

Influence of Religious Education Instruction on God-Centeredness among Grade 10 Students: The Mediating Role of Family Religious Practices

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ABSTRACT

Religious education in Catholic schools is expected to help young people connect faith with everyday life. However, limited evidence explains how classroom instruction and family religious practices work together to develop God-centered students. This study examined the influence of Religious Education Instruction on the God-centeredness of Grade 10 students at Father Saturnino Urios University, and explored the mediating role of Family Religious Practices. The study employed a quantitative descriptive-correlational design. Participants were 103 Grade 10 students purposively selected for their sustained exposure to the university's Religious Education and faith formation programs. Data were collected through a researcher-developed questionnaire that underwent expert validation and reliability testing. Descriptive, correlation, regression, mediation, and group comparison analyses were employed. Findings revealed high levels of Religious Education Instruction, God-centeredness, and Family Religious Practices. A strong positive relationship was found between Religious Education Instruction and students' God-centeredness. Faith integration emerged as the strongest predictor, together with pedagogical approaches and spiritual and reflective activities. Family Religious Practices partly mediated the relationship, showing that faith experiences at home reinforced the formation received at school. Differences in God-centeredness were also observed according to sex and membership in religious organizations. The study concludes that Religious Education is most effective when it connects Christian teachings with real-life experience, encourages participation and reflection, and involves families in faith formation. An Enhanced Instructional Design is proposed to strengthen school-family collaboration, reflective learning, and lived faith, supporting holistic, values-oriented Catholic education.

KEYWORDS

Adolescent spirituality; faith integration; family faith practices; school-family partnership; values formation-methods; teacher agency and digital pedagogy.

INTRODUCTION

Religious Education occupies a central place in Catholic schooling, forming learners not only in knowledge but in spiritual and moral character (Miller, 2007; Rosales & Bantogon, 2024). Amid growing concern over weakening moral values and declining spiritual engagement among the young (Smith & Denton, 2005; Twenge, 2017), Catholic

institutions continue to strengthen Religious Education as an avenue for forming learners who are academically competent, spiritually mature, and morally upright. The Congregation for Catholic Education (1988) teaches that Catholic education should pursue the integral formation of the human person, where faith and life are harmoniously integrated, while Pope Francis (2013) emphasized that education must form individuals capable of compassion, service, and social responsibility rooted in faith.

Central to this formative vision is the concept of God-centeredness, understood as the extent to which a person places God at the center of one's beliefs, relationships, values, and daily decisions. For Grade 10 students, God-centeredness may be observed through prayerfulness and trust in God, servant leadership, social Christian living, family and community values, and moral integrity in everyday decisions.

In the Philippine context, where roughly 78.8% of the population identifies as Roman Catholic (Philippine Statistics Authority, 2023), religious affiliation remains high, yet affiliation alone does not guarantee active faith engagement. Studies on Filipino youth suggest that while many students continue to value religion, they encounter difficulty integrating faith into everyday life amid rapid social change, and often perceive Religious Education as content acquisition rather than lived Christian witness (Cornelio, 2018; Busa & Tancontian, 2025).

At Father Saturnino Urios University (FSUU), a Catholic institution in Butuan City, the formation of God-centered learners is a central educational goal. Religious Education begins as early as preschool and continues through the tertiary level, complemented by Eucharistic celebrations, retreats, recollections, and outreach activities organized by the Office of Religious Affairs. Family religious practices such as prayer, Mass participation, and faith discussions at home may reinforce these classroom experiences (Fowler, 1981), yet the extent to which Religious Education instruction actually translates into God-centered living, and whether the family strengthens this process, remains empirically untested at FSUU.

This study was anchored on Bandura's (1977, 1986) Social Learning Theory, which holds that learners acquire attitudes, values, and behaviors largely through observation, modeling, and reinforcement within social environments. Applied to Religious Education, students internalize Christian values by observing teacher witness, engaging in reflective and participatory pedagogy, and integrating faith into lived experience, effects that recent scholarship continues to affirm within explicitly Christian educational contexts (Kondrla et al., 2026). Family religious practices, in this framework, function as a second, reinforcing environment for the same modeling process.

