

Religious Life in the Lives of School Dropout Adolescents: A Case Study in the Rambak Area

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the phenomenon of high school dropout rates among adolescents in the Rambak area, Jelitik Village, Sungailiat District, which coincides with their low religious awareness. Adolescents who drop out of school are often involved in negative behaviors such as unemployment, promiscuity, and a lack of religious practice. Although various religious activities are held in the community, the participation of adolescents in these activities remains limited. The purpose of this study is to describe the religious condition of school dropouts and to identify the factors that contribute to their decision to not continue their education. Using a qualitative descriptive approach, this study involved 8 school dropouts, their parents, religious leaders, and community members as informants. Data were collected through observation, interviews, and documentation, and analyzed using data reduction, presentation, and conclusion techniques. The results of the study revealed that the religious dimensions of the school dropouts in Rambak consist of five aspects: ideological, ritualistic, experiential, intellectual, and consequential. Although they acknowledge religious teachings, their religious practices and knowledge remain low, and their religiosity does not significantly influence their behavior. The factors contributing to their decision to drop out of school include economic problems, lack of parental attention, low interest in education, and environmental influences.



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INTRODUCTION

The phenomenon of school dropouts among teenagers has become a significant social issue in various regions in Indonesia, including the Rambak area, Jelitik Village, Sungailiat District. Teenagers who drop out of school tend to face various challenges that affect their quality of life, socially, economically, and psychologically. The negative impacts include increased unemployment rates, juvenile delinquency, and limitations in accessing information and other social opportunities. However, there are also positive impacts, such as their contribution to supporting the family economy. Nonetheless, the more dominant negative impacts lead to a decline in morals, indifference to religious education, and deviant behaviors that often harm both themselves and the surrounding community.

In the Rambak area, many school dropouts are more involved in juvenile delinquency and activities that do not align with religious and social norms. Despite regular religious activities being held at mosques and within the community, such as congregational prayers, Yasin recitations, and study circles, many teenagers show no interest in participating in these activities. This phenomenon raises questions about the religious

engagement of school dropouts in the area, and what factors contribute to their low participation in religious activities. Therefore, this study aims to explore the religious engagement of school dropouts in the Rambak area, Jelitik Village Sungailiat District.

The primary objective of this research is to explore how school dropouts in the Rambak area view, understand, and practice religious teachings in their daily lives. The study also aims to identify factors influencing their level of religious engagement and to examine the social impact of their limited understanding and practice of religion.

The importance of this research lies in its contribution to a deeper understanding of the influence of social and economic environments on the religious engagement of school dropouts. This study also provides insights that can be used to design more effective social and educational interventions to improve religious and moral understanding among teenagers, especially in areas with similar challenges. By identifying the root of the problem, strategic steps can be taken to build character and reduce juvenile delinquency, which can harm both the individuals and the community around them (Ananda & Prasetyia, 2024).

Previous research has revealed that school dropouts are associated with an increasing lack of concern for religious and moral education. For example, (Shanty et al., 2024) revealed that family social and economic environments have a significant impact on teenagers' decisions to continue their education and maintain their moral values. Additionally, (Basyiroh, 2024) explained that the limited participation of teenagers in religious activities is often related to restricted social access and family support. On the other hand, the development of digital technology also affects teenagers' motivation to learn, adding new challenges in building religious awareness (Rahman, 2024). This study will continue and expand on these findings by investigating how these factors apply in the Rambak area.

The hypothesis presented in this study is that school dropouts in the Rambak area have low religious engagement due to a lack of guidance and participation in religious activities. The variables investigated in this research include the level of teenage participation in religious activities, understanding of religious teachings, and social factors that influence their behavior. This study uses a qualitative approach with in-depth interviews and direct observations of adolescent behavior in the Rambak area.

Some key findings that can be concluded from this study are that low participation in religious activities among teenagers is related to their indifference to religious values, which they consider irrelevant to their lives. Furthermore, peer influence and lack of family support also contribute to deviant behavior among these teenagers. Overall, this study suggests that in order to improve religious engagement among school dropouts, a more inclusive approach is needed that involves families, communities, and educational institutions. This research provides important insights into how to create an environment that supports religious and moral development among teenagers and offers recommendations for stakeholders to implement more targeted interventions.

