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Publication details, including author guidelines

URL: <https://jurnal.konselingindonesia.com/index.php/jkp/about/submissions#authorGuidelines>

Editor: Khairul Bariyyah

Article History

Received: 27 Apr 2025

Revised: 29 Mei 2025

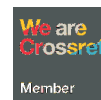
Accepted: 25 Jun 2025

How to cite this article (APA)

Susilawati, H., Sugiharto, D., Sunawan, S., & Mugiarto, H. (2025). Understanding forgiveness in adolescents: the role of religiosity, self-esteem, and empathy with social support as a moderator. *Jurnal Konseling dan Pendidikan*. 13(2), 286-296. <https://doi.org/10.29210/1151700>

The readers can link to article via <https://doi.org/10.29210/1151700>

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Jurnal Konseling dan Pendidikan

ISSN 2337-6740 (Print) | ISSN 2337-6880 (Electronic)





Understanding forgiveness in adolescents: the role of religiosity, self-esteem, and empathy with social support as a moderator

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ABSTRACT

Forgiveness is a complex psychological and spiritual process that is very important in the lives of adolescents who are full of interpersonal dynamics and the search for self-identity. This study aims to understand how religiosity, self-esteem, and empathy contribute to the tendency to forgive in adolescents, and how social support moderates this relationship. In the context of Indonesian culture, religious values are often the foundation for moral decision-making, including in the forgiveness process. High self-esteem allows adolescents to respond to interpersonal conflicts with better emotional regulation, while empathy opens up a space for understanding the motives of others that allows forgiveness to develop. This study uses a qualitative approach with a systematic literature study method, reviewing relevant scientific publications from 2013-2023 from various leading academic databases. The results of the review indicate that the three psychosocial variables religiosity, self-esteem, and empathy have a positive relationship with forgiveness, and this effect is strengthened by the presence of social support from family, peers, and teachers. Social support acts as a moderator that strengthens the relationship between variables by creating a sense of security, acceptance, and emotional validation that supports the forgiveness process. These findings emphasize the importance of a holistic approach and community-based interventions in developing character education programs for adolescents. This article provides a strong conceptual basis for educators, counselors, and policy makers to build strategies that support the development of forgiveness capacity among Indonesian adolescents.

Keywords:

Adolescent forgiveness
Religiosity
Social support

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Introduction

Forgiveness is a complex psychological process that involves a person's efforts to reduce feelings of resentment and hatred towards individuals who have done wrong (Worthington & Scherer, 2004). In adolescence, intense interpersonal experiences often lead to conflict, so the ability to forgive becomes an important factor in maintaining emotional balance and healthy social relationships (Enright & Fitzgibbons, 2015). This ability also plays a role in the development of identity and strengthening the personality of adolescents (Thompson et al., 2005).

Forgiveness is a psychological and spiritual process that involves releasing feelings of resentment, anger, and the desire to retaliate against those who have hurt (Nussbaum, 2016). In a Christian theological context, forgiveness is seen as a force that frees individuals from negative emotional

burdens, strengthens personal resilience, and improves interpersonal relationships (Horowski & Kowalski, 2022). Research by Kathryn et al. (2021) in *Matheo: Jurnal Teologi/Kependeta* shows that the teaching of forgiveness in Christianity contributes significantly to personal resilience by helping individuals manage stress and trauma more effectively (Kathryn et al., 2021).

In the social and cultural context of Indonesia, forgiveness also plays an important role in the post-conflict reconciliation process. A study by Yuli and Pramudiani (2020) in the *Jambi Psychology Journal* highlights that forgiveness can be the first step towards deeper reconciliation, especially in societies that have experienced social conflict (Yuli & Pramudiani, 2020). This process involves acknowledging the wounds that have occurred, letting go of the desire to retaliate, and rebuilding damaged relationships.

One factor that is believed to have a significant contribution to the tendency to forgive is religiosity. Research shows that adolescents who are religiously involved tend to be more forgiving because religious teachings often emphasize the importance of forgiveness and compassion (McCullough et al., 1997; Toussaint & Webb, 2005). Religiosity also functions as a meaning system that helps adolescents manage negative emotions and understand painful events in a spiritual framework (Pargament, 2011).

