



Quantitative Study: Understanding Identity in Christ (Galatians 3:26–28) and Self-Confidence among Late Adolescents

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
<p>Article history: Submitted: March 02, 2026 Final Revised: April 10, 2026 Accepted: May 8, 2026 Published: May 15, 2026</p> <p>Keywords: Children of God; Galatians 3:26–28; Identity in Christ; Late Adolescents; Self-Confidence.</p>	<p>Purpose: This study aims to analyze the relationship between the understanding of identity in Christ based on Galatians 3:26–28 and self-confidence among late adolescents studying Christian Religious Education at State Christian Religious Higher Education Institutions in Indonesia.</p> <p>Methods: This study employed a quantitative approach using a correlational survey method. The sample consisted of 150 students aged 18–21 years, selected through stratified random sampling from five State Christian Religious Higher Education Institutions. Data were collected using Likert-scale questionnaires measuring students' understanding of identity in Christ and self-confidence. The instruments were tested for validity and reliability before the main data collection. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and Pearson Product-Moment correlation with SPSS version 26.</p> <p>Findings: The results show that students' understanding of identity in Christ was in the good category, with an actual score percentage of 78.28%. Their self-confidence was also in the good category, with a percentage of 79.94%. Correlation analysis revealed a strong and significant positive relationship between understanding identity in Christ and self-confidence, with $r = 0.682$ and $p = 0.000$. The coefficient of determination of 46.5% indicates that spiritual identity makes a substantial contribution to students' self-confidence.</p> <p>Research Implications: The findings imply that strengthening students' understanding of identity in Christ can support self-concept, emotional stability, and psychological resilience among late adolescents.</p> <p>Originality: This study contributes by integrating the theological concept of identity in Christ with the psychological construct of self-confidence in the context of Christian higher education in Indonesia.</p>



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INTRODUCTION

Late adolescence is a developmental phase marked by complex and dynamic psychological, social, emotional, and spiritual changes. During this age range, individuals begin to develop a stable sense of self-identity as a foundation for entering adulthood more independently. Changes in the social environment, academic pressure, family expectations, and the development of digital technology have made adolescents increasingly vulnerable to identity confusion and instability in self-concept (Abosedo, 2025). From the perspective of developmental psychology, Erikson positions adolescence as the stage of *identity versus role confusion*, a phase in which individuals seek answers to fundamental questions about who they are and how they are accepted in society (Hikmandayani et al., 2023; Jundi, 2026). The inability to resolve this identity crisis may lead to various psychological problems, such as anxiety, low self-esteem, social isolation, and difficulty in building healthy interpersonal relationships. This condition indicates that the formation of a strong identity is a fundamental need for late adolescents in order to develop optimally. Therefore, studies on the factors that contribute to identity formation and self-confidence among adolescents are increasingly relevant in the context of modern societal development.

The phenomenon of identity crisis among late adolescents is becoming increasingly evident in various contemporary social realities. Many adolescents experience pressure to gain social recognition through academic achievement, physical appearance, and digital validation on social media, causing their sense of self-worth to depend heavily on external acceptance. This situation leads some adolescents to experience emotional instability, excessive self-comparison, and low self-confidence when they fail to meet environmental expectations. [Parveen et al. \(2025\)](#) and [Stankovska et al. \(2023\)](#) explain that failure to form a clear identity during emerging adulthood may affect individuals' ability to develop intimacy, generativity, and integrity in subsequent developmental stages. On the other hand, the growth of individualistic and competitive cultures has also caused some adolescents to lose a stable value foundation for understanding the meaning of life and their own existence. In this context, the spiritual dimension has begun to be viewed as an important source for building adolescents' psychological resilience. Spirituality functions not only as a belief system but also as a framework of meaning that helps individuals understand themselves more fully and meaningfully. Thus, exploring the relationship between spiritual identity and adolescents' psychological health is important to examine empirically.

In the Christian tradition, the concept of identity in Christ occupies a central position in shaping believers' understanding of the self. Galatians 3:26–28 affirms that all believers are children of God through faith in Jesus Christ, so social identities such as ethnicity, social status, and gender are no longer the primary basis for determining human worth ([Hia & Silaen, 2022](#)). Paul presents identity in Christ as an identity given by grace, stable, and inclusive, in contrast to worldly identities that often change according to social circumstances. This concept is relevant in the context of late adolescents who are searching for acceptance and certainty of identity amid increasingly complex social pressures. [Panjaitan \(2025\)](#) and [Taufan \(2025\)](#) explain that baptism in Christ is not merely a religious ritual but also a symbol of participation in a new life that shapes a person's spiritual identity. In addition, [Kobak et al. \(2025\)](#) emphasize that Galatians 3:28 contains a dimension of universal equality that rejects discrimination and fosters a sense of unconditional acceptance among believers. This understanding of identity has the potential to serve as a psycho-spiritual foundation that strengthens adolescents' self-acceptance and self-confidence. Therefore, it is important to examine whether an understanding of identity in Christ truly correlates with the level of self-confidence among late adolescents empirically.

