



## An Investigation of Spiritual Well-Being and the Integration of Religious Practices in the Lives of Religious Education Students

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### ABSTRACT

The study examines the role of religious practices in fostering the spiritual well-being and holistic development of students undergoing religious education formation. By exploring their experiences and the practices they integrate into their lives, the research aims to bridge the gap in understanding how these elements contribute to their overall formation. The study utilized a phenomenological design conducted at the Bukidnon Institute of Catechetics (BIC), involving ten purposively selected participants. Data were gathered through focus group discussions and analyzed using narrative and thematic analysis, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of the participants' lived experiences. The study revealed that spiritual practices such as prayer, Mass, retreats, and community engagement significantly contribute to the student's spiritual well-being and holistic personal development. Themes of interpersonal relationships, moral grounding, and perseverance highlight the transformative role of religious activities in nurturing resilience and faith integration. These findings emphasize the essential role of structured spiritual programs in supporting the well-being of religious education students.

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## **INTRODUCTION**

### ***Background of the Study***

Religious education students undergo a distinct formation process that encompasses not only academic learning but also spiritual and personal development (Del Castillo & Cacho, 2024). Central to this formation are religious practices that serve as essential tools for nurturing spiritual well-being (Entegro & Del Castillo, 2021) and fostering holistic growth (Estrada et al., 2019). These practices—such as prayer (Macaranas, 2021), reflection (Baring, 2018), participation in sacraments (Batugal, 2019), and communal worship (Ma, 2020)—are not limited to the spiritual realm but also contribute to the human formation of students by instilling values such as discipline, compassion, and resilience (Howard, 2018). By integrating these practices into their daily lives, students are equipped to navigate the challenges of their vocation, fostering a balance between their spiritual and human dimensions.

Despite the integral role of religious practices in the formation of religious education students, there is limited understanding of how these practices influence their spiritual well-being (Božek et al., 2020; Ryff, 2021). The interplay between structured religious practices and the personal spiritual development of these students remains underexplored. As students navigate the demands of academic, spiritual, and personal growth, there is a need to examine how these practices contribute to their overall spiritual well-being (Oracion & Madrigal, 2019; Pham & Del Castillo, 2020). Understanding this relationship is vital to enhancing formation programs and ensuring that they meet the holistic needs of students.

While significant research has focused on spiritual well-being and religious practices within seminary formation (Legada et al., 2020; Soguilon & Relator, 2022), there is a noticeable lack of studies examining the same among religious education students. This gap in the literature highlights the need for research that investigates how religious practices impact the spiritual well-being of students undergoing religious education formation, who may face challenges and experiences different from those of seminarians. By addressing this population gap, the study explores an underrepresented area of research and examines the influence of religious practices on spiritual well-

being, a vital component of both personal and professional development.

This study aims to explore the spiritual well-being of students under religious education formation and identify the religious practices they integrate into their daily lives. The study seeks to provide an account of the relationship between these practices and their overall spiritual development.

### ***Theoretical Framework***

This study's anchors on the Self-Determination Theory (Ryan & Deci, 2024) and Scott Peck's (1993) Stages of Spiritual Growth, providing a lens to examine the interplay between spiritual well-being and religious practices among religious education students. Self-Determination Theory (SDT) emphasizes the significance of intrinsic motivation and the fulfillment of psychological needs in fostering overall well-being. In the context of religious education students, SDT is particularly relevant as it underscores how internalizing religious practices and spiritual disciplines can contribute to their spiritual well-being.

Additionally, Scott Peck's Stages of Spiritual Growth is a framework that outlines the progressive nature of spiritual development through four stages. This theory provides a lens through which to examine the spiritual journeys of religious education students and the role of religious practices in facilitating their progression through these stages and contextualizing the integration of religious practices in their lives (Hukkinen et al., 2023).