In addition to religiosity, self-esteem also plays a role in shaping the ability to forgive. Individuals with high self-esteem have better emotion regulation and are less likely to perceive others' mistakes as a threat to their identity (Caprara et al., 2013). In contrast, low self-esteem is often associated with vulnerability to deep emotional pain, which can hinder the ability to forgive (Orth & Robins, 2014; Strelan & Zdaniuk, 2015).

Empathy is also an important determinant in encouraging forgiveness. Adolescents who are able to understand the perspectives and emotions of others are more likely to develop an understanding of the perpetrator's motives and reduce the desire for revenge (Crone & Fuligni, 2020; Davis, 1983; Zechmeister & Romero, 2002). The empathic process opens up space for forgiveness by bridging the emotional distance between the perpetrator and the victim.

Although there have been many studies that highlight the relationship between forgiveness and psychosocial factors, research that specifically examines the contribution of religiosity, self-esteem, and empathy simultaneously in the context of Indonesian adolescents is still very limited. In addition, the moderating role of social support as a protective variable in this relationship has not been widely revealed empirically. This research is important to understand the internal and external dynamics that support the capacity for forgiveness during adolescent development.

Several previous studies have revealed a positive relationship between religiosity and forgiveness (McCullough et al., 1997), as well as between self-esteem and the ability to let go of grudges (Exline et al., 2003). Empathy has also been found to contribute to increased forgiveness through reduced aggressive responses (Zechmeister & Romero, 2002). However, studies that include social support as a moderator in this relationship, especially in adolescent populations in Eastern cultural contexts such as Indonesia, are still rare (Toussaint & Webb, 2005; Mullet et al., 2003).

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between religiosity, self-esteem, and empathy with the tendency to forgive in adolescents, and to explore the role of social support as a moderator in this relationship. By understanding this mechanism, research is expected to contribute to the development of more effective psychological interventions and character education programs in educational and family settings.

Methods

This study uses a qualitative approach with a literature review type that aims to examine in depth the concept of forgiveness in adolescents and its relationship to psychosocial factors such as religiosity, self-esteem, empathy, and social support as moderators. Literature review is a systematic method in identifying, evaluating, and interpreting all research relevant to a particular topic, in order to answer research questions or test certain hypotheses theoretically (Snyder, 2019).

The data sources in this study come from relevant scientific publications such as national and international journals indexed by Scopus, Web of Science, PubMed, and Google Scholar, with a focus on articles published in the last ten years (2013–2023). Inclusion criteria include articles that contain studies on forgiveness in adolescents and their relationship to the variables of religiosity, self-esteem, empathy, and social support. Meanwhile, sources that did not go through the peer-review process, such as opinions, popular articles, and blog materials, were excluded from the data review because they were considered not to meet academic standards (Booth et al., 2021).

The data collection technique was carried out through a systematic search of scientific databases with keywords such as forgiveness in adolescents, religiosity, self-esteem, empathy, and social support. The search process was carried out iteratively to ensure that the data collected was relevant and adequate. In addition, the search technique used the Boolean search and snowballing methods to track articles that were related to each other (Booth et al., 2021).

The data analysis method used was thematic analysis, which is the process of identifying recurring patterns, themes, and categories from various literature sources to find deep meaning related to the phenomenon being studied (Braun & Clarke, 2021). The researcher first carried out a familiarization stage with the contents of the article, then coded relevant information, identified themes, reviewed the consistency of the theme, and compiled thematic narratives logically and coherently. The validity of the analysis is maintained by applying the principles of theoretical triangulation and peer debriefing, as well as referring to a proven conceptual framework.

Results and Discussion

Result

In this study, researchers conducted a systematic literature study to examine the relationship between religiosity, self-esteem, empathy, and social support on the tendency to forgive in adolescents. From dozens of articles found through scientific database searches such as Scopus, Elsevier, SpringerLink, Taylor & Francis, and Google Scholar, a selection process was carried out based on inclusion criteria, such as topic suitability, year of publication (2013–2023), and publication quality. The final selection results produced 10 scientific articles that were considered the most relevant and representative for further analysis. These articles come from reputable journals and have gone through a peer-review process, and directly discuss the variables studied in this study. The following is a summary of the literature data from the 10 selected articles on Table 1.

