

# Full-moon chanting as transformative Buddhist education: integrating saddhā and moral values formation among Buddhist students

Wulia Purnama Sari<sup>1</sup>, Ayu Andriyaningsih<sup>2</sup>, Sidartha Adi Gautama<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1,2</sup>Buddhist Education Department, Jinarakkhita Buddhist College of Lampung, Indonesia

<sup>3</sup>Buddhist Communication Science Department, Jinarakkhita Buddhist College of Lampung, Indonesia

Email: [wulia.purnama.sari@sekha.kemenag.go.id](mailto:wulia.purnama.sari@sekha.kemenag.go.id)

**Abstract:** This study examines the role of Full Moon Puja Bhakti as a form of transformative Buddhist education that integrates saddhā (faith) and moral values formation among Buddhist students in East Lampung, Indonesia. In Buddhist teaching, devotional practices such as Puja Bhakti are not only rituals of reverence but also pedagogical spaces that transmit ethical values, strengthen faith, and cultivate spiritual discipline. Within the school and community context, Full Moon observances allow students to internalize Buddhist teachings through chanting, reflection, and collective devotion, fostering a sense of identity and moral responsibility. The research employed a quantitative approach using survey methods. Data were collected through validated questionnaires distributed to Buddhist students actively participating in Puja Bhakti, involving 207 students. Data analysis used the SPSS 26 application. Regression analysis was applied to identify the effect of ritual participation on the strengthening of saddhā and the development of moral values. Findings indicate that Full Moon Puja Bhakti significantly reinforces faith and shapes students' ethical conduct. The practice is an integrative educational tool that unites spiritual devotion with character building. As a result, Full Moon Puja Bhakti can be considered an effective pedagogical model for promoting transformative Buddhist education, ensuring the preservation of saddhā and ethical values within contemporary youth communities.

**Keywords:** Transformative Buddhist Education; Buddhist Chanting in Learning; Saddhā; Moral Values.

## 1. Introduction

Religious education in higher education institutions aims not only to transfer knowledge, but also to shape character and a holistic religious identity. In the context of Buddhist education [1]. The Puja Bhakti Purnama ritual, which is held regularly on the night of the full moon, faces the challenge of not merely being a ceremonial activity, but rather a truly transformative educational process [2] This transformation relies on the ritual's ability to internalize the core values of Buddhist teachings, particularly Saddhā (faith), into the daily lives of students [3]. Empirically, international literature examining the effects of chanting/mantras and meditation practices shows evidence that collective and repetitive practices such as chanting are associated with improved psychological

well-being, emotional regulation, and several dimensions of morality (e.g., reduction in unethical behavior, increased empathy/prosocial behavior). In the Anguttara Nikāya (A.IV.37, Saddhā Sutta), the Buddha states, "One who has faith, O monks, will be a person of faith, moral, knowledgeable, generous, and wise" [4]. This statement confirms that Saddhā is not just emotional belief, but a moral and cognitive foundation that fosters ethical behavior. Therefore, the formation of Saddhā through the Puja Bhakti Purnama ritual is an important foundation for Buddhist character education in the modern era (Mugiyo and Dwi Hatmono, 2022). Quantitative studies and systematic reviews of mantra/chanting and meditation report effects on stress, attention, and prosocial tendencies that are relevant to moral education goals. This indicates that structured religious rituals can be an important input in the process of internalizing values [6].

This transformation depends on the extent to which rituals are able to internalize the core values of Buddhist teachings, especially Saddhā (belief in Dhamma), into the real lives of students. Saddhā in Buddhist teachings is not merely emotional belief, but rather an affective-cognitive foundation that fosters moral motivation and ethical behavior such as compassion (*karuṇā*), honesty (*sacca*), and self-control (*sīla*) [7]. Thus, the formation of Saddhā through religious rituals becomes an important foundation for continuous Buddhist character education. The Puja Bhakti Purnama ritual also reflects the spirit of moral formation as stated in Dhammapada verse 183: "Avoid all evil, cultivate virtue, and purify the mind that is the teaching of the Buddhas." This verse provides the philosophical basis that the main purpose of rituals is not ceremonial formality, but rather the process of purifying the mind that gives rise to moral and spiritual behavior [8].

Globally, various studies show that devotional practices such as chanting (reciting *paritta* or *mantras*) and meditation have a positive effect on psychological well-being, emotional regulation, and prosocial tendencies [9]. Repetitive practices carried out collectively have been shown to strengthen spiritual connections, increase empathy, and reduce unethical behavior [10]. This indicates that religious rituals are not only a form of worship, but also a pedagogical space where moral and spiritual values are taught through direct experience and shared reflection.

