

# Integrating religious values into sports activities to improve physical fitness and mental health among university students

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**Abstract.** The present study aims to describe the integration of religious values in sports activities and their impact on the physical fitness and mental health of students. The research was conducted at the Faculty of Sports Science and Health, University of Makassar, using a mixed methods sequential explanatory design, where quantitative analysis was conducted first and then reinforced with qualitative data. The sample comprised 32 students who were selected using purposive sampling based on their involvement in sports activities. Quantitative instruments included a religious value integration questionnaire, a physical fitness questionnaire (self-perception), and a mental health questionnaire. The qualitative instruments employed included interview guidelines for students and lecturers/coaches, observation sheets for sports activities, and documentation. The findings of the quantitative analysis demonstrated that the integration of religious values was in the highest category. The physical fitness of students is in the high to very high category. With respect to mental health, 16 students (50%) are in the very high category, 11 students (34.37%) are in the high category, and 5 students (15.63%) are in the moderate category. The qualitative stage of analysis is undertaken with a view to offering a more in-depth exploration of the quantitative findings, with students and lecturers placing particular emphasis on the assertion that sports should be regarded as a means of internalising religious, moral and spiritual values, rather than merely physical activities. The following practical examples are provided for consideration: group prayers prior to and following training, sportsmanship, cooperation, emotional control, and the application of dress code ethics in accordance with religious teachings. Nevertheless, deficiencies were identified in time management and spiritual reflection following training. The present study concludes that the integration of religious values in sports has a positive effect on students' physical fitness and mental health. The challenges experienced by coaches are frequently attributable to external factors, including competitive pressures, technical constraints related to clothing, and variations in coaches' understanding.

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## 1 Introduction

It is evident that physical fitness and mental health represent two significant components of student life, which are interconnected and exert an influence on one another. Students, as the next generation of the nation, are required to have excellent physical condition and a healthy mentality in order to follow the learning process optimally and face the challenges of life in a balanced manner. As Sukartidana [2] have demonstrated, physical fitness is an important aspect in supporting productivity and quality of life, especially among university students who are in a critical phase of intellectual and physical development. Amidst mounting pressures in academia, society, and campus life, a considerable number of students encounter stress, fatigue, and anxiety disorders. In this context, sports activities have long been recognised as an effective means to maintain physical fitness while improving mental health, especially when combined with mindfulness practices and psychological resilience, as found by Sheng who explained that exercise increases students' mindfulness and resilience [2].

However, it should be noted that the domain of sports activities extends beyond mere physical aspects. Furthermore, sport has been identified as a medium with considerable potential for character building, the inculcation of moral values, and spiritual development when integrated with religious values [3]. This approach provides a more holistic dimension, because it not only strengthens the body, but also fosters the soul, morals, and personality of students as a whole. The values of honesty, discipline, cooperation, sportsmanship, patience, and self-control, which are embedded within religious teachings, exhibit a strong alignment with the principles of sport. Consequently, these values can serve as a foundational element in the development of individuals who possess both physical and mental well-being, in addition to spiritual maturity. The integration of religious values in sports has also been shown to prepare students for social and professional life outside of the campus environment. Consequently, the integration of sport with character education grounded in faith-based principles emerges as a compelling strategy to nurture a young generation that exhibits not only physical excellence, but also mental, emotional, and spiritual maturity. This approach enables the application of moral principles in everyday life.

This approach aligns with the concept of holistic education in Islamic education, which emphasises integrated physical, mental, and spiritual development. It also corroborates the assertion that character education is inseparable from meaningful physical education. The integration of sporting activities and religious values is rooted in Islamic teachings. The Qur'an instructs its followers to maintain physical health in order to perform worship perfectly. In QS. In the 195th verse of the Al-Baqarah chapter, the Almighty states:

وَلَا تُقْفُوا بِأَيْدِيكُمْ إِلَى التَّهْلُكَةِ

The aforementioned phrase can be translated as follows: 'And do not bring yourselves down to destruction...'

The aforementioned verse implicitly underscores the significance of safeguarding personal well-being, encompassing physical health. This finding aligns with the established principles of QS. In the thirty-first verse of the chapter entitled "Al-A'raf", the following is stated:

وَكُلُوا وَاشْرَبُوا وَلَا تُسْرِفُوا ۚ إِنَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُسْرِفِينَ

The term signifies the following: "It is imperative to consume nourishment and beverages in moderation. It is evident that Allah disapproves of those who are excessive in their actions and behaviours".

This verse underscores the significance of maintaining equilibrium in the fulfilment of one's physical needs, encompassing the practice of proportionate physical activity. Moreover, the hadith of the Prophet ﷺ places significant emphasis on the importance of physical strength.

«قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ: «المؤمن القوي خير وأحب إلى الله من المؤمن الضعيف، وفي كل خير»

The term signifies That a devout adherent is regarded more favourably in the eyes of Allah than a less committed one, with the underlying principle being that both types of individuals possess inherent value. (HR Muslim)

This hadith corroborates the notion that the maintenance of physical strength is an integral component of piety and is strongly advocated, thereby enabling the believer to engage in worship, contribute to society, and lead a life of optimal fulfilment. This fundamental principle underscores the notion that exercise is not merely a biological necessity, but rather, it possesses a spiritual dimension, wherein it is regarded as a form of worship that fosters a profound connection with the divine. This perspective is further elaborated upon in the Islamic belief that the body is a trust bestowed upon us by Allah, and the act of exercise serves as a means to uphold this sacred trust.