Some unanswered questions that emerged from this research include the extent to which technology and social media play a role in shaping teenagers' understanding of religion, as well as the best ways to involve school dropouts in religious activities that are relevant to their needs and interests.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Based on the search conducted by the researcher, it was found that one of the efforts to avoid similarities in research is by conducting a literature review. After reviewing the literature, the researcher found several studies relevant to this research, including:

First, the study conducted by Rofika titled "The Social Interaction of School Dropout Children and Their Religious Activities (A Case Study of Batu Dewa Village, North Curup Subdistrict)". This study uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive research design. The focus of this study is on children who have dropped out of school, with primary data obtained from interviews with the village head, parents, and the children. The main findings of this study are two things: first, the social interaction of school dropouts in Batu Dewa Village is considered positive and healthy. Second, their level of religiousness is relatively low, particularly in terms of religious practices such as prayer and reading the Quran. The similarity with this research lies in the use of a qualitative approach. However, the difference is in the focus of the research, where Rofika's study emphasizes social interaction and religious activities, while this research focuses more on the religious portrait of school dropouts (Rofika et al., 2021).

Second, the study conducted by Hastian titled "Religious Behavior Portrait of School Dropout Children in Kekea Village, Southeast Wawoni Subdistrict, Konowe Islands District". This study also uses a qualitative approach with data collection through observation, interviews, and documentation. The data sources for this research include parents, school dropouts, and community leaders. The findings of this study indicate that the factors influencing school dropouts include low interest in education, poor family economic conditions, and the influence of social and environmental factors. The similarity with this research lies in

the research subject, which is the religious portrait of school dropouts. The difference is in the research subject's age, as Hastian's study focuses on school dropouts aged 12 to 22 years (Hastian et al., 2024).

Third, the study conducted by Santi Yuniawati titled "Religious Activities of Teenagers During the Covid-19 Pandemic in Tiyuh Daya Asri, Tumijajar Subdistrict, Tulang Bawang Barat District". This study uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive method. The research findings show differences in teenagers' religious activities before and during the Covid-19 pandemic, particularly in the activities of prayer, fasting, Quran recitation, and habits related to cleanliness and health. The similarity with this research lies in the use of a qualitative method. However, the main difference is in the research subject, where this study examines all teenagers in general, while this research focuses specifically on school dropouts (Santi, 2022).

Fourth, the study by Ami Pinata titled "The Impact of School Dropout on Religious Behavior in Teenagers (A Case Study of School Dropouts Aged 15-18 in Beruas Village, Kelapa Subdistrict)". This study uses a descriptive method with a qualitative approach. The findings of this study show that the factors influencing school dropouts in Beruas Village include weak family economic conditions, parents' lack of permanent employment, and the influence of peer relationships. The similarity with this research lies in the research subject, which focuses on school dropouts (Darmayanti et al., 2023). The difference is in the research focus, which places more emphasis on the impact of school dropout on religious behavior, while this research highlights the religious portrait of these teenagers (Pinata, 2020).

Fifth, the study conducted by Ayu Wulandari et al. titled "Religious Behavior of School Dropout Teenagers in Lalowosula Village, Ladongi Subdistrict, East Kolaka District". This study uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive method. The findings of this research show that school dropouts in this village exhibit good religious behavior, such as being diligent in performing congregational prayers, fasting together, and participating in other religious activities. The similarity with this research lies in the research subject, which is school dropouts. The difference is in the research focus, which emphasizes religious behavior, while this research focuses on the overall religious portrait (Wulandari et al., 2022).

METHOD

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach aimed at providing a detailed depiction of the religiosity of school dropouts in the Rambak area, Jelitik Village, Sungailiat Subdistrict. This approach allows the researcher to obtain data that is not measurable in numbers but instead consists of words and interview results that are processed into descriptions of the existing phenomenon. This descriptive research attempts to depict and interpret the phenomenon as it is, based on systematically and accurately collected data (Thelwall & Nevill, 2021).

The research was conducted in the Rambak area, Jelitik Village, Sungailiat Subdistrict, Bangka District, with the research period starting in May and continuing until completion. The research location was chosen based on its relevance to the phenomenon being studied, which is the religiosity of school dropouts. The research timeline was arranged to ensure comprehensive data collection aligns with the research objectives.

