



Religious Development in Adolescents: A Literature Study Based on Developmental Psychology

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Abstract

Introduction to the Problem: Adolescence is a crucial period in the formation of an individual's religious identity, influenced by rapid psychological, social, and emotional changes that significantly impact the dynamics of adolescent faith. Religion often becomes a subject of exploration during this phase. **Purpose:** This study aims to examine the dynamics of adolescent religious development, including the identification of factors that influence development, its characteristics, and stages, while reviewing relevant theories of religious development. **Design/Methods/Approach:** This research employs a qualitative approach through a literature review. Data was collected using documentation techniques and content analysis with thematic analysis methods. **Findings:** The study reveals that the stages of adolescent religious development are fluctuating, ranging from the inheritance of beliefs from family to a critical and personal reinterpretation. This process is influenced by cognitive development, emotional maturity, and social environmental factors. Adolescents may experience religious doubts and emotional conflicts but often emerge with a reconstructed belief system. **Research Implications/Limitations:** This article does not include empirical data from fieldwork, limiting the generalization of the findings to the literature context. However, these findings are valuable for curriculum designers, parents, and educators in fostering healthy religious development in adolescents. **Originality/Value:** This study contributes to the academic discourse by synthesizing theoretical perspectives on adolescent religious development. By integrating psychology and development theories, the study presents a conceptual model on how adolescents' belief systems evolve alongside cognitive, emotional, and social maturity..

Keywords: Adolescence and Religion; The Psychology of Adolescent Religious Development; Characteristics; Factors; Dynamics of Religious Development

Introduction

Religion is a fundamental aspect of human life, serving as a moral, spiritual, and social guide (Leonardo et al., 2025). Religious values not only shape the way individuals view themselves and others but also influence how they respond to the world around them. This role of religion

becomes particularly important during adolescence, a period when individuals begin to form personal identities and explore the belief systems they adopt.

Adolescence is a crucial stage in human development. Piaget stated that adolescence is also a psychological age when individuals integrate into adult society (Hurlock, 1980). In the framework of human developmental stages, adolescence occupies a progressive phase (Ramayulis, 2009). More specifically, Sarwono, as cited by Royani Chairiyah (2022), divides adolescence into three phases: early adolescence, middle adolescence, and late adolescence (Chairiyah, 2022). Each phase occurs alongside age changes and the individual's development, including physical, emotional, social, intellectual, moral, and religious growth (Suryana et al., 2022).

Adolescence can be referred to as a transitional or shifting period (Toyyibah et al., 2025), a time that is fragile, sensitive, and full of challenges because adolescents often struggle to adapt to the changes within themselves, affecting their attitudes and behavior. At this stage, individuals are engaged in a search for identity, including their beliefs and religious life. The religious landscape of adolescents is dynamic and complex, as evidenced by phenomena such as the increasing interest of adolescents in religious activities, growing skepticism towards religious teachings, and their tendency to deviate from spiritual values. This suggests that most adolescents believe in God, pray regularly, and consider studying religious teachings to be important. This indicates that religion remains a significant part of the lives of modern adolescents (Santrock, 2005).

Therefore, understanding how the process of religious development occurs in adolescents is essential, particularly for educators, parents, and society at large, to provide wiser guidance as adolescents navigate their religious maturation. This article will discuss the definition of religion, the characteristics of religious life in adolescents, factors that influence religious development, and the dynamics of its stages in adolescent religious growth.

Literature Review

Religious development is an important aspect of psychological development, especially during adolescence, a period marked by the search for identity and emotional, social, and cognitive changes (Sulhan, 2024). Several developmental psychology figures have specifically examined religious development in adolescence. William Starbuck highlighted aspects such as changes in ideas, social considerations, and moral conflicts that emerge alongside the mental and emotional development of adolescents (Amalia & Latipah, 2024). Daradjat categorized adolescent religious attitudes into several categories, ranging from “beliefs due to peer influence” to “non-belief.” Meanwhile, Hurlock identified three stages of religious change in adolescence: religious awareness, religious doubt, and religious reconstruction (Masganti, 2012).