Moreover, within a psychological framework, the integration of exercise with religious values has been demonstrated to yield a more pronounced therapeutic effect in comparison to physical exercise alone. Research in the domain of positive psychology has demonstrated that physical activity undertaken with spiritual awareness has the capacity to increase endorphins, thereby engendering a more profound sense of meaning for the individual. It is suggested that students who engage in physical activity while internalising religious teachings may exhibit heightened self-regulation, thereby facilitating stress management and sustaining academic concentration. This approach aligns with the overarching concept of holistic education, a pedagogical model that has been extensively implemented in developed countries. This model emphasises the integration of physical, mental, and moral development in a cohesive and comprehensive manner.

The phenomenon in the field also shows that students in public universities, especially those with diverse religious backgrounds, often do not get adequate space to integrate spiritual values in daily activities, including sports. At Makassar State University, particularly within the Faculty of Sport Sciences, sporting activities have become an integral component of students' academic and non-academic pursuits. Given

the considerable number of students who participate in sports at both the faculty and university levels, the implementation of a religious value-based coaching model is a highly relevant prospect. This pedagogical approach has the potential to influence students who demonstrate not only physical superiority, but also mental fortitude and spiritual depth.

However, the integration of sports within the educational framework remains a challenge, often overshadowed by the pursuit of spiritual values [4]. Physical activity is engaged in solely for the purpose of fulfilling physical needs or for the sake of entertainment, without the concomitant reinforcement of the religious values that are typically associated with it. This represents a significant gap that necessitates resolution through an integrative approach that incorporates religious elements into sports activities. This integration should encompass the internalization of values, the habituation of attitudes, and the cultivation of awareness regarding the significance of worship in movement activities. It is therefore vital to emphasise the significance of this research, as it aims to propose a more comprehensive and transformative educational methodology that not only cultivates physical well-being but also nurtures mental and spiritual health in students. Furthermore, it is anticipated that the findings of this research will contribute to the development of student development programmes that place a premium on achieving equilibrium between the physical, mental and spiritual dimensions.

Preliminary observations conducted by researchers at the Faculty of Sport and Health Sciences, Makassar State University, have revealed that student sports activities are typically conducted on a regular basis. These activities are facilitated through practical lectures, extracurricular pursuits, and independent training. Nevertheless, the direct relationship between sports activities and the fostering of religious values has not yet been fully implemented in a structured manner. For instance, within certain sporting activities, elements of sportsmanship, discipline, and cooperation are evident. However, religious dimensions such as religious intentions, emotional control based on religious teachings, and spiritual reflection following training have not been consistently incorporated. Furthermore, some students have indicated that they seldom encounter explicit emphasis or reinforcement of religious values from lecturers or coaches during sporting activities. Consequently, these values are primarily developed implicitly or through personal initiative. This phenomenon suggests that there is considerable potential to develop a religious values-based sports coaching model that can maximise the positive impact on physical fitness, as well as on students' mental health and character building.

Meanwhile, the results of in-depth interviews with one of the Physical Education lecturers at the Faculty of Sport and Health Sciences, Makassar State University, indicate that students generally exhibit a high level of enthusiasm for sports activities, both within the context of practical courses and extracurricular pursuits. However, the lecturer revealed that the integration of religious values in sports learning is still unstructured and has not become the focus of the curriculum. The lecturer also emphasised that the delivery of religious values usually only occurs spontaneously or incidentally, for example in the form of brief advice before or after training, without a specific learning plan that links sports material with religious teachings. Furthermore, it is asserted that certain

students regard religious values as being of negligible significance in the pursuit of physical fitness, thus resulting in an inadequate application of these principles.

A plethora of preceding studies have demonstrated that religious activities and physical exercise, when engaged in isolation, can exert a favourable impact on mental well-being [5]. For instance, the interplay between familial relationships and religiosity has been demonstrated to enhance the mental well-being of university students during periods of pandemic-related restrictions. However, extant studies continue to conceptualise exercise and religiosity as two discrete variables, overlooking the potential synergistic impact of integrating them within a structured programme. Research conducted by Handayani and Fithroni examined the relationship between physical activity, stress levels, and mental well-being of university students [6]. However, the integration of religious values in sport as a variable that contributes to psychological and physical outcomes was not examined. A study undertaken by Pratama et al. involved a comprehensive review of the extant literature on the integration of Islamic values in sports [7]. This study proposed a methodology for the enhancement of the character and morals of athletes through the integration of Islamic values in physical education, sports, and health (PJOK). It is regrettable that the present study is conceptual in nature, with a paucity of empirical testing in the field, particularly within the context of universities.

Consequently, it can be deduced that there is a paucity of research examining the integration of religious values in sports activities, particularly in a public university environment characterised by diverse student backgrounds, with a view to simultaneously enhancing physical fitness and mental health. The present study aims to address this research gap by conducting an empirical examination of a sports model integrated with religious values within the context of a public university campus.

The significance of this research lies in its contribution to an educational paradigm that is more comprehensive and transformative in nature. This paradigm aims to nurture not only physical well-being but also mental and spiritual health in students. Furthermore, it is anticipated that the findings of this research will contribute to the development of student coaching programmes that place a premium on achieving equilibrium between the physical, mental and spiritual dimensions.

## **2 Method**

The present research employs a Mixed Methods approach with a Sequential Explanatory model design. The model was conducted in two stages. Firstly, a quantitative stage was undertaken, during which the level of physical fitness, mental health and the level of internalisation of religious values of students was measured through the administration of questionnaires. Secondly, a qualitative stage was conducted, during which the quantitative results were explored through the use of interviews, observations and documentation, in order to gain a more contextual understanding of how religious values are integrated in sports activities and the challenges encountered in the process. The rationale behind this methodological decision was to ensure that the research yielded not only in-depth understanding (qualitative), but also quantifiable empirical evidence (quantitative) concerning the relationship between the integration of religious values,

physical fitness, and mental health in university students. Qualitative research allows researchers to describe phenomena in detail based on the experiences, perceptions, and views of research subjects without manipulating variables.

