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Exploring Intrapersonal Dialogue in Elderly Living in Nursing Homes to Improve Religious Quality

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Abstract - This qualitative study employs the theoretical frameworks of intrapersonal communication and gerotranscendence to investigate how intrapersonal dialogue enhances the religious experiences of elderly individuals in nursing homes. The study focuses on Panti Jompo Tresna Werdha Husnul Khatimah in Pekanbaru City, Riau Province, Indonesia. Using a qualitative descriptive approach with in-depth interviews and participatory observation of five purposely selected individuals aged 74–81, as well as thematic analysis, this study aims to understand the mechanisms of spiritual transformation. The findings reveal the complexity of psychospiritual mechanisms through four stages forming a synergistic cycle: adapted sensations through compensation strategies to accept religious stimuli; perceptions transforming the meaning of worship from obligation to existential need; religious memories serving as a source of psychological and spiritual resilience; and reflective thinking processes crystallizing experiences into spiritual maturity. These results reinforce Gerotranscendence theory, which posits that spiritual perspectives evolve in old age and that intrapersonal dialogue serves as a vital coping mechanism. The study concludes that intrapersonal dialogue plays a fundamental and dynamic role in improving the religious lives of the elderly. It also recommends creating a religious environment in nursing homes to support the holistic spiritual health of residents.

Keywords: Intrapersonal communication; elderly; nursing home; religious quality; spiritual health

Introduction

Indonesia is experiencing a significant demographic shift in its elderly population. The number of individuals aged 60 and over is projected to reach 33 million by 2025, accounting for 11.53% of the total population (Kementerian Sosial RI, 2025). This shift underscores the importance of supporting the holistic well-being of older adults, including their physical, psychological, and spiritual health. Increased religious involvement provides older adults with a framework for interpreting life experiences, coping with loss, and finding purpose in old age, particularly for those living in nursing homes (Naczk et al., 2020).

The transition to life in a nursing home often presents unique challenges for older adults. Changes in social environments, limited mobility, and reduced interaction with family can trigger feelings of isolation and loneliness (Erfiyanti et al., 2023). In this context, the spiritual dimension becomes increasingly crucial as a source of psychological resilience. Religious activities, such as prayer,

scripture reading, and worship, can significantly improve mental health, increase life satisfaction, and reduce anxiety in older adults (Andrianto et al., 2023).

According to research by Lutfiah (2020), seniors who actively participate in religious services at nursing homes tend to adjust better and have a more positive perception of the aging process. This internal process can be understood through the lens of intrapersonal communication, defined as the process by which an individual communicates with themselves through internal discourse, reflection, and self-talk (Woodman, 2021). Intrapersonal dialogue is the foundation of self-awareness, decision-making, and personal growth. According to Jang and Kim (2021), intrapersonal dialogue is especially important in the context of aging because seniors often reflect on their life journeys. Through this internal dialogue, seniors reconstruct their life narratives, give meaning to their existence, and strengthen their relationship with God. This process is both cognitive and deeply spiritual, transforming ritual worship into meaningful personal experiences.

In the context of Indonesia's religious population, where religious values permeate various aspects of life, exploring intrapersonal dialogue among older adults is significant (Palinggi et al., 2023; Rakhmat, 2019). Prabandari (2021) asserts that spirituality plays a crucial buffering role against the negative effects of aging on older Indonesians.

Previous research has widely recognized the importance of spirituality for older adults, focusing on external approaches such as the frequency with which they participate in religious activities. However, research specifically exploring how intrapersonal dialogue supports religious engagement among older adults in Indonesia is limited. This research gap underscores the necessity of understanding the role of internal psychological mechanisms, such as intrapersonal communication dialogue, in improving the quality of worship and well-being among older adults.

To analyze the process by which a person actively interprets and processes religious experiences through internal dialogue, Rakhmat (2019) proposed a four-stage intrapersonal communication framework consisting of sensation, perception, memory, and thinking. This study uses these four stages to address the lack of research on spirituality among the elderly in Indonesia, particularly nursing home residents. Conducted at the *Panti Jompo Tresna Werdha Husnul Khatimah* in Pekanbaru City, the study explored elderly individuals' interpretation of worship in old age through intrapersonal dialogue. This study contributes to the fields of religious psychology and gerontology by offering a local perspective rich in spiritual values.