Self-confidence is one of the psychological aspects that plays an important role in individual development during late adolescence. Individuals with good self-confidence tend to be better able to manage emotions, build healthy social relationships, make decisions independently, and face life challenges with optimism ([Halisloy, 2024](#); [Sakinah et al., 2024](#)). Conversely, low self-confidence is often associated with social anxiety, difficulty in expressing oneself, and vulnerability to environmental pressure. [Li et al. \(2025\)](#) explain that self-confidence develops through the processes of self-acceptance, social experience, and consistent environmental support. However, most modern psychological approaches still position self-confidence within an individualistic framework that focuses on personal achievement and external validation. Such approaches do not fully consider the spiritual dimension as a source for forming a stable self-concept. In fact, in religious societies, spiritual identity often becomes a major factor shaping how individuals understand their own worth. Therefore, integrating the perspective of developmental psychology with the theology of identity in Christ is important to generate a more comprehensive understanding of the formation of self-confidence among late adolescents.

Several previous studies have shown that spirituality and religiosity are related to psychological health and adolescent identity development. [Siadari and Tarigan \(2026\)](#) found that Christian religious education contributes to the formation of adolescents' character and moral identity in social life. [Farida and Christy \(2023\)](#) also emphasize that the foundation of a Christian family plays an important role in shaping adolescents' spiritual intelligence through faith practices and healthy family relationships. In the context of the psychology of religion, [Febriansyah et al. \(2025\)](#) found that a religious approach can strengthen the psychological resilience of adolescents experiencing emotional conflict. Another study by [Zuhroh and Kurniawati \(2026\)](#) shows that a stable identity during emerging adulthood has positive implications for long-term psychosocial development. Meanwhile, [Ishari \(2025\)](#) developed the *Spiritual Identity Scale* as an instrument for understanding how spiritual identity shapes individuals' self-perception. Several recent international studies have also shown that spiritual identity is associated with self-esteem, resilience, and psychological well-being among adolescents and young adults. Nevertheless, most of these studies still focus on spirituality in general and have not specifically examined the concept of identity in Christ based on Galatians 3:26–28 as a theological construct that can be measured empirically.

Furthermore, previous studies have generally been conducted within separate disciplinary frameworks between psychology and theology. Studies in developmental psychology tend to explain identity formation from a psychosocial perspective without exploring spiritual or theological sources that may serve as the foundation of an individual's self-

concept. Conversely, theological studies are mostly normative and interpretive, so few have empirically tested the psychological implications of the concept of identity in Christ. This condition indicates a significant research gap in efforts to integrate Pauline theology with modern developmental psychology. In addition, quantitative studies linking the understanding of identity in Christ with the self-confidence of late adolescents in the context of State Christian Religious Higher Education Institutions in Indonesia remain very limited. In fact, university students in late adolescence face complex identity dynamics due to the interaction of academic, social, and spiritual demands. Therefore, research is needed to bridge these two scholarly traditions through a systematic empirical approach. Thus, this study is expected to provide a new contribution to the development of interdisciplinary studies between developmental psychology and Christian theology.

Based on the above discussion, this study aims to analyze the correlation between the understanding of identity in Christ based on Galatians 3:26–28 and the level of self-confidence among late adolescents, specifically students of Christian Religious Education at State Christian Religious Higher Education Institutions in Indonesia. This study is expected to offer a theoretical contribution by strengthening the integration between Pauline theology on identity in Christ and Erikson's psychosocial theory in understanding adolescent identity development. In addition, this study provides an empirical contribution by presenting quantitative evidence regarding the relationship between spiritual identity and self-confidence in the context of Christian higher education. Practically, the findings of this study may serve as a basis for developing Christian religious education curricula, pastoral ministry, and faith-based counseling approaches that are more contextual for late adolescents. This study is also expected to broaden academic discourse on the importance of the spiritual dimension in shaping the psychological health of the younger generation. By presenting an integrative approach between psychology and theology, this study seeks to offer a new perspective on how spiritual identity can become a source of psychological resilience amid the developmental dynamics of contemporary adolescence.