James W. Fowler developed a theory of faith development in six stages, two of which are highly relevant to adolescence: the synthetic-conventional stage and the individuative-reflective stage. In the first stage, adolescents begin to form beliefs influenced by social pressures and are not yet critical. In the next stage, individuals start to reflect on their faith personally and reconsider previously accepted teachings (Boiliu, 2021).

Thouless also suggested that personal experiences, life needs, and intellectualism are important factors in the development of religiousness. Adolescents experiencing crises or emotional pressure are often more open to profound religious experiences. Conversely, adolescents from permissive family backgrounds regarding religious values tend to show looser religious attitudes (Hood et al., 2003).

Previous studies indicate that religious development in adolescents is influenced by various factors. Research conducted by Atikah Asna et al. delves deeply into the factors influencing religious development in adolescents. They categorize these influences into two main categories: internal factors (cognitive, emotional, and moral development) and external factors (family, social environment, media, education, and culture). The study also emphasizes the importance of spiritual experiences, identity crises, and involvement in religious communities as part of the process of adolescent religious formation. Using a systematic approach, this study provides a comprehensive overview of the complex dynamics of adolescent religious development in the context of modern society (Asna et al., 2024).

Field research was also conducted by Lubis et al. (2023), focusing on the development of religious psychology in late adolescence through interviews with a 20-year-old subject. The results showed that although the subject was in the individuative-reflective stage of belief according to Fowler's theory, their religious development was not significant. This was linked to a lack of strong religious education background and minimal influence from a religious environment. This research offers a real-life critique and examination of faith development theory through the context of the daily lives of Indonesian adolescents (Lubis et al., 2023).

Furthermore, Yuhani'ah (2022) in her study of religious psychology highlighted the importance of developing a religious soul in adolescents as a process influenced by internal conflicts, social conditions, and family environments. This study emphasizes that religion has a preventive and curative power in addressing restlessness, conflicts, and emotional tensions in adolescents. She also classified adolescent religious attitudes into four types: belief due to peer influence, conscious belief, ambivalent belief, and non-belief, emphasizing that early religious education plays a decisive role in shaping religious attitudes during adolescence (Yuhani'ah, 2022).

A qualitative study by Siregar and Lubis (2023) examined the impact of the Community Service Program (KKN) on enhancing adolescent religiousness in Ulumahuam Village, North Sumatra. Student activities such as mentoring mosque youth, organizing study groups, as well as teaching the basics of reading the Qur'an and worship were found to significantly increase adolescent participation in religious activities. This study reinforces the idea that role models and direct social approaches can act as catalysts for adolescent spiritual growth (Siregar & Lubis, 2023).

Finally, Fahrurrozi (2022), in his literature review, provided an in-depth examination of adolescent development from cognitive, physical, emotional, and sexual perspectives. He emphasized that adolescents are in an identity crisis phase, which makes them vulnerable to negative influences if not accompanied by strong religious values. Therefore, instilling religious values is seen as a crucial effort in shaping self-control and religious behavior in adolescents. This study also outlined seven key strategies for instilling religious values, including fostering interest in religious teachings, providing role models through parents and teachers, organizing engaging religious activities, and offering consistent moral education. These findings underscore the central role of the immediate environment in building a strong religious foundation for adolescents (Fahrurrozi, 2022).

Based on the theories and previous research findings, it can be concluded that religious development during adolescence is a dynamic and complex process influenced by various personal and contextual factors. Adolescents not only passively receive religious teachings but also undergo a process of internalization, rejection, and belief reconstruction. These stages and patterns of religiosity are closely related to psychological, social growth, and the individual's spiritual experiences. Therefore, a comprehensive understanding of these dynamics is essential to interpreting adolescent religiosity in various social and cultural contexts.