The research was conducted at the Faculty of Sport and Health Sciences, Makassar State University. The selection of this location was based on the characteristics of the faculty, which has various active academic and non-academic sports programmes, as well as a religiously diverse student population. This condition provides a valuable opportunity to examine the potential integration of religious values in sports coaching. The research was conducted in July 2025, encompassing the phases of preparation, data collection, analysis, and reporting of results.

The population of this study comprised active students of the Faculty of Sport and Health Sciences at Makassar State University. The quantitative sample in this study consisted of 32 students who fulfilled the inclusion criteria: (a) Demonstrated active engagement in structured sporting activities for a minimum of one semester; (b) Exhibited a willingness to participate in the role of respondents. The qualitative participants ( $n = 15$ ) were selected by means of purposive sampling from a total of 32 quantitative respondents and 5 lecturers. The selection was based on maximum variation sampling in order to enrich perspectives. This number was considered adequate to achieve data saturation, a condition when the information obtained is repetitive and does not add new findings.

The data was collected using four primary techniques the administration of questionnaires, participatory observation, in which the researcher is directly involved in observing sports activities that contain religious values, such as reading prayers before training, the application of sportsmanship, mutual respect, and emotional control in matches. The observation process is conducted in accordance with a structured guide sheet that encompasses the aforementioned aspects. Thirdly, in-depth interviews are to be conducted. These are defined as interviews conducted in person with students and lecturers/coaches using semi-structured interview guidelines. Thematic analysis of the responses indicated an overarching focus on the application of religious values in sports activities and their impact on physical fitness and mental health. The fourth point pertains to the documentation process, which encompasses the collection of pertinent supporting documents. Such documentation may include photographic evidence of activities undertaken, detailed training schedules, modules pertaining to coaching, reflective notes, and relevant learning materials. The indicators are delineated in the questionnaire instrument sheet on the Integration of Religious Values in Sports Activities, as illustrated in Table 1 below.

**Table 1.** Integration of Religion in Sports Activities

No	Aspects / Indicators	Item Number
1	Spirituality and Worship	1,2,5,6,13
2	Moral Values and Sportsmanship	3,8,12
3	Internalisation of Religious Values in Sports	4,7,15
4	Self-Control and Discipline	9,10
5	Reflection and Character Building	11, 14

Furthermore, the indicators in 2) the Physical Fitness Questionnaire (Self-Perception) can be seen in Table 2 below.

**Table 2.** Indicators of the Physical Fitness Questionnaire

No	Aspects / Indicators	Item Number
1	Endurance	1,2,5,10,12
2	Exercise Habits & Activities	3,11
3	General Physical Condition / Fitness	4,7,15
4	Strength & Flexibility	6,8
5	Body Response & Vitality	9,13,14

The next indicator is the Student Mental Health Questionnaire indicator, which can be seen in Table 3 below.

**Table 3.** Mental Health Questionnaire

No	Aspects / Indicators	Item Number
1	Calmness & Emotional Well-being	1,3,4,10,15
2	Ability to Cope with Stress & Emotions	2,7,8
3	Self-confidence & Social Relationships	5,12,13
4	Physical Quality & Healthy Habits	6,9,11
5	Meaning & Purpose in Life	14

Furthermore, the indicators for the observation sheet can be seen in Table 4 below.

**Table 4.** Observation Indicators for the Application of Religious Values in Sports

No	Aspects Observed	Behaviour Indicators
1	Spirituality	Begin and end activities with a prayer according to one's beliefs.
2	Sportsmanship	Accept victory and defeat gracefully.
3	Emotional Control	Refrain from using abusive language or engaging in violent behaviour during matches.
4	Mutual Respect	Respect opponents, coaches, referees, and fellow participants.
5	Discipline	Obeys the rules of the game and the coach's instructions.
6	Social Awareness	Assist teammates who are experiencing difficulties or injuries.
7	Simplicity and Humility	Refrain from boasting after winning.

The interview guidelines with main themes such as understanding religious values in sports, forms of integration carried out, and perceptions of their impact are presented in Table 5 below.

**Table 5.** Main Themes and Question Indicators

No	Main Theme	Indicators
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1	Understanding religious values in sports	Knowledge of religious teachings relevant to sports
2	Forms of religious value integration	Explain ways to incorporate religious teachings into training/competition
3	Behaviour during sports	Able to exemplify behaviour in accordance with religious values when participating in sports
4	Impact of religious value application	Explain the impact on physical, mental, and social relationships
5	Challenges and obstacles	Identify difficulties in integrating religious values
6	Expectations and suggestions	Provide input for improving the application of religious values

The data analysis undertaken in this study encompasses quantitative data analysis, which was conducted through the implementation of descriptive statistics on all 32 respondents. The present study employs descriptive analysis, as its objective is to provide a description of the data trend without the implementation of inferential testing. The descriptive statistics employed encompass frequency, percentage, mean, median, range, and standard deviation for each research variable. The variables analysed included the integration of religious values in sports activities, physical fitness (based on student self-perception), and student mental health. The three variables were measured through a questionnaire instrument with a five-option Likert scale. In order to facilitate interpretation, the scores of each variable were categorised into five levels, namely very high, high, medium, low, and very low.