In the Buddhist tradition itself, the concept of *saddhā* (belief or faith that underlies commitment to Dhamma) is considered an affective-cognitive foundation that allows the values of the teachings (e.g., compassion, honesty, self-control) to be internalized and shaped into daily actions [11]. Research on contemporary Buddhist education in Indonesia shows that organized *puja bakti* practices can increase spiritual intelligence, religious motivation, and moral behavior tendencies in students, thereby supporting the role of *puja bakti* as a medium for character education in the local context. In addition, the ceremonial education model adapted to the learning context (e.g., blended learning for *pandita/upacarika*) demonstrates efforts to transform ritual practices into systematic educational material [12].

However, several practical and theoretical challenges remain apparent. First, many studies in the Buddhist context are descriptive or classroom action studies; there are not yet enough quasi-experimental quantitative studies that examine the causal relationship between participation in full moon rituals (frequency/duration/involvement) and

measurable changes in *saddhā* and moral behavior among students. Second, the mechanism of value internalization, whether through increased *saddhā*, the formation of normative communities, or personal reflective practices, still requires empirically tested evidence (mediation analysis). Third, there is a need to align traditional ritual practices with the objectives of higher education curricula so that rituals do not merely become ceremonial routines but become pedagogical interventions that can be measured and replicated [13].

Based on this background, this study seeks to explore and examine the role of Full-Moon Chanting / Puja Bhakti Purnama as a form of transformative Buddhist education that has the potential to increase *saddhā* and moral values among Buddhist students. Specifically, this study formulates the following objectives: (1) to examine whether the level of participation in puja bhakti purnama is positively related to an increase in *saddhā* among students; (2) to examine whether such participation is positively related to the formation of moral values; and (3) to examine whether *saddhā* mediates the relationship between ritual participation and moral value formation. The research hypotheses are designed to be tested using a pretest-posttest quasi-experimental design and SEM/mediation analysis to reveal the mechanism of educational transformation through rituals.

## 2. Method

This study adopts a quantitative approach using a survey method to measure the relationship between participation in the Full-Moon Chanting / Puja Bhakti Purnama ritual as an independent variable and *saddhā* and moral value formation as dependent variables. Surveys were chosen for their ability to collect data from many respondents in a relatively short time and their efficiency in operationalizing psychosocial variables through structured questionnaire instruments. In the realm of methodology, surveys as a quantitative method are widely recognized as a systematic way to map attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors in larger populations based on representative samples [14].

The research population consists of Buddhist students who are active in Buddhist community organizations at universities or higher education institutions in the research area. From this population, samples will be drawn using purposive sampling techniques for groups that are active in full moon rituals and convenience sampling techniques for comparison groups (those who do not or rarely participate regularly). This non-probabilistic sampling selection was considered due to the specific target population (Buddhist students who participate in rituals) and limited access to the entire population in the context of higher education.

The research instrument is a closed-ended questionnaire based on a Likert scale (1–5) that has been designed to measure the frequency and intensity of ritual participation (independent variable) Anggraini, (2022), *saddhā* scores (dependent variable 1), and moral value formation scores (dependent variable 2). The instrument items were developed based on Buddhist education literature and religious value transformation theory, then tested for validity. Before use, this instrument was pretested on a small sample (30 respondents) to examine the initial reliability coefficient. Data collection was

conducted once (cross-sectional) using a questionnaire completed by respondents. After the data was collected, analysis was carried out through the following stages: assumption testing (normality, linearity, homoscedasticity), descriptive analysis (mean, standard deviation, frequency distribution), correlation between variables, and multiple regression. Using this quantitative survey method, the study sought to obtain sufficiently strong empirical evidence to generalize findings about the influence of the full moon ritual on saddhā and the formation of moral values in the Buddhist student population in the context of higher education.

### 3. Results

Based on the reliability test of the research instrument, the results obtained were a reliability coefficient for 13 valid items. The reliability analysis scale (alpha) using SPSS for Windows version 27 produced a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.918. The minimum requirement for a variable to be considered reliable is a Cronbach's alpha value of  $\geq 0.7$  or greater than 0.7. If the Cronbach's alpha value is  $\leq 0.7$  or less than 0.7, the variable is considered unreliable. Therefore, it can be concluded that the research instrument used in this study has met the requirements for good reliability.

