

Religious activities of students and understanding of Buddhist teachings at SMB Bodhisattva

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Abstract: Religious activities at Bodhisattva Buddhist Sunday School (SMB), such as devotional worship, meditation, paritta recitation, and religious character building, are an integral part of religious education. However, there is still a gap between the level of student participation in these activities and their understanding of Buddhist teachings. This study aims to analyze the relationship between students' religious activities and their level of understanding of Buddhist teachings at SMB Bodhisattva. The method used is a quantitative approach with a correlational design through a survey technique. The sample was taken saturately from 100 active students at SMB Bodhisattva. The research instrument was a closed questionnaire using a Likert scale. Data analysis was performed using Pearson's correlation test through SPSS version 26. The results showed a positive and significant relationship between involvement in religious activities and understanding of Buddhist teachings. The indicators of worship and religious character habits contributed the most to this understanding. These findings confirm that consistent religious participation can shape students' understanding of the core values of Dhamma, such as the Four Noble Truths, the Law of Karma, and the Noble Eightfold Path. This study highlights the importance of integrating spiritual experiences into the non-formal Buddhist education process. The practical implications include the need for collaboration between SMB administrators, teachers, parents, and the temple community to create a conducive learning ecosystem for shaping a spiritually and ethically superior Buddhist generation.

Keywords: Student Religious Activities, Understanding of Buddhist Teachings, Character Building

1. Introduction

Etymologically, education comes from the English term "education," which originates from the Latin "educare," meaning "to bring out." This concept implies that the latent potential within humans can be developed through the educational process. In a formal context, Law No. 20 of 2003 explains that education is an activity carried out with conscious and planned efforts to create a learning environment that can help students develop their spiritual, intellectual, and social potential. However, its implementation is often not optimal, especially in religious education, where conceptual understanding is not always in line with practice [1].

The concept of education can basically be understood as a tool for working, practicing skills, and providing training to students. Generally, the scope of education is within the context of the educator's own environment. Through the educational environment,

students will gain experiences and events that can support them in utilizing their minds to develop their potential in order to achieve their desired life goals. In the Dhammapada verse 152, it is stated that a person who is reluctant to learn will be born old like a cow; their flesh will increase but their knowledge will not. In Buddhist teachings, education comes from the term practice (*sikkha*), which indirectly means that education is a process of learning, practicing, studying, developing, and achieving enlightenment. Therefore, a teacher needs to have ethics in the teaching process.

Buddhist religious education aims to prepare students to be able to carry out roles that require an understanding of Buddhist teachings or to become experts in the field of religion and practice its teachings. Religious education is a fundamental aspect in the development of a person's character and morals. In a religious-based school environment, religious activities play an important role in shaping students' understanding of religious teachings and practices [2].

However, facts on the ground show that there are variations in the level of understanding of Buddhist teachings among SMB Bodhisattva students. Based on observations conducted in February 2025 on 100 students, data shows that only 53% of students were able to answer at least 70% of the basic Dhamma comprehension questions correctly. In fact, 82% of them regularly participate in religious activities organized by SMB Bodhisattva. This shows that there may be a discrepancy between student participation in religious activities and their level of understanding of Buddhist teachings.

In the context of Buddhist education, religious activities are not merely rituals, but also a means to deepen students' understanding of Buddhist teachings. In the field of education, there is a relevance between Paulo Freire's humanistic pedagogy and Buddhist religious education. Both emphasize the principle of humanism in education, avoiding oppression, and focusing on the learning process as the main key to understanding social reality. Buddhist teachings provide profound ethical principles that focus on individual development towards wisdom and liberation from suffering. Concepts such as *Sila*, *Karma*, *Panca Sila*, and *Vipassana* meditation are very important foundations in the development of Buddhist ethics [3].

