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Dynamics of Muslim Adolescent Aggression: The Relationship Between Religiosity and Aggression and Peer Religion as Moderator

Nurul Isnaeni

Universitas Islam Negeri Raden Intan Lampung nurulisnaeni@radenintan.ac.id

Suhandi

Universitas Islam Negeri Raden Intan Lampung suhandi@radenintan.ac.id

> Satria Adi Pradana The University of Queensland *s.pradana@student.uq.edu.au*

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Abstract

Adolescence is a critical period marked by significant physical, cognitive, and socio-emotional changes. In Indonesia, adolescent's aggression is a problem influenced by various factors, such as internet addiction, poor emotional regulation, anxiety, peers influence, and parenting styles. Therefore, during this period, relationships with peers become increasingly important as young people strive to be independent and have a sense of belonging. The study population of 238 people was obtained through an initial questionnaire collected on July 25, 2024 - August 20, 2024. The use of covariance-based SEM with parametric assumptions that the research variables must meet the assumption of a normal multivariate distribution. However, the research variables did not meet the

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assumption of normality, so Partial Least Square (PLS) was used. The hypothesis testing method used Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with SmartPLS 4.00 software. The dynamics of Muslim adolescent aggression, especially the relationship between peer religiosity and aggression, is a multifaceted topic. General research shows that religiosity acts as a protective factor against aggression and delinquency among adolescents. However, peer influences and social context can significantly modulate this relationship.

Abstrak

Masa remaja merupakan masa kritis yang ditandai dengan perubahan fisik, kognitif, dan sosial emosional yang signifikan. Di Indonesia, agresivitas remaia merupakan masalah yang dipengaruhi oleh berbagai faktor, seperti kecanduan internet, regulasi emosi vang buruk, kecemasan, teman sebaya, dan gaya pengasuhan. Oleh karena itu, pada masa ini, hubungan dengan teman sebaya menjadi semakin penting karena kaum muda berusaha untuk mandiri dan memiliki rasa memiliki. Populasi penelitian sebanyak 238 orang diperoleh melalui kuesioner awal yang dikumpulkan pada tanggal 25 Juli 2024 – 20 Agustus 2024. Penggunaan SEM berbasis kovarians dengan asumsi parametrik bahwa variabel penelitian harus memenuhi asumsi distribusi multivariat normal. Akan tetapi, variabel penelitian tidak memenuhi asumsi normalitas, sehingga digunakan Partial Least Square (PLS). Metode pengujian pengujian hipotesis menggunakan Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) dengan software SmartPLS 4.00. Dinamika agresi remaja Muslim, khususnya hubungan antara religiusitas teman sebaya dan agresi, merupakan topik yang memiliki banyak sisi. Penelitian menunjukkan bahwa religiusitas secara umum bertindak sebagai faktor pelindung terhadap agresi dan kenakalan di kalangan remaja. Namun, pengaruh teman sebaya dan konteks sosial dapat secara signifikan memodulasi hubungan ini.

Keywords: Aggression, Religiosity, Peer Religion, Structural Equation Modeling

Introduction

Adolescence is a critical period marked by significant physical, cognitive, and socio-emotional changes (Yang, 2024; Walsh & Nicholson, 2022). In Indonesia, adolescent aggression is an issue influenced by various factors, such as internet addiction (Melati et al., 2024), poor emotional regulation (Baiduri & Widyorini, 2023), anxiety (Sari et al., 2022), and peer influence and parenting style (Wangsa & Tobing, 2024). Therefore, during this period, peer relationships become increasingly important as young people strive for independence and a sense of belonging (Rajendran et al., 2023). Aggression can be verbal and physical. Verbal aggression in adolescents includes some behaviors such as swearing, teasing, and belittling (Aridhona, 2022). A study in Jember Regency found that

29.6% of adolescents showed physically aggressive behavior, while verbal aggression was more common, namely in 46.4% of respondents (Budiman, 2023). In Yogyakarta, a particular form of aggression known as "Klithih" has been identified as a criminal act that causes physical harm (Muarifah et al., 2022). The increase in bullying cases also reinforces this phenomenon. A study showed that 67.9% of high school students and 66.1% of junior high school students had experienced bullying, with psychological violence being the most common form (Handayani et al., 2024).

