

## Conference Paper

# Religious Fundamentalism as the Predictor of Secondary Students' Obedience to Authority During Pandemic

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## Abstract

This study aims to evaluate the levels of SMPN 1 Ambulu Jember (Junior High School 1 of Ambulu, Jember Regency) students' obedience to authority, ascertain the levels of religious fundamentalism of the SMPN 1 Ambulu Jember students, and determine whether religious fundamentalism affects students' obedience to authority. This study is quantitative predictive research, employing descriptive analysis and linear regression on the population of SMPN 1 Ambulu Jember students. The subjects were 139 students, chosen using proportional random sampling and simple random sampling. As for the instrumentals, the study used Obedient-Disobedient Tendency Scale with a reliability of 0.911 and Religious Fundamentalism Scale with a reliability of 0,758. The findings demonstrated that 52% of the subjects possess a low level of obedience to authority, whereas 55% of them have a high level of religious fundamentalism. The R-value obtained by the variable of hardiness on the variable of happiness was quite significant, namely 0.825. The R-square value of 0.680 also indicated that religious fundamentalism played a role in obedience to authority for 68% and 32% while having other factors as well. The significance value of  $0.00 < 0.05$  means that the research hypothesis is accepted.

**Keywords:** religious fundamentalism, obedience, students

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Published: 5 January 2021

Publishing services provided by  
Knowledge E

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Selection and Peer-review under the responsibility of the ICoPsy Conference Committee.

## 1. Introduction

Learners mean members of any community wishing to develop their potential through a learning process, available in a particular stream, level, and type of education (Pemerintah Indonesia, 2003). Students are handed by their parents to be a part of the school's learning process to be someone with knowledge, skills, experience, personality, attitudes, and independence (Ali, 2010). Not only do students play a role as the future of the nation, but they are also currently in strategic positions. Either the uprising or downfall of a nation lies on the shoulders of students. Students possess moral potency to be

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positively developed to actively build the nation with high integrity and responsibility (Nawawi, 2011). This moral potency can be a great role model for society to look up to. However, there are a lot of phenomena that display students' deviance against the moral values in the society, for example, abuse, law violation, and disobedience to the authority. Moreover, students and teachers are now forced to do all the learning process online during the pandemic.

As Nawawi (2011) stated in research, the phenomena of juvenile delinquency nowadays have become concerning, especially to public order and safety. As quoted from [jatim.suara.com](http://jatim.suara.com), more than 70% percent of traffic violations by two-wheeled vehicle drivers in the area of Blitar City Police Department were executed by underage students, mostly those of junior high school or SMP. The data of eleven-day obedience operation in Satlantas Polres Blitar Kota (Traffic Unit of Blitar City Police Department) elaborated 1774 lawbreakers in total, with 1.544 of them as two-wheeled vehicle drivers, and was dominated by underage students that made up 7 percent of them (Ariefana, 2019). On the other hand, as cited in [news.detik.com](http://news.detik.com), a junior high school student in Gresik was reported to dare his teacher into a fight audaciously. The student held the teacher's head and grabbed the collar of the teacher's shirt as if he was going to thrash the teacher (Suki, 2019).

From the interview with the Dean of Students of SMPN 1 Ambulu Jember, the researchers obtained some information on students' daily misdemeanors, such as coming late, vandalizing walls and desks, not doing the assignments, and sneaking out to the canteen during classes. The informant also admitted that there are times where the Dean of Students has to announce the lawbreakers' names aloud using the school speaker system because there are too many of them. The informant also revealed many complaints from the teachers about the students' impertinence in both the class and outside class.

The interview with the school counselors explained that there is always a student's parents coming to school because of their children's delinquency. On the informant's report, such demeanors of students like missing the assignments, mistreating classmates, offensively joking, or lying and saying disrespectful things to the teachers frequently happen. However, stated that teachers, ustadz, parents, and leaders are examples of authority figures that students should look up to (Ariyanto & Sa'diyah, 2018). Out of the phenomenon mentioned prior, students nowadays seem to have lost the respect and obedience to the authority figures at school.

Stated that obedience means compliance to authorities and is deemed as a spiritual discipline (Kaur & Kaur, 2014). Kaur also added that obedience is learned from the smallest part of society, namely family. The family environment is responsible for teaching adolescents to obey God, parents, teachers, managers, and others who have authority over them. Meanwhile that obedience is a form of social influence in which an individual or more complies with an order from another individual (Byrne & Baron, 2012).