Based on the results of a literature study of ten selected national journal articles, it appears that forgiveness in adolescents is influenced by various psychological and social factors, including religiosity, self-esteem, empathy, and social support. In a study by Nashori et al. (2023), it was found that religiosity plays a significant role in shaping attitudes of forgiveness among the Minang ethnic group. Religiosity in this context reflects an individual's spiritual beliefs and adherence to religious values, which strengthens their ability to forgive others, especially when influenced by personality traits such as agreeableness and neuroticism (Nashori et al., 2023). Similar findings were also expressed by Nashori et al. (2020) who studied the Javanese population in Yogyakarta, where religiosity and interpersonal attachment were able to shape forgiveness behavior through the mediation of the two personality traits (Nashori et al., 2020).

In addition to religiosity, self-esteem also emerged as an important factor in the forgiveness process. In a study conducted by Rachman et al. (2024), the attachment between parents and children, as well as the level of religiosity, contributed significantly to adolescent self-esteem. High self-esteem allows adolescents to more easily let go of the emotional pain they experience, thus facilitating the forgiveness process (Rachman et al., 2024). Pradinavika and Baiduri (2023) also found that social support plays a major role in shaping adolescents' self-esteem, which in turn, supports their ability to be more tolerant and forgiving (Pradinavika & Baiduri, 2023).

Interestingly, empathy did not appear explicitly in most of the articles reviewed, but elements of empathy are often inherent in the concept of self-compassion. Research by Latifannisa and Agustina (2023) showed that self-compassion, or self-compassion, has a positive correlation with the ability to

forgive in adolescents who are victims of divorce. This suggests that adolescents who have the ability to empathize with themselves are more able to also show empathy and forgiveness to others (Latifannisa & Agustina, 2024). This finding is reinforced by research by Wibowo and Naini (2021), which showed a positive correlation between self-compassion and forgiveness among high school students in Semarang (Wibowo & Naini, 2021).

Table 1. Selected Literature Data on Digital Transformation in Educational Management

Title	Author	Findings
Understanding Forgiveness among Minangnese Ethnicity: The Effect of Religiosity, Agreeableness, and Neuroticism	Nashori et al. (2023)	Religiosity has a significant influence on forgiveness through the mediation of agreeableness and neuroticism in the Minang ethnic group.
Religiosity, Interpersonal Attachment, and Forgiveness among the Javanese Population in Yogyakarta, Indonesia	Nashori et al. (2020)	Religiosity and interpersonal attachment influence forgiveness through the mediation of agreeableness and neuroticism traits in the Javanese population.
The Relationship of Self-Compassion with Forgiveness in Teenage Victims of Divorce in Indramayu	Latifannisa & Agustina (2023)	There is a significant positive relationship between self-compassion and forgiveness in adolescent victims of divorce.
Self-Compassion and Forgiveness among Senior High School Students: A Correlational and Comparative Study	Wibowo & Naini (2021)	Self-compassion is positively correlated with forgiveness in high school students in Semarang.
The Relationship of Parent-Child Attachment and Religiosity to Improving Adolescent Self-Esteem	Rachman et al. (2024)	Parent-child attachment and religiosity contribute significantly to increased self-esteem in adolescents.
The Effect of Social Support on Adolescent Self-Esteem	Pradinavika & Baiduri (2023)	Social support has a significant positive influence on adolescent self-esteem.
Prediksi Self-Esteem, Social Support dan Religiusitas terhadap Resiliensi	Pahlevi et al. (2017)	Self-esteem, social support, and religiosity significantly predict resilience in students.
The Contribution of Self-Efficacy, Self-Esteem, Social Support, and Self-Concept to Social Anxiety of High School Students in Malang City	Najich et al. (2023)	Self-esteem and social support contribute significantly to social anxiety in high school students.
The Mediating Effect of Forgiveness on the Relationship between Spirituality and Psychological Well-Being in Adults with History of Childhood Bullying	Theodora et al. (2023)	Forgiveness mediates the relationship between spirituality and psychological well-being in individuals with a history of childhood bullying.
Pengaruh Dukungan Sosial Teman Sebaya terhadap Harga Diri pada Santri	Aliyah et al. (2024)	Peer social support has a significant positive influence on students' self-esteem.

Social support was also found to be a strong moderating factor in the dynamics of forgiveness. Several articles highlight how support from peers, family, and the school environment can strengthen adolescents' self-esteem and increase their psychological resilience. Research by Aliyah et al. (2024) for example, highlighted the positive influence of peer support on the self-esteem of students, while research by Najich et al. (2023) showed a significant contribution of social support to reducing social

anxiety in high school students, which has implications for a more stable psychological condition and a greater ability to forgive (Aliyah et al., 2024; Najich et al., 2024).

