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The Structural Model of Influential Interplay among Cultural Practices, Social Support, Economic Factors, and the Suku Anak Dalam Community' Perceptions of Religious Education

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Abstract

The Suku Anak Dalam (SAD) community in Sumatra, Indonesia, faced unique educational challenges influenced by cultural, social, and economic factors. This study aimed to explore and confirm the influential relationships among cultural practices, social support, economic factors, and SAD's perceptions of religious education. A total of 356 literate SAD from some regions in Sumatra were sampled. Utilizing Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM), data were collected through a structured questionnaire translated into the local language. The results revealed that cultural practices positively impacted SAD's perceptions of religious education (H1, $t=7.550$, $p=0.000$) and significantly enhanced social support (H4, $t=3.870$, $p=0.000$). Social support positively influenced perceptions of religious education (H2, $t=4.880$, $p=0.000$), while economic factors had a strong positive effect on both perceptions of religious education (H3, $t=9.119$, $p=0.000$) and social support (H5, $t=31.108$, $p=0.000$). These findings highlight the necessity of integrating cultural, social, and economic aspects in educational policies for the SAD community. The study's novelty lies in its structural model, offering deep insights into religious education perceptions. Future research should explore similar dynamics in other indigenous communities using longitudinal and qualitative methods.

Keywords

Suku Anak Dalam, cultural practices, social support, economic factors, religious education

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El Modelo Estructural de la Interacción Influyente entre las Prácticas Culturales, el Apoyo Social, los Factores Económicos y las Percepciones de la Comunidad Suku Anak Dalam sobre la Educación Religiosa

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Resumen

La comunidad Suku Anak Dalam (SAD) en Sumatra, Indonesia, enfrenta desafíos educativos influenciados por factores culturales, sociales y económicos. Este estudio examinó las relaciones entre prácticas culturales, apoyo social, factores económicos y percepciones de la educación religiosa en la comunidad SAD. Se recolectaron datos de 356 miembros alfabetizados utilizando un cuestionario estructurado y el Modelo de Ecuaciones Estructurales de Mínimos Cuadrados Parciales (PLS-SEM). Los resultados mostraron que las prácticas culturales influyen positivamente en las percepciones de la educación religiosa ($t=7.550$, $p=0.000$) y en el apoyo social ($t=3.870$, $p=0.000$). Además, el apoyo social y los factores económicos también afectan significativamente las percepciones de la educación religiosa ($t=4.880$, $p=0.000$; $t=9.119$, $p=0.000$) y el apoyo social ($t=31.108$, $p=0.000$). Estos hallazgos subrayan la importancia de integrar aspectos culturales, sociales y económicos en las políticas educativas para la comunidad SAD. El estudio destaca por su modelo estructural, proporcionando nuevos conocimientos sobre la educación religiosa en comunidades indígenas. Se sugiere que investigaciones futuras examinen dinámicas similares en otras comunidades utilizando métodos longitudinales y cualitativos.

Palabras clave

Suku Anak Dalam, prácticas culturales, apoyo social, factores económicos, educación religiosa

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The Suku Anak Dalam (SAD), or Orang Rimba, are indigenous to Sumatra's deep forests and are known for their nomadic lifestyle. They face challenges from modernization and habitat loss, affecting healthcare, education, and economic opportunities (Pahmi et al., 2023). Understanding religious education's role, crucial for moral and social integration (Samsu et al., 2022), is essential as SAD communities grapple with geographical isolation, economic hardships, and traditional resistance to formal schooling (Abdullah & Primus, 2021; Zidny et al., 2021). Cultural practices in SAD communities, such as rituals and beliefs, strongly influence their perception of religious education, making integration into educational programs essential. Social support networks help mitigate barriers, fostering educational participation (Suarta et al., 2022). Economic conditions, characterized by subsistence living, limit access to education, with financial stability being crucial for educational engagement and support (Souza & Menezes, 2020).

Previous studies on indigenous education often focus on general educational challenges without comprehensively examining the influence of cultural practices, social support, and economic factors (e.g., Chilvers, 2021; Njoh et al., 2022; Parter & Skinner, 2020). There is a notable gap in research targeting the specific context of SAD and their perceptions of religious education. Addressing this gap requires an in-depth investigation into how these factors interact and influence SAD's educational perspectives. The existing literature lacks quantitative analyses using methods like PLS-SEM, which can elucidate the relationships among these variables (Abdullah & Primus, 2021). This study aims to fill this gap by providing data-driven insights into SAD's views on religious education and offering evidence-based recommendations for policymakers and educators.