The interplay between these two theories lies in their complementary focus on internal motivation and developmental progression. While SDT highlights the role of autonomy and self-directed growth in fostering well-being, Scott Peck's framework offers a structured pathway to understanding how individuals navigate their spiritual development. Concurrently, these theories provide a comprehensive perspective for analyzing the dynamic relationship between religious practices and spiritual well-being, illustrating how intrinsic motivation affects the progression through the stages of spiritual growth (Ryff, 2021).

### ***Statement of the Problem***

This study aimed to investigate the spiritual well-being and religious practices among Religious Education students undergoing formation. Specifically, it sought to answer the following research questions:

1. How does the religious education students view their spiritual well-being?
2. What religious practices are applied by the religious education students in their life?

### **METHODS**

#### ***Research Design and Participants***

The study employed a phenomenological research design (Errasti-Ibarrondo et al., 2018) to explore the lived experiences of religious education students regarding their spiritual well-being and the integration of religious practices into their lives. This design captures the personal and shared experiences, allowing for an in-depth understanding of how students perceive and internalize these practices. The research was conducted at the Bukidnon Institute of Catechetics (BIC), an institution dedicated to the formation and training of religious education students (Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines, 2021). The setting provided a rich context for exploring the unique experiences of the participants in their faith formation journey.

The study included ten (10) participants selected from the thirty-nine (39) students under formation at BIC. Using a purposive sampling technique (Thomas, 2022), the researchers selected third-year and fourth-year students, as their extended time in the formation program provided deeper insights into the integration of religious practices. The participants comprised four (4) male and six (6) female participants, representing a balanced perspective across genders.

#### ***Research Procedure***

The researchers began by preparing the necessary documents to secure approval for the study. Coordination with the relevant offices and institutions ensured compliance with institutional protocols and facilitated access to the participants. Once permissions were granted, the researchers scheduled data-gathering sessions in consultation with the institution's administration to ensure minimal disruption to the students' formation

activities. A researcher-made instrument, patterned after the study of Soguilon and Relator (2022), was used to guide data collection. Experts in religious education and formation validated the instrument to ensure its relevance, clarity, and alignment with the study objectives.

Focus group discussions (FGDs) (Sim & Waterfield, 2019) were employed to collect data, allowing participants to share their experiences and perspectives in a collaborative ~~What religious practices are ap~~ discussions, which lasted approximately thirty minutes to an hour, were conducted in a conducive environment that ensured comfort and confidentiality. The FGD format enabled participants to build on each other's insights, providing a deeper and more detailed understanding of their lived experiences. The researchers facilitated the sessions with respect, ensuring that all voices were heard and respected.

The study interpreted the data using narrative and thematic analysis (Sharp et al., 2019). Narrative analysis was employed to capture and convey the participants' stories, highlighting their unique experiences and the meaning they derived from their religious practices. Thematic analysis identified common patterns and themes across the data, providing a structured understanding of the shared experiences and insights. Together, these methods allowed for a comprehensive exploration of the phenomena under study.

The study adhered to strict ethical protocols to ensure trustworthiness and integrity. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, ensuring they fully understood the purpose, process, and scope of the study. Data privacy was maintained by anonymizing participants' responses and securely storing data. Participation was entirely voluntary, with participants free to withdraw at any point without repercussions. These measures ensured that the study respected the rights and dignity of all participants.