Based on the identified gap and novelty, this study aims to answer the following research question: How does intrapersonal dialogue contribute to the religious engagement of elderly individuals at the *Panti Jompo Tresna Werdha Husnul Khatimah* Nursing Home in Pekanbaru City, Indonesia? Operationally, the study will analyze manifestations of intrapersonal dialogue in elderly individuals using the intrapersonal communication framework. The research focuses on understanding the internal psychological mechanisms that shape, risk, or transform the spirituality of elderly nursing home residents.

Theoretical Framework

Intrapersonal Dialogue and the Aging Self

Intrapersonal dialogue is a communication process that occurs within an individual through interactions with their own thoughts, involving reflection, contemplation, and internal information processing (Fitria, 2023). According to Rakhmat (2019), this process involves four cognitive stages that form the basis for self-understanding and decision-making. These four stages are sensation, perception, memory, and thinking. In the context of aging, this process becomes more complex as life experiences accumulate, shaping older adults' unique perspectives on interpreting reality (Shao & Lee, 2020).

The function of intrapersonal dialogue becomes increasingly crucial in old age. According to Brinthaupt et al. (2020) and Al Izzami et al. (2023), several key relevant functions are: (1) developing self-awareness through introspection; (2) managing emotions and stress; (3) adaptive problem-solving; (4) maintaining mental health; and (5) strengthening motivation and spiritual resilience. These functions help older adults adapt to the various physical, psychological, and social changes they experience (Woodman, 2021).

Studies by Erfiyanti et al. (2023) and Shao & Lee (2020) explain that intrapersonal dialogue in older adults intensifies as they undergo life review and reconcile their life experiences. Monereo & Hermans' (2023) Dialogical Self Theory explains that the dialogue process in older adults becomes

increasingly complex because the self consists of multiple "I-positions" in dialogue with each other. Therefore, older adults attain psychological and spiritual maturity as they tend to develop the ability to integrate various aspects of their life experiences through continuous internal dialogue (Filip et al., 2020).

Understanding the dynamics of intrapersonal dialogue in older adults has important implications for elderly care and support. According to Karmiyati et al. (2020), interventions that facilitate reflection and life review can improve the psychological well-being of older adults. This approach not only helps achieve ego integrity but also enables older adults to find new meaning and purpose in life in old age, while simultaneously optimizing the potential for spiritual development, a unique characteristic of aging.

This phenomenon aligns with the psychosocial developmental stage of ego integrity versus despair, where older adults actively reframe the meaning of their existence through deep reflection and seek to achieve acceptance of their life journey (Van der Kaap-Deeder et al., 2022). According to Bahrevar & Hosseini (2025), this process is not only retrospective but also prospective. According to the concept of gerotranscendence, older adults experience a metacognitive shift in perspective that allows them to accept the contradictions and uncertainties in their lives.

Religious Involvement in Late Adulthood

Religious involvement undergoes a significant transformation in meaning, particularly in old age. Research by Lutfiah (2020) emphasizes that meaningful religious involvement transcends formal rituals and leads to a more personal and profound search for meaning. This finding suggests that older adults tend to develop a more contemplative and reflective spirituality, which serves as an adaptive mechanism for coping with the challenges of aging (Solaimanizadeh et al., 2020). Krause & Ironson (2025) added that religion can serve as a source of comfort, a means of maintaining a sense of control, and a way to connect with transcendent realities amidst physical decline and social isolation.

In Indonesia, where religious values are deeply rooted in culture and religious practices are an integral part of the elderly's identity and an effective coping mechanism (Rimadani, 2023), a study by Al Izzami et al. (2023) confirmed that in societies with strong religious traditions, elderly Indonesians demonstrate greater psychological resilience through religious activities. Research by Noor (2021) on elderly Indonesian Muslims also found that the intensity of religious worship not only correlates with better mental health but also plays a role in building a sense of belonging and purpose in life in old age.

Factors influencing increased religious practice include religious understanding, social environment, spiritual-psychological well-being, and the use of media and technology (Pohan, 2021). Regarding social support, research by Upenieks & Krause (2024) added that social support from religious communities is an important predictor of the consistency of elderly religious practice. Meanwhile, a study by Iskandar et al. (2025) showed that the use of religious technology such as prayer reminder apps and online study sessions contributes to maintaining religious discipline despite limited physical mobility.

