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INTERNAL CONFLICTS OF RELIGIOUS ADOLESCENTS WHO VIOLATE RELIGIOUS NORMS: A QUALITATIVE PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY

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Abstract

This research aims to understand the internal conflicts experienced by religious adolescents who violate religious norms. Despite having a high level of religion, such as regularly carrying out worship and participating in religious activities, some adolescents are still involved in deviant behavior, such as drinking, promiscuity, and violence. Using a qualitative phenomenological approach, the study explores the subjective experiences and inner dynamics of adolescents who face the contradiction between their religious beliefs and behaviors. The data was obtained through in-depth interviews with ten teenagers who were considered religious but had been involved in violations of religious norms. The results showed that these adolescents experienced significant inner conflict, which arose from the imbalance between the religious values they professed and the social and emotional pressures they faced. Factors such as social influence, self-identity search, and emotional urges are the main triggers of deviant behavior. These findings reveal the importance of emotional support, a conducive environment, and holistic religious guidance in helping adolescents cope with these internal conflicts.

Keywords: *Internal Conflict, Religious Adolescence, Deviant Behavior*

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INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is a stage of development characterized by various physical, emotional, and social changes. In this phase, adolescents often face various challenges in the process of finding their identity, including in terms of moral values and the religion they adhere. For adolescents who are raised in a religious environment, religious values are often the main guideline in living daily life. However, it is not uncommon for internal conflicts to arise when the behavior or decisions taken by the teenager are contrary to the religious norms adhered to.

According to George Herbert Mead on symbolic interaction theory, Mead focuses on how individuals build identity through social interaction. In this context, internal conflicts can arise when adolescents try to balance between the religious identity taught by the family and the identity formed through interaction with friends and the wider community. This process can lead to confusion and violations of religious norms. According to Adler's study (Prastyana, 2017, p. 47),

adolescents have a form of characteristics in juvenile delinquency, including wild, irresponsible, and unsettling behavior in the surrounding community. There are clashes between gangs, between groups, between schools, and even between tribes, which sometimes result in casualties. Children who skip school then wander the streets or hide in remote places. Crimes committed by schoolchildren and teenagers, such as extortion, theft, threats, and intimidation.

These internal conflicts are often a source of stress and confusion for adolescents, especially when they feel trapped between personal desires and moral or religious demands. This phenomenon is interesting to study more deeply because it illustrates the complexity of the relationship between religious beliefs, social norms, and the psychological development of adolescents. This study aims to understand how adolescents who grow up in a religious environment face internal conflicts when they violate the religious norms they have been adhering to. Through a qualitative phenomenological approach, this study will explore the subjective experiences of adolescents in dealing with such conflicts as well as the factors that influence their decision to violate or defend religious norms.

One of the factors that affect the drive for juvenile delinquency is the principle of religiosity possessed by adolescents (Terrie, 2004, p. 57). According to Hawari (2013, p. 19), religiosity is a form of appreciation of religion and the depth of belief, which is manifested through daily activities such as worship, prayer, and reading the holy book. Feierman and Oviedo (2019, p. 29) defines religiosity as a personal relationship with the Almighty, Most Merciful, and Most Merciful divine figure (God), which gives birth to the urge to please Him by carrying out His will and staying away from things that He forbids or does not want.

If adolescents have a high level of religiosity, they tend to exhibit behaviors that are in line with a religious life. In contrast, adolescents with low levels of religiosity will exhibit behaviors that move away from religious life. This shows that teenagers have the potential to violate the religious teachings they follow, which can ultimately trigger juvenile delinquency. An internal factor that affects the drive for juvenile delinquency is the principle of religiosity in adolescents. Religion reflects formal aspects related to rules and obligations, while religiosity is more about the aspects of beliefs that have been lived in the heart of the individual. The rules and norms contained in religion can be a guideline in life, which will have a positive impact so that a person can be more accepting of himself (Hafidzi, 2020, p. 59). However, from the results of the analysis Berger, Roloff, and Roskos-Ewoldsen (2017, p. 92) also stated that several factors such as family, school, and friendship environment play a role in the emergence of juvenile delinquent behavior.