While Religious Education and family faith formation have each been studied separately, no known study has examined how Religious Education Instruction and Family Religious Practices jointly shape God-centeredness among Grade 10 students, or tested whether family practices mediate the influence of classroom instruction on this outcome. By empirically modeling this mediating pathway using validated, contextualized instruments at a Philippine Catholic university, this study addresses an empirical, methodological, and contextual gap and offers evidence-based direction for strengthening God-centered formation through the combined efforts of school and family.

Objective of the Study

This study aimed to determine the influence of Religious Education Instruction on Students' God-Centeredness among Grade 10 students at Father Saturnino Urios University, and to examine the mediating role of Family Religious Practices in this relationship. Specifically, it described the respondents' demographic profile and the levels

of Religious Education Instruction, Students' God-Centeredness, and Family Religious Practices; determined the influence of Religious Education Instruction on Students' God-Centeredness; tested the mediating effect of Family Religious Practices; and examined differences in God-Centeredness according to selected demographic variables.

RESEARCH METHODS

Research Design

This study employed a quantitative descriptive-correlational research design (Creswell & Creswell, 2018) to describe the levels of Religious Education Instruction, Students' God-Centeredness, and Family Religious Practices among Grade 10 students, and to examine the relationships among these variables. Regression analysis determined whether Religious Education Instruction significantly influenced Students' God-Centeredness, mediation analysis determined whether Family Religious Practices intervened in this relationship, and analysis of variance and t-tests determined differences in God-Centeredness across demographic profile variables.

Participants

Respondents were 103 Grade 10 students, selected through purposive sampling from a total Grade 10 population of 163 (63.19%) at the FSUU Basic Education Department, Morelos Campus, during School Year 2025-2026. Only students enrolled at FSUU for at least four years were included, ensuring sufficient exposure to the University's Religious Education curriculum and faith formation programs.

Research Instrument

Data were gathered using a researcher-made questionnaire composed of four parts: demographic profile; Religious Education Instruction (content relevance, pedagogical approaches, faith integration, teacher witness and facilitation, and spiritual and reflective activities); Students' God-Centeredness (spiritual relationship with God, Christian leadership, social Christian living, family and community values, and moral integrity and faith-guided decision making); and Family Religious Practices (family prayer, Mass or religious service participation, faith discussions at home, Christian value formation, and family spiritual support). Items used a five-point frequency scale (5 - Always to 1 - Never). The instrument was validated by a panel of experts and pilot-tested; reliability analysis using Cronbach's alpha yielded coefficients of .808-.931 for Religious Education Instruction, .786-.952 for God-Centeredness, and .860-.945 for Family Religious Practices, with overall indices of .952, .954, and .973 respectively, indicating high internal consistency (Taber, 2018).

Data Gathering Procedure

After securing ethical clearance and institutional approval, the researcher coordinated with school authorities and administered the questionnaire through Google Forms to officially enrolled respondents. Informed consent and assent were obtained from respondents and their parents or guardians, as participants were minors, and confidentiality was strictly maintained throughout data collection and analysis.

Statistical Treatment

Frequency and percentage described the demographic profile; mean determined the levels of Religious Education Instruction, God-Centeredness, and Family Religious Practices; Pearson Product-Moment Correlation and multiple regression determined the relationship and predictive influence of Religious Education Instruction on God-

Centeredness; mediation analysis, using a causal-steps approach with significance testing of the indirect effect, determined the mediating role of Family Religious Practices; and one-way analysis of variance and independent samples t-test determined differences in God-Centeredness across demographic variables. All analyses were interpreted at the .05 level of significance.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Respondents were predominantly female (63.1%) and Roman Catholic (85.4%); most attended Mass or religious services three to four times per week (68.9%), were not affiliated with any religious organization (68.0%), and had been enrolled at FSUU for four to five years (61.2%), indicating substantial exposure to Catholic education and faith formation.