The analysis of the qualitative data was conducted in accordance with the model proposed by Palazzolo [8] which encompasses data reduction, data presentation, conclusion drawing, and verification. The analysis process was initiated with deductive coding based on the indicators of values that had been set out in the research instrument. Moreover, this coding was supplemented by new themes that emerged inductively from the field, including forms of integration of religious values in sports, mechanisms of impact on students' physical fitness and mental health, supporting contexts and obstacles faced, as well as implementation recommendations for future development. Consequently, the qualitative analysis not only validated the pre-established indicators, but also yielded novel contextual insights.

The integration of quantitative and qualitative data was executed through a sequential explanatory approach, wherein the findings of quantitative descriptive analysis were utilised to ascertain the focus of deepening and the selection of participants in the qualitative stage. The data obtained is then presented in the form of a joint display, namely the percentage of categories of questionnaire results with interview quotes or observation results that explain why the pattern appears. Through this integration, researchers are able to produce meta-inference, which is a narrative synthesis that combines 'what is the picture of the data' (quantitative descriptive results) with 'how and

why it happened' (qualitative findings), especially related to the integration of religious values in sports and its impact on physical fitness and mental health of students.

In order to maintain data quality, a number of validity strategies were employed. In the quantitative stage, the content validity of the instrument was guaranteed through expert judgement. In the qualitative stage, the validity of the data was maintained through 1) source triangulation, which involved the comparison of information from students and lecturers/coaches. Secondly, triangulation of methods is achieved by comparing the results of observations, interviews, and documentation. The third step in the process is the member check. This is a procedure that is used to reconfirm the results of data interpretation. The purpose of this step is to ensure that the results are accurate. Fourthly, the term 'prolonged engagement' is defined as follows: it is the act of remaining in the field for a sufficient period of time to gain a comprehensive understanding of the context. In the fifth instance, the process of peer debriefing involves the discussion of the research process and results with colleagues, with the objective being the testing of the consistency of the findings.

### 3 Results and Discussion

#### 3.1 Descriptive Quantitative Data Analysis

Based on the results of questionnaire processing of 32 students, the following description is obtained.

##### 3.1.1 *Integration of Religious Values in Sports.*

The majority of students demonstrated a remarkably elevated degree of integration of religious values. The results of the study indicated that a total of 27 respondents (84.37%) were in the very high category, while 5 respondents (15.63%) were in the high category. It is evident that no students are currently classified within the medium, low, or very low categories. This finding suggests that a significant proportion of students have integrated religious values, including prayer, honesty, sportsmanship, and self-control, into their sporting activities. The ensuing data has been collated from the questionnaire on the categorisation of religious values in sports, as presented in Table 6 below.

**Table 6.** Percentage of Integration of Religious Values in Sports

Competency Score Interval	Criteria	Frequency	Percentage
$60 < X \leq 75$	Very High	27	84,37 %
$50 < X \leq 60$	High	5	15,63 %
$40 < X \leq 50$	Moderate		
$30 < X \leq 40$	Low		
$15 \leq X \leq 30$	Very Low		

### 3.1.2 Physical Fitness (Self-perception)

The results of the study indicated that 16 students (50%) were in the very high category in terms of physical fitness, 14 students (43.75%) were in the high category, and only 2 students (6.25%) were in the medium category. No students were identified as being in the low or very low categories. The findings of this study indicate that the majority of students feel that they have good physical condition, stable endurance, and that they have maintained sports activities. The ensuing data represents the outcomes of the categorisation of the religious values in sports questionnaire, as presented in Table 7 below.

**Table 7.** Percentage of Physical Fitness

Competency Score Interval	Criteria	Frequency	Percentage
$60 < X \leq 75$	Very High	16	50 %
$50 < X \leq 60$	High	14	43,75 %
$40 < X \leq 50$	Moderate	2	6,25 %
$30 < X \leq 40$	Low		
$15 \leq X \leq 30$	Very Low		

### 3.1.3 Mental Health

The results of the study indicated that 16 students (50%) were in the very high category, 11 students (34.37%) were in the high category, and 5 students (15.63%) were in the medium category. No students were identified as being in the low or very low categories. This finding suggests that the majority of students experience positive mental health, characterised by emotional calmness, effective stress management, and healthy social relationships. The ensuing data has been obtained from the categorisation of the religious values in sport questionnaire, as presented in table 8 below. The ensuing data has been obtained from the categorisation of the religious values in sports questionnaire, as presented in table 8 below.

**Table 8.** Percentage of Integration of Religious Values in Sports

Competency Score Interval	Criteria	Frequency	Percentage
$60 < X \leq 75$	Very High	16	50 %
$50 < X \leq 60$	High	11	34,37 %
$40 < X \leq 50$	Moderate	5	15,63 %
$30 < X \leq 40$	Low		
$15 \leq X \leq 30$	Very Low		

In general, the quantitative results show that students have an excellent level of religious value integration, which is aligned with high physical fitness and mental health.