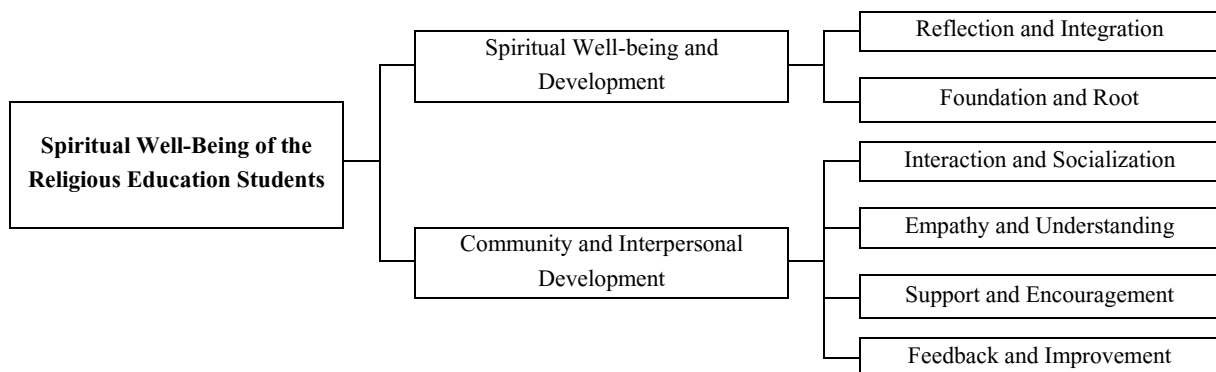
### **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

#### ***Spiritual Well-being of the Religious Education Students***

Figure 1 illustrates the thematic analysis chart connecting the spiritual well-being of the religious education students under formation. The analysis reveals the synthesis of two primary overarching themes, namely *spiritual well-being and*

development and community and interspersed development. Within each thematic category, subthemes have been documented and analyzed,

recording the spiritual well-being of the religious education students under formation.



**Figure 1.** Thematic chart on the spiritual well-being of the religious education students under formation.

### **Reflection and Integration**

The subtheme of *Reflection and Integration* highlights the process by which students internalize their spiritual practices and connect them to their personal lives. As shared by the responses of the participants:

**G1-R2** : “I could reflect on my sense of connection to my faith and integrate my spiritual teaching into my daily life...”

**G2-R1** : “Makatabang, especially in terms of meditation and reflection.”  
(Helpful, especially in terms of meditation and reflection.)

The result entails a reflective process that allows students to evaluate their beliefs and behaviors, fostering a deeper sense of purpose and alignment with their spiritual values (Madrigal et al., 2020; Pham & Del Castillo, 2020). Integration, on the other hand, emphasizes the application of these reflections in their daily lives (Entegro & Del Castillo, 2021), reinforcing their spiritual growth and well-being (Cena & Bual, 2021). The result implies that the capacity to reflect on and integrate spiritual practices is critical for students' holistic development (Basileyo, 2019), as it nurtures autonomy and intentionality in their faith journey (Buys, 2021).

### **Foundation and Root**

The subtheme of *Foundation and Root* focuses on the student's core beliefs and the early influences

that shape their spiritual identity. As indicated by the participant:

**G2-R4** : “I describe the spiritual well-being of religious education students at present as a foundation of my faith and my root of being a REED student...”

These foundational elements provide stability (Pham & Del Castillo, 2020) and serve as a guiding force (Manalastas, 2020) in their spiritual formation. Rootedness in faith traditions and values helps students maintain resilience and equips them with a strong sense of relatedness to their community and spiritual heritage (Baring, 2018). This subtheme underscores the importance of establishing a solid spiritual base (Bangcola & Pangandaman, 2022), which allows for sustained growth and the capacity to navigate the complexities of religious practices (Legada et al., 2020; Duterte, 2024). The result suggests that a well-established foundation is crucial for students to engage meaningfully with their faith and evolve in their spiritual development (Del Castillo et al., 2023).

### **Spiritual Well-being and Development**

The overarching theme of *Spiritual Well-being and Development* offers a comprehensive view of the student's spiritual journey. Together, the subthemes illustrate the dynamic interplay between introspection, application, and rootedness in faith, which collectively enhance spiritual well-being. The

theme implies that spiritual development is not a linear process but a continuous interplay of nurturing foundational beliefs and adapting them through reflective practice. By supporting both individual and communal dimensions of spirituality, this theme reflects the students' capacity to grow through autonomy, relatedness, and competence while also advancing in their stages of spiritual growth.