Furthermore, the article by Theodora et al. (2023) provides a unique perspective that forgiveness not only plays a role in interpersonal relationships but also mediates the relationship between spirituality and psychological well-being, especially in individuals with a history of trauma such as childhood bullying. This confirms that forgiveness is a multidimensional process that is rooted in internal aspects of the individual such as religiosity and self-esteem, but is also strengthened by external factors such as social support and interpersonal relationships (Theodora et al., 2023).

Overall, this literature review underscores the importance of a holistic approach to understanding forgiveness in adolescents. Religiosity and self-esteem serve as intrapersonal foundations, while empathy and social support provide the social context in which forgiveness can grow and develop. By understanding these relationships in depth, psychological and educational interventions can be designed more effectively to help adolescents develop forgiveness, ultimately improving their psychological well-being and the quality of their social relationships.

Religiosity and Forgiveness in Adolescents

Religiosity is one of the strong psychosocial foundations in shaping adolescent attitudes and behavior. In a psychological context, religiosity is not only limited to religious rituals, but also includes internal beliefs, moral values, and an individual's relationship with a transcendent power or God. During adolescence—where the search for identity and self-worth is developing—religiosity can act as a moral guide and a source of healthy coping, especially in dealing with interpersonal conflicts.

Research shows that religiosity plays an important role in increasing the tendency to forgive. This is because almost all major religious belief systems teach the importance of forgiveness as a noble act. In Islam, for example, forgiveness is a primary value that is often associated with noble morals; in Christianity, forgiveness is a reflection of Christ's love; and in Buddhism and Hinduism, forgiveness is understood as part of releasing negative emotions and bad karma.

Research by McCullough et al. (1998) revealed that active involvement in religious activities strengthens prosocial orientations such as compassion, empathy, and forgiveness. This is because collective norms within religious communities encourage moral and tolerant behavior (McCullough & Worthington Everett L, 1999). Similarly, Toussaint & Friedman (2009) found that religious adolescents were more likely to show empathy and forgiveness after experiencing social conflict (Toussaint & Webb, 2005). This suggests that intrinsic religiosity—that is, religious motivation that comes from within, rather than from external pressure—is closely related to the tendency to forgive.

Psychologically, religiosity also helps adolescents process hurt or betrayal in a more adaptive way. Those who have a spiritual outlook on life tend to view conflict events as tests or as part of a divine plan, allowing them to let go of resentment or anger more quickly.

Table 2. Relevant Dimensions of Religiosity and Their Relationship to Forgiveness

Dimensions of Religiosity	Influence on Forgiveness
Intrinsic Religiosity	Giving spiritual meaning to conflict; increasing patience, compassion, and love for others.
Religious Practices	Forming habits of reflection and confession of mistakes through worship, prayer, and ritual.
Religious Attachment	Religious community support reinforces social norms of not seeking revenge and of forgiveness.

The table above illustrates how different aspects of religiosity play an important role in shaping forgiveness. Not only personal beliefs, but also religious environments and spiritual practices contribute to the formation of strong character in adolescents.

Religiosity has a transformative effect on cognitive and emotional processes in adolescents. When someone has a deep belief in religious teachings, the process of assessing a conflict or mistake is no longer seen solely as a threat to self-esteem, but as part of a life test or opportunity to grow spiritually.

Some psychological mechanisms at work: (1) Cognitive Reframing: Religious adolescents tend to interpret the hurtful behavior of others in a broader context (maybe this is a test from God, or everyone can make mistakes); (2) Emotion Regulation: Religious practices such as meditation, prayer, and regular worship can reduce the activation of the stress system and encourage calmness, which is a major asset in forgiving; (3) Modeling from Religious Figures: The stories of prophets and saints (for example, the Prophet Joseph who forgave his brothers, or Jesus who said 'Forgive them') become concrete, inspiring representations.

Table 3. Limitations

Aspect	Explanation
Extrinsic Religiosity	If adolescents behave religiously only because of social pressure (e.g., to look good), then the value of forgiveness can be shallow and inauthentic.
Dogmatic Fanaticism	In some contexts, religious teachings can be misinterpreted to extremes, leading to judgment rather than forgiveness.
Limitations of Cultural Context	The majority of studies were conducted in the US or Europe, while the Indonesian context has more complex religious and cultural dynamics.