According to data from the National Survey of Sharia Financial Literacy and Inclusion (2021), more than 90% of the Indonesian population identifies as Muslim. Therefore, religious values are an important part of everyday life. One important aspect of adolescent development is the role of peer relationships in the formation of morals and aggressive tendencies. Muslim adolescents' aggressive behavior may be influenced by their religious/gender identity, peer relationships, and maternal parenting practices (Alsarhi et al., 2019). One important aspect of adolescence is the increasing importance of peer relationships in the formation of morals and aggressive tendencies (Faris & Ennett, 2012), whereas relational aggression and victimization are associated with higher levels of peer rejection (Casper, D., Card, N., & Barlow, C. (2020). Therefore, there is a need for a safe and positive environment and promoting spirituality among adolescents in Indonesia.

A study among Muslim adolescents in Arabia found that religiosity was negatively correlated with delinquent peers and serious physical violence. Thus, religious beliefs can reduce the influence of peers on aggressive behavior (Massarwi et al., 2019). In addition, religious values can also counteract the negative influence of peers, especially on sexual aggression (Hagen et al., 2018). However, research in New Zealand, there are research findings that show that peer relationships in a religious context do not significantly reduce aggression among adolescents (Sævarsdóttir, 2018). This is interesting because it contradicts research showing that religiosity can function as a protective factor that reduces the negative impact of peers (Desmond, Soper, & Kraus, 2011).

Method

This study uses a multivariate quantitative method. Quantitative research allows findings to be generalized from a sample

population to a larger population (Harrison, 2010). The researcher involved three types of variables, namely Aggression as an independent variable, Religiosity as an independent variable, and Peer Religion as an independent variable. The independent variable is a variable that influences the dependent variable (Loliyana et al., 2023) and can be the distance from a predetermined point (Tagashira & Okabe, 2002). The researcher proposed a hypothesis, namely: religiosity affects aggression, and religiosity is influenced by aggression and moderated by peer religion.

This study involved male and female participants who were Muslim, aged 13 to 18 years, had the status of active junior high or high school students, and had peers with recognizable religious identities (For example, engaged in religious organizations such as ROHIS (Islamic Spirituality) at school, youth mosques, or Islamic youth organizations). The initial questionnaire was collected on July 25, 2024 - August 20, 2024. According to (Abdillah & Hartono, 2015), the number of samples used in PLS should be five or ten times the number of indicators. The sample used in this study was 5 times the number of indicators: 490 people. The number of samples per batch was taken using proportional stratified random sampling. The selection of samples with this method aims to ensure that the sample represents the character of all elements of the heterogeneous population. Sample data was collected through an online questionnaire" via Google Form. The collected data was analyzed using the Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) method with the help of SmartPLS 4.0 (Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling) software. PLS-SEM is used to analyze the relationship between latent variables in complex models. This method does not require normally distributed data and can be applied to studies with smaller sample sizes (Hair & Sarstedt, 2021).

Result and Discussion

This study uses two types of models in structural equation modeling using SmartPLS 4.0: the Outer Model and the Inner Model. The Outer Model used to determine how latent variables are measured with their respective indicators, ensuring that the constructs are accurately represented in the model (Ariyanto et al., 2024) (Alwiyah et al., 2024). The Inner Model was used to test the theoretical relationship between variables, determine the R-square value, and test hypotheses (Nurhalizah et al., 2024). Based on the questionnaire instrument data, the Aggression variable with 40 statement items, Peer Religion with 28 statements, and Religiosity with 30 items is declared valid and reliable

because the r count> r table and Cronbach's alpha value> 0.7 refers to Hair et al. (2019), so that the questionnaire can be distributed to respondents according to the characteristics that have been determined.

Based on the data obtained from the questionnaire recapitulation, the main SmartPLS model was formed with 98 statement items. Moreover, an evaluation of the measurement model of the model was carried out. Then, the PLS-Algorithm process is carried out to obtain the Cronbach Alpha, Composite Reliability, and AVE values. To obtain these values, several stages are required, such as looking at the outer loading to analyze Convergent Validity, as in Table 1. The Outer Loading value of each statement that is <0.7 is eliminated. Furthermore, the results of the statements that have been eliminated are as in Table 1.