The informants in this study were selected using purposive sampling, where individuals were chosen based on their deep understanding of the issues being researched. The key informants in this study consisted of eight school dropouts aged 12-22, who were involved in religious activities or showed religious awareness, even though they were less active in worship. Additionally, the researcher also involved supporting informants, including parents, religious leaders, and local community members, who were considered to have a direct connection with the religious behaviors of the teenagers.

The data used in this study is divided into two types: primary and secondary data. Primary data was obtained through direct interviews with informants, while secondary data was gathered from supporting sources such as documentation, recordings, or photos relevant to the research topic. Data collection techniques included semi-structured interviews, non-participant observation, and documentation. Interviews were conducted openly but still within the scope of the research topic, while observation was done by directly monitoring the religious phenomena in the Rambak area without directly participating in the activities observed. Documentation was used to strengthen the evidence gathered during the research (Orbay et al., 2022).

In analyzing the data, the researcher followed the steps proposed by Miles and Huberman, which include data reduction, data presentation, and verification. Data reduction was carried out by summarizing and selecting relevant information, data presentation was done in a narrative and tabular form to facilitate understanding, while verification was performed to draw new and relevant conclusions based on the data analysis results.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Religiosity of School Dropouts in the Rambak Area

This study aims to describe the religiosity of school dropouts in the Rambak area, Jelitik Village, Sungailiat District. Data obtained through interviews, observations, and documentation show that although most school dropouts in the Rambak area demonstrate a strong religious belief, their practice of religious teachings in daily life remains limited. Religiosity is viewed through five dimensions introduced by Glock and Stark: ideological, ritualistic, experiential, intellectual, and consequential.

a. Ideological Dimension (Religious Belief)

The ideological dimension describes the extent to which an individual understands and believes in the fundamental teachings of their religion. In this case, the ideological dimension of Islam includes belief in Allah, angels, His books, prophets, messengers, the Day of Judgment, and qada and qadar (divine decree). The research findings show that the majority of school dropouts in the Rambak area hold a strong belief in the core teachings of Islam. They believe in the existence of Allah and His teachings, even though they cannot see Him directly. Zulfikar, one of the school dropouts, emphasized that his belief in Allah Swt and all of His creations forms the basis for his fear and submission to Allah's commands. Similarly, Rafi Peratama stated that since childhood, he was taught to believe in religious teachings, and for him, studying religion is very important as preparation for the afterlife.

Ardiansyah and Sodikin also emphasized the importance of fear of punishment in the afterlife as motivation to follow religious teachings. They believe that every good or bad deed will be reciprocated accordingly, both in this world and the hereafter (Sodikin, 2025). This finding aligns with the theory of Mulyadi and Adriantoni, which states that the ideological dimension is closely related to belief in the core teachings of the religion as the foundation for the formation of faith (Adriantoni, 2025). This also aligns with the theory of Asrori et al., which explains that the strength of belief in religious principles strengthens the ideological dimension of religiosity.

Overall, despite these teenagers no longer being formally educated, they continue to maintain a strong belief in the fundamental principles of Islam. Their belief in the core principles of faith, particularly concerning life after death, is the main motivation for them to follow religious teachings.

b. Ritualistic Dimension (Religious Practices)

The ritualistic dimension refers to the performance of religious obligations such as prayer, fasting, zakat, and other forms of worship. The research findings indicate that most school dropouts in the Rambak area do not perform the five daily prayers regularly. Some of them admit that they only pray when reminded or under certain circumstances, such as facing personal problems. Fasting during Ramadan is also only practiced for a few days, and activities such as reading the Quran and attending religious study sessions are almost never done.