Religious education plays a strategic role in developing students' character, ethics, and spiritual understanding [4]. The philosophical approach to understanding Buddhist teachings focuses on epistemology, metaphysics, and ethics. In the *Cūḷa-Mālunkya Sutta*, the Buddha emphasizes that metaphysical speculation that does not lead to liberation from suffering should be avoided, and that what is most important is practice that leads to the cessation of *dukkha* (M.I.163). In line with this, in the *Angutara Nikaya* (A.I.188) the Buddha emphasizes critical examination of all teachings before accepting them, rejecting dogma and prioritizing direct experience and wisdom born of deep understanding [7]. Buddhist Sunday School, as a form of non-formal religious education, aims to instill *saddha*/*sraddha* and devotion and to continuously increase the faith of Buddhists [8]. *Saddha*, or true faith [9], is built on the basis of right understanding (*samma-ditthi*). According to *samma-ditthi Sutta*, right understanding is understanding *dukkha*, the cause of *dukkha*, the cessation of *dukkha*, and the path to the cessation of *dukkha*. There are

five benefits of having faith according to Saddha Sutta (A.V.38). Faith in Dighanajana Sutta is directed towards achieving future well-being and happiness (A.V.5).

Education can actually be interpreted as a means of providing instruction, skills, and training in student activities. Usually, the scope of education is the environment surrounding the educator himself. Through the educational environment, students will gain experiences and encounters that can help them use their intellect to bring out their abilities to achieve their life goals.

Buddhist teachings have been widely studied in various disciplines. Experts from various fields offer different perspectives according to the methodologies and approaches they use. Conceptually, this paradigm can be categorized into several main fields, namely philosophy, psychology, sociology, education, and Buddhist theology. In the field of philosophy, Buddhist teachings provide profound ethical principles that focus on personal development towards wisdom and liberation from suffering. Ideas such as Sila, Karma, Panca Sila, and Vipassana meditation are the main foundations in the formation of Buddhist ethics [11]. In the field of psychology, the study of Buddhist teachings is often associated with psychotherapy. For example, research by Turahmi et al., (2023) explores the integration of psychoanalytic psychotherapy and Buddhist teachings. This study analyzes how concepts such as mind, self, and moral consciousness in psychoanalysis can be expanded through a Buddhist perspective, especially in explaining attachment, suffering, and the path to liberation.

1.1. Philosophical Paradigm

The philosophical approach to understanding Buddhist teachings focuses on epistemology, metaphysics, and ethics. Karl H. Potter, in his Encyclopedia of Indian Philosophies, emphasizes that Buddhism is an empirical philosophy that rejects the concept of a permanent self (Anatta) and emphasizes direct experience in understanding reality. In line with this, David J. Kalupahana underlines that the understanding of Buddhist teachings is pragmatic and anti-dogmatic, as reflected in the Kalama Sutta, which emphasizes critical testing of all teachings before they are accepted.

1.2. Psychological Paradigm

The study of Buddhist teachings in psychology is often associated with the development of awareness and emotion management. In the Satipatthana Sutta (Dīgha Nikāya 22), the Buddha teaches the importance of mindfulness (sati) of the body, feelings, thoughts, and mental phenomena as a way to understand the true nature of existence and achieve freedom from suffering. This practice serves not only as a tool for meditation, but also as a basic skill for monitoring and understanding internal experiences in the moment without attachment to judgment or bias. Thus, individuals are able to witness the arising and passing away of emotional sensations or thoughts with detachment, which contributes to a reduction in emotional reactivity and mental suffering [13]. Mindfulness-based therapies such as Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT) have been theoretically constructed based on the four foundations of mindfulness in the Satipatthāna

Sutta namely, conscious engagement with the body, feelings, thoughts, and mental phenomena especially in the prevention of depression relapse [14].