Construct Validity and Reliability					
	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability	Average variance extracted (AVE)		
Agresi Fisik	0.509	0.779	0.298		
Agresivit	0.845	0.936	0.251		
as					
ES	0.562	0.917	0.561		
ESS	0.852	0.886	0.568		
IFS	0.848	0.822	0.515		
IS	0.302	0.673	0.289		
KY	0.291	0.528	0.341		
MBO	0.562	0.730	0.255		
MVS	0.636	0.777	0.303		
NS	0.687	0.009	0.469		
PA	0.755	0.786	0.454		
PMT	0.356	0.077	0.180		
PP	0.731	0.846	0.459		
РТ	0.669	0.794	0.310		
Peer	0.631	0.956	0.365		
Religion					
Pth	0.583	0.771	0.344		
Religiusi	0.787	0.904	0.221		
tas					

Table 1.

	Cronbac h's alpha	Composite reliability	Composite reliability	Average variance
		(rho_a)	(rho_c)	extracted (AVE)
Agresi Fisik	0.509	0.779	0.632	0.298
Agresivi	0.845	0.936	0.834	0.251
tas				
ES	0.562	0.917	0.755	0.561
ESS	0.852	0.886	0.886	0.568
IFS	-0.848	0.822	0.012	0.515
IS	0.302	0.673	0.017	0.289
KY	0.291	0.528	0.204	0.341
MBO	0.562	0.730	0.657	0.255
MVS	0.636	0.777	0.235	0.303
NS	0.687	-0.009	0.697	0.469
PA	0.755	0.786	0.827	0.454
PMT	0.356	0.077	0.455	0.180
PP	0.731	0.846	0.759	0.459
РТ	0.669	0.794	0.748	0.310
Peer	0.631	0.956	0.132	0.365
Religion				
Pth	0.583	0.771	0.675	0.344
Religius	0.787	0.904	0.798	0.221
itas				

Based on the values in Table 1, most of the constructs have not met the requirements for reliability and convergent validity. This means that there are constructs whose indicators are not consistent enough and do not reflect the construct well. A construct meets the requirements if the Cronbach Alpha value of all latent variables is >0.7, the Composite Reliability value is > 0.7, and the AVE is > 0.5 (Management, 2015). Aggressiveness, ES (Emotional Support), ESS (Emotional Social Support), PA (Positive Affect), PP (Perceived Peer), PT (Peer Trust) and Religiosity. These constructs have Composite Reliability (CR) values above 0.70, and most also have AVEs

approaching or above 0.50. while IFS, IS, KY, PMT, MVS, and Peer Religion have very low CR and AVE values, indicating that there are invalid indicators or that they do not contribute to the construct being measured.



Figure 1. SEM-PLS Model

Table 2.		
f-square values		

	i square varues			
Path	f ² Score	Interpretation		
$NS \rightarrow Peer Religion$	0.626	Large effect		
Peer Religion → Aggressiveness	0.142	Small–medium effect		
Religiosity → Aggressiveness	-0.018	Not significant (negative and small effect)		

Based on Table 2, the f-square value of the NS variable on Peer Religion has a large effect because its value is 0.626. On the Peer Religion variable on aggressiveness, the f-square value of 0.142 is stated as moderate because its value is in the middle between 0.15 and 0.35. Moreover, on the religiosity variable on aggressiveness, the value of -0.018 is stated as insignificant because the f-square value is between 0.02-0.15.

Hypothesis testing in this study was conducted using the bootstrapping method. The testing process is based on the results of the inner model (structural model), which includes outputs such as R-square values, parameter coefficients, and t-statistic values (Sayyida & Alwiyah, 2018). To determine whether the hypothesis is accepted or rejected, the significance value of the relationship between constructs, t-statistics, and p-values is considered. This analysis is assisted by using SmartPLS software. These values are obtained through the bootstrapping process (J.F. Hair, G.T.M. Hult, & C.M. Ringle, 2017). This study uses the guidelines of t-statistics> 1.96, a significance level of p-value <0.05 (5%), and a positive beta coefficient. The complete results of the hypothesis testing can be seen in Table 3.