Individual who is obedient to the order from an authority figure might be continuing to obey even though it will potentially take them to harm and hurt other people, which may lead to permanent injuries and death (Elms, 2009). Obedience is a basic element in the structure of social life and is a psychological mechanism that connects individual action with specific purposes that bind individuals to the systems of authority (Milgram, 1963). Systems of authority is a requirement of communal living, and it is only isolated humans who are not forced to respond, through defiance or submission, to the others' commands.

Leveillee (2011) elaborated on the importance of obedience. In his opinion, obedience is a part of the foundation of society. Without obedience, there would be nothing but chaos and anarchy. Without stability and productivity, the welfare of the people would be unachievable. Obedience to regulations and systems of authority is designed to create a safe and protected environment (Kaur, 2014).

The research conducted by Ludeke et al. (2013) mentioned that there are some factors of obedience to authority. There are three essential factors: conservatism, religious fundamentalism, and traditionalism, with intelligence as an additional factor. This is supported by the findings of research that obedience to authority is commonly found among fundamentalist communities in some Islamic countries (Pelletiere, 1995).

Religious fundamentalism is a belief in religious teachings that comprise fundamental, intrinsic, essential, and absolute truths about humanity and divinity (Altemeyer & Hunsberger, 1992). In a psychological view, religious fundamentalism could be regarded as a system of religious perceptions that relies on the sacred scriptures (Hood, Jr., & Williamson, 2005). To the fundamentalist community, the perception lies on the pages of the holy scriptures. The perception of religious belief is the stance that keeps the fundamentalist community in such a pernicious culture. Moreover, the same opinion stated that expounded fundamentalism as a perception that entirely relies on sacred scriptures (Savage, 2006). Writings in the holy book can validate themselves as sacred, and it is only the sacred scriptures that establish the absolute truth.

The fundamentalist interpretations of sacred scriptures might lead to morals and ethics that emphasize obedience to orders (Bennet, 2011). The moral maturity of fundamentalists is at the pre-conventional level, which means that moral reasoning is controlled by reward and punishment from others, so the fundamentalists believe that obedience is the right option for them. They are unlikely to care whether the individual obeys out of demands or desires. Bennet also explained that education in the fundamentalist community urges conformity and obedience to authority. Still, it does not give the people a chance to question the truth of the teachings. The fundamentalists deem obedience to human authority as similar to God, so no content or teaching of authority figures needs to be considered or accommodated (Adam, 2007).

The previous research about obedience by Kaur (2014) demonstrated that obedience has no correlation with the income and occupation of parents, but with the birth order and educational background of parents instead. According to Kaur, older adolescents tend to obey more than younger adolescents, while parents with higher educational backgrounds are more concerned with their children's education. The research that also conducted on prisoners' obedience to authority, which resulted in a negative correlation between authority figures and cognitive dissonance (Dewi, 2016). Exceeding dissonance can provoke prisoners' disobedience to the authority figure caused by the denial of individual cognitive in facing the current reality. On the other hand, another research demonstrated religious fundamentalism as one of the factors linking to the obedience to authority and correlating positively with other factors, and authenticates obedience further (Ludeke, Johnson, & Bouchard, 2013). In the research, respondents acquired excellent religious fundamentalism points and possessed a fine tendency to obey authority. From previous studies on obedience to authority, it is acknowledged that research on obedience to authority with religious fundamentalism is yet to be done.

Based on the introduction above, it can be concluded that obedience to authority results from the fundamental belief in the religious teachings adopted by an individual. Therefore, the researchers are interested in researching SMPN 1 Ambulu Jember students' religious fundamentalism and obedience to authority. This research is carried out to see whether religious fundamentalism can be the indicator of SMPN 1 Ambulu Jember students' obedience to authority.

## 2. Method

The research method employed is quantitative with the descriptive and causal type of research. Quantitative research emphasizes its analysis of the quantitative data and

numbers obtained from the measurement procedure and processed using statistical analysis. Causal research is used to investigate the cause-and-effect relationships of two or more variables. This type of research explains the influence of the change in a variable on the other variable(s). In causal research, the independent variable works as the cause, whereas the dependent variable is the effect.

Variables in this research consisted of (a) free variable or X as the religious fundamentalism, and (b) bound variable or Y as the obedience to authority. The location chosen for this research was SMPN 1 Ambulu Jember. The population of this research was 139 students of SMPN 1 Ambulu Jember, class of 2019/2020. The sampling technique employed was probability sampling with proportional random sampling and simple random sampling with the samples of 139 students.