METHOD

This study employed a quantitative approach using a correlational survey method to analyze the relationship between the understanding of identity in Christ based on Galatians 3:26–28 and the self-confidence of late adolescents. The correlational approach was selected because this study aimed to determine the direction and strength of the relationship between the independent variable, namely the understanding of identity in Christ (X), and the dependent variable, namely self-confidence (Y), without intending to explain a causal relationship between the variables (Barus & Febiola, 2024; Tampubolon & Ariswandy, 2025). Through this approach, the study provides empirical evidence regarding the relationship between spiritual identity and the psychological condition of late adolescents in the context of Christian religious education. In addition, the survey method enables the systematic and efficient collection of data from a relatively large number of respondents, allowing the findings to be analyzed statistically and objectively. Therefore, this research design is considered relevant for addressing the research objective, which focuses on the relationship between variables within the fields of psychology and theology.

The study was conducted in five Christian Religious Education Study Programs at State Christian Religious Higher Education Institutions in Indonesia, namely Institut Agama Kristen Negeri Tarutung, Institut Agama Kristen Negeri Kupang, Institut Agama Kristen Negeri Manado, Institut Agama Kristen Negeri Toraja, and Sekolah Tinggi Agama Kristen Protestan Negeri Sentani. The research was carried out during the even semester of the 2025 academic year. The research subjects were active students of Christian Religious Education Study Programs aged 18–21 years, who were categorized as late adolescents. The selection of Christian religious higher education institutions as the research context was considered relevant because students in these environments tend to have more intensive spiritual experiences and religious identity formation than those in general educational settings. In addition, these institutions represent the geographical and sociocultural diversity of Christian students in Indonesia, thereby providing a more comprehensive picture of the relationship between spiritual identity and self-confidence.

The total number of respondents involved in this study was 180. A total of 30 respondents were used for the instrument trial, while the remaining 150 respondents were used as the main research sample. The sampling technique used was stratified random sampling to ensure proportional representation from each participating higher education institution. The inclusion criteria in this study included active students of Christian Religious Education Study Programs who were aged 18–21 years and were willing to participate voluntarily. Meanwhile, respondents who did not complete the questionnaire or did not meet the age criteria were excluded from the data analysis. The use of stratified random sampling was intended to minimize sampling bias and increase the representativeness of the research data. Thus, the sample was expected to reflect the characteristics of the population more objectively and proportionally.

The main instrument used in this study was a questionnaire in the form of a Likert scale. For the variable of understanding identity in Christ (X), the response options consisted of 5 = Strongly Agree (SA), 4 = Agree (A), 3 = Less Agree (LA), 2 = Disagree (D), and 1 = Strongly Disagree (SD). Meanwhile, for the self-confidence variable (Y), the response options consisted of 5 = Very Capable (VC), 4 = Capable (C), 3 = Less Capable (LC), 2 = Incapable (I), and 1 = Very Incapable (VI). The research instrument was designed to measure respondents' perceptions of spiritual identity and their level of self-confidence in a systematic and measurable manner. The Likert scale was chosen because it provides flexibility in measuring respondents' attitudes, perceptions, and psychological tendencies quantitatively (Antoro, 2025; Wibowo et al., 2025). In addition, this format facilitates statistical data processing and objective interpretation of the research findings.

The indicators of the variable of understanding identity in Christ were adapted from the *Spiritual Identity Scale* developed by Sturgeon (2016). These indicators include: (1) awareness of spirituality as part of the self, (2) involvement in spiritual practices or activities, (3) integration of spiritual values into decision-making and behavior, (4) life purpose and meaning based on spirituality, and (5) connectedness with a transcendent entity. Meanwhile, the indicators of the self-confidence variable were adapted from the *Manual of Self-Confidence Inventory for School Students* (PSCI) developed by Bhat and Arumugam (2021). These indicators include: (1) social and emotional maturity, (2) intellectual adequacy, (3) satisfaction, (4) optimism, (5) independence, (6) self-confidence, (7) self-feeling, (8) self-evaluation, and (9) assertiveness. The instrument adaptation process was carried out contextually to suit the characteristics of Christian Religious Education students in Indonesia without changing the conceptual substance of the original instruments. The use of standardized instruments aimed to strengthen the conceptual validity and consistency of the measurement of the research variables.