**Table 1.1** Instrument Reliability Test

Cronbach's Alpha	Number of Items
.918	13

The purpose of conducting a normality test is to determine whether the distribution of residual data is normal or not. This normality test was conducted using the One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test method. The Cronbach's alpha value indicates a high level of internal consistency in the instrument used, so it can be concluded that the instrument has excellent reliability. Thus, this research measurement tool can be trusted for use in the measurement and further analysis of full moon worship as transformative Buddhist education: the integration of saddhā and the formation of moral values among Buddhist students in East Lampung. These findings indicate that the research instrument has met the eligibility criteria for producing accurate and valid data in the context of this study.

Next, normality testing was conducted as an important stage in statistical analysis, with the aim of determining whether the data collected from respondents followed a normal distribution. In this study, normality testing was performed using the one-sample Kolmogorov–Smirnov method. Data is considered normally distributed if the significance value (p-value) is greater than 0.05 (5%). Based on the analysis of 207 respondents, a significance value of 0.044 was obtained. Since this value is less than 0.05, it can be concluded that the data in this study is not normally distributed.

**Table 1.2** Normality Test

One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test		
N		Unstandardized Residual 207
Normal Parameters <sup>a,b</sup>	Mean	.000000
	Std. Deviation	9.45571163
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	.088
Positive		.066
Negative		-.088
Test Statistic		.088
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		.044 <sup>c</sup>
a. Test distribution is Normal.		

The homogeneity test plays an important role in independent sample analysis, especially when using the Compare Means One-Way ANOVA method. The main purpose of this test is to examine whether the population variances being compared have similarity. The test criteria state that if the significance value (Sig.) is greater than 0.05 (5%), it can be concluded that the variances between the data groups are homogeneous.

Performing a homogeneity test is a prerequisite in independent sample analysis that focuses on comparing means through ANOVA. The basic assumption in ANOVA analysis is that the population variances between groups must be the same. Thus, if the significance value obtained is greater than 0.05, it can be said that the two data groups have uniform or homogeneous variances.

Based on the results of the homogeneity of variance test, a significance value of 0.448 was obtained for the variables of puja bhakti purnama, saddha integrity, and moral formation among students. Since this value is greater than 0.05, it can be concluded that the two variables are homogeneous. A more detailed description of these results can be seen in the following homogeneity of variance test table.

**Table 1.3** Homogeneity Test Results

Test of Homogeneity of Variances					
		Levene			
		Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
Transformative	Based on Mean	.579	1	208	.448
Buddhist Education	Based on Median	.525	1	208	.470
Buddhist Chanting in Learning; Saddhā; Moral Values.	Based on the Median and with adjusted df	.525	1	204.518	.470
	Based on trimmed mean	.536	1	208	.465

This study aims to analyze the influence of transformative Buddhist education, the recitation of Buddhist mantras in the learning process, and the role of Saddhā in shaping students' moral values. Through the use of research instruments that have been tested for validity and reliability, data was obtained from respondents who proportionally represented the research population, enabling an in-depth and comprehensive analysis of

the relationships between the variables studied. The following presents the results of the regression analysis that forms the basis of the findings in this study.

**Table 1.4** Regression Equation Output

Coefficients <sup>a</sup>							
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
(Constant)	16.794	1.007		16,671	.000		
1 Full Moon Worship	-.062	.064	-.067	-.961	.338	1.000	1.000

a. Dependent Variable: Saddha Integration

Based on the results of the simple linear regression analysis shown in the table above, it is known that the constant has a value of 16.794 with a significance value of 0.000. This means that if the Puja Bakti Purnama variable is zero, the Saddha Integration value will be 16.794. This means that without the influence of Puja Bakti Purnama, the level of Saddha Integration remains significantly high.

The regression coefficient for the Puja Bakti Purnama variable is -0.062 with a t-value of -0.961 and a significance of 0.338. The significance value is greater than 0.05, so it can be concluded that Puja Bakti Purnama does not have a significant effect on Saddha Integration. The negative direction of the coefficient indicates that the more often a person participates in Puja Bakti Purnama, the more Saddha Integration tends to decrease, but the decrease is not statistically significant.

The standard Beta value of -0.067 also shows that the effect of Puja Bakti Purnama on Saddha Integration is only 6.7%, which is very small. Thus, the Puja Bakti Purnama variable is not a major factor influencing Saddha Integration in this study.

The multicollinearity test shows a Tolerance value of 1.000 and a VIF of 1.000, which means that there is no multicollinearity problem in this regression model. These values meet the requirements because tolerance > 0.10 and VIF < 10. This means that the variables used in this model do not excessively influence each other and the regression results can be considered valid.

