative [29]. It is at this point that bracketing becomes operationally significant. Whenever the researcher felt that a participant's narrative was already familiar or aligned with prior expectations, the reflexive journal was employed as a space in which to pause and ask whether a given interpretation had genuinely emerged from the participant's narrative or was merely a reflection of the researcher's own experiences and assumptions as a lecturer in an Islamic higher education institution. In this way,

[27] Smith, Flowers, and Larkin, *Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis: Theory, Method and Research*.

[28] Linda Finlay, "Negotiating the Swamp: The Opportunity and Challenge of Reflexivity in Research Practice," *Qualitative Research* 2, no. 2 (August 2002): 209–30, https://doi.org/10.1177/146879410200200205; Roni Berger, "Now I See It, Now I Don't: Researcher's Position and Reflexivity in Qualitative Research," *Qualitative Research* 15, no. 2 (April 2015): 219–34, https://doi.org/10.1177/1468794112468475; Francisco M. Olmos-Vega et al., "A Practical Guide to Reflexivity in Qualitative Research: AMEE Guide No. 149," *Medical Teacher* 45, no. 3 (March 2023): 241–51, https://doi.org/10.1080/0142159X.2022.2057287.

[29] Berger, "Now I See It, Now I Don't: Researcher's Position and Reflexivity in Qualitative Research"; Olmos-Vega et al., "A Practical Guide to Reflexivity in Qualitative Research: AMEE Guide No. 149."

the insider position was actively managed as an interpretive resource rather than allowed to operate unconsciously as a filter screening the data. This reflexive stance follows contemporary guidance on conducting IPA.[30]

C. Results

Analysis followed the six-stage IPA procedure described above, moving from close idiographic engagement with each participant's account to the construction of group experiential themes (GETs) across the four cases, each case corresponding to an individual participant.[31] All participants were lecturers at a State Islamic University (UIN) in Makassar and are identified by the participant codes PW_1–PW_4. Consistent with IPA's idiographic and interpretative commitments,[32] the account below foregrounds the particularity of each participant's experience and draws on translated interview excerpts as the evidential basis for its interpretive claims; frequencies are not reported because the analytic aim is depth of meaning rather than prevalence. Five group experiential themes were developed through iterative interpretation of the participants' accounts, with religious orientation and moral foundations serving as sensitizing concepts rather than predetermined thematic categories: (1) intrinsic religiosity as an internalized source of moral foundations; (2) the sacralization of professional roles as an arena of worship; (3) spirituality as active coping; (4) the hidden burden behind the pious image; and (5) the reframing of exhaustion as meaningful.

1. Intrinsic Religiosity as an Internalized Source of Moral Foundations

Across all four accounts, religiosity was experienced not as an external role to be performed but as a value system fused with participants' sense of self. For PW_2, the concept of Amanah (trust) functioned as an internal moral brake at the very moment professional motivation faltered: "If I were to teach half-heartedly, if I were not honest in giving grades, that would be a betrayal. And it is that feeling that always holds me back whenever I am close to becoming apathetic." Here a religious value, rather than salary or recognition, restrains conduct - an expression of the fairness foundation grounded in internalized faith. For PW_4, the same internalization took a cognitive form: he described no dichotomy between his identity as a scientist and as a Muslim, locating an epistemic harmony between maqashid reasoning and mathematics. The shared structure - faith as moral identity - was thus expressed through

[30] Smith and Nizza, *Essentials of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis.*
[31] Smith, Flowers, and Larkin, *Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis: Theory, Method and Research*.
[32] Taruvinga Muzingili, "Towards a Coherent Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) Practice: Epistemic Clarification and Methodological Guidance for Social Sciences and Allied Disciplines Research," *Cogent Social Sciences* 12, no. 1 (2026): 2698386.

markedly different foundations and idioms across the cases, an early indication of the heterogeneity that the idiographic analysis would make visible.