Before being used in the main study, the research instrument was first tested for validity using trial data from 30 respondents. The validity test results showed that the variable of understanding identity in Christ consisted of 25 valid statement items with a significance value below 0.05 (Sig. = 0.000 < 0.05). Meanwhile, the self-confidence variable consisted of 27 valid statement items with a significance value below 0.05 (Sig. = 0.000 < 0.05). These results indicate that all items used in the study met the validity requirements and were therefore appropriate for use in the main data collection. The validity test was conducted to ensure that the instrument was able to accurately and consistently measure the constructs under investigation (Hair et al., 2019). Thus, the research instrument had an adequate level of feasibility for use in the data analysis process.

To calculate the level of understanding of identity in Christ (X) and self-confidence (Y), this study used descriptive analysis with the actual score percentage approach proposed by Ariawan (2025). This approach was used to determine the extent to which the actual scores obtained from the questionnaire responses approached the expected ideal scores. The formula for calculating the actual score percentage is presented as follows:

$$\text{Actual Score Percentage} = (\text{Actual Score} / \text{Ideal Score}) \times 100\%$$

Where:

Actual Score = the total score of all respondents' answers to the questionnaire items

Ideal Score = the highest score (5) × the number of respondents

The results of the actual score percentage calculation were then interpreted based on the criteria proposed by Ariawan (2025), as presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Criteria for Determining Actual Scores

No.	Actual Score Percentage	Criteria
1	20.00% – 36.00%	Poor
2	36.01% – 52.00%	Fairly Poor
3	52.01% – 68.00%	Moderate
4	68.01% – 84.00%	Good
5	84.01% – 100%	Very Good

The research hypothesis was tested using Pearson Product Moment correlation analysis with the assistance of SPSS version 26. Pearson correlation analysis was used to determine the strength and direction of the relationship between two quantitative variables (Afiani et al., 2026). The Pearson correlation formula is presented as follows:

$$r = \frac{n\sum XY - (\sum X)(\sum Y)}{\sqrt{[n\sum X^2 - (\sum X)^2][n\sum Y^2 - (\sum Y)^2]}}$$

r = Pearson correlation coefficient

X = understanding of identity in Christ variable

Y = self-confidence variable

n = number of respondents

The decision-making criteria in this study were established as follows:

1. If the significance value (2-tailed) is < 0.05 , then H_0 is rejected, meaning that there is a significant positive correlation between the understanding of identity in Christ and the self-confidence of late adolescents.
2. If the significance value (2-tailed) is > 0.05 , then H_0 is accepted, meaning that there is no significant positive correlation between the two research variables.

The entire research process was conducted by observing the principles of academic research ethics. Each respondent was given an explanation regarding the purpose of the study and their right to participate voluntarily. The identities and personal data of the respondents were kept confidential and were used solely for academic purposes. In addition, respondents were given the freedom to withdraw from the study at any time without any consequences. The implementation of these ethical principles was intended to maintain scientific integrity, data security, and participants' comfort throughout the research process.

RESULTS

Distribution of the Actual Score Percentage for the Variable of Understanding Identity in Christ

The results of the descriptive analysis indicate that, in general, Christian Religious Education students at State Christian Religious Higher Education Institutions possess a good level of understanding of identity in Christ. This finding suggests that the respondents have a relatively strong spiritual understanding of their status as children of God based on Galatians 3:26–28. The distribution of the actual score percentages for each indicator of the understanding of identity in Christ variable is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Percentage Distribution of Actual Scores of the Understanding of Identity in Christ Variable

No	Aspek	Actual Score	Ideal Score	Percentage (%)	Information
1	Awareness of Spirituality as Part of the Self	3.184	3.750	84.91	Very Good
2	Engagement in Spiritual Practices or Activities	2.845	3.750	75.87	Good
3	Integration of Spiritual Values in Decision-Making and Behavior	2.819	3.750	75.17	Good
4	Purpose and Meaning of Life Based on Spirituality	2.838	3.750	75.68	Good
5	Connection with a Transcendent Entity	2.992	3.750	79.79	Good

Based on Table 2, the total actual score percentage for the variable of understanding identity in Christ reached 78.28% and was categorized as good. The aspect of awareness of spirituality as part of the self obtained the highest score, with a percentage of 84.91%, and was classified as very good. This finding indicates that the majority of respondents have developed a strong internal awareness regarding the existence of spiritual identity as an integral part of their self-concept. The high score in this dimension demonstrates that spiritual identity is not merely understood as a formal religious attribute but has become part of how respondents perceive their worth and existence. In the context of late adolescent development, this condition is important because stable identity awareness is often associated with individuals' ability to cope with social pressure and psychological uncertainty. Thus, identity in Christ appears to function as a source of meaning and self-stability for most respondents.