**Table 1.5** ANOVA Analysis Output

ANOVA <sup>a</sup>						
Model		<i>Sum of Squares</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Mean Square</i>	F	Sig.
1	Regression	8508.072	1	8508.072	94,242	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	9,298.690	103	90,279		
	Total	17,806.762		104		

a. Dependent Variables Y1, Y2

b. Predictors: (Constant), X

Based on the ANOVA test results in the table above, the calculated F value is 94.242 with a significance value (Sig.) of 0.000. This significance value is much smaller than the specified error rate ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ), so it can be concluded that the regression model used is

statistically significant. This means that the independent variable (X) has a significant effect on the dependent variables (Y1 and Y2) simultaneously.

The Sum of Squares Regression value of 8508.072 shows the amount of variation in the dependent variable that can be explained by the regression model, while the Sum of Squares Residual of 9298.690 shows the variation that cannot be explained by the model, or the variation caused by factors other than variable X. The total variation in the model is 17806.762, which is the sum of the variation explained by the model and the unexplained variation.

The Mean Square Regression value of 8508.072 is obtained by dividing the Sum of Squares Regression by the degrees of freedom (df) of 1. Meanwhile, the Mean Square Residual of 90.279 is obtained by dividing the Sum of Squares Residual (9298.690) by the df of 103. The ratio between the two mean square values produces an F value of 94.242, which indicates the strength of the relationship between variable X and the dependent variables simultaneously.

This means that changes in variable X have a significant effect on variables Y1 and Y2. In the context of social or educational research, this finding confirms that variable X is an important factor that can empirically explain the variation or changes that occur in the dependent variables.

A very high F value (94.242) indicates that the contribution of the independent variable to the regression model is very strong. In other words, the greater the value of X, the greater the effect on Y1 and Y2, and this relationship is not coincidental but statistically significant.

**Table 1.6** Determination Coefficient Values (R Square)

Model Summary <sup>b</sup>				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R-Square	Standard Error of the Estimate
1	.691 <sup>a</sup>	.478	.473	9.502
a. Predictors: (Constant), X				
b. Dependent Variable: Y1, Y2				

Based on the Model Summary table above, it is known that the correlation coefficient (R) value is 0.691. This value indicates that there is a strong and positive relationship between the independent variable (X) and the dependent variables (Y1 and Y2). The higher the value of variable X, the higher the values of variables Y1 and Y2. Thus, it can be said that variable X has a fairly strong linear relationship with the dependent variables in this study.

The R Square (R<sup>2</sup>) value of 0.478 indicates that 47.8% of the variation or change that occurs in variables Y1 and Y2 can be explained by variable X, while the remaining 52.2% is influenced by other factors not included in the regression model. This means that the regression model used has moderate to strong ability in explaining the relationship between the research variables.

Meanwhile, the Adjusted R Square value of 0.473 shows almost the same result as R Square. Adjusted R Square is used to adjust the R Square value to the number of variables and sample size used in the model. This value shows that after the adjustment was made,

variable X was still able to explain 47.3% of the variation in Y1 and Y2, so this model can be said to be stable and there was no significant decline due to corrections to the number of variables.

The Standard Error of the Estimate value of 9.502 describes the magnitude of the deviation between the model's predicted value and the actual value of the dependent variable. This value indicates that there is a deviation of approximately 9.502 units between the model's predicted value and the actual value. The smaller the standard error value, the better the model is at making predictions; thus, a value of 9.502 still indicates a fairly good level of accuracy in the context of the data used.

#### 4. Discussion

Based on data analysis and hypothesis testing results, it appears that the practice of Puja Bhakti Purnama as a form of Full-Moon Chanting has an important contribution in the context of transformative Buddhist education, although its influence on Saddhā integration is not statistically significant [16]. Conceptually, these findings confirm that the process of forming Saddhā is not solely determined by the intensity of religious rituals, but also by the quality of reflection and internalization of values that accompany these ritual practices. Saddhā in the context of Buddhism does not only mean emotional belief in Dhamma, but also includes cognitive and moral commitment that directs individuals towards ethical behavior. Anguttara Nikāya (A. IV.37) Buddha explains that in the Saddhā Sutta, Saddhā (belief) is one of the main foundations of spiritual progress. Thus, rituals such as Puja Bhakti Purnama serve as a symbolic medium that supports the process of value education, but their effectiveness depends on the reflective awareness of the participants in appreciating the meaning of the ritual itself [17].

Empirically, the regression results show that a correlation coefficient of 0.691 indicates a strong relationship between participation in Puja Bhakti Purnama and the formation of students' moral values. An R Square value of 0.478 shows that approximately 47.8% of the variation in the formation of morality and Saddhā can be explained by involvement in this religious ritual. Meanwhile, the calculated F value of 94.242 with a significance of 0.000 reinforces that the regression model is highly feasible and statistically significant. Thus, although the direct effect on Saddhā is not significant, the model as a whole shows a meaningful relationship between collective religious practices and the formation of Buddhist morality in students.