Table 3.						
Hypothesis Testing						
No	Hypothesis	Path	T-	P-	Conclusion	
		Coefficient (B)	Statisti	valu		
1	Physical Aggression \rightarrow Aggressiveness	0,13680556	35.714	0.00 0	Accepted	
2	$ES \rightarrow Peer Religion$	0,22083333	N/A	N/A	Cannot be concluded	
3	$\begin{array}{llllllllllllllllllllllllllllllllllll$	0,14791667	32.005	$0.00 \\ 0$	Accepted	
4	IFS \rightarrow Peer Religion	0,09027778	N/A	N/A	Cannot be concluded	
5	$IS \rightarrow Peer Religion$	0.086	23.325	$\begin{array}{c} 0.00 \\ 0 \end{array}$	Accepted	
6	$KY \rightarrow Religiosity$	0,08819444	N/A	N/A	Cannot be concluded	
7	$\begin{array}{ll} \text{MBO} & \rightarrow \\ \text{Aggressiveness} \end{array}$	0,11041667	18.892	$0.00 \\ 0$	Accepted	
8	$\begin{array}{ccc} \text{MVS} & \rightarrow \\ \text{Aggressiveness} \end{array}$	0,13472222	13.261	0.00 0	Accepted	
9	$NS \rightarrow Peer Religion$	0.026	8.758	0.00 0	Accepted	
10	$PA \rightarrow Religiosity$	0,17083333	20.230	$\begin{array}{c} 0.00 \\ 0 \end{array}$	Accepted	
11	$PMT \rightarrow Religiosity$	0.056	19.479	$\begin{array}{c} 0.00 \\ 0 \end{array}$	Rejected	
12	$PP \rightarrow Religiosity$	0,1875	1.680	0.09 3	Accepted	
13	$\begin{array}{ll} \text{PT} & \rightarrow \\ \text{Aggressiveness} & \end{array}$	0,13472222	16.054	$\begin{array}{c} 0.00\\ 0 \end{array}$	Accepted (small effect)	
14	Peer Religion \rightarrow Aggressiveness	0.000	3.713	$\begin{array}{c} 0.00\\ 0 \end{array}$	Accepted	
15	$Pth \rightarrow Religiosity$	0,12569444	13.482	0.00 0	Accepted (small effect)	
16	Religiosity → Aggressiveness	0.000	25.403	0.00 0	Conclusion	

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Hypothesis testing in this study was conducted using the bootstrapping method on the SmartPLS application. Based on the results of the analysis, most of the relationships between constructs showed a t-statistic value > 1.96 and a p-value < 0.05, indicating that the relationships were statistically significant. For example, the Physical Aggression construct has a positive and significant effect on Aggressiveness ($\beta = 0.197$; t = 35.714; p < 0.001), indicating that increased physical aggression is correlated with increased aggressive behavior in adolescents. In addition, several dimensions of peer religiosity such as Emotional Spiritual Support (ESS) ($\beta = 0.213$; t = 32.005; p < 0.001), Informational Spiritual (IS) ($\beta = 0.086$; t = 23.325; p < 0.001), and Normative Spiritual (NS) ($\beta = 0.026$; t = 8.758; p < 0.001) also showed a significant influence on Peer Religion, which confirms the role of spiritual support in shaping religiosity among peers.

Furthermore, the variables Result-Oriented Motivation (MBO) ($\beta = 0.159$; t = 18.892; p < 0.001) and Social Value Motivation (MVS) ($\beta = 0.194$; t = 13.261; p < 0.001) also have a significant positive influence on Aggressiveness, indicating that motivational aspects contribute to aggressive behavior. Several other indicators of religiosity, such as Religious Experience (PA) ($\beta = 0.246$; t = 20.230; p < 0.001), Meaning of God (PMT) ($\beta = 0.056$; t = 19.479; p < 0.001), and Influence of Friends on Religious Aspects (Pth) ($\beta = 0.181$; t = 13.482; p < 0.001), also contribute significantly to the construct of Religiosity.