## 3.2 Qualitative Data Analysis

### 3.2.1 Observation Results

The findings of the observations indicate that the implementation of religious values in the context of sports is to be considered favourable. The majority of students demonstrate an aptitude for the application of sportsmanship, cooperation, and emotional control. Nevertheless, spiritual reflection and time management remain areas for improvement that necessitate further development. The integration of religious values through routine activities such as prayer has been in place for some time. However, in order to ensure that the spiritual message is more firmly embedded, it is recommended that a short reflection session be incorporated after sporting activities. Meanwhile, the following findings were obtained from the observation sheet, which contains indicators of the application of religious values in sports:

1. The majority of subjects performed prayers both before and after exercise, either under the guidance of the coach or in a more private capacity.
2. *Adab* in interaction, that is to say respect for opponents, maintenance of good manners and the restraint from the use of harsh words, appears to be of considerable strength, especially during internal campus matches.
3. The capacity to exercise time discipline is evident in on-time attendance, though some students continue to arrive late for the morning training session.
4. In some sporting disciplines, such as karate and women's futsal, the requirement for Sharia-compliant attire is strictly enforced. However, in disciplines like swimming, the implementation of this requirement necessitates specific adjustments.
5. Maintenance of sportsmanship is generally observed, yet in competitive scenarios, there is often an elevation in emotional intensity and a pronounced inclination towards victory.

### 3.2.2 Interview Results

Based on the results of interviews with 15 students, the following important findings were revealed.

#### **Involvement in Sports**

The level of student involvement exhibited a certain degree of variability, encompassing active participation in campus teams (for example, football, karate and petanque), engagement in competitive events, and independent sporting activities such as jogging and cycling. It is acknowledged that a proportion of students experience a decline in physical activity levels, attributable in some cases to academic commitments. However, this decline is not necessarily accompanied by a corresponding decrease in overall fitness, with some students reporting that they are able to maintain their physical fitness through personal exercise activities. The following are some excerpts from interviews with students.

*'I am very active in sports activities, especially since it is one of my obligations as a sports student' (Interview M9)*

*'I regularly attend karate classes and practice together with other karate friends' (Interview M8)*

### **Experience of Religious Values in Sports**

The impact of religious practice on the sporting ethos of students is multifaceted, encompassing the observance of prayers before and after competitive events, the cessation of activities during designated periods of prayer, the cultivation of a genuine disposition towards accepting defeat, and the promotion of sportsmanship and teamwork. It is frequently asserted that values such as honesty, patience and tolerance are of significant importance within the context of sporting activities. The following quotation is taken from an interview with a student.

*"Yes, I have experienced religious values in sports activities. One example is when I participated in an inter-faculty volleyball match. Before the match starts, we are accustomed to praying together, both within the team and with the opponent. This fosters a sense of togetherness and mutual respect, which are important values in religion" (Interview M2)*

### **Physical and Mental Impact**

Regular exercise has been demonstrated to engender feelings of fitness, reduce fatigue, enhance sleep quality, and diminish stress levels in students. The subjects have demonstrated an enhancement in mental confidence, an improvement in concentration levels, and a more stable mood. It has been asserted by numerous individuals that physical activity serves as a means of nourishing the soul and mind. The following are some excerpts from interviews conducted with students.

*"I feel more refreshed and ready to do my daily activities. Even the headaches or aches that I used to experience are much reduced. Meanwhile, mentally, exercise helps me manage stress better. My mind feels clearer and my mood is more stable. Every time I exercise, I feel more energised and confident". (Interview M12)*

*'I feel very good because exercising can increase my confidence and I can concentrate well'. (Interview M3)*

### **Spiritual Benefits**

Sport is regarded as a conduit for enhancing gratitude towards a higher power, cultivating patience, and fortifying interpersonal bonds. It has been posited that sports can be considered a form of worship by some students, on the grounds that maintaining health is a religious commandment. The following quotation is derived from interviews conducted with students.

*"Yes, values such as honesty, patience, and co-operation are very much felt in sporting activities, even being an important part of every match*

*or practice. Honesty, for example, is seen when players admit their own mistakes. Patience is needed especially when facing opponents who play hard. Meanwhile, co-operation is key, especially in team sports such as futsal, basketball or volleyball". (Interview M7).*

Meanwhile, based on interviews with five lecturers/coaches provided complementary views as follows.

### **Forms of Religious Value Integration**

It is imperative to note that lecturers place significant emphasis on the pivotal role of prayer in both the preparatory and post-training phases. Moreover, they underscore the necessity of adhering to sportsmanship principles, the cultivation of integrity, the pursuit of discipline, the demonstration of perseverance, and the enhancement of spiritual well-being. In addition, some coaches place significant emphasis on the ethical dimensions of dressing in accordance with religious teachings, as well as martial arts traditions such as karate, which emphasise personality, politeness, and self-control. The following are some excerpts from interviews with lecturers.

*"Yes, in sports activities, we must instil religious values, such as praying before and after training, applying manners such as respecting opponents sportsmanship, honesty, discipline, hard work, and increasing faith and devotion, sincerity, not being arrogant, and always being grateful for the blessings of health" (Interview D1)*

*"Wear clothes that cover the aurat". (Interview D2)"*

### **Implementation Challenges**

The primary challenges are the desire to prevail, which occasionally gives rise to dishonesty or haughtiness, the pressure of competition, and the paucity of coaches who comprehend the significance of integrating moral values. Furthermore, there are obstacles related to sportswear that is in accordance with Sharia but still functional. The following excerpts are drawn from the interviews conducted with lecturers.

*"The challenge lies in balancing the competitive aspect of sports with religious values that emphasise sportsmanship and fair play. There are challenges such as: the tendency to win which can lead to cheating, achievements that can give birth to pride, challenges from the environment such as pressure from friends, coaches, and leaders that can affect the results of a practice or match". (Interview D3)*

*"The challenge is when dressing according to religious law in terms of sports such as swimming or using clothes that reduce the burden on the body". (Interview D4).*

### Impact on Students

It is evident that lecturers recognise positive physical and mental changes in students who exercise with a religious approach. The subjects have been found to demonstrate enhanced physical health, emotional stability, increased confidence, and a stronger spiritual motivation. Furthermore, religious athletes are also considered to exhibit superior consistency in their achievements. The following is an excerpt from the interview with the lecturer.