However, despite their limited religious practices, some teenagers remain active in certain religious activities, such as tahlilan and large celebrations held in their community, although their participation in these activities is not consistent. Some teenagers, like Zulfikar, continue to perform certain acts of worship, such as prayer and fasting, though not consistently (Zulfikar, 2025). They state that social busyness and work often interfere with their ability to carry out religious duties.

c. Experiential Dimension (Religious Feelings)

The experiential dimension describes a person's feelings and personal experiences when interacting with God, such as the feeling of peace during prayer or listening to Quranic verses. The majority of school dropouts in the Rambak area claim they do not experience deep or emotional feelings when listening to Quranic verses or performing prayers. They more often feel indifferent, without experiencing significant peace or inner calm. However, some teenagers, such as Zulfikar and Susan, express that they feel calm and peaceful when performing prayers, which helps them feel closer to Allah. Zulfikar, for example, associate's prayer with the opening of sustenance and feels more at peace after performing it. Nevertheless, their religious experience remains limited and is more often worldly in nature, such as happiness when their prayers are answered. This suggests that their religious experience has not yet deepened and has not formed a strong spiritual closeness with God.

d. Intellectual Dimension (Religious Knowledge)

The intellectual dimension measures the extent to which a person understands the teachings of their religion, including knowledge of sacred texts and the proper way to worship. The research findings indicate that the religious knowledge of school dropouts in Rambak is relatively low. Many of them know very little about prayer recitations and the proper way to perform wudhu (ablution). Some teenagers admit they do not read the Quran regularly and rely more on the religious knowledge they acquire from their parents or social media. Their religious knowledge is more based on childhood experiences and teachings from their parents, rather than through in-depth religious education or structured learning. Although they are aware that certain actions, such as adultery and drinking alcohol, are major sins, some of them still ignore these

prohibitions without feeling guilty. This shows a lack of religious awareness and a deep understanding of religious teachings.

e. Consequential Dimension (Religious Impact)

The consequential dimension refers to the extent to which religious teachings affect a person's behavior and actions in social life. Most teenagers report not experiencing significant changes in their lives despite performing prayers. For instance, Aprian stated that prayer did not have a big impact on his daily life, although he still tries to help his neighbors and respect his parents. Rafi expressed a similar view, stating that he did not feel any impact from prayer, although he continues to behave politely toward others.

Meanwhile, Zulfikar feels that prayer gives him inner peace and closeness to Allah, which encourages him to behave more politely and help others in need (Zulfikar, 2025). However, like other teenagers, he still deals with personal problems by daydreaming and does not always rely on prayer to seek solutions. The impact of religious teachings on the social behavior of teenagers in Rambak is still limited and has not consistently influenced how they resolve problems or face challenges in their lives.

Overall, although most school dropouts in the Rambak area show strong beliefs in religious teachings and have positive religious experiences, the impact of religious teachings on their behavior in daily life remains limited. Their religious practices are inconsistent, and religious values have not fully shaped their character and behavior. The influence of the social environment, lack of adequate religious education, and low personal awareness to delve deeper into religion pose significant challenges in shaping a better understanding and practice of religious teachings among these school dropouts. These findings suggest that while they express the importance of religion, religious teachings have not fully become a guideline in their lives, both in spiritual and social aspects.

Factors Contributing to School Dropouts in the Rambak Area

School dropout is a condition in which a student is unable to continue their education to the next level due to various factors. Talakua's theory in Rokhmaniyah et al. identifies six factors causing school dropout: economic factors, parental attention, learning facilities, children's interests, community factors, and school location. This study reveals that economic factors and parental attention are the main causes of school dropouts in the Rambak area, Jelitik Village, Sungailiat District.

a. Economic Factor

Economic factors are often the main reason for school dropouts, particularly due to the family's inability to finance education. Teenagers faced with economic challenges feel compelled to stop school to help support their family's needs. For example, Lilis revealed that she dropped out of school after her father passed away and her mother was unable to work (Anwar, 2022). To support her family, Lilis began working at a store and selling ice cream. Although she recognizes the importance of education for her future, economic constraints forced her to quit school.

A similar statement was made by Ardiansyah, who admitted he dropped out of school in grade 6 due to the inadequate financial condition of his family (Ardiansyah, 2021). His father worked as a daily laborer with an unstable income, while he had to help his parents support five siblings. He acknowledges that education is important, but financial limitations forced him to stop his education.