This research will enrich the academic discourse on religious education within indigenous communities by providing new insights into the interplay of cultural, social, and economic factors. It will expand the understanding of how these elements collectively shape educational perceptions and outcomes in the context of SAD. Furthermore, the study will contribute to the methodological advancement by applying PLS-SEM in the analysis of indigenous educational issues. This approach will provide robust and nuanced findings that can inform future research and policy development. The academic significance of this study lies in its potential to bridge existing gaps in the literature and offer a comprehensive framework for analyzing indigenous education (Suarta et al., 2022).

Literature Review

Cultural Practices

Cultural practices, including rituals and traditions, reflect a community's identity, beliefs, and social norms, serving as the foundation for cohesion and continuity (Causadias, 2020). These practices reinforce social bonds and transmit values across generations. For the Suku Anak Dalam (SAD) community, cultural practices deeply influence their perspectives on education, including religious education. Integrating cultural knowledge into educational programs can enhance their relevance and effectiveness, promoting acceptance and engagement (Kang & Yu, 2022).

Indicators of cultural practices include traditional rituals, belief systems, cultural identity, community cohesion, educational attitudes, and intergenerational transmission. Traditional rituals preserve cultural heritage (Kang & Yu, 2022). Belief systems guide behaviors (Winkelman, 2022). Cultural identity fosters belonging (Good et al., 2020). Community cohesion is strengthened by shared practices (Singh et al., 2020). Educational attitudes reflect cultural values (Yan & Chiou, 2021). Intergenerational transmission ensures continuity through elders' involvement (Sydora et al., 2022).

Social Support

Social support is defined as the network of relationships and resources that individuals depend on for emotional, instrumental, and informational assistance (Sun et al., 2022). This support is crucial for coping with stress and navigating daily challenges. In the context of the SAD community, social support often comes from close-knit family structures and community networks, which provide essential emotional backing, practical help, and advice. Strong social support systems enhance individuals' ability to engage with educational initiatives, including religious education. They mitigate geographical and economic barriers, fostering a supportive environment that encourages educational participation and persistence (Shensa et al., 2020).

Indicators of social support include emotional support, instrumental support, informational support, social integration, family support, and community support. Emotional support involves empathy and care (Shensa et al., 2020). Instrumental support provides tangible aid (Thomas et al., 2021). Informational support offers advice and guidance (Yang & Jiang, 2020). Social integration reflects a sense of connectedness (Park et al., 2021). Family support plays a key role in emotional and practical aspects (Wang et al., 2020). Community support enhances well-being through broader networks (Yang & Jiang, 2020).

Economic Factors

Economic factors include income levels, employment opportunities, financial resources, and overall economic stability (Hearn & Kenna, 2021). These elements are critical determinants of individuals' ability to access and participate in education. For the SAD community, economic activities are predominantly subsistence-based, and financial stability is a key factor influencing their educational engagement. Economic well-being directly impacts the capacity of families to support educational endeavors, including religious education. When economic conditions improve, communities are more likely to invest in education, viewing it as a pathway to better opportunities and improved quality of life (Bhide & Khanolkar, 2020).

Indicators of economic factors include income levels, employment opportunities, financial resources, economic stability, wealth distribution, and economic development. Income levels reflect financial earnings and living standards (Haibo et al., 2023). Employment opportunities highlight job availability and growth (Zhang et al., 2022). Financial resources involve access to assets and credit (Bhide & Khanolkar, 2020). Economic stability ensures steady growth (Staeher & Uusküla, 2021). Wealth distribution affects social equity (Destek et al., 2020). Economic development signifies overall economic improvement (Kalimeris et al., 2020).

Perceptions of Religious Education

Religious education in Indonesia serves as a crucial foundation for fostering a sense of national identity and unity amidst the country's cultural diversity. For communities like the Suku Anak Dalam (SAD), religious education goes beyond conventional teaching; it acts as a bridge connecting traditional values with the broader societal norms. This educational approach is not just about imparting religious knowledge but also about ensuring that it resonates with the community's way of life, thereby promoting social harmony and mutual respect among different cultural groups. By intertwining religious teachings with local traditions, religious education in such contexts becomes a powerful tool for cultural preservation and social integration.