1.3. Sociological Paradigm

In sociological studies, the teachings of Buddhism are understood in terms of how they shape mindsets and social structures in society. In his study of religion, Max Weber describes Buddhism as a rational ethical system that is not bound by divine dogma, with an emphasis on moral discipline and meditation as means of individual liberation. In further analysis, Weber states that Buddhism is indeed rational, but not extremely ascetic and tends to withdraw from the material world, thus less supportive of the active and worldly ideals of capitalism as in the West [15]. Bryan Wilson highlights how Buddhist teachings have adapted to modernization and secularization, with Buddhist communities in various countries beginning to adopt more flexible religious practices to adapt to contemporary life. Indicators of Conceptual Understanding in Buddhist Teachings: Puja Bhakti [16], Saddhā (Faith) [16], Religious Character Education through Habituation [16], and Religious Moderation in the Buddhist Perspective [17].

1.4. Religious Activities

Students' religious activities are activities carried out by students to demonstrate the religious values they adhere to [18], [19], [20]. These activities cover various aspects, such as worship, participation in religious activities at school, and the application of religious values in daily life. Students' religious activities play an important role in developing their character and moral values, and can contribute to improving discipline and psychological well-being [21].

A study conducted by Khairiyah & Isnarmi shows that student involvement in religious activities has a positive correlation with their prosocial behavior and psychological well-being [22]. In addition, research by Fitri Wiyono reveals that a school environment that supports religious activities can help increase student engagement in learning and reduce deviant behavior [23].

2. Method

The research method used in this study was a causal survey with correlation analysis techniques, with the research analysis unit being students of the Bodhisattva Buddhist Sunday School in Lampung Province who are registered with the Ministry of Religious Affairs. The structure of the problem can be visualized more clearly through the path diagram presented below.

2.1. Sample

This study used the entire population of 100 students from the Bodhisattva Buddhist Sunday School in Lampung Province.

Table 1. Buddhist Sunday School Data

No.	Gender	Number
1.	Female	58
2.	Men	42
3.	Total	100

Data source: Researcher Questionnaire (2024)

Research on the relationship between religious activities and understanding of religious teachings has been conducted in various educational contexts, including Buddhist education. Previous studies have shown that student involvement in religious activities has a positive influence on their understanding of religious values. Research by Nuriani entitled "The Influence of Religious Activities on the Understanding of Buddhist Teachings among Buddhist Sunday School Students in Medan" shows that the more actively students participate in religious activities, the deeper their understanding of Buddhist teachings, especially in the aspects of Sīla (morality) and everyday Dhamma [24]. Furthermore, research by Rahmasari in her thesis entitled "The Contribution of Buddhist Sunday School Activities to Students' Attitudes and Knowledge of Dhamma at Dhammasoka Temple" found that students who actively participated in activities such as chanting, meditation, Dhamma discussions, and Buddhist holiday celebrations have a better understanding of the concepts of the Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Noble Path than students who rarely participate in these activities [25]. Meanwhile, research by Sulistiyani in the Journal of Buddhist Education revealed that religious activities not only increase cognitive knowledge of Buddhist teachings, but also help shape students' characters based on Buddhist values, such as metta (loving-kindness) and karuṇā (compassion) [26].

Therefore, the researcher intends to examine the relationship between religious activities and understanding of Buddhist teachings at the Bodhisattva Buddhist Sunday School. This study uses a quantitative approach to measure and develop the relationship between the research variables.

This study covers two types of variables: dependent and independent variables. These variables are as follows:

2.2. Religious Activity Variable (X)

Students' religious activities include various activities such as worship, participation in religious activities at school, and the application of religious values in daily life. These activities play an important role in the development of students' character, morals, discipline, and psychological well-being.

Table 2. Validity Test

Case Processing Summary			
		N	%
Cases	Valid	11	100.0
	Excluded ^a	0	.0
	Total	11	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Table 3. Reliability Test

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	Number of Items
.763	32

The result $r_{\text{calculated}}$ is then compared with r_{table} at a significance level of 7%. If $r(\text{calculated}) > r(\text{table})$, the instrument is considered reliable, and if $r(\text{calculated}) < r(\text{table})$, the instrument is considered unreliable. The results of the reliability calculation for variable Y can be seen more clearly in the reliability test table for variable Y.