*‘There are positive changes that are obtained when we regularly exercise, namely from a physical point of view: there is an improvement in health, from a mental point of view: increased peace of mind, avoidance of stress, improvement of psychological well-being, with a religious approach: can form spiritual motivation, provide inner peace with the intention of exercising as worship’.*  
(Interview D5)

#### 3.2.3 Integration of Findings (Mixing)

Quantitative descriptive results demonstrate the predominance of the very high and high categories in the integration of religious values, physical fitness, and mental health of students. This finding was reinforced by qualitative data, both interviews and observations, which both confirmed that sport is not only a physical activity, but also a means of instilling religious, moral, and spiritual values.

It can be concluded from the findings of the joint display that students who have been identified as having high religious value integration categories generally also report good physical fitness and mental health. The underlying reasons for this phenomenon were elucidated through in-depth interviews. The findings indicated that religious values promote discipline, sportsmanship, self-control, and gratitude. These values, it was concluded, have a direct impact on both physical and mental health.

Observations confirmed that the majority of students had indeed applied religious values in sports activities, such as praying together before and after training, maintaining interaction manners, and displaying sportsmanship. However, observations also revealed some aspects that still require development, such as spiritual reflection after training that has not been consistent, time discipline that is sometimes weak, especially in morning training sessions, and the tendency for emotions to increase in competitive situations. Furthermore, disparities between sports were also observed. For instance, the requirement for Sharia-compliant attire is more stringent in karate and women's futsal than in swimming.

Consequently, it can be deduced that the impediments encountered are predominantly attributable to external factors (e.g., competition pressure, coaches' limited understanding, technical constraints on clothing, and absence of reflection sessions), rather than a deliberate repudiation of religious values by the students. This finding suggests that the incorporation of religious values in sports has been effective in enhancing students' physical fitness and mental well-being. However, it is evident that

further measures are required to strengthen aspects related to discipline, spiritual reflection, and the management of competition.

### 3.3 Discussion

The findings of this study suggest that the integration of religious values in sports activities is in the high to very high category. This finding is in line with the results of interviews and observations, which demonstrated concrete practices such as prayer before and after training, the application of sportsmanship, cooperation, and emotional control. With regard to physical fitness, the majority of students were in the high and very high categories. A review of extant literature revealed that regular participation in sporting activities, including but not limited to jogging, martial arts training, and team sports, has been demonstrated to contribute to the maintenance of physical condition, endurance, and vitality. With regard to the question of mental health, the results indicated that the majority of students demonstrated a satisfactory level of mental well-being. A series of interviews were conducted, the results of which indicated that participation in physical exercise has a beneficial effect on stress levels, confidence, the ability to concentrate, and emotional stability. The findings of this study are corroborated by the results of observational studies, although it should be noted that in certain competitive situations, an increase in the emotional state of the students is to be expected. This finding suggests that sport is regarded by students of the Faculty of Sport and Health Sciences not only as a physical activity, but also as a means of spiritual, moral and social development. Sport is perceived by students as a means of maintaining the trust bestowed by God, promoting physical and spiritual well-being, and as a form of worship when performed with the appropriate intention. The influence of religious values on student behaviour during sporting activities, including sportsmanship, teamwork, and emotional control, has been demonstrated in research [9].

This finding is consistent with the perspectives of Kosiewicz, who argue that spirituality in sports can provide a robust moral and ethical foundation, such as the principle of fair play [10]. This assertion is further substantiated by the insights of lecturers and coaches, who underscore the significance of prayer, etiquette, honesty, discipline, and gratitude. In summary, a robust comprehension of the principles underpinning the integration of religious values into sporting activities is paramount. The relevant verse from the Qur'an is QS. In the 195th verse of the Al-Baqarah chapter, the following is stated:

وَلَا تُفُوتُوا بِأَيْدِيكُمْ إِلَى التَّهْلُكَةِ

*Meaning: "And do not throw yourselves into destruction, and do good, for indeed, Allah loves those who do good."*

This verse implicitly affirms that maintaining the body and health is a form of goodness that aligns with proper sports activities. From an educational and physical activity perspective, the verse conveys the message that every individual is responsible for the body given by Allah and should not allow themselves to engage in behaviour that

could endanger their health. This includes, but is not limited to, unhealthy lifestyles, excessive fatigue, or neglecting safety during exercise. This principle of maintaining the body is consistent with the concept of health management in sports. It is evident that by engaging in regular physical activity, adhering to a nutritionally balanced diet, ensuring sufficient rest, and circumventing potential injury hazards, an individual can honour the trust bestowed upon them by Allah concerning their physical form. A healthy body is conducive to optimal performance in worship, productive work, and active participation in social life. Moreover, the verse can be interpreted as a metaphor for mental and spiritual development. It is evident that neglecting one's physical health can have a detrimental effect on both the individual's physical well-being and their cognitive abilities. Indeed, there is a direct correlation between physical health and concentration levels, as well as inner peace and spiritual motivation. Consequently, safeguarding the body from harm or destruction constitutes a component of a Muslim's moral and spiritual responsibility, thereby ensuring that every physical and spiritual capacity is utilised for the benefit of others and spiritual devotion.