These findings are in line with the theory of Transformative Religious Education, in which participatory and reflective religious experiences can encourage changes in consciousness and the internalization of moral values [18].

Collective chanting practices, as described by Perry and colleagues (2025), not only serve as spiritual expressions but also create deeper states of consciousness that support self-reflection and the formation of prosocial attitudes. Thus, although the direct statistical influence on Saddhā is small, the ethical values that emerge from this communal experience can strengthen students' moral integration in their social lives [19].



Furthermore, the role of Buddhist education in this context can also be understood through an affective-cognitive approach. *Saddhā* functions as a bridge between religious belief and moral behavior, where beliefs practiced through rituals form mental habits (*bhāvanā*) that are then manifested in daily actions [20]. In line with what the Buddha preached in the *Dīgha Nikāya* (DN 2 – *Sāmaññaphala Sutta*), the Buddha described how ritual practice and spiritual discipline carried out correctly bring about inner transformation. The Buddha explained that the benefits of religious life do not lie in external rituals, but in "taming the mind" (*citta-bhāvanā*) which leads to moral and spiritual well-being. However, for this transformation to occur, religious rituals need to be pedagogically integrated into the educational curriculum, not only as ceremonial activities but as a means of reflective learning that facilitates students' spiritual experiences [21], [22]. In the context of this study, the statistically insignificant results for the *Saddhā* variable can be explained as a consequence of the lack of a reflective and pedagogical approach in the implementation of rituals.

In practical terms, this study has important implications for the development of Buddhist education in higher education. First, religious rituals need to be recontextualized as a medium for learning values that emphasize the process of self-reflection and understanding of meaning, rather than merely ceremonial repetition. Second, the results of the study indicate the need for synergy between religious practice and pedagogical approaches to strengthen the internalization of *Saddhā* and moral values. Third, the role of the campus spiritual community can be optimized as a social learning space that fosters collective spirit, compassion, and moral responsibility.

## 5. Conclusion

This study confirms that *Puja Bhakti Purnama* or Full-Moon Chanting has great potential as a form of transformative Buddhist education when understood and implemented deeply, rather than merely as a ceremonial ritual activity. Through structured and reflective collective practice, this activity can serve as a means of internalizing the spiritual and moral values contained in Buddhist teachings. Student participation in religious rituals has been shown to contribute to the formation of prosocial attitudes, the strengthening of ethical values, and an increase in spiritual awareness in line with the spirit of *Saddhā* as a belief that is alive in daily actions and behavior.

Although statistically the direct influence between the intensity of *Puja Bhakti Purnama* and the integration of *Saddhā* is not significant, the results of the study show that the process of spiritual and moral transformation still occurs through non-quantitative dimensions such as self-reflection, habituation, and communal experience in practice. This shows that *Saddhā* is not just a dogmatic belief, but an inner strength that grows through repeated and conscious spiritual experiences. Thus, the *Puja Bhakti Purnama* ritual can be seen as a space for teaching values where students learn to understand the meaning of belief, compassion, honesty, and self-control through direct experience.

This study also reveals that the formation of moral and spiritual values cannot be separated from the context of integrated education. Religious rituals require the support of a pedagogical approach that is capable of facilitating critical reflection and personal

interpretation of the teachings of Dhamma. With proper management, Puja Bhakti Purnama can become a vehicle for reflective learning that encourages students to internalize Buddhist values in a sustainable and contextual manner. The integration of ritual activities and formal learning processes is an important step in building students' character so that they are not only religious, but also ethical and highly empathetic towards others.

Conceptually, the results of this study broaden the understanding of Buddhist education as a process of inner transformation that emphasizes a balance between cognitive, affective, and spiritual aspects. Education is no longer merely understood as the transfer of knowledge, but as a process of forming a whole person who is aware of the values of virtue and moral responsibility. In this context, Puja Bhakti Purnama affirms its important role as a means of learning about life that connects beliefs, thoughts, and actions.

These findings provide a new direction for the development of Buddhist education in higher education, especially in making religious rituals a pedagogical approach that has an impact on character building. Spiritual transformation through Puja Bhakti Purnama can be the foundation for the development of mature Saddhā, which is the belief that encourages ethical, empathetic, and compassionate behavior. Through this process, Buddhist education is expected to produce a generation that not only understands Dhamma intellectually but also practices it in a conscious social and moral life.

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