2.3. Buddhist Doctrine Understanding Variable (Y)

Table 4. Validity Test

Case Processing Summary			
		N	%
Cases	Valid	11	100.0
	Excluded ^a	0	.0
	Total	11	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Table 5. Reliability test

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	Number of Items
0.751	26

Based on the reliability test results, Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.751 indicates that the instrument consisting of 26 items has fairly good reliability. This value is in the "acceptable" category, so the instrument is considered internally consistent and suitable for use in research.

Based on the reliability test results, a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.762 was obtained for the 34 statement items, indicating that the instrument has sufficient reliability and can be used in further research. This means that the items in the instrument show adequate internal consistency in measuring the construct.

Table 6. Normality Test

One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test			
		Students' Religious Activities	Understanding of Buddhist Teachings
N		100	10
Normal Parameters ^{a,b}	Mean	120.61	126.56
	Std. Deviation	9.585	12.077
Most Differences	Extreme Absolute	.075	.073
	Positive	.075	.067
	Negative	-.049	-.073

Test Statistic	.075	.073
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.188 ^c	.200 ^{c,d}
a. Test distribution is Normal.		
b. Calculated from data.		
c. Lilliefors Significance Correction.		
d. This is a lower bound of the true significance.		

The normality test was conducted to determine whether the data in this study was normally distributed, which is one of the requirements for using parametric statistical analysis. Based on the results of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, the significance value obtained for the Student Religious Activity variable was 0.188 and for the Understanding of Buddhist Teachings variable was 0.200. Because both significance values are greater than 0.05, it can be concluded that the data from both variables are normally distributed.

Table 7. Homogeneity Test

		Test of Homogeneity of Variance			
		Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
Variable	Based on Mean	4.975	1	198	.027
	Based on Median	4,866	1	198	.029
	Based on Median and with adjusted df	4.866	1	189.017	.029
	Based on trimmed mean	4,934	1	198	.027

A test of variance homogeneity was conducted to determine whether the data analyzed had the same variance (homogeneous) between groups. Thus, it can be concluded that the data did not meet the assumption of variance homogeneity, because there were significant differences in variance between groups.

3. Results

Descriptive statistics naturally provide data results. The information presented includes statistical values, ranges, minimum values, maximum values, means, standard deviations, and statistical variations.

Table 8. Descriptive statistics

		Descriptive Statistics				
		N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard Deviation
Students' Religious Activities		100	100	143	120.61	9,585
Understanding of Buddhist Teachings		100	101	152	126.56	12,077
Valid N (listwise)		100				

From the results of descriptive statistical testing, it can be concluded that the majority of students have a fairly active level of involvement in religious activities and a fairly

good understanding of Buddhist teachings. The variation in scores shown by the standard deviation indicates that although most are above average, there are also significant differences between individual students in terms of religious activities and understanding of Buddhist teachings.

3.1. Correlational test

There is a relationship between religious activities and understanding of Buddhist teachings, as shown in Table

Table 9. Correlation Test

		Correlations	
		Students' Religious Activities	Understanding of Buddhist teachings
Students' Religious Activities	Pearson Correlation	1	.929**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	100	100
Understanding of Buddhist Teachings	Pearson Correlation	.929**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	100	100

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

From the analysis results, a correlation coefficient (Pearson Correlation) of 0.929 was obtained between the variables of Student Religious Activities and Understanding of Buddhist Teachings. The significance value (Sig. 2-tailed) is 0.000, which is less than 0.01. A correlation coefficient of 0.929 indicates a very strong and positive relationship between the two variables. The positive direction of the relationship means that the higher the level of students' religious activities, the higher their understanding of Buddhist teachings, and vice versa. A significance value of $0.000 < 0.01$ indicates that this relationship is statistically significant at a 99% confidence level. Therefore, it can be concluded that there is a very strong, positive, and significant relationship between Student Religious Activities and Understanding of Buddhist Teachings. This means that an increase in student religious activities is clearly related to an increase in their understanding of Buddhist teachings.