### ***Interaction and Socialization***

The subtheme of *Interaction and Socialization* highlights the importance of meaningful relationships within the religious education community. As stated by the participants:

- G1-R1** : *“Interaction is one of the products to help me grow; through interaction, I can develop and make adjust ko sa lain-laing attitude...”*  
*(Interaction is one of the products to help me grow; through interaction, I can develop and make adjustments to different attitudes...)*
- G1-R3** : *“It contributes in a sense, kanang makatabang siya, through interacting with others...”*  
*(It contributes in a sense, that it helps, through interacting with others...)*
- G2-R1** : *“Through interaction, we can build a strong relationship with each other.”*
- G2-R4** : *“Pinaagi sa pakig socialize sa akong mga kauban nahimo kung matured, kay there are different attitudes and behavior of my fellow ReEds...”*  
*(Through socializing with my companions, I have become more mature, because there are different attitudes and behaviors of my fellow ReEds...)*

These interactions provide a platform for students to share experiences, exchange ideas, and develop mutual understanding, fostering a sense of connectedness and belonging (Oracion & Madrigal, 2019; Cena & Bual, 2021). This subtheme implies that socialization is essential in enhancing interpersonal skills and spiritual well-being (Embalsado et al., 2024), as it nurtures the

relatedness needed for personal growth and community engagement (Pham & Del Castillo, 2020; Bangcola & Pangandaman, 2022). By actively participating in social interactions, students strengthen their communal bonds, which support their progress in spiritual maturity and interpersonal development (Basileyo, 2019).

### ***Empathy and Understanding***

The subtheme of *Empathy and Understanding* underscores the value of compassion and sensitivity in building relationships within the religious education setting. As shared by the participants:

- G1-R3** : *“Kanang mabutang nimo imong kaugalingun nga makatabang, then naa bitaw mga alternative ways para ang tanan kay ma belong.”*  
*(When you put yourself in a position to help, there are usually alternative ways for everyone to feel included.)*
- G1-R4** : *“It allows me to connect with the experience and struggles of others...”*
- G2-R3** : *“It enhances in the way that I learned how to put my shoe to others situations.”*

Through empathy (Waters-Tozier, 2022), students learn to appreciate diverse perspectives and provide emotional support to peers (Mergal et al., 2019), fostering a nurturing and inclusive environment (Cena & Bual, 2021). This subtheme reflects how understanding others' experiences deepens interpersonal connections and reinforces spiritual growth by aligning actions with core religious values (Madrigal et al., 2020). The development of empathy not only strengthens community ties but also enhances self-awareness, facilitating a holistic approach to spiritual well-being (Entegro & Del Castillo, 2021).

### ***Support and Encouragement***

The subtheme of *Support and Encouragement* emphasizes the role of mutual assistance and motivation within the community. As shared by the participants:

- G1-R4** : *“...my overall spiritual growth and development by making me encourage to join the community because it makes sense that mo apil ko'g prayer...”*

*(...my overall spiritual growth and development by making me encourage to join the community because it makes sense that I join in prayer [sic]...)*

**G2-R1** : *"...through comforting each other and giving advice, it helps me to grow and become mature to participate in the community activities..."*

**G2-R2** : *"...when someone was sick, na enhance spiritual well-being kay naa ko'y natabangan nga usa ka person kay gi ampo nako siya..."*

*(...when someone was sick, my spiritual well-being was enhanced because I was able to help a person by praying for them...)*

Support from peers and mentors instills confidence and resilience (Basileyo, 2019), enabling students to face challenges with a positive mindset (Legada et al., 2020). Encouragement reinforces competence, as students feel validated in their spiritual practices and personal efforts (Madriral et al., 2020; Cena & Bual, 2021). This subtheme highlights the interplay between community-driven support and individual growth, suggesting that such an environment fosters a sense of empowerment and contributes significantly to spiritual and interpersonal development (Pham & Del Castillo, 2020).

