Psychological and Biblico-Theological Exploration of Spirituality and Religiosity using Grounded Theory: Clergy’s Perspective

Aileen Prochina Mamahit1)*, Ferry Y. Mamahit2)

1) Department of Psychology and Counseling, Sekolah Tinggi Teologi SAAT, Indonesia
2) CMCS Oxford, United Kingdom
* Corresponding author: aileen.mamahit@seabs.ac.id

Received: 29 November 2023/Accepted: 21 February 2024/Published: 30 April 2024


Abstract
Spirituality and religiosity are often used interchangeably in studies without a clear consensus on their meanings. This article argues that these terms represent distinct concepts and must be differentiated. Despite their significance, research on distinguishing them is limited. This study defines religiosity and spirituality through narratives from focused group discussions (FGD) of nine clergy-seminary master’s level students in Indonesia actively involved in ministry. They provided their perspectives on what the terms meant to them based on their ministry experiences. In order to explore the psychological and biblico-theological meanings, grounded theory procedures were used to code the resulting narratives, leading to a working definition of spirituality and religiosity in the context of Christian churches in Indonesia. In this setting, spirituality is more commonly understood and used than religiosity. Results suggest that spirituality has more to do with internal conditions arising from a relationship with God. However, the expression of this relationship is more influenced by religion.

Keywords: Clergy Perspective, Grounded Theory, Religiosity, Spirituality.

Abstrak
Spiritualitas dan religiositas sering digunakan secara bergantian dalam penelitian tanpa konsensus yang jelas mengenai maknanya. Artikel ini berpendapat bahwa kedua istilah ini mewakili konsep yang berbeda dan harus dibedakan. Meskipun penting, penelitian yang membedakan keduanya terbatas. Studi ini mendefinisikan religiositas dan spiritualitas melalui narasi dari Focus Group Discussion (FGD) sembilan mahasiswa pascasarjana di sebuah sekolah tinggi teologi di Indonesia yang aktif terlibat dalam pelayanan gereja. Mereka memberikan pandangan mereka tentang apa yang kedua istilah ini
artikan bagi mereka berdasarkan pengalaman pelayanan mereka. Untuk
mengekplorasi makna-makna psikologis dan alkitabiah-teologis, prosedur
*grounded theory* digunakan untuk mengodifikasi narasi-narasi yang dihasilkan,
menghasilkan definisi kerja spiritualitas dan religiositas dalam konteks gereja
Kristen di Indonesia. Dalam hal ini, spiritualitas lebih umum dipahami dan
digunakan dari pada religiositas. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa
spiritualitas lebih banyak berhubungan dengan kondisi internal yang timbul
dari hubungan dengan Tuhan. Namun, ekspresi hubungan ini lebih dipengaruhi
oleh agama.

Kata-kata Kunci: *Grounded Theory*, Perspektif Pelayan Tuhan, Religi
sitas, Spiritualitas

**Introduction: Background of the Study**

The impetus for this study was a national survey conducted by the
Southeast Asia Bible Seminary research department, locally called
*Lembaga Penelitian dan Pelayanan pada Masyarakat* (LP2M), in 2017-2018. The
survey focused on religiosity and faith support among Indonesian
Christian adolescents\(^1\) and emerging adults,\(^2\) which catalyzed the
present study. The LP2M gathered church youth ministers in five major
Indonesian cities respectively (Jakarta, Surabaya, Pontianak, Bandung,
and Medan) to orient them to the research and to enlist their help in
disseminating questionnaires to their youth group members. During
discussions with them, questions arose regarding the term
“religiosity” and not “spirituality,” particularly from youth ministers in
Jakarta.

It prompted this inquiry about these two terms. Looking at the
literature proved confusing as there is no delineation of the two.\(^3\) In
addition, studies on religiosity and spirituality did not clarify the

\(^{1}\) E. Dewi, A. P. Mamahit, and R. Tanudjaja, “Relationship between Parental
Attachment and Faith Support with Adolescent Religiosity,” *Verita*: *Jurnal Teologi dan
Pelayanan* 18, no. 1 (2019): 69-103, [https://doi.org/10.36421/veritas.v18i1.164](https://doi.org/10.36421/veritas.v18i1.164)

Parental Attachment and Faith Support with Intrinsic Religiosity of Emerging Adults
from Evangelical Churches in Bandung,” *Verita*: *Jurnal Teologi dan Pelayanan* 18, no. 2