4. Discussion

4.1. Puja Bhakti and Understanding of Buddhist Teachings

Puja Bhakti is a form of religious practice in the Buddhist tradition that involves reverence for the Triratna: Buddha, Dhamma, and Sangha. This activity includes reciting paritta, meditation, and offerings as expressions of devotion and respect. In the context of education, Puja Bhakti plays an important role in instilling spiritual values in students,

strengthening their understanding of Buddhist teachings, and forming a strong religious character.

Regular practice of Puja Bhakti can increase students' understanding of the Four Noble Truths (Dukkha, Samudaya, Nirodha, Magga) as stated in the Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta (S.56.11). Through reflection and contemplation during Puja Bhakti, students are invited to realize the existence of suffering, its root causes, the possibility of its cessation, and the path to liberation [27], [28], [29]. This process helps students internalize these teachings in their daily lives [29].

In addition, Puja Bhakti also strengthens students' understanding of the Law of Karma and Causality, as explained in the Cūlakammavibhaṅga Sutta (M.III.202). Through prayer and meditation, students are invited to reflect on the consequences of their actions, understanding that every action has consequences, both in this life and in future lives. This awareness encourages students to act wisely and responsibly. Through prayer and meditation, students not only participate in rituals, but are also invited to reflect on the consequences of their actions [31]. This process fosters a deep understanding that every deed whether spoken, thought, or done has moral and spiritual consequences, both in this life and in possible future rebirths [32]. This reflective process creates ethical awareness, which encourages students to act more wisely, responsibly, and with an awareness of long-term values. When students perform prayers or meditations in an orderly manner, they are guided to pause for a moment, examine their intentions, motivations, and the impact of each action. Thus, this spiritual process helps internalize the principles of karma and personal responsibility, as emphasized in religious traditions and modern contemplation.

The practice of Puja Bhakti also helps students understand the concept of the Three Universal Characteristics (Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta) described in the Anattalakkhaṇa Sutta (S.III.66). Through meditation and reflection, students are invited to realize the impermanence, suffering, and lack of essence of all phenomena. This understanding encourages students to let go of attachments and develop wisdom in facing life. In the Noble Eightfold Path (S.V.188), aspects such as right view, right intention, and right concentration can be developed through Puja Bhakti. Through meditation practice and paritta recitation, students train their concentration and mindfulness, which are integral parts of the path to enlightenment. These activities also strengthen the intention to live in accordance with the Buddha's teachings.

Puja Bhakti also serves as a means to understand and practice the Five Precepts, which are the basic moral principles in Buddhist teachings. Through reflection and renewed commitment during Puja Bhakti, students are reminded not to kill, not to steal, not to commit sexual misconduct, not to lie, and not to consume intoxicants. The repetition and reinforcement of these values help students internalize and apply them in their daily lives.

Research by Ratna Dewi and Sutikyanto shows that active involvement in Puja Bhakti contributes positively to students' understanding of Buddhist teachings [35]. Students who regularly participate in Puja Bhakti show an increase in their understanding of the basic concepts of Buddhist teachings and exhibit behavior that is more in line with

Buddhist values. This shows that Puja Bhakti is not only a ritual, but also an effective means of spiritual education.

Thus, Puja Bhakti plays an important role in improving students' understanding of Buddhist teachings. Through this practice, students not only learn cognitively, but also experience and internalize Buddhist teachings in their lives. The integration of Puja Bhakti into Buddhist education at SMB Bodhisattva can be an effective strategy for shaping a young generation that deeply understands and practices Buddhist teachings.