This internalization was repeatedly articulated through specific Islamic constructs. For PW_2, the lecturer role was not a job but a trust (*amanah*) held on behalf of others:

> "Being a lecturer is not merely work; it is an entrustment. Students are entrusted to us by their parents and by society. If I teach half-heartedly, if I am dishonest in grading, that is a betrayal." (PW_2)

The moral force of the foundation here derives from a felt accountability to God and community rather than from external monitoring. For PW_4, the same internalization took an epistemic form, which he stated explicitly:

> "When I was taught that Islamic law is built upon *maqashid*, structured objectives, I immediately sensed a resemblance to mathematical thinking. There is a logic behind it. That is why I have never felt a contradiction between being a scientist and being a Muslim; for me the two reinforce each other." (PW_4)

Here intrinsic religiosity extends beyond affect into the structure of reasoning itself, an idiographic variation that a uniform reading of "intrinsic orientation" would obscure.

2. The Sacralization of Professional Roles as an Arena of Worship

All four participants, in their own idioms, experienced the lecturer role itself as worship. PW_2 articulated this most directly:

> "I no longer separate work from worship. Entering the classroom with the intention to educate is worship. Being patient with difficult students is worship. Even honestly acknowledging my own weaknesses is part of devotion."

PW_4 operationalized the same sacralization through *itqan* (conscientious excellence), which he sharply distinguished from perfectionism:

> "I am not a perfectionist, I practice *itqan* … perfectionism is about ego. Itqan is about responsibility."

In both cases the profession became an arena of devotion carrying transcendental weight. It is through this theme that the purity (sanctity) foundation is most visible - not in ritual purity narrowly, but in the way ordinary professional acts were set apart as sacred, consecrating teaching, grading, and even the admission of weakness as forms of worship.

The same sacralizing move recurred across the other cases through the pivot of intention (*niyyah*). PW_3 located the transformation not in the task but in how it is framed:

> "When I teach while exhausted, I remind myself: this is worship, not merely a work obligation. That is what changes its quality, not my physical condition, but the way I regard it." (PW_3) PW_1 expressed the same orientation as an enduring motive: "Every effort to educate that is carried out with sincere intention is worship; that is what keeps me from ever truly wanting to stop." (PW_1)

For PW_4, this consecration was inseparable from *itqan* as a non-negotiable internal standard:

> "There is an internal standard I cannot compromise…. because every task performed with itqan carries the value of worship." (PW_4)

Across the cases, teaching was thus re-described as devotion, and the purity foundation was enacted less through ritual observance narrowly than through the sanctification of ordinary professional labor.

3. Spirituality as Active Coping: Patience, Ritual, and *Tawakkal*

Participants drew on spiritual practices and concepts as active psychological resources, not as passive resignation. PW_1 explicitly rejected a repressive reading of patience:

> "Patience does not mean silently bearing everything. Mature patience is the ability to respond wisely, not to suppress emotion until it explodes elsewhere."

PW_3 described ritual as a source of structural stability:

> "Worship gives me ground, a kind of footing. When everything feels chaotic, there is the prayer whose structure stays the same, the same number of cycles, the same recitations."

Tawakkal was invoked explicitly in two of the four accounts, and in strikingly different registers. PW_3 framed it theologically, as the release of control after striving honestly, while PW_4 cast it as a mathematical analogy:

> "There are systems of equations that have no solution, and that is not the failure of the mathematics. It is simply the nature of the system".

PW_1 and PW_2 did not invoke *tawakkal* explicitly - a divergence that is itself analytically significant for the idiographic reading, since it shows that a shared coping orientation need not rely on a single shared concept.

Ritual observance operated as a concrete coping technology for the two participants who did not frame their coping through tawakkal. PW_1 described the pre-teaching dhuha prayer as a deliberate act of self-regulation:

> "The dhuha prayer before teaching is ritual I keep consistently, not only as worship but as a way of stabilizing myself before entering the classroom. There is a distinct calm afterward that I cannot explain in purely psychological terms." (PW_1)

PW_2 used an almost domestic image for the same practice:

> "I almost never skip the dhuha prayer before class. It is not merely a ritual; it is how I tidy myself up inwardly before meeting many people." (PW_2)

Where *tawakkal* was invoked, it was construed as effortful release rather than passivity. PW_3 tied it directly to a process–outcome distinction:

> "Once I have tried my utmost, I try to release the outcome. Whether a student succeeds or not, I am responsible for the process, not the result." (PW_3)

Across these idioms, spiritual practice functioned as an active resource for emotion regulation and meaning-making, not as resignation.