### ***Feedback and Improvement***

The subtheme of *Feedback and Improvement* reflects the importance of constructive dialogue in fostering personal and communal growth. As claimed by the participants:

**G1-R4** : *"Fraternal Correction is about telling positive and negative comments about your attitudes and performance here in the community..."*

**G1-R5** : *"...apil gyapon ang open forum, kay diha nimo ma dungog ang mga suggestion sa imoha ug ila kang e correct para sa imong kaayuhan."*  
*(...open forums are also included, because that's where you can hear suggestions from others and they can correct you for your own good...)*

**G2-R2** : *"...it values the sense of community and collaboration to my other*

*classmates and batch to foster a meaningful relationship with a deep sense of spiritual well-being..."*

**G2-R4** : *"...by attending sa tanang activities sa community..."*

*(...by attending all activities in the community...)*

**G2-R5** : *"...matabangan dayon akong self nga mo pariha ko sa ilaha kung unsa sila ka motivated mo simba..."*

*(...I will be able to help myself to emulate them in terms of their motivation to attend mass...)*

Feedback from peers and mentors provides students with insights to refine their practices and behaviours, ensuring alignment with their spiritual and interpersonal goals (Waters-Tozier, 2022). This subtheme implies that a culture of open communication and continuous improvement promotes accountability and adaptability (Legada et al., 2020; Cena & Bual, 2021; Del Castillo et al., 2023), which are vital for spiritual and community development (Bangcola & Pangandaman, 2022). It further suggests that receiving and applying feedback helps students progress in their journey toward spiritual maturity and relational competence (Madriral et al., 2020).

### ***Community and Interpersonal Development***

The overarching theme of *Community and Interpersonal Development* ties together the subthemes of interaction, empathy, support, and feedback, illustrating the multifaceted nature of communal relationships in fostering spiritual well-being. This theme highlights the dynamic role of community in nurturing relatedness, competence, and autonomy, which are crucial for holistic growth. By emphasizing mutual understanding, encouragement, and opportunities for improvement, the theme exhibits how interpersonal development strengthens the foundation for spiritual growth.

The *Spiritual Well-Being of Religious Education Students* reveals the interconnectedness of personal reflection and social engagement in fostering holistic spiritual growth. The results highlight that spiritual well-being is not solely an individual journey but one enriched and deepened by meaningful relationships within a supportive community. The interplay between personal and

interpersonal dimensions facilitates progress in spiritual maturity, enabling students to navigate their growth in a dynamic and integrative manner. Ultimately, the combined focus on individual development and community support underscores the importance of balance between self-awareness and relational connection in achieving spiritual well-being.

### Religious Practices applied by the Religious Education Students

Figure 2 illustrates the thematic analysis chart connecting religious practices applied by the religious education students under formation. The analysis reveals the synthesis of two primary overarching themes namely *spiritual practices and religious activities* and *personal growth and development*. Within each thematic category, subthemes have been documented and analyzed, recording the religious practices applied by the religious education students under formation.