Methods

This study is a qualitative research using a library research approach, which is a research method that collects data through literature review, including books, journals, and other relevant documents (Zed, 2004). In line with this, Nazir (2005) states that library research is conducted to solve a problem critically based on available secondary data (Nazir, 2005). This method is used because the study does not involve the collection of primary data, but instead relies on literature as the main data source. In library research, the researcher plays a key role as the instrument in the data collection process (Safrudin et al., 2023).

In practice, the author uses documentation techniques as the method of data collection, which involves searching and reviewing written documents such as books, articles, archives, and other relevant sources related to the research problem (Moleong, 2017). This technique was carried out

through the review of more than 37 scientific references, including academic books, reputable journal articles, as well as classical and contemporary Islamic references. These sources were used as a foundation to build the theoretical framework, explain concepts, and systematically answer the research questions.

The data analysis technique in this study uses content analysis, which is carried out by summarizing, categorizing, paraphrasing, and drawing objective and systematic conclusions (Hidayah, 2023). The analysis process is conducted qualitatively-descriptively using a thematic analysis method, which involves grouping key themes such as the characteristics of adolescent religiosity, the factors influencing it, and the dynamics of religious development. Thematic analysis allows the researcher to identify patterns and meanings from qualitative data systematically (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Additionally, to ensure the validity of the information, cross-verification of sources is conducted, along with the selection of references with established academic credibility, ensuring that the findings can be responsibly accounted for scientifically (Moleong, 2017).

Result

Definition of Religion

There are numerous definitions of religion, both in terms of language and terminology, as proposed by various scholars. Linguistically, the word "religion" originates from the Sanskrit language, which means guidance, regulation, path, or devotion to God. According to Abuddin Nata (2009), the word "religion" consists of two parts: "A," meaning "not," and "Gama," meaning "chaotic" or "disorderly." Therefore, religion means order and structure. If elaborated, religion is a set of regulations that governs human life to ensure it remains orderly and free from chaos (Nata, 2009).

According to Harun Nasution, as cited by Jalaluddin (2002), the term "religion" can be traced back to various root words, such as al-Din, religio (from Latin), and the word "religion" itself. In Semitic languages, al-Din means law or regulation, while in Arabic, this term carries meanings such as power, obedience, reward, habit, and debt. In Latin, religio derives from relegere, meaning to gather and read, and religare, meaning to bind. Meanwhile, the word "religion" itself comes from the combination of "A" (not) and "gama" (to go), thus implying something that does not change, remains constant, or is passed down through generations. Based on these various definitions, it can be concluded that religion is essentially a form of bond, a commitment that must be adhered to and followed by humans. This bond comes from a supernatural force that lies beyond human sensory perception but greatly influences daily life (Jalaluddin, 2002).

Robert H. Thouless (1992) defines religion as an attitude (or way of adjustment) toward the world, encompassing a reference that points to a broader environment than the spatio-temporal

physical world (in this case, the spiritual world) (Thouless, 1992). In agreement, Mukti Ali (1969) defines religion as the belief in the existence of the One True God and the laws revealed to His messengers for the happiness of human life in this world and the hereafter (Ali, 1969).

In the Indonesian Dictionary (KBBI), religion is defined as a teaching system that governs faith (belief) and worship of the Almighty God, as well as the rules that regulate the relationship between humans and other humans (Badan Pengembangan dan Pembinaan Bahasa, n.d.). Thus, it can be concluded that religion is a system, teaching, law, or guide that governs faith, belief, or conviction (Khadijah, 2020).

Characteristics of Religiosity in Adolescence

Adolescence is a significant transitional phase in an individual's development. During this period, adolescents engage in the process of identity formation, questioning, and reflecting upon the values, norms, and beliefs that were previously accepted uncritically from their families and surroundings. In this process, religiosity becomes one of the aspects that undergoes significant transformation. Religion is no longer merely understood as a tradition passed down from previous generations but begins to be experienced more personally and existentially as a source of meaning, identity, and guidance in facing the increasingly complex realities of life. Adolescent religious experiences are deeply influenced by the dynamics of their physical and psychological development (Setiawan & Asna, 2025). In other words, how adolescents understand and practice religious teachings is closely related to their overall developmental stage, which includes needs for meaning, security, social acceptance, and direction in life. This makes religiosity in adolescence a dynamic and unique process, full of the search for meaning in a constantly changing context of life (Hamali, 2017).