\(^{3}\) I. Rosyadi, Kusbaryanto, F. A. Yuniarti, “Literatur Review Aspek Spiritualitas/
Religiusitas dan Perawatan Berbasis Spiritual/Religius pada Pasien Kanker,” *Jurnal
meaning of the terms. As a result, laypeople do not clearly understand them. The researcher turned to the clergy for guidance. In the Indonesian context, lay people look up to clergy members for teachings. They believe the clergy are authorities regarding religious matters as they have the educational and ministerial qualifications regarding religiosity and spirituality. The researcher decided to study how these two terms are understood among Indonesian clergy.

Literature delineating spirituality and religiosity proved scarce. Studies in the social sciences have used these terms interchangeably and synonymously. The nature of spirituality and religiosity as highly abstract phenomena or constructs has eluded consensus on their definitions. On the one hand, researchers have viewed spirituality and religiosity as a single construct, referred to as spirituality/religiosity (S/R), to capture a wide range of concepts from social to personal practices. S/R are considered two dimensions or facets of the same construct or interchangeable constructs. Instead of classifying spirituality and religiosity as distinct concepts, Good, et al. combine them to form the concept of the sacred within and outside of established religion.

On the other hand, several studies have come to acknowledge important distinctions between spirituality and religiosity. Despite having solid conceptual similarities, the two terms are distinct enough to be used separately. Miller and Thoresen argue that whereas spirituality focuses more on the practice of religion, religiosity is anchored in it. As a belief that connects a person to the outside world and provides existence, meaning, and purpose, spirituality also has to do with the active presence of the divine in human lives. Contrarily, religiosity strongly correlates with organized religion, social structures, and institutions. According to Zinnbauer et al., religiosity is related to a person’s adherence to religious institutions’ doctrines, beliefs, ritual practices, and organizational involvement. Spirituality, on the other hand, involves connection and relationship in and belief or faith with a higher power of some kind, and integrating one’s values and beliefs with one’s behavior in daily life. In this sense, spirituality and religiosity are similar but distinct. People can be religious and practice their religion without being connected to their spirituality. On the other hand, a person might be profoundly spiritual without being religious or practicing any religion.

Dictionaries and electronic databases, laypeople, literature, and psychologists have contributed the majority of the definitions that are

---


15. Ibid.


Currently in use. There was no definition of the notions researched in a study where clergy were participants, but a policy-capturing approach was utilized to understand religiousness. According to Hodge, understanding the distinctions between spirituality and religiosity is essential for comprehending these concepts' complexity and creating a more nuanced view of faith and religion. This notion is supported by research that claims that the literature frequently discusses the connection between spirituality and religiosity. Even though the two ideas are similar, they are not the same.

Psychology has come up with a comparable pair of concepts that are distinct from one another. The difference between intrinsic and extrinsic religious orientation is one of them. Extrinsic religious orientation describes those who consider religion a means to an end, such as earning social prestige or fulfilling personal goals. In contrast, intrinsic religious orientation describes people who see religion as an end in itself and as crucial to their identity. According to Gorsuch and McPherson, an individual who prays and attends religious services because they find it fulfilling and enriching would be considered intrinsically religious. In contrast, an individual who attends religious services to impress others or to gain social acceptance would be considered extrinsically religious. Despite critics of the lack of validity in measuring these concepts, this intrinsic/extrinsic (I/E) view has been

---


widely used in literature. Another distinction of similar concepts is proposed by Allport and Ross, which is mature-immature religion. Mature religion involves a flexible and open-minded approach to religious beliefs and practices, whereas a rigid and dogmatic adherence to religious beliefs characterizes immature religion.

Those with a mature approach are open to the possibility that other religions may offer valuable insights and perspectives and can integrate their religious beliefs into a broader worldview. In contrast, those with an immature approach tend to view their beliefs as absolute and resist alternative perspectives. Similar ideas about mature and immature religiosity have been proposed by other scholars, such as Fowler (1981) and Batson and Ventis (1982).

From a biblical-theological perspective, the distinction between spirituality and religiosity finds its roots in passages underscoring the importance of inner disposition over external rituals. It can be seen in Jesus’ critique in Matthew 15:8 about honoring with lips but having hearts far from God. The theological underpinning draws from discussions on the holistic nature of faith and works, as highlighted in James 2:26, emphasizing the symbiotic relationship between internal belief (spirituality) and external expressions (religiosity).