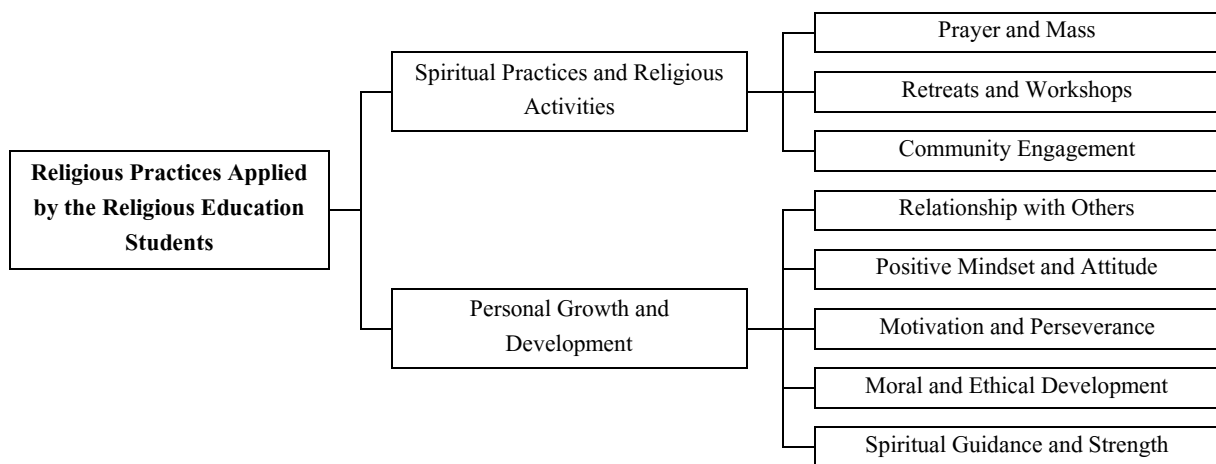


Figure 2. Thematic chart on the religious practices of the religious education students under formation

#### Prayer and Mass

The subtheme *Prayer and Mass* highlight the centrality of liturgical and devotional practices in the lives of the students. As stated by the participants:

- G1-R4 : "...prayer is one of the most important things I apply to my daily life ..."
- G1-R5 : "...mass and prayers will serve as our foundational aspect to become a better person ..."
- G2-R3 : "...we had the following: Morning/Evening Prayer and Mass..."

Through consistent participation, these practices serve as both a grounding routine and a profound means of nurturing their spiritual life (Macaranas, 2021). Prayer and Mass encourage autonomy as students internalize their connection with the divine, fostering intrinsic motivation in their faith journey (Abun et al., 2018). They also

enhance competence as students develop a deeper understanding of their spiritual traditions (Madrigal et al., 2020). Moreover, these practices signify progress in spiritual growth, enabling students to navigate personal and collective expressions of faith, consequently contributing significantly to their holistic spiritual development (Waters-Tozier, 2022).

#### Retreats and Workshops

The subtheme *Retreats and Workshops* underscores the transformative experiences that structured religious activities provide. As stated by a participant:

- G2-R1 : "...Recollection, BEC, Bible Seminars, Prayer and Life Workshop, Holy Hour, and Retreat..."

These opportunities allow students to deepen their reflection (Macaraan, 2019), renew their spiritual focus (Norman & Pokorny, 2017), and

foster personal and communal growth. They promote autonomy by providing a space for self-discovery and spiritual renewal (Algarme, 2021). Competence is further developed as students engage with teachings and exercises that challenge and refine their understanding of faith (Ryff, 2021). These activities act as catalysts for spiritual maturation, encouraging a movement toward greater integration and awareness within their faith journey.

### ***Community Engagement***

The subtheme of *Community Engagement* demonstrates the importance of active involvement in collective activities as a means of applying and living out spiritual values. As shared by the participants:

**G1-R4** : “...by attending the prayers and community activities it can shape me because it teaching me to be a responsible if matinumanon ...”  
 (...by attending the prayers and community activities it can shape me because it teaching me to be responsible if I am obedient [sic]...)

**G2-R3** : “...it motivated me to become more excited and interested in attending any religious activities...”

Through programs, shared service, and faith-based initiatives, students strengthen their sense of relatedness and shared responsibility (Estrada et al., 2019). This engagement enhances their ability to empathize and connect with others while grounding their spiritual practices in real-world applications (Embalsado et al., 2024). It also fosters progress in spiritual growth by encouraging an outward expression of internal faith (Baring, 2018; Del Castillo et al., 2023), thus bridging personal belief with communal impact (Soguilon & Relator, 2022).

### ***Spiritual Practices and Religious Activities***

The overarching theme of *Spiritual Practices and Religious Activities* illustrates how these practices collectively shape the students’ spiritual and personal development. Together, these activities create a balanced structure that supports autonomy through self-driven devotion, competence through structured spiritual exercises, and relatedness through communal involvement. This

holistic engagement with spiritual practices nurtures a deeper, more authentic faith experience, guiding students through various stages of spiritual growth and equipping them with the tools to integrate their beliefs into their everyday lives.