Religious education is crucial in Indonesia for moral and social development. Educational perceptions are shaped by cultural, social, and economic backgrounds (Goldmann & Racine, 2021). Indicators include attitudes towards religious education, integration with cultural practices, educational engagement, perceived outcomes, and support for religious education. Attitudes reflect the perceived importance of religious teachings (Smothers et al., 2020). Integration examines alignment with cultural traditions (Flensner, 2020). Engagement refers to student participation (Oxhandler et al., 2022). Perceived outcomes highlight moral development (Karni-Vizer, 2020), and support gauges community backing (Wright, 2022).

Theoretical Interactions

Cultural practices are fundamental to understanding how communities like the Suku Anak Dalam (SAD) perceive religious education. These practices encompass rituals, traditions, and belief systems that shape their worldview and daily life (Raerino et al., 2021). In the context of SAD, cultural practices deeply rooted in animism and forest-based living significantly influence their openness to religious education. Studies suggest that when educational programs align with and respect these cultural practices, there is greater acceptance and engagement (Bishop, 2020).

Social support plays a crucial role in shaping educational outcomes by providing emotional, instrumental, and informational assistance (Johnson & Fluckiger, 2022). For the SAD community, social support often comes from close-knit family structures and community networks. These support systems can enhance the perception of religious education by providing encouragement, resources, and a sense of belonging. Research indicates that students with robust social support networks are more likely to engage positively with educational initiatives (Vaughn & Ambo, 2022). In the context of SAD, social support can help bridge the gap between traditional beliefs and formal education, facilitating a smoother integration of religious education. Thus, social support is seen as having a significant positive influence on the perception of religious education (Milne & Wotherspoon, 2020).

Economic factors, including income levels, employment opportunities, and overall economic stability, directly impact educational access and engagement (Lin et al., 2020). For SAD, whose economic activities are predominantly forest-based, financial constraints can limit their ability to participate in formal education. However, economic stability can enhance their

capacity to support educational endeavors, including religious education. Studies have shown that when economic conditions improve, communities are more likely to invest in education, viewing it as a pathway to better opportunities (Lin et al., 2020). Therefore, economic factors are believed to significantly positively influence the perception of religious education (Goldmann & Racine, 2021).

Cultural practices not only shape individual behaviors but also influence the structure and dynamics of social support networks (Ford et al., 2020). In SAD communities, cultural rituals and traditions foster strong communal ties and a sense of solidarity. Cultural bonds create a supportive environment where individuals rely on each other for emotional and practical assistance (Ingram et al., 2021). Research suggests that communities with rich cultural practices often exhibit robust social support systems. This interplay between cultural practices and social support enhances community cohesion and resilience (Moore et al., 2022).

Economic stability can enhance the quality and extent of social support within a community (Rashid et al., 2023). For SAD, stable economic conditions can lead to better resource availability, which in turn strengthens social support networks. When families are economically secure, they are better positioned to provide support to each other, whether through financial assistance, emotional backing, or access to educational resources. Studies indicate that economic prosperity often correlates with stronger social support structures, as individuals have more means to contribute to communal well-being (West et al., 2022).

Based on interactions among variables above, the researchers formulate the following hypotheses:

H1: Cultural practices positively and significantly affect SAD's perceptions of religious education.

H2: Social support positively and significantly affects SAD's perceptions of religious education.

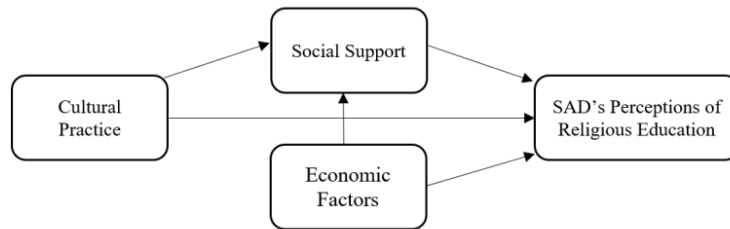
H3: Economic factors positively and significantly affect SAD's perceptions of religious education.

H4: Cultural practices positively and significantly affect social support among SAD.

H5: Economic factors positively and significantly affect social support among SAD.