Christian spirituality, viewed as a path to holiness, derives its biblical foundation from passages emphasizing the transformative nature of faith (Rm. 12:2), urging believers to be renewed in mind. The theological bedrock lies in the belief in the incarnation of God, as expressed in the Gospel of John’s proclamation that “the Word became flesh and dwelt among us” (John 1:14).
1:14), illustrating the divine bridging of the gap to facilitate spiritual union.  

However, biblical theology considers the prevailing separation between spirituality and religiosity suboptimal. The incarnation of God in human form, exemplified by the embodiment of Jesus, underscores the inherent unity between inner nature and external practice. This unique perspective, upheld by orthodox Christianity over centuries, asserts that Jesus Christ surpasses being merely human; he embodies the eternal, absolute God. Theologically, he deliberately chose to set aside divine glory and take on human form while retaining the essence of God (Phil 2:6-11). The purpose behind this incarnation was to reconcile humanity with God and restore the divine union that had been lost. In essence, the fullness of God is believed to reside in Jesus Christ within the framework of Christian religiosity and spirituality.

Despite these distinctions, literature is still in a quandary of delineating these two terms. Whereas the concepts of intrinsic vs. extrinsic religious orientation, mature vs. immature religion, and inner disposition vs. external rituals (faith and works) have been widely developed to distinguish between different aspects of religion, there still seems to be a gap in the distinct nature of spirituality and religiosity. Aside from that, definitions from the clergys’ standpoint are lacking. This study aims to fill these gaps.

Overall, this study is significant as no local literature on the same concepts turned up. The use of local Indonesian clergy adds significance as Indonesian lay Christians tend to look to them for guidance on spiritual concepts. In addition, spirituality and religiosity tend to be lumped together by the Indonesian term kerohanian which is very broad. This study sheds light on these two terms which is direly needed in the Indonesian context.

Two objectives guide this qualitative investigation. First, to identify the meaning of spirituality and religiosity according to Indonesian clergy-seminary master students. Second, to determine the

contrasts between spirituality and religiosity that these participants draw.

Research Methods

Grounded Theory

This study uses Charmaz’s constructivist grounded theory. It is a qualitative research approach to develop theories grounded in empirical data. The method involves a systematic yet flexible set of guidelines for collecting and analyzing data to construct theories derived directly from the data itself. It is based on the observations and experiences collected and analyzed through the research process. This way, the theory is grounded in the collected and analyzed data rather than developed from pre-existing theories or assumptions.

Participants

Nine men and women who were students in the Master of Theology (M.Th.) program of a theological seminary in the Fall 2019 semester were purposively selected as all of them were members of the clergy from nine different Christian churches and para-church organizations in Indonesia. Table 1 shows their church involvement and the number of years in ministry. It should be noted that the participants still are in active ministry involvement while studying for their M. Th. They come to the seminary to attend intensive classes twice every year. An FGD was conducted among them to gather data. They all verbally consented as participants, audio recorded, and later sent written consent online. They were also consulted regarding the findings of this study. Subsequent theoretical sampling was gathered from 28 M.Th. students of the Fall 2021 semester. These M.Th. students also have similar ministry involvement in their Christian churches and para-church organizations. They signed written consent forms, which were sent online, and sent in answers to the same question posed during the FGD. No incentive was given to them in any form.

---

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Participants (n=9)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sex</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ministry Involvement</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pastor</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth Ministry</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women’s Ministry</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Years in Vocational Ministry</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-10 years</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-20 years</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-30 years</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Procedure**

This study employed qualitative methods using FGD to determine how clergy members understand religiosity and spirituality. The question was, “What is your understanding of religiosity and spirituality?” Supporting questions were: “Are they similar? If yes, how are they similar?” “If no, how are they different?” Our research assistant transcribed the FGD recording, after which about 4 hours were spent cleaning the data by comparing the transcribed data with the recording. The raw data filled nine pages, making up the data set.

Initial coding was done by both our research assistant and the first researcher separately. Initial codes yielded 95% similarity. Consensus was sought from each participant to verify the initial conclusions. From these initial codes, focused codes emerged separately from two sources: the first researcher and a colleague from another department. Focused codes yielded 97% similarity. Consensus on the final results was sought from each participant of the FGD and presented to the theoretical sampling participants collectively.