4. The Hidden Burden Behind the Pious Image

Alongside these resources, every participant described a psychological burden arising from the religious professional identity itself: the pressure to appear flawlessly pious. PW_3 named this through the Foucauldian image of the panopticon: "There is a kind of social panopticon. People feel entitled to monitor and judge our lives, because we teach Islamic law. How we dress, how we speak, what we watch, where we vacation, all of it can become material for comment." A second facet was the absence of emotional support. PW_2 recounted a moment of burnout met with a spiritualized dismissal - "Seek forgiveness, Sir. Perhaps you are lacking in worship" - and concluded, "What I needed at that moment was not advice, but first to be heard." PW_4 added a generational dimension, reflecting that his cohort "was not taught to talk about feelings." This theme reveals a vulnerable underside rarely made visible in accounts of piety on Islamic campuses, and it stands in productive tension with the preceding themes of sacralization and coping.

The surveillance PW_3 named was not abstract; he illustrated it with a concrete episode:

> "Once, a photo of me working on my laptop at a café drew the comment, 'How can a Sharia lecturer hang out at a café like a young person?' I was in my thirties then; I was a young person," (PW_3)

PW_1 located the same pressure in an internalized ideal of comportment:

> "There is an unwritten expectation that a UIN lecturer must always appear calm, patient, and Islamically dignified. Yet we are ordinary human beings. I was once criticized by a student because my tone was considered too harsh in a discussion." (PW_1)

For PW_4, the burden took a discipline-specific form, the obligation to reconcile science and faith on demand:

> "I often have to prove that science and Islam are not in conflict, questions about evolution, about the origin of the universe. I must answer carefully, without being intellectually dishonest. That is a quietly heavy pressure." (PW_4)

What unites these accounts is a felt gap between an expected flawless piety and an unspoken human interior, which PW_2 distilled into a plea:

> "Lecturers also need to be cared for, not only demanded of. We are not machines; we have limits." (PW_2).

5. Reframing Exhaustion as Meaningful

Three of the four participants actively reframed exhaustion from a sign of failure into evidence of earnestness. PW_1 interpreted it as a form of intellectual jihad; PW_2 read it as proof of genuine commitment, reasoning that "a person who does not care will not become exhausted"; and PW_3 offered the most radical reframing, acknowledging exhaustion honestly as itself a form of devotion: "Allah does not ask us not to be tired, what is asked is that we remain honest."

Participants did not, however, romanticize this reframing; several paired it with an insistence on limits and self-preservation. PW_3 cautioned against a premature spiritualization of fatigue:

> "I am learning not to rush to make meaning. I used to feel I had to find the wisdom, the theological answer, immediately. Now I am learning that sometimes we must sit with the tiredness before interpreting it." (PW_3)

PW_1 recast self-care itself as a moral duty:

> "Guarding myself against excessive exhaustion is also part of my responsibility, to myself, my family, and the students who will still need me tomorrow." (PW_1)

PW_2 made the point more bluntly:

> "Taking care of myself is not selfish. If I collapse, who will teach? So I now guard myself physically, mentally, and spiritually, not for my own sake but for those who still need me." (PW_2)

PW_4, the eldest, closed his account of meaning-making with quiet surrender:

> "I have tried as best I can. The rest, hasbunallah." (PW_4)

The reframing of exhaustion was therefore neither denial nor mere endurance but an active, and at times self-critical, appraisal.

Table 4.
Cross-Case Patterns and Participant-Specific Variations

Code	Cross-Case Pattern	Description
K-1	Religious Practice as Coping	PW_1 and PW_2 describe Dhuha prayer before teaching, while PW_3 emphasizes the stabilizing role of ritual and PW_4 draws on itqan and tawakkal.
K-2	Institutional Pressure	All four participants describe distinct forms of pressure associated with their religious and professional identities.
K-3	Sacralization of the Profession	All four participants understand teaching with sincere intention as a form of worship.
K-4	Psychosocial Need	PW_2 explicitly emphasizes the need to be heard, while other participants describe emotional regulation, institutional expectations, or difficulties in expressing personal vulnerability.
K-5	Tawakkal as Coping	*Tawakkal* is invoked explicitly by PW_3 and PW_4, with different interpretations of effort, control, and acceptance.