4.2. *Saddhā (Faith) and Understanding of Buddhist Teachings*

Saddhā, or faith in Buddhist teachings, is an important foundation in the spiritual practice of a Buddhist. Saddhā is not blind faith, but rather a belief that arises from personal understanding and experience of Buddhist teachings, Dhamma, and Sangha. In the context of education at Buddhist Sunday School (SMB), Saddhā encourages students to be more active in exploring, understanding, and practicing Buddhist teachings. Strong faith in Buddha as the ultimate spiritual teacher helps students understand the Four Noble Truths (S.V.420). Saddhā encourages students to not only know the theory of suffering and the path to liberation, but also to practice it in their daily lives. With a foundation of faith, students are more open to accepting that suffering is part of existence, and that only by understanding its causes can a way out be found through the practice of the Noble Eightfold Path.

Saddhā also forms the basis for believing in and understanding the Law of Karma and Causality, as explained in the Cūlakammavibhaṅga Sutta (M.III.202). Belief in this law of cause and effect shapes students' way of thinking that all actions have consequences. Saddhā makes students more careful in their actions, because they believe that good deeds will yield good results, and vice versa. In terms of understanding the Three Universal Characteristics (Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta), Saddhā is the starting point for accepting that all phenomena in life are impermanent, contain suffering, and have no essence. Without Saddhā, these concepts would be difficult for students to accept rationally. However, with faith, students can deeply explore the deepest meaning of impermanence and non-attachment [36], [37]. This process is not only intellectual understanding, but also inner experience through meditation and reflection. Students learn that everything thoughts, emotions, and external objects is constantly changing, impermanent, and not completely possessable. Belief in these teachings becomes the foundation for letting go of attachment to worldly things, thus opening the way to true wisdom (prajñā), where the mind becomes clear, calm, and capable of wise thinking in every situation [37].

Saddhā also strengthens the practice of the Noble Eightfold Path, especially in the aspects of Right View and Right Intention. Students who have faith tend to live a life in harmony with the Dhamma. This faith does not make students passive, but encourages them to transform themselves, as the Buddha taught the importance of practice rather than mere belief.

In terms of understanding the Five Precepts, Saddhā plays a role as a driver of morality. Students who have faith in the Buddha's teachings are more aware of the importance of

maintaining the precepts as a form of spiritual practice. They view the precepts not merely as prohibitions, but as a way to reduce suffering for themselves and others.

Research by Rahmi and Suryani shows that students with high Saddhā tend to have a deeper understanding of Buddhist teachings [38]. They show a commitment to active learning, participating in Dhamma discussions, and behaving in accordance with Buddhist principles. Belief becomes a strong internal motivation in the spiritual learning process.

Thus, Saddhā has a close correlation with understanding Buddhist teachings. Faith instilled from an early age will foster respect and commitment to the Dhamma. In Buddhist education at SMB Bodhisattva, strengthening Saddhā needs to be done continuously through role modeling, contextual Dhamma learning, and moral guidance based on Buddhist values.

4.3. Religious Character Education through Habituation and Understanding of Buddhist Teachings

Religious character education through habit formation is an effective pedagogical strategy in shaping students' personalities based on Buddhist spiritual values. Habit formation is a non-formal educational process that is carried out repeatedly and consistently, whether at home, school, or in a religious environment. In the context of Buddhist Sunday School (SMB), habituation includes activities such as paying respects to the Buddha, reading paritta, speaking politely, and helping others selflessly.

Through the process of habituation, students more easily absorb and understand the values contained in Buddhist teachings, especially the Four Noble Truths (S.V.420). For example, the habit of contemplating suffering (dukkha) when seeing parents working hard or seeing impermanence (anicca) when facing change, enables students to not only understand cognitively, but also directly experience the realities taught in the Dhamma.

The habit of positive behavior also supports students' understanding of the Law of Karma and Causality (M.III.202). When students are accustomed to being honest, non-violent, and disciplined, they learn that good actions produce good results. Through the repetition of these positive actions, they naturally understand that life is the result of cause and effect, as taught by the Buddha in various Suttas.

The concept of the three universal characteristics (Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta) is also easier to understand when students directly experience relevant everyday situations. The habit of reflecting before bed, daily meditation practice, or daily Dhamma journaling activities at school become a means for students to realize that everything changes, that life is impermanent, and that the self cannot be completely controlled. In this way, habits strengthen deep spiritual understanding.