Adolescents exhibit different patterns of religiosity, depending on how they form their religious identity. According to Haryanti and Chairunissa (2023), there are two main tendencies in how adolescents understand religion: first, religion is practiced as a heritage from parents without personal reflection, known as identity foreclosure; second, religion is consciously chosen after exploration and deep reflection, known as identity achievement. Adolescents in the foreclosure stage tend to practice religion in a normative and passive manner, merely following family traditions or the practices of their environment without critical understanding. In contrast, adolescents who have reached the achievement stage exhibit maturity in their religious practices. They choose to commit to their beliefs based on personal understanding developed from the process of identity searching, experience, and consideration of the spiritual values they hold dear. The transition from inherited religiosity to personal awareness marks the growth of a more mature and authentic religiosity (Haryanti & Chairunissa, 2023).

Religious development in late adolescence shows more mature characteristics, as adolescents begin to integrate religious beliefs into their overall worldview (Lubis et al., 2023). In this context, religion plays a crucial role in the formation of self-identity, particularly in Muslim adolescents, where religious teachings and practices influence their self-perception, moral values, and life goals through psychological mechanisms that contribute to the consolidation of both personal and social identities (Febriansyah & Hariry, 2025). The characteristics of religiosity in adolescence also show ongoing transitions and evolutions into early adulthood, with differences and similarities in how individuals understand, feel, and practice religion, including dimensions of belief, ritual practice, religious experience, and religious knowledge (Fuadah et al., 2024).

Religiosity in adolescence has unique characteristics that distinguish it from both childhood and adulthood. Here are some characteristics of religiosity in adolescence:

a. Development of Critical Attitudes Toward Religious Teachings

During adolescence, individuals experience significant changes in their thinking patterns, marked by an increasing ability to think abstractly and critically (Setiawan & Asna, 2025). Adolescents no longer accept religious teachings passively as they did during childhood; instead, they begin to question, evaluate, and reinterpret the teachings they have received. They start to engage with more complex and broader issues, such as social, economic, and cultural matters, as well as life values related to religious teachings. This critical attitude is influenced by various factors, including the characteristics of the adopted religious teachings. Conservative teachings tend to encourage obedience and adherence, while more open or liberal teachings often allow space for freedom of thought, which, in some cases, may lead some adolescents to distance themselves from or even abandon their religious beliefs.

b. Variations in Attitudes and Enthusiasm Toward Religion

Adolescent religiosity can be categorized into several forms. First, belief due to peer influence, which refers to religious attitudes that are still influenced by the environment and typically learned through family experience, without deep understanding. This attitude generally occurs at the beginning of adolescence and is temporary (Amna et al., 2025). Second, belief with awareness, where adolescents begin to reconsider the religious practices inherited from childhood and start to understand religion in a more critical and reflective manner. Third, positive religious enthusiasm, marked by efforts to purify religious teachings from external elements such as superstitions, innovations (*bid'ah*), and myths, as well as a tendency to understand religion rationally and deeply. Fourth, negative religious enthusiasm, characterized by a tendency to mix religious beliefs with non-authentic elements, such as myths and non-religious beliefs.

c. Faith Crisis and Exploration Phase

Adolescence is often a period of faith crisis, where individuals experience doubt and deep questioning of the religious teachings they previously accepted uncritically. This process is part of the search for identity and life meaning, which is a natural occurrence during this developmental stage. In this situation, adolescents may experience changes in their beliefs, either by strengthening their faith, replacing their belief system, or distancing themselves from religion. When the religious foundation built from an early age is weak, adolescents may become more vulnerable to changing their beliefs, even to the point of rejecting religion altogether (Yuhani'ah, 2022).