Research on teenagers who break the rules has been widely conducted by previous researchers. Hadi (2023, p. 54) examined how religious guidance can contribute to reducing juvenile

delinquency in schools, which is often related to violations of religious norms. Hadi's findings stated that religious factors, in this case religious guidance, have a very important role in helping teenagers solve their problems and create peace in their lives. Atika, Purwanto, and Noviyani's findings (2013, p. 9) stated that the religious aspect has an effective influence on juvenile delinquency. Students who have a high religious attitude will increasingly show commendable character. Jalaluddin (2012, p. 19) also emphasized that teenagers who have a low religious attitude will show behavior that violates religious norms. This study will examine a different perspective on religious teenagers who violate religious norms. Providing counseling can shape the religious character of teenagers and the problems of millennial teenagers who are greatly influenced by sophisticated technology such as gadgets (Saimun, 2022, p. 4070). In this study, adolescent problems actually arise from internal conflicts. Therefore, this study is very interesting to study and explore about the internal conflicts of religious teenagers who violate religion.

By understanding the dynamics of this internal conflict, it is hoped that a deeper insight into the moral development of religious adolescents and the psychological implications that may arise due to the tension between religious beliefs and their behavior can be obtained. In addition, the results of this study are expected to contribute to the development of more effective religious education strategies in helping adolescents overcome internal conflicts related to religious values.

RESEARCH METHODS

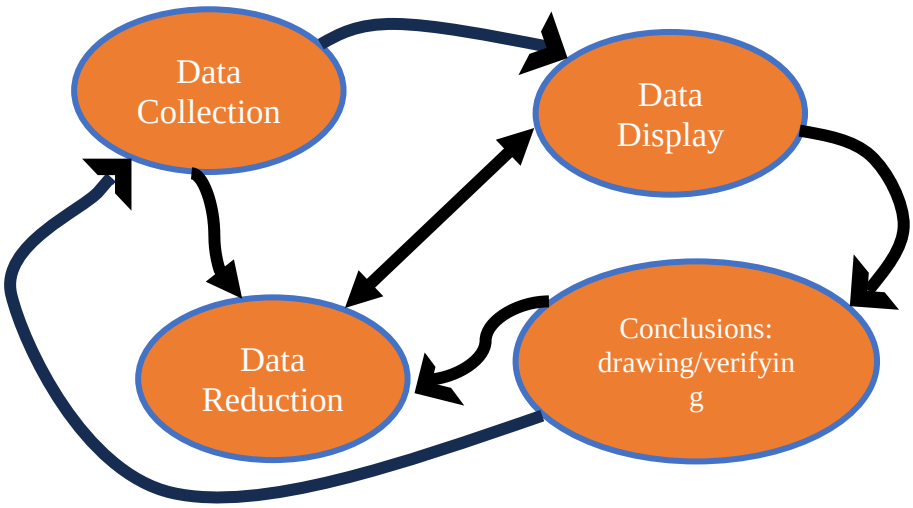
This study uses a qualitative approach with a phenomenological design to understand the subjective experience of religious adolescents who experience internal conflicts due to violating religious norms. The phenomenological approach was chosen because it was able to explore the meaning of individual experiences in depth from the participant's point of view. The study participants consisted of adolescents aged 17-19 years who had a strong religious background and had experienced internal conflicts related to violations of religious norms. The selection of participants was carried out by purposive sampling until data saturation was reached, where semi-structured in-depth interviews were used as the main method of data collection. These interviews are designed to explore the experiences, perceptions, and dynamics of internal conflicts of participants, complemented by non-participant observations to enrich the social and religious context.

Table 1. Participant Profile

	Age	Amount	Institution
Male	18-19 years old	6	Several state universities in Surabaya city.
Female	17-19 years old	10	

The data obtained was analyzed by phenomenological analysis methods, starting from the transcription of the interview to the identification of the main themes, coding, and integration of the themes to form a comprehensive understanding. To ensure the validity of the data, data triangulation, member checking, and peer debriefing are used. In addition, this study pays attention to ethical aspects, such as maintaining the confidentiality of participants' identities, obtaining informed consent, and providing freedom for participants to withdraw at any time. Through this method, the research is expected to delve deeply into the internal conflicts experienced by religious adolescents and understand the factors that influence their decisions in dealing with violations of religious norms.