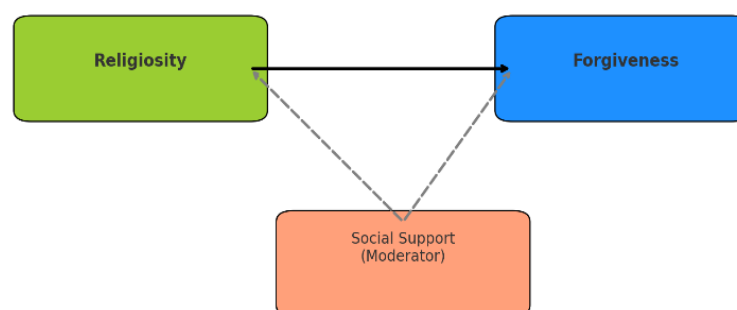


Figure 1 The Effect of Religiosity on Forgiveness with Social Support as a Moderator

Religiosity plays a direct role in encouraging an individual's tendency to forgive, where spiritual values and religious teachings shape a more tolerant, compassionate, and open attitude towards reconciliation. However, this relationship becomes stronger when supported by a positive social environment. Social support from family, peers, teachers, and religious communities act as moderators that strengthen the influence of religiosity on forgiveness. By feeling understood and accepted by their surroundings, religious adolescents will find it easier to apply the values of forgiveness in their daily lives.

Self-Esteem as a Predictor of Forgiveness

Self-esteem is an individual's subjective assessment of their own value or worth. In a psychological context, self-esteem influences how a person responds to interpersonal conflict, including the ability to forgive. Forgiveness itself is not only about forgetting the mistakes of others, but more about letting go of anger, hatred, and the desire to retaliate.

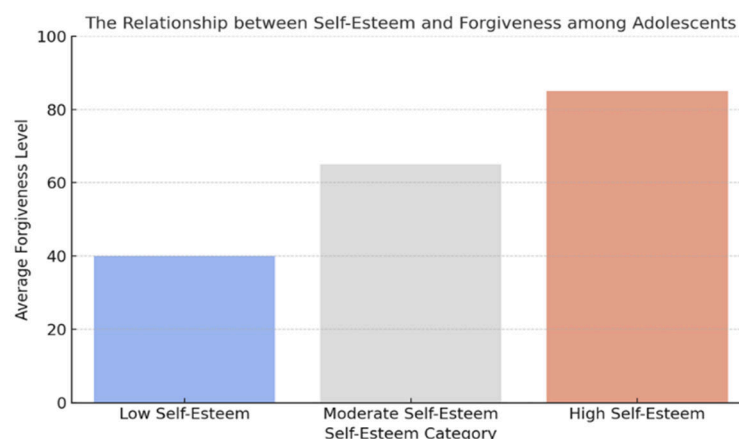


Figure 2 Relationship between Self-Esteem and Level of Forgiveness in Adolescents

Research has shown that high self-esteem significantly contributes to an individual's tendency to forgive. Individuals with high self-esteem tend to feel emotionally secure, have better self-control, and are less affected by insults or social rejection. They are able to view the mistakes of others as part of the dynamics of human relationships that can be forgiven, rather than as an attack on their personal identity (Exline et al., 2004).

In contrast, individuals with low self-esteem often have negative self-views and feel worthless. They are more easily offended or insulted when they experience negative treatment from others. When hurt, individuals with low self-esteem tend to internalize the event, harbor emotional wounds, and have a harder time forgiving because they feel their self-worth has been lowered (Maltby et al., 2001).

Psychologically, forgiveness requires strong emotional regulation processes and a sense of security within oneself. High self-esteem acts as an "emotional cushion" that allows a person to view the situation more objectively. They do not feel their identity is significantly compromised when hurt, making it easier to reconcile and forgive. In addition, high self-esteem is closely related to empathy and the desire to maintain healthy social relationships.

For example, in a longitudinal study of middle school adolescents, students who participated in a self-esteem-building program through self-affirmation and group counseling showed significant improvements in their ability to forgive peers who had hurt them verbally or socially (Reitz, 2022). They were not only more open to reconciliation, but also showed improvements in social relationships and emotional control.