d. Moral and Social Growth in the Context of Religiosity

During adolescence, moral considerations begin to develop, involving conflicts between religious values and worldly interests. In facing these conflicts, some adolescents seek inner peace through adherence to religious teachings, while others begin to make decisions based on personal judgment or individual values. Not all adolescents are able to consistently balance worldly impulses with moral religious principles, so only a small percentage achieve harmony between the two.

e. Religious Maturity in Late Adolescence

By the late adolescence phase (around ages 17–21), individuals typically begin to demonstrate greater stability in their religious attitudes. At this stage, adolescents have formed a more realistic self-image and show more mature abilities in handling life's challenges. Both in their vertical relationship with God (*hablumminallah*) and in their horizontal relationships with others (*hablumminannas*), religious awareness becomes stronger and is reflected in their daily behavior (Yuhani'ah, 2022).

The development of religiosity in adolescents is marked by several aspects of development. According to William Starbuck, this development includes (Amalia & Latipah, 2024):

1. Growth of Adolescent Thoughts and Mentality. The ideas and foundational beliefs that adolescents accepted during childhood are no longer appealing to them. At this stage, a critical attitude toward religious teachings begins to emerge. Additionally, adolescents become more interested in social, cultural, economic issues, and other life norms.
2. Development of Feelings. Various types of feelings have developed during adolescence. Feelings such as social, ethical, and aesthetic emotions encourage adolescents to experience life in ways that align with what they are accustomed to in their environment..
3. Social Considerations. The religious nature of adolescents is characterized by social considerations. In their religious life, conflicts begin to arise between moral and material

considerations. These conflicts often lead to complex dilemmas for adolescents in choosing between worldly life and the afterlife.

4. Moral Development. The moral development of adolescents is rooted in feelings of guilt and the need to seek protection. This sense of guilt becomes a trigger for adolescents to seek acceptance or protection from their surroundings by trying to act in accordance with the prevailing values and rules. Furthermore, the types of morality that are also evident in adolescents include (Ramayulis, 2009): a) Self-directive, where religious or moral obedience is based on personal judgment; b) Adoptive, where adolescents follow their environmental situation without criticism; c) Submissive, where there is doubt toward moral and religious teachings; d) Unadjusted, where they have not yet firmly believed in the truth of religious and moral teachings; e) Deviant, where they reject the foundations and laws of religious and societal morality..

Factors Affecting Religious Development in Adolescents

Spiritual development during adolescence is a psychological journey that is far from simple, as adolescents are in a stage of identity search, facing deep questions about life, and experiencing emotional turmoil. Murni and Widiandari (2023) explain that this phase is crucial in shaping an individual's religious life, as adolescents begin to scrutinize and evaluate religious teachings they have previously received from their environment. In this process, it is not uncommon for them to experience confusion, doubt, or even a tendency to question or reject some teachings before ultimately rebuilding their understanding of faith in a more conscious and personal way. Therefore, religious education for adolescents should ideally be dialogical, tailored to their psychological stage, and provide space for reflection. Support from the surrounding environment, such as family, peers, and educational institutions, plays a significant role in helping adolescents achieve healthy and directed spiritual maturity (Murni & Widiandari, 2023).

The development of religious psychology in adolescents is influenced by three educational factors: informal education, formal education, and non-formal education (Jalaluddin, 2002).

1. Informal Education

Every child is born in a state of purity. This state is likened to a blank canvas, ready to be colored with various shades. Therefore, parents play a central role as the primary figures responsible for the religious beliefs adopted by their children. As stated in a hadith narrated by Bukhari:

كُلُّ مَوْلُودٍ يُوَلَّدُ عَلَى الْفِطْرَةِ فَأَبَوَاهُ يُهَوِّدَانِهِ أَوْ يُنَصِّرَانِهِ أَوْ يُمَجِّسَانِهِ

The meaning is: "Every child is born in a state of fitrah. It is the parents who make him a Jew, a Christian, or a Zoroastrian." (Narrated by Bukhari).