Given the cross-sectional nature of our data, it is essential to justify the directionality of causality between variables. This study posits that cultural practices influence social support and economic factors, which in turn affect perceptions of religious education. This directionality is supported by theories of social capital and cultural determinism, which suggest that cultural and social structures significantly shape individual behaviors and educational outcomes. The hypotheses of this study as formulated above are drawn into a conceptual model as displayed in figure 1.

Figure 1
The Conceptual Model



Method

This study employed a quantitative research design using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) to test the hypothesized relationships. This method allowed for the simultaneous analysis of multiple dependent and independent variables, providing comprehensive insights into the relationships among cultural practices, social support, economic factors, and SAD perceptions of religious education. The directionality assumed in this model is justified by existing literature and theoretical frameworks emphasizing that cultural practices influence social support and economic factors, which in turn affect perceptions of religious education.

Population and Sample

The target population for this study included members of the Suku Anak Dalam (SAD) community who had basic literacy skills. The study focused on individuals from various regions where the SAD communities reside, specifically in Jambi, South Sumatra, and Riau provinces. A total of 356 participants were sampled to ensure sufficient statistical power for PLS-SEM analysis. The demographic characteristics of the sample are outlined in Table 1.

Table 1
Characteristics of the Sample

Demographic Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	178	50%
	Female	178	50%
Age	18-25 years	71	20%
	26-35 years	107	30%
	36-45 years	107	30%
	46-55 years	53	15%
	56+ years	18	5%
Occupation	Farmer	143	40%
	Hunter	107	30%
	Gatherer	71	20%
	Artisan/Craftsman	36	10%

Demographic Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Region	Bukit Duabelas, Jambi	142	40%
	Bathin Leko, South Sumatra	107	30%
	Rawas Ilir, South Sumatra	71	20%
	Tesso Nilo, Riau	36	10%

Data Collection Technique

A structured questionnaire was developed to measure cultural practices, social support, economic factors, and perceptions of religious education. Indicators were derived from the literature review and included in a 4-point Likert scale, translated into the local language for clarity. A pre-test with a small sample ensured the instrument's clarity and reliability, followed by a pilot study with 100 SAD community members to refine the questionnaire. Content validity was established through expert evaluations in anthropology, sociology, and education, achieving a content validity index (CVI) above 0.80 (Hair et al., 2019). Reliability was confirmed with Cronbach's alpha values above 0.70 for all constructs, indicating strong internal consistency (Hair et al., 2019).

Data Analysis Technique

Driven by PLS-SEM, data were analyzed in two phases, namely the evaluation of the measurement model and the structural model, using SmartPLS 4 software. For the measurement model evaluation, the reliability and validity of the constructs were assessed through indicators such as loading factors, Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability, and average variance extracted (AVE). According to Hair et al. (2019), loading factors should ideally be greater than 0.70, while Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability values should exceed 0.70 to be considered acceptable, and the AVE should be greater than 0.50 to confirm convergent validity. Additionally, discriminant validity was evaluated using the Fornell-Larcker criterion, which requires the square root of the AVE for each construct to be greater than its correlation with any other construct in the model, and the Heterotrait-Monotrait ratio (HTMT), where values below 0.90 indicate adequate discriminant validity.

The structural model evaluation began with the assessment of multicollinearity among the predictor variables, using the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF), where VIF values below 5 were considered acceptable (Hair et al., 2019), indicating no significant multicollinearity issues. The structural model was then evaluated by testing the hypothesized relationships using path coefficients, t-values, R², F², and Q² values. Bootstrapping with 5000 resamples was employed to assess the significance of the path coefficients, with significant path coefficients determined at p-values less than 0.05 (Hair et al., 2019). Hair et al. (2019) further explained that R² values could be categorized as weak, moderate, or substantial based on thresholds of 0.25, 0.50, and 0.75, respectively, while F² effect sizes were categorized as small (0.02), medium (0.15), or large (0.35). Q² values, which were used to assess the model's predictive relevance, were interpreted with thresholds of 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35, representing small, medium, and large predictive relevance, respectively. These guidelines collectively provided a comprehensive