As an illustration, a teenager named A had experienced bullying by his classmates. After participating in a counseling session that focused on building a positive self-image and practicing healthy emotional expression, A was able to see the experience from a different perspective and chose to forgive the perpetrator, not because he approved of his actions, but because he did not want to continue carrying the negative emotional burden.

This understanding has important implications, especially for educators, school counselors, and parents. Interventions aimed at increasing self-esteem—such as self-affirmation training, social competence enhancement, or cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT)—can indirectly promote forgiveness in adolescents. Such programs should be part of character development curricula in schools.

Empathy as a Key Factor in Forgiveness

Empathy is one of the key factors in the forgiveness process. A person's ability to understand and feel what another person is experiencing—both emotionally and cognitively—is an important foundation in reducing the anger and hatred that often arise as a reaction to hurtful treatment. When someone is able to "step into someone else's shoes," he or she can see beyond the hurtful actions that were carried out, and begin to understand the context, background, or even emotional pressure that may have driven the perpetrator to do so. This is the starting point for a sincere and deep forgiveness process.

In the context of psychology, empathy has been shown to play a central role in a person's tendency to forgive. McCullough, Worthington, and Rachal (1998) developed a model of interpersonal forgiveness that places empathy as one of the main mediating factors (Scherer et al., 2007). This model explains that as empathy grows, a person becomes more likely to understand and forgive, because he or she begins to see the perpetrator as a human being who also has wounds and weaknesses, rather than as a mere antagonist. Empathy helps shift the focus from inner wounds to a broader understanding of the perpetrator's social and psychological dynamics.

Empathy itself consists of two main dimensions, namely cognitive empathy and affective empathy. Cognitive empathy is the ability to rationally understand another person's perspective. A person with cognitive empathy can imagine how someone else feels about an event and why they react in a certain way. On the other hand, affective empathy is more emotional, namely the ability to feel the emotions experienced by others. These two forms of empathy complement each other in encouraging someone to be more lenient and accepting of others' mistakes.

Empirical research has supported the importance of empathy in forgiveness. Kardas, (2023) showed that in various forgiveness-based psychological intervention programs, increased empathy was a very influential factor in strengthening the tendency to forgive (Kardas, 2023). Experimental research conducted by Karremans and Van Lange (2004) also showed that participants who were asked to imagine the perpetrator's perspective showed increased levels of empathy and forgiveness compared to a control group (Karremans & Van Lange, 2004). Similar evidence has been found in the context of character education in schools, where Enright and Fitzgibbons (2000) showed that empathy-based training programs—such as role-playing and reflective discussions—can effectively improve students' ability to forgive their peers after experiencing interpersonal conflict (Ewin, 2004).

In Indonesia, a study by Susanti (2024) highlighted the importance of empathy training in the context of secondary education (Susanti, 2024). Through group discussion activities and sharing emotional experiences, students not only learn to understand the feelings of their peers, but are also better prepared to deal with conflict in a constructive way. This finding confirms that empathy is not a static innate ability, but rather a social competence that can be developed through the right pedagogical approach.

In practice, building empathy can be done through various approaches that involve direct experience or in-depth reflection. Experiential learning approaches, such as real-life simulations, role-play, and the use of media such as films and literature that depict interpersonal conflict, have been shown to be effective in strengthening empathy. Teachers and educators can also integrate reflective discussions or restorative circle techniques to create a safe space for students to share their experiences, understand each other, and learn to forgive.

Thus, empathy is not only a complementary element in the forgiveness process, but is the main foundation that allows for the birth of authentic and healing forgiveness. In a world full of conflict and social wounds, fostering empathy from an early age, especially among adolescents, is a very important emotional and social investment for the future of a more peaceful society.

Social Support as a Moderator

Social support plays an important role in the psychological dynamics of individuals, especially when someone faces interpersonal conflicts that cause emotional wounds. In the context of forgiveness, social support acts as a moderator, namely as a factor that can strengthen or weaken the influence between psychological variables such as religiosity, self-esteem, and empathy on the tendency to forgive. In other words, the quality and intensity of support that someone receives from the social environment—whether from family, peers, or teachers—can influence the extent to which the individual is able to manage their emotions and choose to forgive rather than hold a grudge.