Increased religious involvement in the elderly can be seen in two ways: the quantity of worship and the quality of worship, which includes devotion, sincerity, and appreciation of meaning (Iskandar et al., 2025; Pohan, 2021). This is supported by research by Foong et al. (2023), which states that the peace of mind achieved by the elderly has shifted from extrinsic to intrinsic religiosity, where spiritual values are more deeply internalized. They no longer seek peace for social recognition (extrinsic), but rather a deep and sincere appreciation of religious values for personal peace (intrinsic). This finding is consistent with research by Alshehry et al. (2020), which shows that the quality of religious experience is positively correlated with life satisfaction and subjective well-being in the elderly population.

The Intersection of Intrapersonal Dialogue and Religious Engagement

The integration of intrapersonal dialogue and religious engagement creates a unique spiritual dynamic in the elderly. This can be comprehensively explained through a four-stage framework of the intrapersonal communication process (Palinggi et al., 2023; Rakhmat, 2019). In the sensation stage, for example, Muslim elderly receive religious stimuli through their five senses, such as the call to prayer, the recitation of the Quran, or the visualization of religious symbols. Despite experiencing sensory impairment, research by Razzak et al. (2020) demonstrated that elderly individuals develop compensatory strategies through selective attention and perceptual intensification. A study by

Candraningtyas et al. (2024) suggests that consistent religious stimuli can minimize the impact of sensory impairment through neuroplasticity mechanisms.

Next, the perception stage involves interpreting and assigning personal meaning to religious stimuli. According to Pohan (2021), during this phase, elderly individuals develop an understanding that worship is not merely an obligation, but a spiritual necessity and preparation for the afterlife. Research by Upenieks & Krause (2024) also revealed that elderly people who successfully made positive meaning attributions to their religious experiences showed lower levels of depression and higher life satisfaction.

Meanwhile, in the memory stage, older adults are able to activate past religious experiences as references and sources of motivation. Memories of family worship or previous spiritual accomplishments support consistent devotions. A study by Khait et al. (2024) demonstrated that religious reminiscence serves as a source of psychological resilience in older adults. Meanwhile, research in Indonesia by Salamun et al. (2023) found that collective memories of religious rituals strengthen the religious identity of older adults. Finally, the thinking stage involves evaluation, reflection, and critical assessment of religious practices. According to Rimadani (2023), this cognitive process enables older adults to engage in introspection to improve the quality of their devotions.

This theoretical framework is supported by Fitria's (2023) research on the effectiveness of intrapersonal religious communication, but this study did not specifically focus on older adults in nursing homes. The integration of these four stages creates a dynamic and holistic cycle of intrapersonal communication, meaningfully strengthening older adults' religious engagement.

Research by Andrianto et al. (2023) suggests that in old age, there is a natural integration between cognitive and spiritual processes, where religious experiences are processed through more mature psychological mechanisms. This is in line with the gerotranscendence theory which states that the elderly experience the development of metacognitive awareness which allows for the deepening of spiritual aspects (Tornstam, 1997).

Building upon this theoretical foundation, the present study aims to explore how intrapersonal dialogue, examined through the four-stage framework of sensation, perception, memory, and thinking, shapes and transforms the religious engagement of elderly individuals residing in a nursing home in Pekanbaru, Indonesia.

Material and Methodology

This study employed a qualitative descriptive design to gain an in-depth understanding of the lived experiences of older adults related to intrapersonal dialogue and spiritual life. A qualitative approach was chosen due to its suitability for exploring complex subjective phenomena (Lim, 2025). The study was conducted at *the UPT Pelayanan Sosial Tresna Werdha Husnul Khatimah*, a government-owned nursing home in Pekanbaru City, Indonesia, involving five residents (3 men, 2 women) aged 74-81 years who were selected through purposive sampling.

This sample size is methodologically justified based on the concept of "data adequacy" (Hsu et al., 2026), which emphasizes that sample sufficiency in qualitative research depends on a constellation of factors including study focus, population homogeneity, and information power (Guest et al., 2020). Given the narrow focus of this study (intrapersonal dialogue in religious engagement), the high homogeneity of the population (elderly residents in the same nursing home with active religious participation), the strong theoretical foundation (intrapersonal communication and gerotranscendence), and the rich quality of data obtained through in-depth interviews and participatory observation, five participants provide sufficient information power to address the research questions (Malterud et al., 2016, cited in Sims et al., 2025).

This aligns with contemporary qualitative methodology literature which recognizes that descriptive exploratory studies with homogeneous samples can achieve data adequacy with smaller sample sizes (Lim, 2025; Wutich et al., 2024).