This hadith emphasizes that the religion developed in a child is influenced by the education and example set by their parents. This is because hereditary factors play a significant role in the growth and development process of a child. From birth, a child inherits various biological and psychological characteristics from both parents as well as their ancestors, such as grandparents. These inherited characteristics include physical aspects, such as body shape, facial features, and skin color, as well as non-physical aspects, such as intelligence, talents, personality, and predisposition to certain diseases. The majority of this genetic inheritance comes from both parents, while the remainder is passed down from previous generations on both sides of the family. These hereditary factors form the basis of an individual's nature from the womb and subsequently influence the potential and development of the child in various aspects of life, including religion (Rijal, 2016).

2. Formal Education

The importance of religion in the lives of adolescents calls for educational institutions, particularly schools, to actively instill religious values in students. When adolescents have already received religious education from their family environment, schools serve as a reinforcement and support in solidifying those values. However, if religious education is lacking at home, schools must place greater emphasis on intensively imparting religious teachings. The religious guidance provided at schools contributes positively to shaping adolescents' behavior in a better direction, aligning with moral values (Aqillah, 2024).

3. Non-Formal Education

The community is the environment where adolescents live. The conditions of the people around the adolescent's living environment also influence the development of their religious psyche. Adolescence is a period of socialization, where adolescents tend to be closer to and trust their peers more than their parents, which means that their religiosity is also influenced by their peer group. Non-formal education plays a strategic role in facilitating the natural and contextual internalization of religious values. The community, as one of the social interaction spaces closest to the daily lives of adolescents, provides various patterns and religious practices that indirectly serve as models for them. Religious traditions, social norms, and spiritual activities within the community contribute significantly to shaping the religious attitudes of adolescents (Jalaluddin, 2002).

According to Thouless in Ralph W. Hood, et al. (2003), there are several factors that influence an individual's level of religiosity, such as:

1. Experience Factor (Comfortable Spiritual and Religious Experiences and Other Experiences)

Spiritual experiences and the sense of comfort felt after performing religious rituals can drive an increase in an individual's religiosity. Conversely, if an individual struggles to find

meaning in performing religious rituals, following religious commands, or avoiding religious prohibitions, it may result in their religiosity remaining stagnant or even declining. The experience factor affecting religiosity is not limited to personal experiences but can also stem from the experiences of others that provide inspiration or spiritual lessons.

2. Life Factor (Need for Security, Safety, Comfort, Fear of Death)

In an effort to meet the needs of life, humans often face various difficulties and challenges. These conditions encourage individuals to seek help from God as a source of strength and hope. At this stage, life's needs can become a trigger for the increase in an individual's religiosity. This is because individuals understand that religiosity can help them face life's challenges (Rahman & Rusli, 2025). Furthermore, humans naturally desire safety and protection from all forms of harm, including disasters or misfortunes. This hope for safety is not limited to life in this world but also extends to the afterlife. Therefore, it is not uncommon for someone who was previously less religious to become more devout after experiencing a severe trial, such as a serious illness with a small chance of recovery. Such situations often encourage individuals to improve their way of life and increase their closeness to religious teachings.

3. Intellectual Factor (Reasoning Toward Religious Knowledge)

Intellectuality can be acquired through the process of education, both through formal and non-formal channels, including religious education. Additionally, intellectuality encompasses the breadth of knowledge and understanding that an individual possesses, which is not limited to religious knowledge but also includes general knowledge. For example, when someone studies the universe, it can spark awareness and reflective questions, such as: "Who created this magnificent universe?" Such thoughts demonstrate that intellectuality plays a role in shaping an individual's spiritual awareness and religiosity.