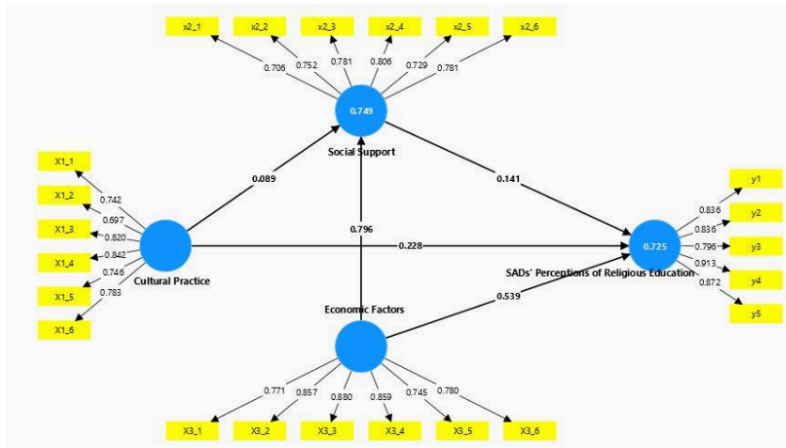
framework for analyzing the influences of cultural practices, social support, and economic factors on SAD perceptions of religious education.

Results

Measurement Model

The first step to evaluate the measurement model was to compute loading factor values whose results can be seen in Figure 2.

Figure 2
The Results of Initial Outer Loading Computation



Based on Figure 2, outer loadings showed correlations among observed variables and latent constructs. Values above 0.70 indicated satisfactory reliability (Hair et al., 2019). Indicators for cultural practices, economic factors, and social support generally had strong loadings, except X1_2 (0.697), which was eliminated. Table 2 presents the revised model's performance, demonstrating high reliability and validity.

Table 2
Model's outer Loadings, Reliability (Cronbach's Alpha {CA} and Composite Reliability {CR}), and Convergent Validity (AVE)

Variable	Item	Outer Loadings	CA	CR	AVE
Cultural Practices	I often participate in traditional rituals.	0.750	0.862	0.901	0.646
	I express my cultural identity through clothing and symbols.	0.858			

Variable	Item	Outer Loadings	CA	CR	AVE
	I regularly take part in community events and activities.	0.844			
	I believe that including cultural knowledge in education is important.	0.755			
	Cultural practices are well passed down to younger generations.	0.807			
Social Support	I can rely on my family members for emotional support.	0.706	0.854	0.891	0.577
	I have access to practical help during emergencies.	0.752			
	I can get advice and guidance from my community.	0.781			
	I feel a sense of belonging and acceptance in my community.	0.806			
	My family encourages me to pursue education.	0.729			
	There are community programs that support education and well-being.	0.780			
Economic Factors	My household income is sufficient for basic needs.	0.771	0.899	0.923	0.667
	There are stable job opportunities available to me.	0.857			
	I have access to financial resources for education.	0.880			
	My household feels economically stable.	0.859			
	Wealth is fairly distributed in my community.	0.745			
	My community participates in economic development projects.	0.779			
Suku Anak Dalam's Perceptions of Religious Education	Religious education is important in my daily life.	0.836	0.905	0.929	0.725
	Religious education fits well with my traditional beliefs.	0.836			
	I participate in religious education programs.	0.796			
	Religious education brings benefits to my personal and community development.	0.913			
	My family and community support my participation in religious education.	0.872			

Table 2 presents the outer loadings, reliability (CA and CR), and convergent validity (AVE) for the constructs measured. According to Hair et al. (2019), values above 0.70 indicate strong reliability. For cultural practices, outer loadings ranged from 0.750 to 0.858, with a CA of 0.862, CR of 0.901, and AVE of 0.646. Social support loadings ranged from 0.706 to 0.806, with a CA of 0.854, CR of 0.891, and AVE of 0.577. Economic factors loadings ranged from 0.745 to 0.880, with a CA of 0.899, CR of 0.923, and AVE of 0.667. SAD's perceptions of religious education had loadings from 0.796 to 0.913, with a CA of 0.905, CR of 0.929, and

AVE of 0.725, all indicating strong reliability and validity. The researchers continued to examine the discriminant validity whose results can be seen in Table 3.

Table 3*Discriminant Validity*

	HTMT
Economic Factors <-> Cultural Practice	0.775
SAD's perceptions of Religious Education <-> Cultural Practice	0.788
SAD's perceptions of Religious Education <-> Economic Factors	0.870
Social Support <-> Cultural Practice	0.754
Social Support <-> Economic Factors	0.868
Social Support <-> SAD's perceptions of Religious Education	0.860

Table 3 presents the discriminant validity of the constructs, assessed using the Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio. According to Hair et al. (2019), an HTMT value below 0.90 was considered acceptable, indicating that discriminant validity was established. Table 3 shows that all values of HTMT were below 0.90. Thus, all constructs exhibited robust discriminant validity, ensuring each construct measured a distinct concept.