However, there is one relationship that is not statistically significant, that is between Personal Perception (PP) and Religiosity ($\beta = 0.270$; t = 1.680; p = 0.093), then the hypothesis is rejected. In addition, the path between Religiosity and Peer Religion on Aggressiveness shows statistical significance (t = 25.403 and t = 3.713 respectively; p < 0.001), but the path coefficient value is very small ($\beta = 0.000$), indicating a weak influence in practice.

Some paths have not been able to be determined as significant because t-statistic and p-value are not available, such as in the relationships $ES \rightarrow Peer$ Religion, IFS $\rightarrow Peer$ Religion, and KY \rightarrow Religiosity. Therefore, it is recommended that retesting is conducted to obtain more comprehensive results. Overall, these results support most of the research hypotheses and indicate that religiosity and peer influence play an important role in shaping adolescent aggressive behavior.

The results of this study provide an in-depth understanding of the dynamics of Muslim adolescent aggression, especially in relation to religiosity and the influence of peer religiosity. In general, these findings indicate that most of the constructs in the model have statistically significant relationships, which strengthens the theoretical framework that adolescent aggressive behavior is not only influenced by individual factors but also by the spiritual and social values. The dynamics of aggression in Muslim adolescents, especially the relationship between religiosity and aggression and the moderating role of peer religiosity, is an important issue that deserves further study. Studies conducted on Arab Muslim adolescents have shown that individuals with higher religiosity tend to have a weaker relationship between involvement with delinquent peers and physically violent behavior, indicating that religiosity can be a buffering factor against these negative influences (Massarwi et al., 2019). Conversely, several studies have shown that the relationship between religiosity and aggression is not universally protective. For example, one study found that peer spirituality and religiosity reduced aggression but were not significant predictors in all cases, suggesting that other factors may also play a crucial role (Sævarsdóttir, 2018).

Religiosity is often associated with reduced aggression and delinquency among adolescents. Research has shown that religious beliefs and practices can prevent delinquent behavior by promoting traditional values and preventing association with deviant peers (Simons et al., 2004) (Salas-Wright et al., 2014). In the context of Muslim adolescents, religious involvement has been associated with better social competence and adjustment, which may indirectly reduce aggressive behavior (French et al., 2008). The protective effect of religiosity on aggression was consistent across different socio demographic groups, suggesting a universal mechanism by which religiosity influences behavior (Salas-Wright et al., 2014).

Peers play a crucial role in shaping adolescent behavior, but levels of religiosity may moderate this influence. Studies have shown that adolescents with high religiosity are more resilient to peer pressure related to deviant behavior, including drug use—the implications of which may extend to other forms of delinquency, such as aggression (Desmond et al., 2011). In Muslim communities that tend to be collectivistic, the presence of religious peers may reinforce religious values and serve as an additional protective factor (French et al., 2008). The relationship between religiosity and aggression is not unidirectional. Delinquent behavior may also influence levels of religiosity, suggesting a complex interaction between these factors (Benda & Corwyn, 1997). Contextual factors, such as parental control and the socio-political environment, may further mediate the relationship between religiosity and aggression. For example, in politically volatile areas, religiosity combined with strong parental control may reduce the likelihood that adolescents will engage in aggressive or violent behavior (Khoury-Kassabri et al., 2015) (Victoroff et al., 2010). While religiosity generally acts as a deterrent to aggression, peer influences and the broader social context can significantly alter this dynamic. In some cases, religious adolescents may still engage in aggressive behavior if they perceive their group is being treated unfairly or if they are exposed to aggressive peers. This highlights the importance of considering both individual and environmental factors when examining the relationship between religiosity and aggression among Muslim adolescents.

Conclusion

The results of this study provide an in-depth understanding of the dynamics of Muslim adolescent aggressiveness, particularly in relation to religiosity and the influence of peer religiosity. In general, the findings show that most of the constructs in the model have statistically significant relationships, which strengthens the theoretical framework that adolescent aggressive behaviour is not only influenced by individual factors, but also by the spiritual and social values that surround them. The dynamics of aggression in Muslim adolescents, particularly the relationship between religiosity and aggression and the moderating role of peer religiosity, are important issues that deserve further study.

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