**Data Analysis**

The transcripts were manually coded using Charmaz’s Grounded Theory, the Constructivist Grounded Theory, which involves the following steps:32

---

Initial Coding. The data set was scanned and coded freely without any category in mind. While doing careful word-for-word and line-by-line coding, the following questions were kept in mind: “What process(es) is at issue here? How can I define it?” from Charmaz. This careful process fulfills two criteria for completing a grounded theory analysis: fit and relevance. The following initial codes that were most significant emerged: both are Christian terms; interchangeably used; different terms with different meanings; religiosity can be measured, spirituality not easily measured; refer to internal vs. external conditions; relationship with God vs. relationship with man; horizontal vs. vertical relationship; belief vs. ritual; being vs. doing; praxis; ritual; doctrine; experiencing God; spiritual growth; affective vs. cognitive domains.

Focused Coding. Focused coding uses the most significant initial codes by deciding which of these made the most analytical sense to accurately and thoroughly classify the data. From the initial codes, the following focused codes were most significant: practice and belief; measurable and challenging to measure; internal and external; ritual and relational; being and doing; affective and cognitive; and relationship with God and man.

Conceptual Categories. This step attempted to treat substantive, focused codes as categories and evaluate them as such. Categories explicate ideas in the data and, at the same time, are integrative. Conceptual categories that emerged are as follows: spirituality has to do with the internal processes, religiosity has to do with the external processes; spirituality has to do with one’s being; religiosity has to do with doing; spirituality is a relationship with God, religiosity is ritualistic; spirituality has to do with beliefs, religiosity is more on praxis; spirituality is difficult to measure, religiosity can be measurable.

Memo-Writing. Memos are informal analytic notes that record and detail this study’s analytic phase. Memos were produced that sped up the process of moving through the analysis and writing the results, from initial coding to theoretical coding. The findings section will describe this stage, including analytical notes to clarify and complete the categories. Sampling for theory development, also known as theoretical sampling, is done to verify and improve conceptual categories. The same

---

questions were posed in writing to 28 people with backgrounds and levels of ministry involvement similar to those of the FGD group. This data set revealed similar codes. Saturation was reached during the analysis of FGD data. Data for theoretical sampling were 28 pages.

Writing the Draft. The draft of initial findings was presented at the Asia-Pacific Network for Moral Education (APNME) 13th Annual Conference held in Bali, Indonesia, on June 26-30, 2019. It resulted in a final theory on the nature of the two terms as elicited through the participants’ responses to the questions.

Research Findings

The data analysis gave rise to a process leading to a core category that showed how spirituality and religiosity relate. Five different categories were identified as the pairs of relationships between spirituality and religiosity drawn from the various opinions and statements of the participants: internal-external, being-doing, relational-ritual, belief-practice, and measurable-immeasurable. These conceptual categories show the differences and relationship between spirituality and religiosity.

Table 2. Conceptual Categories Between Spirituality and Religiosity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Spirituality</th>
<th>Religiosity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conceptual categories</td>
<td>Internal</td>
<td>External</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Being</td>
<td>Doing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Relational</td>
<td>Ritualistic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Belief</td>
<td>Practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Difficult to measure</td>
<td>Easy to measure</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Internal-External**

Spirituality flows outward to manifest as religiosity, with the depth of one’s spirituality influencing the outward expression of one’s faith. As seen in Participant 4’s response, “It (spirituality) has to do with the depth of one’s spirituality... from within out... from the depth of one’s spirituality flows religiosity.”

Spirituality influences the outward expression of faith, referred to as religiosity. In this regard, spirituality is an internal and deeply personal experience that serves as the foundation for the external
expression of one’s spiritual beliefs. Conversely, religiosity is the objective and communal expression of one’s spiritual beliefs, influenced by religious teachings, authorities, or community. Participant 9 further explains the distinction between the two, “The root word is spiritus. So, it automatically has to do with spirituality or being. Religiosity has more to do with religious behavior.”

Furthermore, spirituality is about an individual’s relationship with God, while religiosity focuses on adhering to religious practices and beliefs externally. Participant 6 also supports this idea, stating, “I see spirituality as something from within towards God. Religiosity has more to do with beliefs or faith that is seen.”

Spirituality, thus, is an internal process of connecting with God, often not visible to others, while religiosity is the external display of religious beliefs and practices visible to others. In this context, spirituality is related to one’s being or essence, while religiosity is focused on outward behaviors and actions related to religion.