Structural Model

The initial step to evaluate the structural model before hypothesis testing was to compute multicollinearity statistics. This computation was important to make sure that there was no any problem of collinearity within the model. The computation results can be seen in Table 4.

Table 4*Multicollinearity Test*

	Cultural Practice	Economic Factors	SAD's perceptions of Religious Education	Social Support
Cultural Practice			1.933	1.882
Economic Factors			4.380	1.882
SAD's perceptions of Religious Education				
Social Support			4.042	

Table 4 shows the multicollinearity test results, assessing potential multicollinearity among independent variables. According to Hair et al. (2019), a VIF above 5 indicates problematic multicollinearity, while a VIF below 5 is acceptable. All VIF values in Table 4 were below 5, ensuring reliable and valid regression analyses. The next step was testing the hypotheses, with results in Table 5.

Table 5
Hypothesis Testing

	O	M	STD EV	T	P	Considera tion
Cultural Practice -> SAD's perceptions of Religious Education (H1)	0.2 25	0.2 25	0.030	7.55 0	0.0 00	Accepted
Social Support -> SAD's perceptions of Religious Education (H2)	0.1 22	0.1 25	0.081	4.88 0	0.0 00	Accepted
Economic Factors -> SAD's perceptions of Religious Education (H3)	0.5 75	0.5 71	0.063	9.11 9	0.0 00	Accepted
Cultural Practice -> Social Support (H4)	0.1 13	0.1 14	0.029	3.87 0	0.0 00	Accepted
Economic Factors -> Social Support (H5)	0.7 86	0.7 86	0.025	31.1 08	0.0 00	Accepted

Table 5 presents the results of hypothesis testing, showcasing the path coefficients, their significance, and the associated p-values. According to Hair et al. (2019), a path coefficient is considered significant if the t-statistic is above 1.96 and the p-value is below 0.05. For H1, the path from cultural practice to SAD's perceptions of religious education showed a significant positive relationship ($t=7.550$; $p=0.000$). H2 indicated that social support had a significant positive effect on SAD's perceptions of religious education ($t=4.880$; $p=0.000$). H3 revealed that economic factors had a strong and significant positive influence on SAD's perceptions of religious education ($t=9.119$; $p=0.000$). H4 showed that cultural practice significantly influenced social support ($t=3.870$; $p=0.000$). Lastly, H5 demonstrated a very strong and significant positive relationship between economic factors and social support ($t=31.108$; $p=0.000$). All hypotheses were accepted. The next step was to examine the strength of coefficient of determination (R^2), effect size (f^2), and predictive relevance (q^2). The results can be seen in Tables 6, 7, and 8.

Table 6
Coefficient of Determination (R²)

Variable	R-square	R-square adjusted	Consideration
SAD's perceptions of Religious Education	0.730	0.728	Substantial explanatory power
Social Support	0.753	0.752	Substantial explanatory power

Table 7
Effect Size (F²)

Relationship	f-square	Consideration
Cultural Practice -> SAD's perceptions of Religious Education (H1)	0.097	Small effect
Social Support -> SAD's perceptions of Religious Education (H2)	0.029	Small effect
Economic Factors -> SAD's perceptions of Religious Education (H3)	0.279	Medium effect
Cultural Practice -> Social Support (H4)	0.027	Small effect
Economic Factors -> Social Support (H5)	1.328	Large effect

Table 8
Predictive Relevance (Q²)

Variable	Q ² predict	Consideration
SAD's perceptions of Religious Education	0.725	High predictive relevance
Social Support	0.751	High predictive relevance

Table 6 and 7 provide insights into the model's explanatory power and effect sizes, while Table 8 presents predictive relevance. According to Hair et al. (2019), an R² above 0.50 is substantial. The R² for SAD's perceptions of religious education was 0.730, and 0.753 for social support, indicating substantial explanatory power. The f² effect sizes were small for cultural practice (0.097) and social support (0.029) on perceptions of religious education, medium for economic factors (0.279), and large for economic factors on social support (1.328). The Q² values were 0.725 for perceptions of religious education and 0.751 for social support, indicating high predictive relevance (Hair et al., 2019).