On the other hand, the aspect of integrating spiritual values into decision-making and behavior obtained the lowest percentage, namely 75.17%, although it still fell within the good category. This result indicates the possibility of a gap between the acceptance of spiritual identity at the cognitive level and its implementation in daily behavior. Respondents seem to find it relatively easier to affirm spiritual identity conceptually than to consistently translate it into concrete actions. This finding suggests that the internalization of spiritual values still requires a deeper formation process through life experiences, character development, and continuous spiritual practices. Furthermore, the dynamics of late adolescence, which involve academic pressure, social demands, and identity development, may influence individuals' consistency in implementing spiritual values in practical decision-making. Therefore, the spiritual identity of some

respondents may still be at the stage of *affirmational identity* rather than *embodied identity*, which is fully integrated into everyday behavior.

The aspect of connectedness with a transcendent entity obtained a percentage of 79.79% and was categorized as good. This finding indicates that a spiritual relationship with God remains one of the primary sources of life orientation and psychological reinforcement for the respondents. From the perspective of Pauline theology, identity as children of God through faith in Christ not only shapes spiritual status but also creates a sense of acceptance and belonging that transcends worldly social identities. The high score in this dimension suggests that respondents tend to understand their lives in relation to a spiritual reality greater than themselves. Nevertheless, because the study was conducted within a religion-based educational environment, the possibility of normative responses or a social desirability tendency must still be considered when interpreting the high spirituality scores of the respondents. Students at religious institutions are generally situated in environments that encourage positive religious expression, meaning that their responses may also be influenced by social expectations and the religious academic culture developed on campus. Therefore, the interpretation of the findings should be conducted proportionally by considering the social and institutional context in which the study was carried out.

Distribution of the Actual Score Percentage for the Variable of Late Adolescents' Self-Confidence

The results of the descriptive analysis of the self-confidence variable indicate that, in general, the respondents possessed a good level of self-confidence. This condition suggests that most students have positive perceptions of their personal abilities, emotional capacities, and social skills in dealing with various academic and social demands. The distribution of the actual score percentages for each dimension of self-confidence is presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Percentage Distribution of Actual Scores of Late Adolescent Self-Confidence Variables

No	Aspect	Actual Score	Ideal Score	Percentage (%)	Information
1	Social and emotional maturity	1.952	2.250	86.76	Very Good
2	Intellectual adequacy	1.649	2.250	73.29	Good
3	Satisfaction	1.679	2.250	74.62	Good
4	Optimism	1.750	2.250	77.78	Good
5	Independence	1.766	2.250	78.49	Good
6	Self-confidence	1.743	2.250	77.47	Good
7	Self-worth	1.913	2.250	85.02	Very Good
8	Self-evaluation	1.902	2.250	84.53	Very Good
9	Assertiveness	1.834	2.250	81.51	Good
	Total	16.188	20.250	79.94	Good

Based on Table 3, the total actual score percentage for the self-confidence variable reached 79.94% and was categorized as good. Three dimensions achieved the very good category, namely social and emotional maturity at 86.76%, self-feelings at 85.02%, and self-evaluation at 84.53%. These findings indicate that most respondents possess relatively good abilities in managing emotions, understanding themselves, and evaluating their personal capacities positively. The high score in the dimension of social and emotional maturity suggests that respondents are relatively capable of adapting to social environments and managing the emotional dynamics that emerge during late adolescence. This condition is important because social and emotional regulation is one of the key indicators of healthy psychological development during emerging adulthood. In addition, the high score in self-evaluation indicates that respondents tend to engage in positive self-reflection regarding their abilities and personal worth.

Nevertheless, the dimension of intellectual adequacy obtained the lowest score, namely 73.29%, although it still remained within the good category. This finding indicates that some respondents still experience certain doubts regarding their academic or intellectual abilities compared to other psychosocial aspects. In the context of higher education, academic pressure, performance demands, and social competition may influence individuals' perceptions of their intellectual capacities. This condition suggests that self-confidence in late adolescence is shaped not only by emotional factors but also by academic experiences and perceptions of personal achievement. Furthermore, the variation in scores across indicators demonstrates that self-confidence is a multidimensional construct that develops through complex interactions among psychological, social, spiritual, and life-experience factors. Therefore, efforts to develop students' self-confidence require a more holistic approach and should not focus solely on improving academic abilities.