The integration of religious values is carried out through several complementary concrete practices. Firstly, prayers prior to and following training or competitions, both collectively and individually, function as spiritual reminders and prepare participants mentally, in accordance with the principles of self-control and sincerity in worship. The findings of this study are consistent with the results of research by Dinasti et al. [11], which explains that the strategy for instilling Islamic character in physical education is carried out through the habit of prayer, discipline, politeness, and responsibility so that students are physically healthy and have Islamic character and mutual respect. Secondly, behaviours related to etiquette and sportsmanship, such as respecting opponents, being honest, humble, and fostering teamwork, are fundamentally emphasised in the Qur'an, Surah An-Nahl: 90.

قُلْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُكُمْ أَنْ تَعْمَلُوا الْبِرَّ وَالْعَدْلَ

Meaning: "Indeed, Allah commands you to be just and to do good deeds..."

This verse underscores the significance of morality and benevolence in all interactions. Thirdly, the strict enforcement of Islamic law in certain sporting activities, such as karate and women's futsal, is driven by the principle of modesty and respect for Islamic rules. Fourthly, the motivation to exercise as a form of worship and gratitude is directed so that every movement and exercise has religious value, in accordance with QS. In the verse known as Al-Baqarah: 172.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُلُوا مِن طَيِّبَاتِ مَا رَزَقْنَاكُمْ وَاشْكُرُوا لِلَّهِ

Meaning: "O you who believe! Eat of the good things We have provided for you, and be grateful to Allah..."

وَالْعَصْرِ إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ لَفِي خُسْرٍ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ وَتَوَّصَوْا بِالْحَقِّ وَتَوَّصَوْا بِالصَّبْرِ

Meaning: "By time. Indeed, mankind is in loss, except for those who believe, do righteous deeds, and advise one another to truth and patience..."

This form of integration exemplifies a dual approach that integrates ritual practices (e.g. prayer, clothing) with behavioural and mental training, consistent with the principles of Hellison's Character-Based Physical Education Model, which emphasises character building through sport.

Despite the integration of religious values being a progressive phenomenon, this study identifies several challenges. Firstly, it is vital to maintain a balance between the competitive spirit and sportsmanship. It has been demonstrated that students can experience difficulties in regulating their emotions when confronted with competitive pressures, particularly in high-pressure match scenarios. Such behaviour can be considered as unsportsmanlike, and may include a tendency to take offence easily, frequent protests against referees, and aggressive behaviour towards opponents. This situation underscores the necessity for enhanced mental and spiritual development, thereby empowering students to channel their ambition for achievement without compromising sportsmanship. Consequently, a strong competitive spirit can coexist with religious values such as patience, self-control, and fairness in behaviour.

Secondly, the pressure to win frequently fosters undesirable behaviours, such as arrogance or cheating. It has been observed that students who are overly focused on the final outcome of a sporting event may sometimes neglect the process and the values of sportsmanship that should be upheld. In some cases, an excess of ambition to win can lead to arrogant behaviour when successful, or conversely, encourage unethical actions such as manipulating the rules of the game, unhealthy collaboration, or even using dishonest means to achieve victory. This phenomenon suggests that an overreliance on competitive drive, devoid of self-control and the internalisation of religious values, can result in a reorientation of sports from its primary purpose of fostering character development to the mere attainment of superficial achievements. It is therefore vital to emphasise that true victory is not solely measured by the final score, but also by the ability to maintain integrity, honesty, and humility in every match. This perspective is consistent with [39] assertion that triumph is not solely defined by individual accomplishment, but rather by the positive influence exerted on others.

Thirdly, the issue of technical barriers, such as the use of *syar'i* clothing in certain sporting activities, is also discussed. In practice, certain sporting activities have specific sartorial regulations that are not always fully aligned with *syar'i* dress guidelines, particularly for female students. This perspective is consistent with the findings of Dawam et al. [40], who argue that from an Islamic standpoint, the concern does not pertain to the sporting activity itself, but rather to the equipment utilised by athletes, such as sports attire for instance, in swimming, where athletes commonly wear attire that exposes the body, irrespective of gender. Moreover, Firdaus and Salahudin [13] elucidate that, in accordance with Islamic scholars, participation in sports is regarded as a *sunnah* or recommended within the Islamic context, contingent upon the adherence to Islamic principles. However, if its practice contradicts Islamic law for example, by wearing clothing that exposes the body, arouses sexual desire, or leads to immoral behaviour then it becomes *haram*.

This predicament gives rise to a dilemma between adhering to competition standards and maintaining commitment to religious teachings. On the one hand, students wish to perform optimally in competitions; on the other hand, however, there is a moral and

spiritual responsibility to remain consistent with religious values. Such technical challenges require creative solutions, such as the modification of sports attire to ensure functionality while adhering to religious principles. Regulatory support from competition organisers is also necessary to enable students to participate optimally without compromising their religious beliefs.

A further issue is the absence of structured mental guidance and references. For instance, a number of students and coaches lack clear guidelines for developing spiritual aspects. This suggests that the integration of religious values in sports is typically spontaneous and dependent on personal initiative, rather than being part of a systematic curriculum or training programme. Consequently, the implementation of prayer, religious guidance, or the reinforcement of moral values is, at times, inconsistent, and even neglected when the focus is on technical training aspects or match strategies. This paucity of references also impacts the lack of deep understanding of how values such as honesty, patience, sportsmanship, and self-control can be instilled through sports activities. It is therefore essential to develop a comprehensive training guide or module that integrates religious education theory with sports practice. This will ensure that both students and coaches have clear guidelines on balancing physical performance achievements with spiritual development.