**Being-Doing**

The distinction between spirituality and religiosity is further shown in the category of being vs. doing, where spirituality is more focused on internal awareness and understanding of who one is in one’s relationship with God. In contrast, religiosity is rooted in external practices and actions. Participant 9 and 4 emphasize this distinction by respectively saying, “Spirituality automatically has to do with one’s being.” “Spirituality is revealed in one’s character, daily life, worldview, and relationship with others; when one experiences misfortunes, one’s spirituality is displayed.”

Participant 7 further differentiates religiosity from spirituality by saying,

“Spirituality, if I may sound philosophical, has more to do with one’s being, a connection of one’s spirit with God. Religiosity, on the other hand, is the doing. It has to do with religion and religious symbols that are ritualistic. Spirituality as being is revealed in the doing. Religiosity is the product of spirituality.”
In this way, spirituality emphasizes one’s inner self and connection to God, while religiosity results from personal spirituality and focuses on external practices and actions.

Relational-Ritualistic

Spirituality involves establishing connections with oneself, others, and God through relationships, while religiosity is centered on rituals and doctrine. Participant 6 reinforces the idea that spirituality is about a relationship with God, while religiosity is primarily focused on religious beliefs and practices; as this participant says, “Spirituality has more to do with our relationship with God... while religiosity has maybe more to do with beliefs or religion.”

Participant 4 highlights how spirituality and religiosity are reflected in an individual’s relationships with others and God, stating that “One’s nearness to God is displayed in how one treats people.”

It suggests that a relationship with God is vital in expressing one’s relationship with others. It also highlights the differences between spirituality and religiosity, where the former values the depth of relationships while the latter is more concerned with attendance at religious services.

Similarly, Participant 5 stresses the distinction between spirituality and religiosity by avoiding the term “religious” since it is associated with rituals, implying that spirituality aims to guide Christians on how to live their lives rather than solely focusing on religious rituals, as stated, “In the context of discipleship, it means guiding Christians how to live, not only to do rituals.”

Collectively, the utterances support the notion that spirituality emphasizes the development of connections and relationships, while religiosity is more concerned with rituals and beliefs.

Belief-Practice

Spirituality is centered around an individual’s values, beliefs, and personal growth, while religiosity involves the outward expression of these values and beliefs through specific religious practices. Participant 2 confirms that religiosity includes specific religious practices, such as “Reading the Bible, doing devotions, praying in private and community.”
Participant 4 further explains that religiosity is related to the practical aspects of religious life, such as ideas, religious symbols, service, and prayer. The participant notes, “Faith is manifested as praxis in one’s life,” and “religiosity is identical with praxis.”

However, this participant also acknowledges that: “Spirituality is broader, including one’s character, daily life, perspectives, worldview, and relationships.”

Participant 5 states, “Religiosity, because it has to do with rituals, it is more praxis.” Supporting the idea that religiosity is more concerned with specific religious practices, Participant 7 summarizes, “Religiosity is behavior, action, and practice.”

It further supports the notion that it is centered around specific religious practices. These utterances suggest that religiosity focuses more on specific religious practices, while spirituality emphasizes personal growth, values, and beliefs.

**Difficult to Measure-Easy to Measure**

Spirituality is characterized by a lack of structured rules or restrictions, making it difficult to measure or can only be measured by God. On the other hand, religiosity is based on a rule-based belief system that can be easily measured through observable manifestations and accomplishments. Participant 4 highlights, “Religiosity can be measured, while spirituality cannot be measured quantitatively.”

This quote emphasizes that religiosity can sometimes be misleading if it lacks proper spiritual depth. Participant 8 also acknowledges the subjective nature of spirituality, stating that “Other people cannot know for sure one’s spirituality.”

In contrast, Participant 1 explains, “Religiosity is similar to spiritual discipline and can be measured through specific religious practices such as reading the Bible, praying, and fasting.”

Therefore, these utterances support the idea that spirituality is difficult to measure, while religiosity can be easily measured through specific religious practices. The participants’ statements provide further insight into this category, highlighting how religiosity is quantifiable while spirituality is more subjective and cannot be measured accurately by others.
Discussion

The above analysis offers valuable insights into the intricate relationship between spirituality and religiosity. The researcher presents five categories that help distinguish between these two constructs. This understanding is consistent with prior literature that distinguishes between religiosity and spirituality. The five categories from the analysis include internal-external, being-doing, relational-ritual, belief-practice, and difficult immeasurable-measurable. These categories describe the differences and relationships between spirituality and religiosity.