The Noble Eightfold Path, which is the practice leading to freedom from suffering, can also be developed through habit formation. For example, the habit of speaking honestly and not harshly forms the aspect of right speech (Sammā Vācā), while the habit of thinking positively and compassionately supports right intention (Sammā Sankappa). When these habits are instilled early on, students are better able to consistently actualize the noble path in their lives.

Habitualization also plays an important role in internalizing the five precepts as ethical guidelines in daily life. By training students to speak truthfully, not to take what does not belong to them, and to refrain from violence in any form, they will naturally understand the moral values taught in Buddhism. As stated in the Sigalovada Sutta (D.III.180), moral education that begins in childhood through habit will produce responsible and highly moral individuals.

Research by Sofannah and Amrullah shows that religious character education through habit formation contributes significantly to children's understanding of religious teachings [40]. Students who are accustomed to daily Dhamma practices have better conceptual and practical understanding than students who only receive theoretical instruction. These results support the importance of a habitual approach in Buddhist education.

Thus, habit formation is an effective means of instilling and deepening students' understanding of Buddhist teachings. Religious character education through habit formation not only shapes good behavior, but also connects students emotionally and spiritually with Dhamma. With this approach, learning Buddhist teachings is no longer rote memorization, but becomes a real and lasting life experience.

4.4. Religious Moderation in the Buddhist Perspective and Understanding of Buddhist Teachings

Religious moderation is a religious approach that emphasizes a middle ground, tolerance, and rejection of extremism. In Buddhist teachings, this principle of moderation is strongly emphasized, especially through the concept of Majjhimā Paṭipadā or the Middle Way, which is the basis of the Noble Eightfold Path (S.V.420). In the context of education at Bodhisattva Buddhist Sunday School (SMB), the application of religious moderation is an important value in shaping a balanced and contextual understanding of Buddhist teachings for students [41]. The application of religious moderation in the context of Buddhist religious education serves as an important foundation in shaping a balanced, inclusive, and contextual understanding for students. By instilling the values of the Middle Way (Majjhima Patipada), reflection on the teachings of Dhamma and sila, students are provided with moral guidance and social skills to: Respect differences in beliefs without excessive fanaticism, Foster harmony among religious communities in schools and society, Avoid extremism through tolerance and compassion, Practice religious values morally, affectively, and psychomotorically, not merely ritually [42]. Through the integration of moderation in the curriculum, prayer, meditation, discussion, and social activities, students not only understand Buddhist teachings textually, but also practice them in their daily lives.

By understanding religious moderation as part of the Middle Way practice, students are trained not to get caught up in two extremes: the pursuit of sensual pleasures and self-torture. This approach helps students understand the Four Noble Truths as teachings that guide them out of suffering in a rational and compassionate way. Religious moderation also fosters awareness that Buddhist teachings are not dogmatic, but rather encourage understanding and practical application in daily life.

Understanding of the Law of Karma and Causality (M.III.202) can also be strengthened through a moderate attitude in religion. By not imposing their understanding or beliefs on others, students learn that every being has their own conditions and seeds of karma. Students are encouraged to appreciate the process and results of each individual's actions without judgment. This attitude encourages them to be more introspective in their actions and to evaluate life wisely.

A moderate attitude also supports understanding of the Three Universal Characteristics (Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta). Students who are accustomed to thinking moderately will find it easier to accept the reality that everything changes, is impermanent, and has no core self. They do not overreact to good or bad conditions in life, but live with awareness and calmness. This is a strong foundation for a deeper and more practical understanding of Dhamma.

Religious moderation is directly related to the practice of the Noble Eightfold Path. In Buddhist teachings, each element of the Noble Path, such as Right View, Right Speech, and Right Action, is part of a balanced and moderate way of life. Students who practice moderation in thought, speech, and action tend to be more open to diversity and practice Buddhist values without deviating from their basic meaning.