Discussion

The hypothesis testing in this research revealed some results. The first data showcased that cultural practice positively and significantly affected SAD's perceptions of religious education (H1 is supported). The statistics demonstrated a strong and significant effect ($t=7.550$; $p=0.000$). Several studies support these findings. For instance, Suarta et al. (2022) highlighted that teachers' Indigenous knowledge and cultural competencies internalized into students' learning activities positively impact students' views on the intended object learned, similar to how cultural practices influence the perceptions of religious education in the SAD community. Washington (2021) discussed the role of Indigenous communities in fighting for cultural continuity and educational equity, reflecting the importance of cultural practices in SAD's education. Furthermore, Dietz (2021) emphasized the inclusion of religious diversity in intercultural education, resonating with the findings on SAD's cultural practices affecting their religious education. Nesterova and Jackson (2021) also found that Indigenous education in urban settings must address cultural ties and knowledge since cultural practice played a role in directing students' views. The underlying theories for these findings include the social constructivism theory, which suggests that knowledge is constructed through social and cultural interactions (Suarte et al., 2022). In the context of SAD, their cultural practices shape their perceptions of religious education through social interactions within their community. The social capital theory emphasizes the importance of social networks and relationships in shaping educational and social outcomes (Washington, 2021). SAD's cultural practices can be seen as social capital that strengthens community support and influences perceptions of religious education. The cultural determinism theory posits that culture is the primary factor determining individual behavior and thought (Dietz, 2021). In the case of SAD, their cultural practices play a crucial role in shaping their perceptions of religious education.

The second data indicated that social support positively and significantly affected SAD's perceptions of religious education (H2 is supported). The statistics revealed a significant effect, underscoring the importance of social support in shaping religious educational perceptions

($t=4.880$; $p=0.000$). Several studies support these findings. For instance, Sun et al. (2022) demonstrated that social and emotional learning programs co-created with Indigenous communities support children's identity and well-being, indicating the critical role of community and social support in educational settings. This in some way aligns with the significance of social support for SAD's perceptions of religious education. Similarly, Nesterova and Jackson (2021) discussed how Indigenous education in urban settings must address cultural and social ties, further emphasizing the importance of social support networks in educational outcomes. In addition, Dunbar (2020) noted that regular attendance at religious services enhances community engagement and social support, which can significantly affect perceptions of religious education. Crosby et al. (2021) explored the practices of supportive church children's ministries and found that structured and unstructured social interactions significantly enhance children's social support within religious communities, supporting the idea that social support within religious contexts positively influences educational perceptions. Additionally, Hashemi et al. (2020) found that social support plays a crucial role in the psychological well-being of Middle Eastern migrants in Australia, highlighting the significant impact of social connectedness and support from the community. The underlying theory for these findings includes the social support theory, which posits that social support is critical for mental and emotional well-being and can significantly impact educational outcomes (Sun et al., 2022). In the context of SAD, social support helps shape their perceptions of religious education through community and peer interactions.

The third data indicated a positive and significant influence of economic factors on SAD's perceptions of religious education. The statistics showed a significant effect, highlighting the crucial role of economic conditions in religious education perceptions ($t=9.119$; $p=0.000$). Several studies support these findings. For instance, Elizalde (2020) found that indigenous institutions and economic development are closely related, with the economic gains from ancestral land redistribution in Mexico significantly improving education outcomes. This underscores the importance of economic stability in enhancing educational perceptions. Similarly, Nesterova and Jackson (2021) highlighted that the economic challenges faced by Indigenous communities often intersect with educational barriers, further supporting the significance of economic factors in educational views. In addition, Caron et al. (2020) emphasized that improving the socio-economic status of Indigenous employees through better recruitment, integration, and retention strategies in the mining sector can lead to better perceptions of education alongside educational outcomes within these communities. However, some studies present different findings. Njoh et al. (2022) discussed the mixed implications of economic factors on the incorporation of Indigenous knowledge in environmental education, indicating that while economic factors can be beneficial, they also pose challenges. Similarly, Khadka et al. (2022) found that economic backgrounds and parental education significantly influence learning performance among Indigenous students in Nepal, but cultural factors also play a crucial role. The underlying theories for these findings include the economic determinism theory, which posits that economic conditions are the primary factors shaping social structures and individual behavior (Elizalde, 2020). This theory helps explain the strong influence of economic factors on educational engagement in the context of SAD. The social

capital theory emphasizes the role of economic resources and networks in providing opportunities and support for educational success (Caron et al., 2020).