The high scores in the dimensions of self-feelings and self-evaluation also indicate a tendency toward positive self-acceptance among the respondents. This condition may be understood as stable spiritual identity likely providing a sense of psychological security that helps individuals perceive themselves more positively. In the context of late adolescence, self-acceptance becomes an important factor in building psychological resilience when facing social pressure, future uncertainty, and complex social role changes. However, because this study employed a self-report questionnaire approach, the possibility of respondent subjectivity bias must still be considered. Respondents may have provided answers that reflected their ideal self-image rather than their actual psychological condition. Therefore, the interpretation of the findings should take into account the possibility of differences between reported self-perceptions and the actual psychological dynamics experienced by the respondents.

Correlation Between Understanding Identity in Christ and Late Adolescents' Self-Confidence

To determine the relationship between understanding identity in Christ and the self-confidence of late adolescents, this study employed Pearson Product Moment correlation analysis using SPSS version 26. The results of the correlation analysis are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Pearson Correlation Test Results

Variable	r	r ²	Sig.	Correlation Level
Understanding Identity in Christ (X) with Self-Confidence (Y)	0.682	0.465	0.000	Strong

The analysis results showed a Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.682 with a significance value of 0.000 ($p < 0.01$). These findings indicate a strong and statistically significant positive relationship between understanding identity in Christ and late adolescents' self-confidence. Thus, the higher the respondents' understanding of their identity in Christ, the higher their level of self-confidence. This relationship demonstrates that spiritual identity functions not merely as a symbolic religious belief but is also associated with the formation of self-concept, personal worth, and psychological stability. In the context of late adolescence, which is often characterized by identity exploration and the need for social acceptance, identity in Christ appears to provide a framework of meaning that helps individuals develop a more positive and stable self-perception. These findings suggest that spirituality has a significant psychological function in supporting the development of self-confidence among Christian Religious Education students.

The coefficient of determination (r^2) of 0.465 indicates that 46.5% of the variation in respondents' self-confidence can be explained by their understanding of identity in Christ, while the remaining 53.5% is influenced by other factors beyond the scope of this study. This contribution percentage demonstrates that spiritual identity is one of the dominant factors shaping the self-confidence of late adolescents, although it is not the sole psychological determinant influencing self-concept development. Other contributing factors may include family social support, peer relationships, academic experiences, economic conditions, parenting styles, and personality characteristics such as resilience and optimism. These findings indicate that the development of self-confidence in late adolescence occurs multidimensionally and is influenced by interactions between internal and external factors. Nevertheless, the contribution of 46.5% still demonstrates that spiritual identity occupies a strategic position as a psycho-spiritual foundation in the psychological development of late adolescents. The regression equation obtained in this study was:

$$Y = 28.456 + 0.623X$$

This equation indicates that every one-unit increase in understanding identity in Christ is followed by an increase of 0.623 units in self-confidence. These findings indicate a positive linear relationship between the two research variables. Conceptually, the results demonstrate that the deeper adolescents' understanding of themselves as individuals who are accepted, loved, and valued before God, the greater their tendency to develop a positive and stable self-concept. Spiritual identity appears to function as an internal source of meaning that helps adolescents cope with social pressure, future uncertainty, and psychological developmental dynamics during late adolescence. Therefore, the findings of this study reinforce the assumption that spirituality possesses not only a religious dimension but is also closely related to the formation of psychological well-being and identity resilience in facing contemporary social changes.

DISCUSSION

The main finding of this study indicates that the understanding of identity in Christ falls within the good category, with the highest dominance found in the aspect of awareness of spirituality as part of the self. These results

suggest that students of Christian Religious Education possess a relatively stable spiritual identity foundation in understanding themselves as children of God based on Galatians 3:26–28. From Erikson’s psychosocial development perspective, this condition indicates that the respondents tend to have successfully passed the stage of *identity versus role confusion* through the formation of an identity that derives legitimacy from spiritual beliefs rather than merely from external social recognition. Identity in Christ appears to function as an internal source of meaning that provides late adolescents with a sense of worth, acceptance, and existential certainty. This finding supports the view of [Hia and Silaen \(2022\)](#), who argue that the concept of “children of God” in Pauline theology presents a stable identity that does not depend on worldly social status. The results are also consistent with the study of [Kobak et al. \(2025\)](#), which emphasizes that spiritual identity rooted in a relationship with God can foster stronger self-acceptance among young individuals. However, this study extends previous research by not only positioning identity in Christ as a normative theological concept but also demonstrating its relevance as a psychological construct with tangible implications for the development of self-concept among late adolescents in the context of Christian higher education in Indonesia.