4. Environmental Factor

Environmental factors, such as family, peers, school, and the broader community, have a significant influence on the formation of adolescents' religious attitudes. In the pre-adolescent phase, religious practices are largely driven by external influences, such as parental rules and educational institutions, and have not yet fully emerged from personal awareness. However, as adolescents enter the early teenage years, they begin to demonstrate a more solid belief in religious teachings, supported by biological and psychological maturation. During this phase, adolescents start to reflect on the meaning of life, including its spiritual and religious dimensions (Zuroidah, 2022).

Discussion

Adolescence is a crucial period in the development of an individual's religious life (Setiawati et al., 2024). This is because adolescence is the stage when individuals begin to search for their identity (Pratama et al., 2022). In this process of searching, various aspects of life, including religion, become objects of reflection and questioning. During adolescence, individuals begin to question the idealism and identity they hold, including their religious beliefs. They begin to question the truth of the religion they believe in. This search for meaning and truth during adolescence demonstrates that adolescent religiosity is not static, but dynamic (Santrock, 2018).

Along with spiritual and physical development, adolescents' beliefs in religion also evolve (Ramayulis, 2009). This means that adolescents' understanding and experience of religious teachings also develop as their cognitive, emotional, and social maturity increases. In addition, consistent religious practices not only shape spirituality but also have a direct impact on adolescents' ability to manage emotions, build social relationships, and respond to life's challenges in a healthy way (Masrofah et al., 2024). Furthermore, the development of adolescent religiosity is influenced by interactions with their environment (Taufik, 2020). For example, a toxic family environment, characterized by ongoing conflicts, emotional manipulation, and poor communication, can increase psychological stress, such as anxiety and depression in late adolescence. Such disturbed psychological situations can weaken spiritual stability and lead adolescents to distance themselves from religious values, or even trigger doubts in their beliefs. Thus, emotional conditions resulting from dysfunctional parenting styles have a significant potential to influence the dynamics of adolescent religiosity (Nasir et al., 2024). This shows that religious development in adolescents does not occur separately, but runs concurrently with other aspects of their development.

The development of religiosity in adolescents is reflected in their attitudes and how they express their religious lives. Daradjat, an Islamic psychologist, stated that there are four types of religious attitudes in adolescents, namely (Masganti, 2012):

1. Belief Due to Peer Influence. In early adolescence, belief in religion is usually derived from simple teachings of the family and environment. This belief is passive and lacks critical understanding.
2. Belief with Awareness. In middle adolescence, there is a growing awareness to understand religion personally and critically. This attitude can be positive (critical and rational) or negative (influenced by irrational factors).
3. Belief but Doubtful. Adolescents' doubts about their religion can be divided into two types:
 - a) Doubting religion due to emotional crises and mental shocks. This is a normal occurrence;

b) Doubting religion because of the perceived discrepancy between religious teachings and reality.

4. Non-Belief or Atheistic Tendencies. Atheistic attitudes in adolescents may emerge due to childhood experiences filled with pressure from authority figures, such as parents, which foster rejection of all forms of authority, including the authority of God.

Daradjat's theory is based on an Islamic psychological approach and religious experience within the context of Muslim culture (Aqidah, 2023). The religious experience referred to here is the profound feeling that drives an individual to act according to their beliefs. Daradjat emphasizes the attitudes and expressions of religiosity that are reflected in daily life. He categorizes the stages of religious development in adolescents not based on age stages, but on the depth of their attitude toward religion. In other words, the deeper and more mature an individual's attitude toward religion, the higher their level of religious development.

Unlike Daradjat, Fowler divides the stages of religious development based on human developmental phases, from childhood to adulthood. Fowler's theory emphasizes that faith or religious belief undergoes developmental stages in line with cognitive growth and life experiences (Simanjuntak et al., 2025). Fowler divides faith development into six stages: the intuitive-projective stage, the mystic-literal stage, the synthetic-conventional stage, the individuative-reflective stage, the conjunctive stage, and the universal stage (Boiliu, 2021; Rustam et al., 2021). Among these six stages, the third and fourth stages reflect the state of faith during adolescence.