Inclusion criteria included age over 60 years, adequate physical and cognitive abilities to participate in interviews, willingness to share personal experiences, and active involvement in religious activities, with ethical approval and informed consent obtained prior to data collection. The informants used can be seen in Table 1 as follows:

Table 1. Research Informant

Code	Name	Gender	Age	Length of Stay in Nursing Home
A1	Kh	Male	74 years old	5 years and 3 months
A2	Yn	Male	78 years old	3 years and 1 months
A3	Sy	Male	80 years old	4 years and 2 months
A4	Mr	Female	75 years old	2 years and 6 months
A5	Nr	Female	81 years old	4 years and 5 months

Data collection was conducted through in-depth semi-structured interviews and participant observation. Interviews focused on daily routines, religious practices, internal dialogue during worship, and spiritual memories, which were recorded and transcribed verbatim. Observations were conducted during religious activities and social interactions to triangulate data and complement the interview data. Data analysis used Braun & Clarke's (2023) thematic analysis through inductive-deductive coding, grouping codes according to the four-stage framework of intrapersonal communication (sensation, perception, memory, thinking), and developing key themes based on recurring patterns to understand the role of intrapersonal dialogue in older adults' religious engagement.

Result and Discussion

Research findings indicate that intrapersonal dialogue among elderly people, structured through four stages, actively plays a role in increasing religious engagement among residents of the Tresna Werdha Husnul Khatimah Nursing Home in Pekanbaru. This study reveals the complexity of intrapersonal communication processes, strengthening and expanding Rakhmat's (2019) theoretical framework by demonstrating the unique dynamics of the elderly population within a religious context.

Sensation: Sensory Adaptation to Religious Stimuli

The sensation stage, as the process of receiving information through the five senses, demonstrates a unique adaptation pattern in the elderly (Rakhmat, 2005). Research findings reveal the remarkable adaptive capacity of the elderly in maintaining receptivity to religious stimuli despite sensory decline. The compensatory strategies they develop, such as strategically positioning themselves near sound sources or windows, and selectively utilizing residual hearing, reflect not only physiological resilience but also strong spiritual determination.

Auditory adaptation is evident in the ability of older adults to selectively utilize their remaining hearing function, as A1 stated.

> Although my hearing is not as sharp as it used to be, I can still hear the call to prayer, especially when sitting near the window. I deliberately choose a seat close to the window or one that faces the mosque. The sound of the call to prayer is like a very clear signal, and with this strategy, I can still pray on time (A1 informant interview, July 12, 2023).

This statement demonstrates how environmental adaptation is an integral part of religious practice. These findings expand on Demir's (2025) research on sensory adaptation mechanisms by including the spiritual dimension as a significant motivational factor.

The clarity of auditory perception is also influenced by factors such as the room's acoustics, strategic position, and weather conditions. As A3 stated, some older adults acknowledge hearing limitations but still develop adaptive mechanisms.

> The call to prayer can sometimes be faint, especially in a soundproof room or during heavy rain. But I refuse to give up. I usually choose to sit on the porch so I can still hear the call to prayer, or watch my friends prepare. That way, I can still estimate the time and avoid missing prayer (A3 informant interview, July 13, 2023).

The deep emotional responses of older adults to religious stimuli indicate a harmonious integration of sensory processes and spiritual experiences. Quranic recitation isn't just something you hear. It can also make you feel spiritual changes, like A2 said.

> It's very comfortable. It feels like my heart is calmer. Sometimes I cry because I feel closer to Allah (A2 informant interview, July 15, 2023).

Physiological responses such as crying, closing the eyes, or bowing the head while listening to Quranic recitation indicate the activation of an emotional system integrated with spiritual awareness. This phenomenon aligns with the concept of neurotheology, which explains how religious experience involves the simultaneous activation of the limbic system and the prefrontal cortex (Nyske, 2020).

As A4 explained, this auditory stimulus is perceived not only physically, but also triggers a transformative spiritual experience.

> Every time I hear the call to prayer, it feels like more than just a sound entering my ears. There's a vibration in my heart that reminds me of His greatness. It's like there's a force that lifts my spirits and makes me want to continue worshipping, no matter how difficult my physical condition (A4 informant interview, July 15, 2023).

Meanwhile, religious objects such as prayer mats and prayer robes serve as meaningful spiritual symbols through visual and tactile stimuli. Visual stimuli, or stimulation through sight, are present in the form of color, calligraphy, and patterns on these objects. These features immediately remind the wearer of the context of worship. Meanwhile, tactile stimuli are obtained through the texture of the fabric, the temperature of the material, and the physical sensations of using these objects. According to Tabrik et al. (2021), these objects serve both practical functions and as physical representations of a spiritual connection with God and memories of past religious life. Prayer items trigger complex sensory responses by integrating visual memories, tactile sensations, and spiritual meaning.