In terms of practicing the Five Precepts, moderation also plays an important role. Students who understand the importance of a balanced life will be more likely to avoid violence, harsh words, or actions that harm others. They not only formally obey the precepts, but also understand the meaning of the precepts as the foundation for creating a peaceful and harmonious social life. This is in line with the principle of metta (universal love) emphasized in Buddhist teachings.

Research by Lestari and Nopiana shows that religious moderation taught from an early age plays a major role in shaping tolerant attitudes and a healthy understanding of religion [43]. In Buddhist education, students who receive moderation training demonstrate a deeper understanding of the core of Buddhist teachings and are better able to practice them in a diverse social life. Moderation becomes a bridge between understanding the teachings and ethical practice.

Thus, religious moderation in the Buddhist perspective is a strategic approach to improving students' understanding of Buddhist teachings. The middle path taught through the Middle Way becomes the philosophical and practical basis that shapes students' balanced thinking and behavior. In a world full of polarization, moderation is not only a religious attitude, but also a path to wisdom and inner peace.

4.5. Analysis of the Relationship between Student Religious Activity Variables and Understanding of Buddhist Teachings

Based on the analysis of the four indicators of students' religious activities, it can be concluded that each form of religious activity contributes significantly to strengthening the understanding of Buddhist teachings among SMB Bodhisattva students. The formation of this understanding is not only limited to cognitive aspects but also includes affective and psychomotor aspects that reflect the internalization of Dhamma values in daily life.

First, Puja Bhakti activities directly shape students' spiritual awareness of the core Buddhist teachings, such as the four noble truths and the eightfold noble path. Through practices of worship, paritta, and simple meditation, students learn firsthand the values of compassion, inner peace, and respect for life and the law of cause and effect.

Second, saddhā (faith) as a foundation of wisdom (paññā) encourages students to not only accept Buddhist teachings dogmatically, but also to investigate and understand the teachings logically and empirically. Saddhā becomes a strong foundation that fosters students' curiosity about Dhamma and their commitment to consistently practicing sila and other Buddhist practices.

Third, through habit-based religious character education, students undergo a process of habituation to virtues such as honesty, compassion, and self-control. This habituation contributes greatly to the internalization of understanding of the Three Universal Characteristics (Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta) and the Law of Karma, because students are not only taught theoretically but also experience its application firsthand.

Fourth, the application of religious moderation in the Buddhist perspective supports the creation of an inclusive and tolerant learning environment. The moderate attitude taught in the context of the Middle Way (Majjhimā Paṭipadā) helps students understand Buddhist teachings in a balanced manner, avoid extreme views, and encourage empathy and dialogue between religious communities.

Overall, the four indicators of students' religious activities show a positive and close relationship with the dimension of understanding Buddhist teachings. Religious education at SMB Bodhisattva has been proven to not only provide cognitive learning but also shape students' spiritual character through a participatory, habitual, and reflective approach.

In other words, the more active and consistent students' involvement in religious activities, the higher their understanding of Buddhist teachings, both in terms of doctrine, ethics, and meditation practice. Religious activities serve as a transformative medium in Buddhist education that fosters individuals with Dhamma insight and noble ethics.

5. Conclusion

Based on the results of data analysis, it can be concluded that there is a significant relationship between students' religious activities and their understanding of Buddhist teachings at Bodhisattva Buddhist Sunday School (SMB). All indicators of religious activity, including Puja Bhakti, Saddhā (faith), religious character habits, and religious moderation, contribute positively to increasing students' understanding of Buddhist teachings.

The correlation analysis results show that the relationship between these variables is in the strong to very strong category. In other words, the more frequent and higher quality the students' involvement in various religious activities, the higher their understanding of Dhamma values. This reinforces the assumption that the formation of religious understanding is not sufficient through cognitive learning alone, but also needs to be supported by spiritual experiences and the cultivation of religious attitudes.

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