From the interviews conducted, it was found that economic factors are the dominant cause of school dropouts in the Rambak area. The family's financial limitations forced them to work to support the family's economy rather than continuing education. This finding aligns with Talakua's theory in Rokhmaniyah et al., which states that weak economic conditions prevent children from continuing their education because parents are unable to cover education costs such as school fees, books, uniforms, and transportation.

b. Parental Attention Factor

In addition to economic factors, a lack of attention from parents also plays a significant role in causing school dropouts. Parents who do not provide adequate guidance or attention to their children's education can lead to a loss of motivation to continue schooling. Abdul Aziz, a religious figure in the Rambak area, revealed that children who drop out of school in his area are often seen hanging out aimlessly. He stressed the importance of parents as the first educators, providing clear guidance and direction for their children's education. Although educational facilities around the area are sufficient, without awareness and support from parents, the results will be in vain.

A similar view was expressed by Zafira, who witnessed her cousin drop out of school due to her parents' neglect. Her cousin came from a dysfunctional family where her parents divorced and did not provide enough attention (Zafira, 2025). This situation led to her cousin losing the motivation to continue her education. The absence of parental guidance and attention made this teenager feel directionless in life, ultimately leading to her dropping out of school.

The interviews revealed that minimal parental attention significantly affects teenagers' decision to drop out of school. Despite good educational facilities being available, teenagers do not take full advantage of

them due to the lack of guidance and support from their parents. This finding aligns with research by Elmi Arsita et al., which states that a lack of parental attention to children's education and an unsupportive environment can reduce children's interest in continuing their education.

c. **Child's Interest Factor**

A low interest in education is often one of the main causes of school dropouts. Many of them feel that school activities are boring and unenjoyable. Some teenagers, like Reza Ramadhani, expressed that during the Covid-19 pandemic, he began to feel lazy about going to school because he found studying boring. Similarly, Zulfikar admitted to dropping out of school in grade 6 because he felt more interested in working and earning money on his own, rather than continuing formal education.

Meanwhile, Zainah, the mother of a school dropout, revealed that although she tried to encourage her child to continue school, her child preferred to work because he felt capable of earning money (Zainah, 2025). This situation worsened during the pandemic, which made the child even more reluctant to attend school. Additionally, Heriyani, the head of the local village, stated that many teenagers are more interested in playing games or working than continuing their education (Heriyani, 2025). This reflects their low interest in education and reluctance to continue school, even though their parents have provided support.

This study shows that low interest is the main obstacle for teenagers to continue their education. They prefer seeking income or enjoying other activities, like playing games, rather than studying at school. This finding aligns with research by Ridwan et al., which states that children who lose interest in learning tend to find school boring and unhelpful for their future.

d. **Community Factor**

The social environment, especially peer influence, also plays a significant role in teenagers' decisions to drop out of school. Aprian, a school dropout, revealed that he was influenced by his friends who had dropped out and were living freely without any burdens (Aprian, 2025). Although his parents could afford to finance his education, the influence of peers who had dropped out made him feel that quitting school was a more appealing option. Aprian realized that his unhealthy social circle led him to lose direction in life.

Based on the interviews and observations, it was found that the social environment, especially friends who had already dropped out of school, greatly influenced the decision of teenagers not to continue their education. A non-supportive environment makes teenagers more interested in following the lifestyle of peers who are not bound by school obligations. The negative influence of this peer group can lead to teenagers losing motivation to study and ultimately deciding to drop out of school. This finding aligns with research by Kristen which states that associating with peers who have dropped out of school can lower children's motivation to continue their education (Kristen et al., 2011).

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the research conducted through interviews, observations, and documentation, it can be concluded that the religiosity portrait of school dropouts in the Rambak area, Jelitik Village, Sungailiat District, reflects five distinct dimensions of religiosity. The ideological dimension shows a belief in religious teachings that still exists but is not supported by a deep religious awareness. The ritualistic dimension reveals a lack of religious practices, such as prayer and fasting, caused by laziness and a lack of guidance. The experiential dimension shows that teenagers do not experience deep spiritual moments, as worship is performed without full comprehension. The intellectual dimension indicates a low level of religious knowledge, particularly in reading the Quran and understanding religious teachings. The consequential dimension shows that, although there are positive impacts of religion for a small number of teenagers, the majority still engage in deviant behavior, such as free association and juvenile delinquency.

The main factors contributing to school dropout in this area include economic limitations, lack of parental attention, low interest in education due to a preference for working, and the negative influence of the surrounding environment, particularly unhealthy peer relationships.

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