Source: *Authors' interpretative analysis of interview data.*

Here, "cases" refers to the four individual participants (PW_1–PW_4), following standard IPA usage. The codes K-1–K-5 identify cross-case patterns, including shared experiences and participant-specific variations, rather than individual participants. The same coding convention applies to Table 5.

Table 5.
Points of Idiographic Divergence

Code	Aspect	Unique Individual Configuration
D-1	Expression of Religiosity	PW_1 and PW_2 are expressive and affective; PW_4 is analytical and cognitive scientific.
D-2	Dominant Source of Pressure	PW_3: the social panopticon (Sharia); PW_4: proving the compatibility of science and Islam.
D-3	Conceptualization of Tawakkal	PW_3: relinquishing control over outcomes; PW_4: an analogy of a system of equations.
D-4	Patience	PW_1: mature patience that rejects repression; PW_2: an active moral standard rather than an escape.
D-5	Response to Burnout	PW_2: opened up to a colleague and was disappointed; PW_4: was never taught to express feelings (generational).

Source: *Authors' idiographic analysis of interview data.*

D. Discussion

Drawing on the five group experiential themes above, this discussion places the participants' experiences in dialogue with scholarship in the psychology of religion, positive psychology, and Islamic education studies.[33]

1. Intrinsic Religiosity as the Source of a Moral Foundation

The most fundamental finding of this study is that all four participants display a religiosity that does not function as an institutional mask but rather as a source of values that has become fused with their sense of identity. This aligns with the concept of intrinsic religiosity formulated by Allport and Ross,[34] a framework reaffirmed in recent scholarship, in which religion is lived as an end in itself, "the end," rather than as a means of attaining other social or material goals.[35] The strongest evidence of this pattern was found in PW_2, who stated that the concept of amanah served as a restraint when he was on the verge of apathy. "If I were to teach half-heartedly, if I were not honest in giving grades, that would be a betrayal. And it is that feeling that always holds me back whenever I am close to becoming apathetic." (PW_2). This phrase reveals the regulatory function of intrinsic religiosity. When external incentives such as

[33] Kevin L. Ladd et al., eds., *The Cambridge Handbook of the International Psychology of Religion* (Cambridge University Press, 2026), https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108771122.
[34] Allport and Ross, "Personal Religious Orientation and Prejudice."
[35] Sözer and Eskin, "Religiosity, Identity Confusion, and Psychological Well-Being in Turkish University Students: The Moderating Role of Religious Orientation"; Gilimbek and Rashimbetov, "Adapting Religious Orientation Scales for Muslim Contexts: Theoretical Review."

salary, career advancement, or recognition become less motivating, internalized religious values may continue to guide moral conduct. Within self-determination theory, Deci and Ryan describe identified regulation as a process in which individuals consciously accept the personal importance of a value and act accordingly.[36]

PW_4 in particular displays a unique form of intrinsic religiosity. He experiences no dichotomy between his identity as a scientist and his identity as a Muslim. Instead, he finds an epistemic harmony between the logic of Sharia (*maqashid*) and mathematical reasoning. PW_4's account illustrates how intrinsic religiosity can be expressed through cognitive and epistemic reasoning alongside its affective and spiritual dimensions.

2. Sacralization of the Profession, When the Classroom Becomes an Altar of Worship

All participants, with differing modes of expression, experience the lecturer role as a form of worship. This process is neither simple nor mechanical but rather an active and personal cognitive transformation. PW_2 expressed it most explicitly. “I no longer separate work from worship. Entering the classroom with the intention to educate is worship. Being patient with difficult students is worship. Even honestly acknowledging my own weaknesses is part of devotion.” (PW_2). This phenomenon may be interpreted through the concept of calling within work psychology [37], yet with an added theological dimension. For the participants, the profession is not merely meaningful work in a secular sense but rather an arena of devotion to Allah carrying eschatological consequences.