The first category, internal-external, draws attention to the personal nature of spirituality that underpins the external expression of one's spiritual beliefs. At the same time, religiosity is belief's objective and communal expression. Consistent with previous research, it is suggested that spirituality is an individual experience, while religiosity is an external expression of faith. While spirituality is an internal and subjective experience that shapes the external expression of faith, Allport and Gorsuch and McPherson have noted that religiosity refers to the outward expression of faith influenced by religious teachings, authorities, or community. This category highlights the personal nature of spirituality, which can be understood as an inner experience unique to each individual, while religiosity is the external expression of these experiences.

In the context of the internal-external category, a relevant biblical theology can be drawn from passages that emphasize the intertwining of internal beliefs and external expressions. The biblical narrative often underscores the importance of a sincere and authentic heart in one's relationship with the divine. This theological perspective can find resonance in biblical teachings that prioritize the internal disposition of individuals over mere external rituals (1 Sam 16:7; Mat 15:8), highlighting the importance of genuine internal devotion. Therefore, the internal-external category resonates with a biblical theology that underscores the

idea that true spirituality involves a genuine and internal connection with the divine, influencing the external expression of faith. At the same time, religiosity, in this context, refers to the outward manifestation shaped by external religious influences and community practices.

The second category, being-doing, draws attention to the distinction between spirituality and religiosity. The former focuses on internal awareness and understanding of one’s relationship with God, and the latter is rooted in external practices and actions. This distinction is consistent with prior research indicating that spirituality emphasizes subjective experiences and feelings, while objective measures characterize religiosity.37 Moreover, this category reflects the difference between mature and immature religions. The former is characterized by an internal awareness and understanding of one’s relationship with God, and the latter is rooted in external practices and actions.38 Miller and Thoresen further suggest that religiosity is grounded in religion, while spirituality is more concerned with the practice of religion.39 This category emphasizes the difference between the subjective nature of spirituality and the objective nature of religiosity, which can be observed through external practices and actions.

In light of the being-doing category, evidence shows that the interplay between internal disposition and external actions can elucidate pertinent biblical theology. It resonates with biblical teachings that underscore the importance of faith manifested through deeds and the relationship between faith and works (Jas. 2:14-26).40 The passage highlights that true spirituality involves internal awareness and outward expressions of one’s faith through righteous actions. The emphasis on mature religion being characterized by internal awareness aligns with biblical teachings about the transformative nature of a genuine relationship with God, influencing internal and external aspects of an individual’s life.41 In this context, the being-doing category reflects the biblical-theological idea that authentic spirituality goes beyond mere external practices, emphasizing the transformative power of an internal

understanding of one’s relationship with God, which naturally leads to meaningful and righteous actions.

The third category, relational-ritualistic, underscores the distinction between spirituality and religiosity in that religiosity primarily focuses on religious ideas and activities. In contrast, spirituality is about personal relationships with a higher power.\(^{42}\) This contrast is consistent with previous research that has suggested that spirituality involves a personal connection with a higher power, while religiosity involves adherence to religious institutions and practices. The relational nature of spirituality is emphasized in this category, highlighting the importance of a person’s connection with a higher power. On the one hand, formal belief, social practice, and institutions are connected to the substantive features of religiosity. On the other hand, the non-substantive parts of religion are associated with individual experiences like prayer, meditation, and other spiritual practices. This category highlights the crucial role of interpersonal relationships and social connections in spiritual practices and their influence on religiosity.

The relational-ritualistic category finds resonance with a biblical theology that emphasizes the relational aspect of faith. From a biblical perspective, a personal relationship with a higher power aligns with the biblical narrative’s emphasis on God’s desire for an intimate connection with individuals (Jer 31:33; Luk 15:10-32).\(^{43}\) Additionally, the emphasis on spirituality involving personal connection aligns with Jesus’ practice of seeking solitude for prayer and communion with God (Mat 14:10-13; Mrk 1:35; Luk 5:15-16; 6:12-13).\(^{44}\) The relational-ritualistic category thus reflects a biblical theology that values the personal and relational dimensions of spirituality, aligning with the biblical emphasis on a transformative, personal connection with a higher power beyond mere adherence to religious institutions and practices.