Figure 2. Phenomenological Qualitative Research Flow



RESEARCH RESULTS

Types of Internal Conflict for Religious Adolescents and Factors that Trigger Conflict

The internal conflicts experienced by religious adolescents when they violate religious norms are a complex phenomenon involving the interaction between religious values, social

pressures, and the psychological development of individuals. In this study, internal conflicts arise as a result of the tension between religious identities instilled from childhood and the urge or desire to engage in behaviors that are considered to violate religious norms. Individual internal conflict is a conflict that occurs within a person when he is faced with a choice between two or more conflicting values, goals or needs (Lestary, Subanji, and Rahardi, 2018, p. 167). Furthermore, Lestary, Subanji, and Rahardi (2018, p. 168) stated that situation can cause stress and emotional tension, as the individual feels trapped in a dilemma that requires difficult decisions.

Based on the researcher's findings on several of his respondents, the respondent with the initials T.S, aged 17, explained that religion is a belief and obligation that must be owned by everyone, including himself, no matter how naughty he is, he feels that behaviors that are often carried out such as often racing wildly in the middle of the night, then drinking liquor with his friends, to dating are just entertainment for him and also a hobby for him to be able to get rid of the taste stress from his mind. Apart from T.S's statement, there is also a statement from B.G. at the age of 19 who explains that religion is a form of faith and confidence in God, according to him his religious level with his behavior, namely frequent fights between martial gangs, and the bullying that he often does to his classmates is just a form of venting from his feelings and his emotions that are difficult to control.

Furthermore, there is another statement from the statement of the 18-year-old R.A., he is a child who looks very religious and religious, often participates in religious events, his worship is very solemn, and has a strict and thick religious level, as evidenced by his daily activities and often he goes to places of worship, but on the other hand he has a behavior that is very lacking in accordance with his religious level, that is, he often participates in brawls between martial gangs, then also engages in promiscuity with his partner and also often and often commits acts of intolerance. Intolerance is a negative attitude characterized by indifference or rejection of the existence of other people, both in terms of religion, race, and culture (Hamayotsu, 2013, 659). In this context, intolerance can be defined as the opposite of tolerance, which means not respecting or respecting differences between individuals or groups of society (Nawawi et al, 2023, p. 244). The intolerance behaviors which he often shows to researchers, namely blaspheming and making fun of other religions, not only that, but he is also very racist towards other religions that are different from him and finally also often uses other people's religions as jokes but if his own religion is used as a joke by people else, then he can be very angry until the researcher is also in an incident where he fights because R.A does not accept his religion being used as a joke by people from different religions, but the one who started joking about religion and insulting religion first was

R.A himself, with the findings of this researcher can be explained that teenagers who have a strong religious background but can experience feelings of guilt, anxiety, and fear of spiritual consequences, such as divine punishment or feelings of alienation from their religious community. However, on the other hand, they also feel the urge of the individual's desire to express themselves, explore the outside world, or simply fulfill social, emotional, or even biological needs.

The main factors that trigger this internal conflict include the development of self-identity and the search for freedom. In adolescence, individuals begin to question the authority and norms that have been held, including religious values (Ni Made and Ni Ketut, 2020, p. 55). For some adolescents, the findings of the researcher, such as some respondents who were excavated, such as T.S., behaved in such a way because the form of the social environment in his family produced such a personality and behavior. B.G had this kind of behavior because of the result of the friendship environment at his school where the average circle of friends was surrounded by a group of individuals who had personalities, character, and the same behavior, like to bully and their conversation is not far from things that smell of violence, especially the discussion about their plan to fight with other martial gangs who have problems with the martial gang he lives in. R.A has this kind of behavior even though he has very strict, strong and harsh religious values but this deviation arises instead due to various social spheres in his life such as the family environment that has the rules and forms of family social teachings are very harsh and rigid and he also often experiences physical violence due to the form of punishment from his family due to his deviant behavior that is not in accordance with the will of the family teachings in it, then it is caused by the social sphere of his friendship which is usually filled and surrounded by friends who have problems also in the family and people around him and also love violence as a form of emotional venting and his feelings that are immersed in his mind and feelings.

Finally, R.A has intolerance towards differences as a result of him following and entering a radical and harsh religious group where any differences that exist from his religious group and other religions will be considered forbidden and bad in their eyes. Radical groups tend to provide doctrine to new followers so that only the religion or sect they believe is the most correct, and all adherents of other faiths must be conquered, changed their beliefs, or destroyed (Rohmatullah, 2017, p. 171). With the results of researchers like this, religious norms are often considered as limits that hinder personal freedom, especially in matters related to social interaction, lifestyle, and interpersonal relationships. This is further strengthened by the influence of peers, the media, and access to a wider range of information outside the religious environment. The findings suggest that religious adolescents who violate religious norms are often at the crossroads between adherence to religious rules and demands to be accepted by a wider social group.