PW_4 operationalizes this sacralization through the concept of *itqan*, which he sharply distinguishes from perfectionism. “My child once said to me, 'Father, you are a perfectionist.' I replied, 'I am not a perfectionist, I practice *itqan*.' There is a difference. Perfectionism is about ego. Itqan is about responsibility.” (PW_4). This distinction is psychologically meaningful within PW_4's account: he associates *itqan* with responsibility toward Allah and separates it from ego-centered perfectionism. His interpretation connects religious commitment with a sense of meaningful work, a concept examined by Steger and colleagues in relation to positive meaning and contribution to a greater good.[38]

[36] Edward L. Deci and Richard M. Ryan, “The ‘What’ and ‘Why’ of Goal Pursuits: Human Needs and the Self-Determination of Behavior,” *Psychological Inquiry* 11, no. 4 (October 2000): 227–68, https://doi.org/10.1207/S15327965PLI1104_01.

[37] Amy Wrzesniewski et al., “Jobs, Careers, and Callings: People’s Relations to Their Work,” *Journal of Research in Personality* 31, no. 1 (1997): 21–33, https://doi.org/10.1006/jrpe.1997.2162.

[38] Michael F. Steger, Bryan J. Dik, and Ryan D. Duffy, “Measuring Meaningful Work: The Work and Meaning Inventory (WAMI),” *Journal of Career Assessment* 20, no. 3 (2012): 322–37, https://doi.org/10.1177/1069072711436160.

3. Spirituality as a Coping Strategy, Between Patience, *Tawakkal*, and Ritual

This study confirms and at the same time extends earlier findings on religiosity as a coping resource.[39] What distinguishes this finding is the important qualification the participants give to the spiritual concepts they employ. PW_1 explicitly rejects a passive and repressive interpretation of patience. “Patience does not mean silently bearing everything. Mature patience is the ability to respond wisely, not to suppress emotion until it explodes elsewhere.” (PW_1). This interpretation of patience as active coping can be understood through collaborative religious coping, in which individuals remain actively engaged in addressing difficulties while drawing on their relationship with God as a spiritual resource.[40]

PW_3 extends this coping dimension through a richly evocative metaphor. “Worship gives me ground, a kind of footing. When everything feels chaotic, there is the prayer whose structure stays the same, the same number of cycles, the same recitations. There is a stability in that which I need.” (PW_3). The phrases “ground” and “footing” are spatial metaphors through which PW_3 describes the stabilizing role of religious ritual amid uncertainty. Within his account, the predictable structure of prayer provides a sense of continuity and emotional steadiness.

PW_4 conceptualizes *tawakkal* through a mathematical analogy: “*Tawakkal* is not giving up. But there is a point at which we have done everything we can, and the rest is indeed not in our hands. Mathematics teaches that too. There are systems of equations that have no solution, and that is not the failure of the mathematics. It is simply the nature of the system”. (PW_4). PW_4 does not merely accept *tawakkal* as a theological doctrine to be believed but rather integrates it into his way of thinking as a scientist, producing an acceptance that is at once rational and transcendental. On the other hand, PW_3 introduces a new dimension in the meaning of coping, namely honesty as a form of worship. His statement, “Allah does not ask us not to be tired, what is asked is that we remain honest,” represents a radical redefinition of devotion, in which exhaustion is acknowledged honestly as part of authentic devotion. The

[39] Hisham Abu-Raiya and Kenneth I. Pargament, “Empirically Based Psychology of Islam: Summary and Critique of the Literature,” *Mental Health, Religion & Culture* 14, no. 2 (February 2011): 93–115, https://doi.org/10.1080/13674670903426482; Justin L. Barrett and Kenneth I. Pargament, “The Psychology of Religion and Coping: Theory Research Practice,” *Review of Religious Research* 40, no. 1 (September 1998): 89, https://doi.org/10.2307/3512468.