### ***Relationship with Others***

The subtheme, *Relationship with Others*, underscores the significant role interpersonal connections play in shaping students' personal growth. As shared by the participants:

**G1-R4** : “...religious activities shape my relationship to others, pinaagi sa pagpapakita ug respect to one another especially naa pud mi nagkalain- laing problema and also helps me to become compassionate, generous, and a kind person...”  
 (...religious activities shape my relationship to others, through showing respect to one another, especially since we have different problems, and also helps me to become compassionate, generous, and a kind person...)

**G2-R4** : “...para sa akua kay religious values guide me to treat others with kindness and compassion, leading me to volunteer in sharing and leading practice gratitude daily ...”  
 (...for me, religious values guide me to treat others with kindness and compassion, leading me to volunteer in sharing and leading practice gratitude daily ...)

Through meaningful relationships (Algarme, 2021; Howard, 2023), students experience relatedness, fostering a sense of belonging and support that enhances their overall spiritual practices (Baring, 2018; Madrigal et al., 2020). These relationships serve as a mirror for self-awareness and empathy (Embalsado et al., 2024), helping students navigate challenges in their faith journey. The cultivation of healthy interactions also aids in advancing stages of spiritual growth by providing a platform for shared learning and accountability, making personal growth more relational and impactful (Macaraan, 2019; Macaranas, 2021).

### ***Positive Mindset and Attitude***

The subtheme *Positive Mindset and Attitude* highlights how students' inner disposition influences their engagement with religious practices. As claimed by the participants:

**G2-R4** : “...it leads me to handle situations positively, and I broaden my understanding on how deal with people around me to think positively and be a kind and approachable to all...”

**G2-R5** : “...the value of patience make myself more calm everyday...”

By nurturing optimism and resilience (Basileyo, 2019), students strengthen their autonomy (Abun et al., 2018) and intrinsic motivation (Abun et al., 2019). A positive mindset supports perseverance in their faith journey and encourages a proactive approach to spiritual challenges (Legada et al., 2020). This development reflects progress in their spiritual growth, moving them toward a more hopeful and purpose-driven outlook on their religious and personal lives (Del Castillo et al., 2023).

### ***Motivation and Perseverance***

The subtheme *Motivation and Perseverance* emphasizes the students' drive to persist in their faith practices despite challenges. As stated by the participants:

**G1-R1** : “...through recollection and all activities, we engage in sharing of experiences and knowledge to give each of us motivation on our journey...”

**G1-R2** : “...through religious values, it makes me persevere and courageous ...”

**G2-R1** : “...it helps me become optimistic every day, knowing that God will guide me...”

**G2-R2** : “...through religious values, it helps me to become more productive and teach me how to have a hope in everything...”

This subtheme highlights the interplay of autonomy and competence as students independently choose to deepen their commitment and cultivate the skills necessary for sustaining their spiritual routines (Legada et al., 2020; Soguilon &

Relator, 2022; Del Castillo et al., 2023). Their perseverance aligns with the stages of spiritual growth by demonstrating maturity and a steadfast pursuit of their faith (Buenconsejo, 2018; Macaranas, 2021), reinforcing personal growth through continuous self-improvement and reliance on divine guidance (Embalsado et al., 2024).

### ***Moral and Ethical Development***

The subtheme *Moral and Ethical Development* reflects the students' internalization of values derived from their religious education. As stated by the participants:

**G1-R3** : “...every day I challenge myself to live out the good morals that God had commanded ...”

**G2-R1** : “...every day is a teaching not only for myself and for others [sic], through doing good things, I can encourage those people who see my good deeds to send a reminder for them to do or act what is good, which is an act to our God...”

**G2-R2** : “...every day is a journey and challenges that comes in my life; I just need to be good all the time...”

These values guide their decisions and interactions, enhancing their sense of competence and self-regulation (Baring, 2018). By grounding their actions in moral principles, students demonstrate progression in their spiritual growth, moving toward a stage of integration where ethical considerations become a natural expression of their faith (Madrigal et al., 2020; Macaranas, 2021). This growth fosters a consistent alignment between their beliefs and behaviours, contributing to their holistic development (Cena & Bual, 2021).