The fourth category, belief-practice, elucidates the difference between spirituality and religiosity, where the former centers around an

\(^{42}\) Pargament, \textit{The Psychology of Religion and Coping}.


individual’s values, beliefs, and personal growth. The latter involves the outward expression of these values and beliefs through specific religious practices. Aligning with previous research highlighting spirituality’s subjective and personal aspects and religiosity’s objective and social aspects, Emmons further states that spirituality involves faith’s subjective and personal aspects, while religiosity encompasses objective and social aspects. The category emphasizes that individuals may experience spirituality and religiosity differently and that their beliefs and values may not necessarily align with religious practices and institutions. Thus, the subjective nature of spirituality and the objective nature of religiosity expressed through specific religious practices are distinguished by this category.

The belief-practice category resonates with a biblical theology that emphasizes the alignment of beliefs with corresponding actions. This perspective supports biblical teachings that stress the importance of genuine faith, reflected in one’s conduct (cf. Jas. 2:14-26). These teachings underscore the idea that authentic spirituality involves subjective beliefs and tangible expressions of those beliefs through righteous actions and aligns with the belief-practice category’s assertion that spirituality centers on individual values and personal growth. It further acknowledges the potential discrepancy between professed beliefs and actual practices, highlighting the need for a genuine alignment between inner convictions and external expressions. The belief-practice category, therefore, reflects a biblical perspective that underscores the truth. Thus, true spirituality involves subjective beliefs and their practical manifestation in one’s conduct.

The category of difficult to measure-easily measured examines the challenge of measuring spirituality versus religiosity.\textsuperscript{49} Spirituality is characterized by the active presence of the divine in individuals’ lives and the belief that connects them to the world, providing a sense of meaning and purpose. Although measuring spirituality involves subjective experiences and qualitative methods that are difficult to quantify, religiosity, such as attendance at religious services and adherence to religious practices, can be measured objectively and quantitatively. Spirituality encompasses a person’s inner self, emotions, and experiences, which are not easily measurable, whereas religiosity’s objective nature allows for specific practices and behaviors to be measured. Nevertheless, Hill et al. suggested that subjective self-reports may be used to assess spirituality.\textsuperscript{50} Therefore, this category highlights the challenges of measuring the subjective nature of spirituality in contrast to the objective nature of religiosity, which is more readily measurable through observable actions.

The difficult to measure-easy to measure category aligns with a biblical theology that recognizes the intrinsic difficulty in measuring the depth of an individual’s spiritual connection. From a biblical standpoint, the emphasis on the personal relationship with the divine, as the psalmist prays for God to search his heart, speaks to spirituality’s internal and subjective nature (Ps 139:23-24).\textsuperscript{51} This biblical teaching reinforces the challenge of objectively measuring the profound, personal experiences associated with spirituality. In contrast, religiosity’s external practices, such as attendance at religious services, can be more easily observed and quantified.\textsuperscript{52} This view aligns with the biblical concept of religious practices as visible expressions of faith. However, biblical theology also acknowledges the limitations of external


\textsuperscript{50} Hill, et al., “Conceptualizing Religion and Spirituality,” 51-77.


observables, cautioning against relying solely on outward actions without considering the inward disposition.

The analysis distinguishes spirituality and religiosity as separate concepts with unique characteristics and relationships. Religiosity involves religious practices and commitment, while spirituality is a personal, internal experience. The findings support previous studies, contributing to our comprehension of their interplay. While acknowledging their distinctions, it is also crucial to recognize that the incarnation of Jesus Christ, seen as the perfect human, blurs the dichotomy between spirituality and religiosity. In him, these categories seamlessly merge into a unified entity, challenging the strict separation discussed earlier. This biblical-theological perspective suggests that Jesus exemplifies a harmonious integration of internal spirituality and external religiosity, offering a model that transcends the distinctions made in the analysis.

Validity

From the beginning, careful word-for-word and line-by-line coding was done for fit and relevance. Fit was ensured when the codes were constructed and developed into categories that crystallized participants’ narratives. Relevance was ensured by an incisive analytic framework that interpreted what was being said instead of imputing the researcher’s personal views.