Religious Education Instruction was rated Always overall ($M=4.32$). Teacher Witness and Facilitation obtained the highest mean ($M=4.39$), followed by Content Relevance ($M=4.37$), Spiritual and Reflective Activities ($M=4.35$), and Faith Integration ($M=4.32$), while Pedagogical Approaches ($M=4.15$, Often) obtained the lowest, suggesting that teaching strategies and methodologies represent the area with the greatest room for enhancement relative to teacher example and content. This affirms that Religious Education Instruction as a whole is a consistently strong and formative influence among FSUU Grade 10 students, consistent with the Church's call for Catholic schools to integrate faith and life in the integral formation of learners (Dicastery for Culture and Education, 2022).

Students' God-Centeredness was likewise rated Always overall ($M=4.45$). Social Christian Living ($M=4.53$) and Family and Community Values ($M=4.52$) emerged as the strongest dimensions, indicating that students most visibly express God-centeredness through relationships and concern for others, while Spiritual Relationship with God ($M=4.38$), though still rated Always, obtained the lowest mean, suggesting that students' interior, contemplative connection with God may still be developing relative to its outward, relational expressions. These findings affirm the goals of Catholic education in forming faith-filled, morally responsible, and socially engaged individuals (King & Boyatzis, 2023; UNESCO, 2023).

Family Religious Practices were rated Always overall ($M=4.24$). Christian Value Formation ($M=4.42$) and Family Spiritual Support ($M=4.33$) were the strongest dimensions, while Faith Discussions at Home ($M=4.06$, Often) obtained the lowest, suggesting that families transmit faith more consistently through lived example and quiet encouragement than through explicit conversation about faith.

Multiple regression analysis revealed that Religious Education Instruction significantly predicted Students' God-Centeredness, accounting for 79.0% of its variance ($R=.889$, $R^2=.790$, adjusted $R^2=.779$). Among its five dimensions, Faith Integration ($\beta=.354$, $p<.0001$), Pedagogical Approaches ($\beta=.177$, $p=.001$), and Spiritual and Reflective Activities ($\beta=.149$, $p=.0403$) emerged as significant unique predictors, while Content Relevance ($\beta=.080$, $p=.217$) and Teacher Witness and Facilitation ($\beta=-.057$, $p=.2443$) did not. The small negative coefficient for Teacher Witness and Facilitation, despite its high descriptive rating, likely reflects a suppression effect arising from its overlap with Faith Integration and Spiritual and Reflective Activities rather than any negative influence in itself; consistent with Social Learning Theory, teacher witness appears to operate indirectly, by shaping the faith-integration and reflective experiences that carry its effect (Palmer, 1998; Groome, 2011). Overall, the results indicate that Religious Education becomes most effective when students are encouraged to connect faith with daily

experience, reflection, and practical application, extending beyond the transmission of religious content alone.

Mediation analysis showed that Religious Education Instruction significantly predicted Family Religious Practices ($\beta=.678$, $p<.0001$), which in turn significantly predicted Students' God-Centeredness ($\beta=.103$, $p=.0102$), while the direct effect of Religious Education Instruction on God-Centeredness remained significant even after accounting for the mediator ($\beta=.679$, $p<.0001$). The indirect effect ($\alpha\beta=.070$, $p=.0175$) was statistically significant, confirming that Family Religious Practices partially mediate the relationship, transmitting approximately 9.3% of the total effect ($.070/.749$) while the remaining 90.7% occurs directly. These findings affirm the complementary roles of school and family in nurturing God-centeredness (John Paul II, 1981; Francis, 2016), consistent with Bandura's (1986) principle of reciprocal determinism, wherein Religious Education Instruction and Family Religious Practices function as two mutually reinforcing modeling environments.

Analysis of variance revealed a significant difference in God-Centeredness according to sex ($F=13.48$, $p=.0004$), consistent with well-documented, cross-cultural evidence that women report higher religious commitment than men (Stark, 2002; Pew Research Center, 2016). No significant differences were found according to religion ($F=1.86$, $p=.1756$), frequency of Mass attendance ($F=1.44$, $p=.2358$), or number of years at FSUU ($F=.444$, $p=.6425$), suggesting that the University's faith formation efforts are experienced consistently across these groups. An independent samples t-test showed a significant difference according to membership in religious organizations ($t=-2.77$, $p=.0067$), indicating that the experiential, peer-based faith opportunities such groups provide meaningfully reinforce students' God-centeredness beyond formal Religious Education instruction alone (Hardy et al., 2022).