The synthetic-conventional stage is typically experienced by early and middle adolescence. At this stage, adolescents' beliefs are formed from external influences such as family and peers. Adolescents begin to form their religious identity, but they do not yet engage in critical thinking (Boiliu, 2021). They believe in a certain set of beliefs because they want to be accepted by those around them. Meanwhile, the individuative-reflective stage emerges in late adolescence or early adulthood. In this stage, adolescents begin to think more deeply about their religion and no longer accept all teachings uncritically. They start to choose what they truly believe in, based on personal thought and experience (Boiliu, 2021).

While Daradjat focuses on the quality of an individual's religiosity, which is not always directly related to age, Fowler emphasizes cognitive stages and the structure of faith that develop with age and individual life experiences (Simanjuntak et al., 2025). Fowler's theory views faith not merely as belief, but also as the way an individual views, processes, understands, and integrates religious values into their life. In the context of adolescence, this includes how they begin to form more reflective and complex personal beliefs. In brief, Fowler's theory emphasizes theoretical and

systematic stages of development, whereas Daradjat's theory is more contextual and practical (Boiliu, 2021).

Although both Fowler's and Daradjat's theories explain faith development as a gradual and structured process, adolescents often face various challenges during this process. One of the challenges is the emergence of doubt and conflict regarding the religious teachings and practices they believe in. In the digital era, this challenge is further complicated by social media and popular culture, which increasingly influence adolescents' thought patterns and attitudes (Sucipto & Avezahra, 2023). Exposure to diverse worldviews, modern lifestyles, and conflicting religious narratives in digital spaces can trigger confusion and doubt.

Religious doubt and conflict regarding teachings, practices, and the condition of religious institutions and leaders are normal during adolescence. This is related to their cognitive and emotional development, as they begin to think critically and reflectively about the values they have accepted. William Starbuck, in his research, identified factors causing doubt and conflict, including (Ramayulis, 2009): a) personality aspects, such as misunderstanding, gender differences, and individual maturity; b) errors in managing religious organizations or the behavior of religious leaders; c) basic human needs, as humans have an inherent desire to question, making doubt a natural response; d) conservatism, where humans are reluctant to accept new ideas; e) educational background; and f) the mixing of religious teachings with mystical elements.

Religious doubt experienced by adolescents can vary, from mild doubts that are easily overcome, to deep doubts that may lead to a change in belief (Hully et al., 2021). According to Hurlock, changes in religious interest during adolescence can be divided into three stages (Masganti, 2012): First, the period of religious awareness, when adolescents begin to explore their religion and compare it with other religions. Second, the period of religious doubt, when adolescents begin to critically question religious teachings and practices. Third, the period of religious reconstruction, when adolescents begin to reshape or reaffirm their beliefs in a way that aligns with their personal understanding and experience.

Thus, the dynamics of religious development in adolescence is a complex process influenced by various factors. Theories by Daradjat and Fowler provide important foundations for understanding this dynamic. Both theories help in understanding that faith is not static, but evolves in line with personal growth and life experiences. Although adolescents often experience confusion and conflict in their religiosity, these feelings should not be viewed as signs of deviation but rather as a natural part of the faith development process that plays a crucial role in their maturation.

Conclusion

This study concludes that the development of religiosity in adolescents is a dynamic and complex process, influenced by various internal (emotions, cognition, morality) and external (family, education, community) factors. Adolescents do not merely passively accept religious teachings but develop their beliefs in a reflective and critical manner as they undergo psychological and social growth. This finding emphasizes the importance of a contextual and responsive approach to religious education, tailored to the individual's developmental stage. In practice, the results of this study can be applied by educators, parents, and religious mentors to design relevant spiritual guidance programs that address the needs of adolescents. Moving forward, field research using a longitudinal approach is needed to trace the dynamics of religious attitude changes in adolescents over time and to evaluate how well contextual and adaptive spiritual mentoring strategies meet their developmental needs.

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