### ***Spiritual Guidance and Strength***

The subtheme *Spiritual Guidance and Strength* highlights how students rely on divine inspiration and support to navigate their personal and spiritual lives. As shared by the participants:

**G1-R1** : “...faith, tungod sa faith nako sa Ginoo malipayon ko kada adlaw kay naa koy

Gino..."

(...faith, because of my faith in the Lord, I am happy every day because I have the Lord...)

**G2-R2** : "...I use some bible quotes for me to be motivated, which would lead my daily life to be happy..."

This reliance enhances their sense of relatedness with the divine and provides the strength to face challenges with courage and faith (Buenconsejo, 2018; Legada et al., 2020; Del Castillo et al., 2023). Such guidance anchors them in their spiritual practices, aiding in progression through the stages of spiritual growth (Pham & Del Castillo, 2020). It reflects a deepened trust and dependency on their spirituality, further fortifying their overall personal growth and resilience (Bangcola & Pangandaman, 2022; Waters-Tozier, 2022).

### ***Personal Growth and Development***

The overarching theme of *Personal Growth and Development* integrates the subthemes to showcase how religious practices shape the students' holistic transformation. By fostering autonomy, competence, and relatedness, these practices provide a framework for students to advance in their spiritual maturity. Each subtheme reflects a dimension of growth—relational, mental, motivational, ethical, and spiritual—that collectively guides students through stages of spiritual development. This extensive growth not only strengthens their religious practices but also equips them to navigate life with purpose, resilience, and a well-formed sense of self.

The *Religious Practices Applied by the Religious Education Students* reveals a dynamic interplay between active engagement in religious practices and the holistic transformation of the student's personal and spiritual lives. Participation in practices such as prayer, Mass, retreats, and community engagement fosters a sense of autonomy, competence, and relatedness, allowing students to internalize their faith as a source of purpose and connection. This active engagement catalyzes personal growth, manifesting in stronger relationships, a positive mindset, perseverance, moral grounding, and reliance on spiritual guidance. Concurrently, the result underscores how spiritual

practices serve as both the foundation and the pathway for continuous development, highlighting their essential role in nurturing the students' overall spiritual well-being and readiness to navigate life's challenges with faith and resilience.

### **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

The study emphasizes the impact of religious practices and personal development activities on the spiritual well-being of religious education students. Through themes such as spiritual practices, community engagement, and personal growth, the findings highlight the transformative role of these experiences in fostering faith, resilience, and moral integrity. Moreover, the study provides empirical insights into the integration of religious practices within community settings, specifically within the context of religious education formation. Furthermore, the results substantiate that structured spiritual and developmental activities not only support the students' holistic well-being but also equip them to embody their faith in personal and communal dimensions.

Based on the findings, it is recommended that institutions offering religious education could further enhance their spiritual and personal development programs by incorporating diverse and meaningful activities such as retreats, workshops, and structured community engagement. Additionally, these programs could be continuously evaluated and refined to ensure they address students' evolving needs and foster deeper spiritual growth. Formators and faculties are encouraged to provide consistent guidance and feedback to help students internalize their experiences, ensuring that these practices lead to sustained well-being and personal transformation.

### **FURTHER RESEARCH**

Further studies could explore the longitudinal impact of religious practices on the spiritual well-being of students. Additionally, investigations could examine how these practices influence other dimensions of personal development, such as emotional resilience, leadership abilities, and academic performance. Moreover, comparative studies between students in religious education programs and those in secular institutions could provide deeper insights into the unique contributions of structured spiritual activities.

Correspondingly, research could focus on the role of technology and modern communication platforms in enhancing or hindering spiritual practices and well-being. These studies could provide a broader understanding of how traditional religious activities can adapt to contemporary challenges while fostering spiritual growth.

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