The fourth data revealed that cultural practices positively and significantly influenced social support. The statistics demonstrated a significant effect, suggesting that cultural practices played a vital role in enhancing social support within the community ($t=3.870$; $p=0.000$). Several studies support these findings. For instance, Parter and Skinner (2020) found that integrating Indigenous cultures and knowledges into public policies significantly enhances community support and cohesion. Their study emphasizes that cultural practices are central to Indigenous health plans, enhancing social support systems. Similarly, Wendt et al. (2022) discussed how culturally adapted interventions in psychotherapy for Indigenous peoples in the United States and Canada improve social support and mental health outcomes by prioritizing cultural traditions. Additionally, Bayrak et al. (2020) demonstrated that cultural practices and local perceptions significantly shape Indigenous communities' responses to climate-related disasters, which enhances their social support networks. However, some studies present different findings. Lin et al. (2023) found that while cultural practices are vital, access to culturally relevant healthcare services is also crucial. In their study of Indigenous women in Thunder Bay, Ontario, cultural practices alone are insufficient without accessible healthcare services. Adlam et al. (2021) highlighted that the revitalization of cultural burning practices among Native American tribes supports community well-being, but the support systems needed to sustain these practices are often misunderstood by non-Native individuals, indicating a gap in cross-cultural understanding. The underlying theory for these findings includes the social capital theory, which posits that social networks and cultural practices significantly contribute to community support systems (Parter & Skinner, 2020). In the context of Indigenous communities, cultural practices enhance social cohesion and support networks.

The fifth data set revealed a strong, positive, and significant influence of economic factors on social support ($t=31.108$; $p=0.000$). Studies support this, showing that economic freedom, ICT usage, and development programs enhance social support in indigenous communities (Hasan et al., 2021; Simons & Steele, 2020). Indigenous traditions and economic activities also foster social entrepreneurship and support (Widjojo & Gunawan, 2019). However, economic factors alone are not always sufficient, as indigenous forest management practices also impact social support (Chukwuone et al., 2020). Cultural resilience theory suggests that economic stability bolsters cultural and social structures (Salim et al., 2023).

The findings have key implications for education policies within the SAD community. The significant influence of cultural practices on social support highlights the need to preserve cultural heritage to strengthen social networks, enhancing educational participation. The strong relationship between economic factors and social support underscores the need for economic programs to improve well-being and educational engagement. The novelty of this study lies in using a structural model to explore the relationships among cultural practices, social support, and economic factors in the SAD community, providing deep insights and practical guidance for policymakers to improve education and social well-being.

Conclusion

This study explores and confirms influential relationships among cultural practices, social support, and economic factors within the SAD community and their perceptions of religious education. The findings provide strong evidence of these relationships. For H1, the path from cultural practice to SAD's perceptions of religious education is significant ($t=7.550$; $p=0.000$). H2 indicates that social support has a significant positive effect ($t=4.880$; $p=0.000$). H3 reveals that economic factors have a strong and significant positive influence ($t=9.119$; $p=0.000$). H4 shows that cultural practice significantly influences social support ($t=3.870$; $p=0.000$). H5 demonstrates a strong positive relationship between economic factors and social support ($t=31.108$; $p=0.000$). This study contributes to understanding how cultural, social, and economic factors influence educational perceptions within the SAD community. It highlights that integrating traditional practices into educational programs enhances relevance and strengthens social support, which is vital for engagement. Additionally, economic stability directly impacts the community's capacity to invest in education. These findings offer actionable recommendations for policymakers and educators to improve educational outcomes in indigenous communities.

Despite the valuable insights provided by this study, there are several limitations that should be acknowledged. The cross-sectional design limits the ability to infer causality definitively. Future research should employ longitudinal designs to validate these findings over time. Additionally, the study focuses solely on the SAD community, and the results may not be generalizable to other indigenous groups. Further research should explore similar dynamics in diverse cultural settings. Lastly, the reliance on self-reported data may introduce response biases, and triangulating these findings with qualitative data could enhance the robustness of the conclusions.

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