Religious Adolescents Strategy in Facing Internal Conflict

In the face of this conflict, some adolescents choose to violate religious norms as a form of experimentation or a way to meet emotional needs that they feel are difficult to meet in a religious context. However, after committing the offense, most of the participants experienced deep feelings of guilt. This feeling suggests that even though the teenager committed the offense, religious values still have a strong influence on the formation of their morals and identity. They often feel caught up in the tension between the desire to be autonomous individuals and a sense of responsibility to their religious beliefs and communities.

From a psychological point of view, this internal conflict can be interpreted as part of the process of forming a normal self-identity in adolescence. Erik Erikson in his theory of psychosocial development mentioned that one of the main tasks of adolescents is to build a consistent and coherent identity (Maree, 2022, p. 16). In a religious context, adolescents need to find ways to integrate religious values into their personal identity. If there is a discrepancy between what they believe and what they do, internal conflict is inevitable. In many cases, adolescents who seek to violate religious norms do so not out of a total rejection of religion, but as a way to test boundaries and understand their own position in the context of those values.

From a sociological point of view, this study reveals that the social environment, especially the family and religious community, plays an important role in the formation and resolution of these internal conflicts. Families help children understand values such as honesty, responsibility and tolerance to be used as guidelines in dealing with problems (Bidaya and Dari 2020: 61). Adolescents who receive emotional support and non-judgmental guidance from their religious environment tend to be better able to cope with internal conflicts without having to abandon religious values entirely. On the other hand, an environment that is too rigid and tends to impose heavy sanctions on violations of religious norms often exacerbates the feelings of isolation experienced by adolescents. This can encourage teens to further distance themselves from religious values or even experience an identity crisis. The environment plays an important role in cultivating tolerant character in students. Tolerance is the ability to respect differences, whether in terms of religion, culture, race, or way of life. This character formation is greatly influenced by students' interactions with their environment, both at home, school and society (Mubarok and Rahmatulloh, 2020, p. 35).

The study also found that the strategies used by adolescents in dealing with internal conflicts varied widely. Some choose to rationalize their behavior by personalizing their interpretation of religion, while others seek to return to the path of religion through a process of

repentance or spiritual reflection. There are also adolescents who choose to live a double life, where they appear as religious individuals in front of family and community, but commit offenses secretly in other neighborhoods. From these findings, it can be concluded that the internal conflicts experienced by religious adolescents when violating religious norms are not only influenced by individual factors, but also influenced by broader social and religious dynamics. The role of family, community, and social support is crucial in helping adolescents find a balance between adherence to religious norms and their need to develop an authentic self-identity. Therefore, a more inclusive and flexible approach to religious education is needed, one that focuses not only on enforcing rules, but also on understanding, empathy, and guidance that can help adolescents overcome their internal conflicts without having to damage their religious identity.

Overall, this study provides important insights into the psychological and social dynamics that occur in religious adolescents when they violate religious norms. This internal conflict not only reflects the struggle of individuals to balance moral demands and personal needs, but also reflects a greater challenge in religious education in the modern era that is increasingly open to the plurality of values

CONCLUSION

This study reveals that internal conflicts experienced by religious adolescents who violate religious norms are a complex and multifactorial phenomenon. This conflict arises due to the tension between religious values embraced since childhood and the drive to meet social, emotional, and even biological needs. Factors such as identity search, pressure from the social environment, and the desire to express themselves are the main triggers for violations of religious norms by adolescents. The findings of the study show that although these adolescents engage in deviant behavior, religious values still have a significant influence on shaping their moral identity. Many teens experience feelings of guilt, anxiety, or fear of the spiritual consequences of their actions, which indicates a deep inner contradiction. The importance of support from family, religious communities, and the social environment in helping adolescents cope with this conflict is also a major highlight. An inclusive and flexible approach to religious education is considered important, because an approach that is too rigid can actually exacerbate adolescents' feelings of isolation from the religious community. By providing empathetic and non-judgmental guidance, adolescents can be encouraged to hold on to religious values while finding an authentic identity.

Overall, this internal conflict is not only part of the process of forming self-identity in adolescents, but also reflects the challenges in religious education in the modern era that are

increasingly open to the plurality of values. Future researchers can study the influence of religiosity on students' morality, anxiety and achievement at school.

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