[40] Barrett and Pargament, “The Psychology of Religion and Coping: Theory Research Practice.”

salience of *tawakkal* as a psychological resource among Indonesian Muslims has also been documented in recent work.[41]

4. Layered Burden, Behind the Pious Image

Behind the rich and meaningful spiritual narrative, this study also uncovers a side rarely visible in the discourse on lecturers at Islamic campuses, namely the psychological burden that stems from the religious and professional identity itself. All participants without exception mention the pressure to always appear flawless as a Muslim figure on an Islamic campus. PW_3 employs the Foucauldian concept of the panopticon to describe the social surveillance he feels as a Sharia lecturer. “There is a kind of social panopticon. People feel entitled to monitor and judge our lives, because we teach Islamic law. How we dress, how we speak, what we watch, where we vacation, all of it can become material for comment.” (PW_3). The participant's own use of the term “panopticon” is a methodologically significant finding within the IPA framework. The participant does not merely describe an experience but analyzes it using a conceptual framework he possesses as an academic. This reflects what Smith, Flowers, and Larkin describe as the double hermeneutic, in which the researcher interprets a participant who is in turn interpreting his own experience.[42]

A second dimension of this burden is the absence of emotional support. PW_2 describes his moment of burnout with a poignant irony. “There was a time I told a fellow lecturer that I was experiencing burnout. The response was, 'Seek forgiveness, Sir. Perhaps you are lacking in worship.' I appreciated the intention, but it did not help. What I needed at that moment was not advice, but first to be heard.” (PW_2). The response illustrates how spiritual advice can displace attention to a person's immediate emotional needs. In PW_2's account, this response left his need for understanding unmet. PW_4 adds an important generational dimension. “My generation was not taught to talk about feelings. We were taught to work hard, to endure, and not to complain. I do not blame that. But I am also not entirely convinced it is the healthiest way.” (PW_4). His reflection highlights a perceived tension between professional endurance and emotional expression.

5. Reframing Exhaustion, From a Sign of Failure to Evidence of Earnestness

Exhaustion, which in the work psychology literature is often treated merely as a negative indicator, appears in this study in a more complex guise. Three of the four participants actively

[41] Fuad Nashori et al., “The Role of Tawakkul as a Mediator in the Relationship between Personality Traits and Depression among Muslim Students in Indonesia,” *Psikohumaniora: Jurnal Penelitian Psikologi* 11, no. 1 (May 2026): 1–22, https://doi.org/10.21580/pjpp.v11i1.23872.

[42] Smith, Flowers, and Larkin, *Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis: Theory, Method and Research*.

and consciously perform a cognitive and spiritual reframing of their experience of exhaustion. PW_1 interprets exhaustion as intellectual jihad. PW_2 describes exhaustion as a sign that he is truly committed, because he believes that "a person who does not care will not become exhausted." PW_3 proposes the most profound reframing, honestly acknowledging exhaustion as a form of worship. These accounts illustrate how exhaustion was appraised through religious meaning. Cognitive appraisal theory emphasizes that the meaning assigned to a stressful experience is relevant to coping responses.[43] In these cases, interpreting fatigue as part of commitment, responsibility, or worship provided participants with ways of understanding and responding to demanding professional experiences.

Reframing exhaustion as meaningful can become a genuine source of psychological resilience, yet it may also become a rationalization that postpones the treatment of an actual burnout condition. PW_2 himself acknowledges that he once experienced burnout that was not handled well. For this reason, positive interpretations of exhaustion should be accompanied by access to genuine psychosocial support, as illustrated by PW_2's account of unmet emotional needs.

6. Theoretical and Practical Contributions

From the discussion above, this study contributes to the development of the psychology of religion in several respects. First, it shows how intrinsic religiosity is expressed not solely at the affective and emotional level but also through cognitive and epistemic reasoning (PW_4) and moral conduct (PW_1, PW_2). Second, PW_4's distinction between itqan and perfectionism offers an Islamic perspective on professional responsibility and meaningful work that merits further conceptual examination. Third, the participants' accounts of *tawakkal* as acceptance following sustained effort offer an Islamic understanding of how professional limits are negotiated, which can be considered alongside acceptance-based approaches to coping.[44]

Finally, reading these findings through an Indian Ocean Muslim Studies lens provides a broader historical and cultural context for understanding religious and moral experiences in Makassar. Historically, the city occupied an important position in maritime trade and Islamic scholarly networks, with figures such as Syekh Yusuf al-Maqassari reflecting connections between intellectual learning and religious devotion.[45] The participants' integration of scholarly