Test of hypotheses. Based on these results, the first null hypothesis, that Religious Education Instruction does not significantly influence Students' God-Centeredness, was rejected ($p<.0001$), as Religious Education Instruction significantly predicted 79.0% of the variance in God-Centeredness. The second null hypothesis, that Family Religious Practices do not significantly mediate the relationship between Religious Education Instruction and Students' God-Centeredness, was likewise rejected, as the indirect effect through Family Religious Practices was statistically significant ($p=.0175$). The third null hypothesis, that there is no significant difference in Students' God-Centeredness according to selected demographic variables, was partially rejected: it was rejected for sex and membership in religious organizations, both of which yielded significant differences, but was not rejected for religion, frequency of Mass attendance, or years of enrollment at FSUU, which showed no significant differences.

Taken together, these findings informed the development of a proposed Enhanced Instructional Design towards God-Centeredness, anchored in Social Learning Theory and organized around five reinforcing strategies: faith integration, reflective pedagogy, teacher witness, service and leadership formation, and family faith engagement, offered as a guide for Catholic schools seeking to strengthen God-centered living among learners through mutually reinforcing school and family environments.

CONCLUSION

Religious Education Instruction, Students' God-Centeredness, and Family Religious Practices were all rated at high (Always) levels among FSUU Grade 10 students, who had substantial exposure to Catholic education and faith formation. Religious Education Instruction significantly influenced Students' God-Centeredness, accounting for 79.0% of

its variance, with Faith Integration, Pedagogical Approaches, and Spiritual and Reflective Activities emerging as its significant predictors, indicating that the active integration and application of faith through meaningful learning experiences and reflection are more decisive to God-centered living than content relevance or teacher example alone.

Family Religious Practices significantly and partially mediated the relationship between Religious Education Instruction and Students' God-Centeredness, confirming that Religious Education Instruction shapes God-centeredness both directly and indirectly through its reinforcement of faith practices at home. Significant differences in God-Centeredness were found according to sex and membership in religious organizations, but not according to religion, Mass attendance frequency, or years of enrollment, suggesting that the institution's faith formation efforts are generally experienced consistently across diverse student groups.

The proposed Enhanced Instructional Design, anchored in Social Learning Theory, offers Catholic schools a concrete guide for strengthening faith integration, reflective pedagogy, and school-family partnership in forming spiritually grounded, morally responsible, and God-centered learners.

Recommendations

The following are the recommendations of the study:

School Administrators may institutionalize faith formation initiatives that directly support the study's significant predictors, such as scheduling at least one grade-level retreat or recollection per semester and integrating faith-based service-learning into the academic calendar, while adopting and periodically evaluating the proposed Religious Education Instruction Framework towards God-Centeredness.

Religious Education Teachers are encouraged to complement authentic Christian witness with learner-centered strategies, devoting a meaningful share of instructional time to reflective discussions, faith-sharing groups, and experiential activities that connect faith lessons to real-life situations, particularly since Pedagogical Approaches obtained the lowest descriptive rating among the dimensions studied.

Families and Parents may strengthen faith formation at home through regular family prayer, weekly faith-sharing conversations, and shared participation in religious services, supported by a school-facilitated Family Faith Formation Module, given the confirmed mediating role of Family Religious Practices.

Religious Organizations and Campus Ministry may expand opportunities for student participation, particularly among male students, through peer discipleship, service-learning, and mentorship programs, since membership in religious organizations was associated with significantly higher God-Centeredness.

Future Researchers may examine additional variables such as peer influence, social media exposure, and school climate; replicate the study across other educational levels and institutions to test generalizability; and employ qualitative or mixed-methods approaches to gain deeper insight into students' lived experience of faith formation.

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