The data was collected using the Likert scale with two adaptational instruments, namely (1) Obedient-Disobedient Tendency Scale by (Mehta & Hasnain, 1984) with the adaptational procedure of back-translation (Brislin, 1970) that consisted of 36 items but was soon corrected into 39 valid items with the reliability of 0,911 after testing and proofreading, and (2) Religious Fundamentalism Scale (Altemeyer & Hunsberger, 2004) with the adaptational procedure of back-translation (Brislin, 1970) that consisted 12 valid items with the reliability of 0,758 after the process of testing and proofreading.

There are two analyses used in this research: descriptive analysis and hypothesis testing using the IBM SPSS Statistics20 program. (1) descriptive analysis in this research was arranged according to the T-score. T-score is one of the rating scale means used to adjust an individual score into a standard score. Adjusting X-score into T-score causes the score to follow a certain distribution score with the mean of  $T = 50$  and the standard deviation of  $St = 10$  (Azwar, 2013). The scores obtained are categorized into two types, namely high-score and low-score. Before doing the hypothesis testing, the researchers conducted an assumption test that consists of a Kolmogorov-Smirnov test for normality and linearity test. Next (2), hypothesis testing was accomplished using simple linear regression analysis.

### 3. Result and Discussion

According to the descriptive data result, obedience to authority and religious fundamentalism are categorized into high and low categories. The categorization result is displayed as follows:

TABLE 1: The Categorization of Obedience to Authority

Category	Frequency	Percentage
High	67	48%
Low	72	52%
Total	139	100%

TABLE 2: The Categorization of Religious Fundamentalism

Category	Frequency	Percentage
High	76	55%
Low	63	45%
Total	139	100%

According to the table above, it is acknowledged that there are more subjects with lower obedience to authority, with the number of 72 students or 52%, and more subjects with higher religious fundamentalism with the number of 76 students or 55%.

TABLE 3: The Result of The Normality Test

Variable	Significance	Information
Religious Fundamentalism	0,174	Normal
Authority to Obedience	0,500	Normal

According to the table of normality test using Kolmogorov-Smirnov analysis, it is obtained that the variable of religious fundamentalism possesses significance of  $0,174 > 0,05$  and the variable of obedience to authority possesses  $0,500 > 0,05$ , which means that both variables are distributed as normal.

TABLE 4: The Result of The Linearity Test

Variable	Sig. Linearity	Information
Religious Fundamentalism with the Obedience to Authority	0,000	Linear

According to the table above, it can be discerned that the extent of the linearity significance of both variables is 0,000 less than 0,05; hence it can be inferred that the religious fundamentalism and obedience to authority variables have a linear connection to each other.

According to the table of hypothesis testing results using simple linear regression as its analysis technique, it is apparent that the result of this research acquired 0,825 for the R-score, which means that the religious fundamentalism variable significantly contributed to the obedience to authority. Moreover, the obtained R-square is 0,680

TABLE 5: The Result of Hypothesis Testing

Variable	R	R-Square	Significance
Religious Fundamentalism on the Obedience to Authority	0,825	0,680	0,000

with a significance of  $0.000 < 0.05$ , which means that religious fundamentalism also contributed by 68% to the SMPN 1 Ambulu Jember students' obedience to authority, thus approving the hypothesis. In other words, religious fundamentalism is the predictor of SMAN 1 Ambulu Jember students' obedience to authority.

According to the hypothesis testing that resulted in significant outcomes, it illustrates that religious fundamentalism is the predictor of the SMPN 1 Ambulu Jember students' obedience to authority. There is certainly a significant role that religious fundamentalism plays in obedience to authority. In other words, the level of SMPN 1 Ambulu Jember students' obedience to authority pivots on their religious fundamentalism.

Although there is not so much research on religious fundamentalism and obedience to authority yet, this research substantiates the research conducted by Ludeke et al. (2013) about how religious fundamentalism positively correlates with obedience and has become one of the factors of obedience to authority. Bennet (2011) also stated that religious fundamentalism urges an individual to obey the authority.

Savage (2006) asserted that religious fundamentalism is defined as a system that completely relies on sacred scriptures. Religious fundamentalism is a belief that a set of religious teachings comprises the absolute truth about humanity and God. The truth then must be practiced in daily life according to the edified basis (Altemeyer & Hunsberger, 1992). Religious fundamentalism knows no bounds of age, as both adolescents and adults can possess fundamental comprehension of their religion and beliefs. That opinion is in line with previous research stated there is no correlation between age and fundamentalism level of an individual (Lavenson, 2005). Therefore, it is possible for an individual to become a fundamentalist during adolescence.