Although the level of understanding of spiritual identity was categorized as good, this study found that the aspect of integrating spiritual values into decision-making and behavior obtained the lowest score compared to other indicators. This finding indicates the existence of a gap between cognitive acknowledgment of spiritual identity and its practical implementation in everyday life. Conceptually, this condition can be explained through the theory of value internalization, which states that transforming beliefs into behavior requires the gradual development of experience, habituation, and social consistency. Late adolescents may have understood spiritual identity theologically, yet they may not have fully integrated these values into their actual responses to academic pressure, social relationships, and personal developmental dynamics. These findings suggest that spiritual identity has not entirely reached the stage of *embodied identity*, but rather remains at the stage of *affirmational identity*, which is more declarative in nature. The findings are consistent with the study by [Febriansyah et al. \(2025\)](#), which found that spirituality can serve as a source of psychological resilience, although its effectiveness is strongly influenced by the level of value internalization in daily life practices. On the other hand, the findings differ from those of [Farida and Christy \(2023\)](#), who found that adolescents receiving intensive spiritual guidance tend to demonstrate stronger consistency in religious behavior. This difference may be influenced by the respondents’ social context, as university students in late adolescence experience more dynamic identity complexities compared to adolescents within more controlled family environments.

Another finding reveals that the respondents’ level of self-confidence falls within the good category, with the highest dominance found in the dimensions of social and emotional maturity, self-feelings, and self-evaluation. This condition indicates that most students possess relatively good abilities in understanding their personal capacities, managing emotions, and adapting to social environments. From the perspective of developmental psychology, stable self-confidence is an important indicator of an individual’s success in developing a positive self-concept during the phase of emerging adulthood. The high score in the self-evaluation dimension demonstrates that respondents tend to engage in positive self-reflection regarding their abilities and personal worth. These findings support self-esteem theory, which argues that individuals’ perceptions of their own worth influence the quality of social relationships, optimism, and their ability to cope with life pressures. [Li et al. \(2025\)](#) also explain that self-confidence develops through self-acceptance and consistent environmental support. Furthermore, the results are in line with the study of [Zuhroh and Kurniawati \(2026\)](#), which found that stable identity has positive implications for the psychosocial development of late adolescents. Nevertheless, this study offers a new perspective by showing that the development of self-confidence is influenced not only by psychosocial factors but also by spiritual meaning-making regarding identity in Christ as a source of unconditional acceptance.

On the other hand, the dimension of intellectual adequacy obtained the lowest score compared to the other dimensions of self-confidence. This finding indicates that some respondents still experience doubts regarding their academic capacity and intellectual abilities, despite being relatively stable socially and emotionally. This condition suggests that self-confidence during late adolescence is a multidimensional construct influenced by various personal experiences, academic pressures, and social performance demands. In the context of higher education, students often face academic competition and high expectations for achievement, making perceptions of intellectual adequacy more vulnerable compared to other psychosocial aspects. These findings are consistent with the study by [Stankovska et al. \(2023\)](#), which explains that social and academic pressures during emerging adulthood can influence individuals’ perceptions of their abilities. However, this study demonstrates that despite doubts in the intellectual dimension, strong spiritual identity appears to help respondents maintain self-acceptance and emotional stability. This finding expands the scope of modern developmental psychology, which has generally positioned self-confidence within an individualistic framework centered on personal achievement. Thus, this study suggests that spirituality can function as a compensatory mechanism that helps individuals maintain self-worth when facing limitations or academic pressures.

The most significant finding of this study is the discovery of a strong and significant positive relationship between understanding identity in Christ and self-confidence among late adolescents, with a correlation coefficient of 0.682 and a contribution of 46.5%. These findings indicate that spiritual identity has a substantial relationship with the formation of self-concept and the psychological stability of Christian Religious Education students. Theoretically, these results support the integration of Pauline theology regarding identity in Christ with Erikson's psychosocial theory concerning identity formation during adolescence. Identity in Christ appears to provide a framework of meaning that helps individuals understand themselves as accepted, loved, and valuable persons without depending entirely on external validation. This condition strengthens psychological security, which subsequently contributes to increased self-confidence in facing social and academic life dynamics. These findings are consistent with [Ishari's \(2025\)](#) study on spiritual identity related to self-esteem and psychological well-being, as well as with the study of [Siadari and Tarigan \(2026\)](#), which emphasizes the importance of religious education in shaping adolescents' character and identity. However, this study offers a new conceptual contribution by specifically examining Galatians 3:26–28 as the foundation of spiritual identity operationalized quantitatively within the context of developmental psychology. Therefore, this study successfully broadens the global literature on the relationship between spiritual identity and psychological health through an interdisciplinary approach integrating theology and psychology.