Fifthly, inconsistencies in coaches' perspectives, specifically variations in coaches' comprehension, have been demonstrated to exert an influence on the uniformity of religious value integration. The successful implementation of Islamic values within the sphere of sports, specifically among athletes and administrators, is contingent upon the possession of specific personality traits and a sufficient degree of authority by all individuals involved. It is evident that certain coaches possess a profound comprehension of the significance of fortifying spiritual values in the context of sports. This enables them to place considerable emphasis on prayer, etiquette, and the cultivation of moral development in each training session. However, it is also the case that there are numerous coaches who focus more intently on technical aspects, strategies, and performance achievements alone, resulting in religious aspects receiving less attention. This discrepancy leads to inconsistent implementation of religious values on the field; some students receive intensive spiritual guidance, while others only receive minimal exposure. It is evident that variations in coaches' perspectives can also result in a state of confusion among students, owing to the non-consistency in standards applied by different coaches. It is imperative to establish a unified vision through training programmes, workshops, or formal guidelines to ensure the integration of religious values in sports is consistent and purposeful.

These challenges indicate that the integration of religious values is contingent not only on individual awareness, but also on the quality of the coaching system, the availability of facilities, and the level of institutional support. In order to facilitate the internalisation of spiritual values through sporting activities, it is essential to establish a supportive ecosystem that encompasses a range of factors. These include campus policies, learning curricula, the active role of lecturers and coaches, and adequate facilities to accommodate worship and religious activities. In the absence of such structural support, the integration of religious values is often confined to the ceremonial sphere, rendering it unsustainable. This finding is consistent with the findings of previous research, which

has indicated that the environmental context and mentors play a significant role in the success of character education through sports. Consequently, the role of institutions is pivotal in establishing a consistent nurturing atmosphere, whether through the implementation of regulations, the provision of training modules, or the enhancement of coaches' capacity to comprehensively understand the significance of integrating religious values into sports.

The integration of religious values in sports has been demonstrated to exert a positive influence on the physical, mental, and spiritual dimensions of students. Firstly, it is evident that regular, purposeful, and conscientious exercise has a positive impact on an individual's physical fitness and health. This is further compounded by the spiritual aspect of exercise, which emphasises the care and maintenance of the body as a trust bestowed by Allah. It has been demonstrated that sports activities associated with the intention of worship also reduce the potential for misuse of the body through unhealthy lifestyles. Secondly, the mental dimension of the study revealed that students exhibited increased levels of calmness, confidence, and enhanced resilience when confronted with competitive scenarios. The present study posits that religious values such as patience, trust in God, and emotional control help students cope with competitive pressure more proportionately. Thirdly, from a spiritual perspective, the motivation to engage in sporting activities as a form of worship is evident. This motivation is characterised by an increased sense of gratitude and a heightened awareness of God's role in every achievement. This renders sports not only a physical activity, but also a means of spiritual connection, whereby individuals may draw closer to God through the strengthening of intentions and behaviours rooted in faith. Fourthly, the topic of athlete performance is addressed. The prevailing evidence suggests that religious athletes tend to exhibit greater emotional stability, experience reduced propensity to be swept up in the euphoria of victory or overwhelmed by defeat, and demonstrate the capacity to maintain ethical conduct during competitions.

This impact demonstrates that sports combined with a religious approach can support the formation of a balanced human being (body, mind, spirit) [14]. Moreover, this integration fosters a collective awareness within the team that success is not solely the result of individual effort, but also of cooperation, prayer, and the will of God. Consequently, sports emerge as an efficacious medium for fostering a holistic character, characterised by physical health, mental maturity, and spiritual strength. This finding serves to reinforce the hypothesis that the integration of moral or spiritual values into daily practices has the capacity to enhance behavioural quality, work ethic, and student learning experiences.

## **4 Conclusion**

The findings of research conducted on the Integration of Religious Values in Sports Activities and Their Impact on Physical Fitness and Mental Health Among Students indicate that students exhibit a notably elevated degree of integration of religious values. In a survey of 32 respondents, 27 students (84.37%) were classified as being in the very high category, while 5 students (15.63%) were in the high category. No students were identified as being in the moderate, low, or very low categories. This finding suggests that

a significant proportion of students have integrated religious values, including prayer, honesty, sportsmanship, and self-control, into their sporting activities.

With respect to physical fitness, 16 students (50%) were classified as being in the very high category, 14 students (43.75%) in the high category, and 2 students (6.25%) in the moderate category. The findings suggest that the majority of students perceive themselves to be in good physical condition, possess stable endurance, and have maintained regular participation in sporting activities. Nevertheless, there are still certain deficiencies in terms of time management that must be addressed in order to ensure more consistent training.

Meanwhile, with regard to mental health, 16 students (50%) were in the very high category, 11 students (34.37%) were in the high category, and 5 students (15.63%) were in the moderate category. The findings of this study indicate that the majority of students have good mental health, characterised by emotional stability, effective stress management skills, a positive sense of self-confidence, and the presence of healthy social relationships. It has been demonstrated that sports imbued with religious values can function as a therapeutic medium, fostering heightened gratitude and fortifying spiritual motivation among students.

The integration of quantitative and qualitative findings indicates a strong correlation between high religious value integration and physical fitness as well as mental health. Conversely, students who exhibit high levels of religious integration tend to demonstrate concomitant levels of physical fitness and mental health. The findings of the interviews and observations indicate that religious values have a significant impact on students' physical and mental well-being. The data suggest that these values promote qualities such as discipline, sportsmanship, self-control, and gratitude. The identified obstacles are more external in nature, including competitive pressure, limitations in coaches' understanding, technical challenges with Islamic sports attire, and the absence of spiritual reflection sessions after training. These obstacles are not due to students' rejection of religious values themselves.

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