All students of SMPN 1 Ambulu Jember are adolescents. Adolescence is the period where children develop into adults; therefore, there must be both physical and psychological changes for them to experience. Adolescence is the period in which an individual searches for self-identity, which results in emotional instability, aggression, sensitivity, and conflicts between behaviors and attitudes (Santrock, 2011).

In spite of the emotional instability, adolescents are still demanded to behave accordingly, as they are also students at school and individuals in society. As elaborated by

Mitchell (Hurlock, 2003) that adolescents are urged to control their behaviors and take responsibility for themselves. On top of that, adolescents are also urged to obey since obedience is an essential part of society.

The obedience to authority and regulations is established to create a safe and favorable environment for adolescents (Kaur, 2014). Obedience is a foundation for society, as there would be only chaos and anarchy without it (Leveillee, 2011). Fundamental comprehension about religion helps SMPN 1 Ambulu Jember students to live in order and obey the regulations. That occurs because a fundamentalist tends to focus on morals and ethics and believes that obedience is the right option (Bennet, 2011).

In the perspective of moral developments, junior high school students should be in the stage of autonomy, as they are already adolescents. It is the stage where adolescents start to consider the purposes of moral behaviors, accept changes, be aware of the purposes of laws and regulations, and comply with the agreed adjustments. Adolescents are no longer controlled by the system of punishment, which refers to a theory by Piaget (Slavin, 2011). However, unlike the stage of moral development that should be achieved in adolescence, Bennet (2011) asserted that fundamentalists are still in the pre-conventional stage of moral development, where moral reasoning is controlled by reward and punishment from others. In this stage, an individual is thinking of themselves; therefore, fundamentalists are most likely to think of the reciprocity between them and the others.

Still, Kohlberg (in Santrock, 2011) does not disclose clear age limits to each stage of moral development, so it can be assumed that the moral development of an individual is not entirely based on age. Religious fundamentalism is not based on age either. Adolescents can show a high level of religious fundamentalism despite being in the pre-conventional stage of moral development. For that reason, their behaviors are still in accordance with what others think of them, and they likely choose to obey the regulations and commands because they are not ready yet to take responsibility for their deeds.

Research by Pelletiere (1995) expounds that obedience to authority is commonly found among fundamentalist communities in some Islamic countries. Furthermore, Bennet (2011) added that education in the fundamentalist community urges conformity and obedience to authority figures. The fundamentalist community is appealed to accept all the teachings without being critical or questioning the validity of it. The result of this research indicates that religious fundamentalism plays a big part in obedience to authority. There is a possibility that most of SMPN 1 Ambulu Jember are on the high level of religious fundamentalism, thus the high obedience of authority too.



However, religious fundamentalism is not entirely contributing to obedience to authority, which means there are still other factors of obedience to authority. Ludeke et al. (2013) stated that besides religious fundamentalism, there are other factors to obedience to authority, such as conservatism, traditionalism, and intelligence.

## 4. Conclusion

Based on the analysis and the discussion of this research, the researchers finally came to the conclusions as follows. (1) In general, SMPN 1 Ambulu Jember students possess a low level of obedience to authority. (2) Most of SMPN 1 Ambulu Jember students possess a high level of religious fundamentalism. (3) Religious fundamentalism is the predictor of SMPN 1 Ambulu Jember students' obedience to authority.

According to the result of this research, it is suggested for SMPN 1 Ambulu Jember students be more disciplined in the religious events held by the school. Students are also expected to control themselves and obey the school regulations. In the process of coming of age, it is anticipated from the students to go along the process with favorable activities and events, such as joining school organizations for responsibility training. In addition, it is also expected from the school always to evaluate the system of punishment so the disobedient students will not repeat the demeanors, considering that the school is currently not having many opportunities to conduct a selection process for the new students, so the quality of this year's students might be different from the years before. It is also suggested for the school to improve the students' religious events and nurture a fair and communicative relationship with the parents to create healthy teamwork in educating the students.

Apart from that, it is recommended for future researchers to broaden the population of the study. To acquire more variants of results about factors of obedience to authority, future researchers are also advised to add other variables, such as conservatism, traditionalism, intelligence, punishment, rewards, legal authority, and others' expectations. The future researchers are anticipated to fix and improve the measurement instruments so that the research result can provide pertinent information for the aimed objectives.

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