Although this study demonstrates a strong relationship between identity in Christ and self-confidence, the interpretation of the findings should still be approached critically by considering the research context and its implicit limitations. The study was conducted at State Christian Religious Higher Education Institutions, so the religious academic environment may have influenced respondents to provide more positive responses regarding spirituality and self-concept. In addition, the use of self-report questionnaires creates the possibility of subjectivity bias and *social desirability tendency*, in which respondents tend to provide answers perceived as consistent with the religious norms of the campus environment. Other factors, such as family support, peer relationships, church ministry experiences, and personality characteristics, may also influence respondents' levels of self-confidence beyond the variables examined in this study. Therefore, the 46.5% contribution indicates that spiritual identity is indeed important, but it is not the sole determinant of late adolescents' psychological development. Nevertheless, this study still makes a significant contribution in addressing the gap in literature concerning the integration of developmental psychology and Christian theology through a quantitative empirical approach. The study also offers a new perspective that spirituality does not merely function as a normative religious expression, but can also be understood as a source of psychological resilience and identity stability amid the crisis of meaning experienced by contemporary young generations.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study demonstrate that the understanding of identity in Christ based on Galatians 3:26–28 has a strong and significant positive relationship with the self-confidence of late adolescents among Christian Religious Education students at State Christian Religious Higher Education Institutions in Indonesia. Both the level of understanding of identity in Christ and the level of respondents' self-confidence were categorized as good, indicating that the majority of students possess relatively stable spiritual awareness and self-concepts. The results of the Pearson correlation analysis revealed a coefficient value of 0.682 with a significance level of 0.000, confirming that the higher an individual's understanding of their identity as children of God, the higher their level of self-confidence. The contribution of the identity in Christ variable to self-confidence, amounting to 46.5%, indicates that spiritual identity serves as an important psycho-spiritual foundation in the formation of self-concept during late adolescence. These findings demonstrate that spirituality functions not merely as a normative religious expression, but also plays a tangible psychological role in fostering self-acceptance, emotional stability, and a sense of personal worth. In the context of late adolescence, which is often characterized by identity exploration, social pressure, and uncertainty about the future, identity in Christ appears to serve as an internal source of meaning that helps individuals maintain stronger psychological resilience.

Theoretically, this study strengthens the integration between Pauline theology regarding identity in Christ and Erikson's psychosocial theory of identity formation during late adolescence. The findings suggest that the concept of spiritual identity should be understood not only as a theological doctrine but also as a psychological construct with empirical implications for the development of self-concept and the mental health of young people. Furthermore, this study expands the academic discourse on spiritual identity by providing quantitative evidence that transcendent religious identity can function as an internal mechanism for developing more stable self-confidence that is not entirely dependent on external validation. Practically, the findings offer important implications for the development of Christian religious education, pastoral ministry, and faith-based counseling approaches in supporting late adolescents as they navigate contemporary psychological developmental challenges. Nevertheless, this study has several

limitations, as it was conducted within a Christian religious higher education context and employed a self-report questionnaire approach, which may introduce subjective response bias. Therefore, future studies are recommended to involve more diverse social contexts, apply mixed-methods or longitudinal approaches, and explore additional variables such as family support, resilience, spiritual well-being, and personal religious experiences in order to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of the relationship between spiritual identity and the psychological development of late adolescents.

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AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION STATEMENT

HM contributed to the conceptualization of the study, research design, data analysis, interpretation of findings, and manuscript writing. **DDP** contributed to data collection, instrument validation, and literature review. **CCK** contributed to statistical analysis, data interpretation, and manuscript revision. **PH** contributed to data management, proofreading, and final editing of the manuscript.

AI DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

The authors declare that artificial intelligence (AI)-assisted tools were used only to support language refinement, grammar checking, and manuscript editing during the preparation of this article. All ideas, data collection, data analysis, interpretation of findings, and scholarly conclusions were conducted entirely by the authors. The authors take full responsibility for the accuracy, originality, and integrity of the content presented in this manuscript.

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Quantitative Study: Understanding Identity in Christ (Galatians 3:26–28) and Self-Confidence ...

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