Validity was considered carefully by applying Barbour’s criteria:53

1) Triangulation was done to enrich understanding of the concepts by viewing them from different perspectives. Data source triangulation was collected from the Christian church and para-church workers such as pastors, youth directors, counselors, Sunday school teachers, children’s pastors, and the like; 2) Comparing the researcher’s coding was done by involving two colleagues from another department to make sure that the analysis makes sense to other people; 3) Participant feedback is respondent validation by presenting results to participants; and 4) Paper trail, by documenting each step of the process as evidence linking raw data to the final report.

---

Scope and Limitation of the Study

This study has homogenous participants from a Christian church and para-church workers in Indonesia. It is, however, beneficial to the study as its purpose was to find the Christian Indonesian perspective of the two terms. They all have theological studies backgrounds in the same seminary. Nine participants of the FGD comprised six men and three women, while the theoretical sample comprised 17 men and 11 women.

The research findings may be biased due to the context where Christianity is considered a minor religion. It could potentially affect the interpretation of the data and the validity of the conclusions drawn. Furthermore, the study found it advantageous for the researcher to have a similar background to the participants, enabling the adequate understanding and analysis of specific terms used in the research. The researcher's shared background with the participants facilitated the accurate interpretation of the data collected. It enabled a more comprehensive understanding of the religious and cultural factors that were being explored.

Recommendations

The terms “spirituality” and “religiosity” are intricate concepts that require a thoughtful examination of the cultural and contextual setting in which they are used. While some general definitions can be applied to these terms, their meanings are not fixed. They may differ depending on an individual's or community's beliefs and practices and the broader cultural context. These concepts are highly subjective and can be influenced by various factors, including personal beliefs, cultural norms, and social dynamics. Moreover, the methods used to measure and study these concepts can vary depending on the research questions being addressed. Therefore, it is necessary to acknowledge the distinct social, cultural, and historical contexts in which these concepts are employed and to appreciate the diversity of viewpoints and experiences within and across various communities to gain a more comprehensive understanding of their religiosity and spirituality.

In order to enhance the scope and validity of the research, it is recommended to expand the study to incorporate insights and opinions from the general public and individuals belonging to other religions in Indonesia. It will enable a more comprehensive understanding of the topic under investigation and provide a more accurate representation of
the diversity of viewpoints and experiences across the population. Including lay participants and those from different faith traditions will provide valuable insights into how religiosity and spirituality are conceptualized and practiced across different segments of Indonesian society and may also reveal significant similarities and differences in the meanings and significance of these concepts across different groups.

Significance of the Study

One of the most salient features of this study is the use of local Christian participants. It makes it possible for a ground-up reconfiguration of the definition of the two terms studied from the Indonesian context. Another significant factor is the background of the participants. Two essential characteristics of the participants contributed to the validity of the findings: first, their theological education that dealt mainly with religiosity and spirituality, and second, their full-time and longtime involvement with Christian ministry where religiosity and spirituality are readily exercised and seen. Lastly, no similar study turned out in our literature search, not only in Indonesia.

Conclusion

The present study distinguishes the concepts of spirituality and religiosity, highlighting the close relationship between the two. While spirituality refers to an individual’s internal state of being, encompassing their relationship with a higher power, religiosity pertains more to the external aspects of religious practices, reflecting an individual’s adherence to religious doctrines and engagement with religious institutions. While these concepts are distinct, they are inherently interconnected, with one informing the other. In other words, an individual’s religiosity often manifests in their spirituality, and vice versa. Hence, it is not easy to completely separate these two concepts, as they are closely intertwined and often shape each other. Recognizing the differences and similarities between spirituality and religiosity is essential to understanding the complex nature of faith and religion.

However, it is crucial to note that despite their distinctiveness, the incarnation of Jesus Christ, considered the perfect human being, provides a unique lens through which these categories can be interconnected. In him, there is no dichotomy between spirituality and
religiosity; instead, they seamlessly merge into one unified entity. His life exemplifies a harmonious integration of internal spirituality and outward religiosity, challenging the notion of a strict separation between the two realms, as discussed in the preceding categories. This theological perspective enriches our understanding, suggesting that spirituality and religiosity converge in the person of Jesus, offering a holistic model that transcends the analytical distinctions highlighted in the analysis.

In the context of Christians in Indonesia, spirituality is more commonly understood and used than religiosity. Results suggest that spirituality has more to do with internal conditions arising from a relationship with God. On the other hand, religion has more to do with the expression of this relationship.

Bibliography