Adolescents who receive emotional support from those around them tend to feel that they are not alone in facing pain or injustice. This feeling creates a sense of security and acceptance that is much needed in the emotional healing process. Social support can take the form of attention, validation of feelings, wise advice, or simply a physical presence that makes someone feel understood and accepted. In this context, social support not only strengthens the affective aspect of the forgiveness

process, but also increases the individual's ability to access and develop empathy for the party that hurt them.

A study by Toussaint and Webb (2005) found that individuals with high levels of social support were more likely to demonstrate forgiveness behavior after experiencing interpersonal conflict (Toussaint & Webb, 2005). This study confirms that social support serves as a buffer against stress and emotional pain that arises from conflict, as well as increasing an individual's openness to reconciliation and understanding of others.

Similar findings were also presented by Lawler-Row and Piferi (2006) who examined the relationship between psychological health, forgiveness, and social support (Lawler-Row & Piferi, 2006). They found that social support had a significant positive correlation with forgiveness, especially in individuals who experienced deep emotional wounds. Even in longitudinal studies, consistent social support has been shown to improve mental health and accelerate the process of emotional recovery.

Among adolescents, the role of social support is very crucial because at this stage of development, individuals are still forming their self-identity and are very sensitive to social rejection or acceptance. A study by Walton and Cohen (2011) showed that psychosocial interventions that strengthen a sense of belonging and social support in the school environment can increase students' emotional resilience and reduce the tendency to seek revenge in conflict situations (Walton & Cohen, 2011). Teenagers who feel supported by peers, family, or teachers tend to have greater confidence in processing pain and choosing a peaceful path through forgiveness.

On the other hand, lack of social support can worsen the psychological impact of conflict. When someone feels isolated or does not get the support they need, negative emotions such as anger, disappointment, or resentment become more difficult to overcome. This condition not only hinders the forgiveness process, but can also have long-term impacts on mental health, such as the emergence of symptoms of depression, anxiety, and even interpersonal relationship disorders.

In practice, it is important for the social environment, especially families and educational institutions, to provide a supportive space for adolescents to express emotions and resolve conflicts healthily. Teachers and parents can act as dialogue facilitators, moral guides, and sources of emotional strength that help adolescents see conflict as part of life learning. Peer support group-based programs or counseling sessions in schools can be a strategic alternative to creating a strong social support network among adolescents.

Thus, social support is not only a passive external factor, but an active component in shaping individual attitudes and moral choices. In the forgiveness process, the existence of social support can be a restorative energy that accelerates reconciliation, strengthens self-esteem, and fosters empathy and deeper understanding of others.

Table 4. Interactive Moderation

Connection		Without Social Support	With Social Support
Religiosity	Forgiveness	Weak	Strong
Self Esteem	Forgiveness	Currently	Stronger
Empathy	Forgiveness	Tall	Very high

Community-based interventions and ecosystem approaches (involving families and schools) are essential in facilitating the forgiveness process.

Conclusion

This study reveals that adolescent forgiveness is significantly influenced by the interplay of religiosity, self-esteem, and empathy. Religiosity provides moral and spiritual guidance that encourages forgiveness; self-esteem fosters emotional stability, allowing individuals to process interpersonal wounds more adaptively; and empathy acts as a bridge that facilitates understanding of others' perspectives. Social support emerges as a critical moderating factor that strengthens the influence of

these three variables by enhancing emotional validation and psychological resilience. The integration of these psychosocial components creates a multidimensional framework for understanding how forgiveness develops during adolescence.

The findings underscore the importance of implementing school-based and community-supported character education programs that focus on fostering empathy, enhancing self-esteem, and integrating spiritual values. Counselors and educators should consider using experiential learning tools such as role-playing, reflective dialogue, and peer group interventions to create emotionally safe environments that nurture forgiveness. Moreover, family and peer support should be actively involved to reinforce adolescents' psychosocial development and to promote a culture of compassion and reconciliation.

Future research should empirically test the proposed conceptual model through quantitative or mixed-method studies, focusing on diverse adolescent populations across different cultural and religious backgrounds. Researchers are also encouraged to explore how variables such as gender, family dynamics, and digital social interaction influence forgiveness tendencies. Longitudinal designs would be beneficial in examining the long-term effects of religiosity, self-esteem, and empathy development on adolescents' emotional health. Finally, evaluating the effectiveness of psychosocial intervention programs across educational and religious institutions will provide practical insights into fostering forgiveness among youth in multicultural societies like Indonesia.

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