[43] Susan Folkman, "Stress: Appraisal and Coping," in *Encyclopedia of Behavioral Medicine* (New York, NY: Springer New York, 2013), 1913–15, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4419-1005-9_215.
[44] Marsha Linehan, *Cognitive-Behavioral Treatment of Borderline Personality Disorder* (Guilford press, 1993).
[45] Knaap and Sutherland, *Monsoon Traders: Ships, Skippers and Commodities in Eighteenth-Century Makassar*; Azra, *The Origins of Islamic Reformism in Southeast Asia: Networks of Malay-Indonesian and Middle Eastern 'Ulamā' in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries*.

conscientiousness and internalized piety—most vividly PW_4's understanding of the relationship between mathematical reasoning and *maqashid*, and the shared interpretation of intellectual labor as worship—offers a contemporary perspective on the relationship between knowledge, religious commitment, and professional responsibility. Contemporary research also situates Makassar within a socially and religiously diverse urban environment.[46] Viewed within this context, the findings illuminate how Muslim academics articulate moral commitments through their religious and professional identities, enriching the study of lived Islamic morality in an Indonesian setting historically connected to the Indian Ocean world.

For UIN institutions, these findings suggest the need for policies that not only optimize the lecturer's function as a teaching staff member but also acknowledge and accommodate his or her psychological needs as a human being. Specifically, three recommendations may be put forward.

No.	Recommendation	Rationale from the Findings
1	Development of a Psychological Support Space	PW_2's expressed need to be heard, together with the participants' accounts of emotional and institutional pressures, supports the provision of safe, non-stigmatizing counseling services separate from performance evaluation.
2	Recalibration of the Religious Image Expectation	Participants described expectations of religious and professional conduct as sources of psychological pressure. An academic culture that allows lecturers to acknowledge exhaustion and personal limitations can provide a more supportive professional environment.
3	Values Based Professional Development Program	A program that integrates the strengthening of Islamic values (*amanah*, *itqan*, *tawakkal*) with skills in emotion regulation and wellbeing can serve as a contextual and effective intervention for UIN lecturers.

Source: *Authors' recommendations based on the study findings.*

E. Conclusion

This study asked how intrinsic religious orientation manifests in the moral foundations of Muslim academics in Makassar. Across four IPA cases, this manifestation emerged through three interconnected dimensions: participants understood their professional roles as expressions of worship; they articulated moral commitments through internalized Islamic values, particularly care, fairness, and responsibility; and they drew on spiritual resources to interpret professional pressures and personal limitations. *Tawakkal* was explicitly articulated by PW_3 and PW_4, while other accounts emphasized patience, ritual practice, and self-regulation.

[46] Latif et al., "A Sense of Security in Urban Environments: Discrimination, Diversity and Prospects for Communication Strategies."

Conceptually, the study offers three contributions to the Islamic psychology of religion. First, it demonstrates how lecturers with a dominant intrinsic religious orientation articulate shared moral concerns through distinct personal experiences and religious understandings. Second, care and fairness emerge prominently in the participants' accounts, while the sacralization of professional work provides an interpretive connection to the purity foundation. Authority and loyalty appear in more specific individual configurations. Third, an Indian Ocean Muslim Studies perspective situates these findings within Makassar's broader historical and cultural setting, offering a contextual interpretation of the relationship between religious commitment, intellectual life, and professional morality.

Practically, the participants' interpretation of work as worship, together with their accounts of emotional and professional pressures, highlights the importance of human-resource development in Islamic higher education that recognizes religious experience, provides safe and non-stigmatizing spaces for reflection, and cultivates a culture of genuine listening rather than premature spiritual advice. These claims are necessarily bounded: with only four intrinsically oriented lecturers drawn from a single professional domain, the findings are transferable rather than generalizable, and the manifestation of moral foundations in other life domains was not explored. Future research should widen participant variation beyond academia, compare across religious-orientation types, and extend the inquiry to other Indian Ocean Muslim coastal cities such as Ternate and Aceh.

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