The implications of these findings emphasize the importance of a holistic approach to designing religious environments in nursing homes. Architectural design that considers room acoustics, strategic placement of religious stimulus sources, and optimization of the remaining sensory functions of the elderly are crucial factors in supporting religious practice. These findings demonstrate concrete mechanisms by which older adults achieve spiritual transcendence through sensory adaptation while supporting the person-environment fit approach in designing elderly environments (Ramsay, 2021; Vleugels et al., 2023).

Field observations corroborated the interview findings by documenting consistent physical responses to religious stimuli. Several elderly individuals were observed spontaneously stopping their activities, closing their eyes, or bowing their heads when hearing the call to prayer or the recitation of the Quran. Visual adaptations were also evident in the use of glasses and adjusted body positions to optimize perception during worship activities.

This suggests that despite declining sensory capacity, elderly individuals develop sophisticated compensatory mechanisms through environmental optimization, utilization of sensory memory, and social support. Sensational processes in older adults are not solely biological but have evolved into multimodal experiences that integrate physical, emotional, and spiritual elements, forming the initial foundation for more complex perceptual stages in intrapersonal religious dialogue (Paradiva & Karnianti, 2025).

Perception: Reframing Worship from Obligation to Spiritual Need

At the perception stage, a profound transformation in the meaning of worship occurs among the elderly. Research findings reveal a profound transformation in the meaning of worship in the elderly, from a mere normative obligation to an authentic existential need. The process of giving meaning to this religious stimulus evolves from a mere formal obligation to an essential spiritual need.

In-depth interviews with informants revealed that awareness of the limitations of time is a key factor in this perceptual transformation. As A5 expressed, he firmly believes that worship is preparation for the afterlife. At his age, he thinks more often about death and the Day of Reckoning. Therefore, he strives to pray on time and increases his prayers.

Interestingly, the perception of limited time becomes a catalyst for spiritual growth. It does so rather than a source of despair. A4 mentioned this.

> Yes, worship now isn't just a routine, but the intention is truly to prepare myself. I don't want to regret it later, so I use this remaining time to increase good deeds and draw closer to God. (A4 informant interview, July 15, 2023).

This demonstrates older adults' ability to reframe existential meaning. While this transformation aligns with Johan and Komala's (2023) study on gerotranscendence, this study offers a unique perspective by emphasizing the communal and religious aspects of Indonesian culture.

The religious environment of the nursing home facilitates this collaborative reinterpretation process. Interacting with fellow residents and caregivers during religious activities creates a space for dialogue that enriches each elderly person's spiritual understanding, as stated by A3.

> I always feel that every act of worship I perform now is a savings for the afterlife. I don't know when that time will be, but I want to be ready to face Him with a pure heart (A3 informant interview, July 13, 2023).

Field observations reinforced the interview findings by demonstrating consistency between expressed perceptions and demonstrated behavior. It was observed that the elderly performed their worship with complete reverence, calm facial expressions, and deep, appreciative movements. In informal conversations, spiritual expressions such as "provisions for returning home" or "time to improve oneself" were often heard, indicating a deep internalization of the meaning of worship. Even in their limited physical condition, their enthusiasm for worship never waned, but rather grew stronger with an awareness of the importance of preparing for the afterlife.

These findings indicate that older adults' perceptions of worship have undergone a holistic metamorphosis, moving from mere formal rituals to encompassing spiritual needs. This perceptual process not only reflects mental maturity but also demonstrates a growing spiritual adaptability throughout the lifespan, shaping a meaningful worldview and inner peace in old age.

This phenomenon supports Carstensen's (2021) research on socioemotional selectivity theory, which explains how older adults tend to focus their emotional resources on existentially meaningful goals. The implications of these findings point to the importance of a meaning-centered care approach in nursing home care for older adults, which facilitates the search for existential meaning through meaningful religious activities.

Memory: Anchoring Current Faith in Past Religious Experiences

In the dynamics of intrapersonal communication, the memory stage closely connects a person's religious history with their current spiritual practices. Research findings reveal the role of religious memory as a dynamic and adaptive spiritual support system in the elderly.

A unique phenomenon was observed among the elderly at the Tresna Werdha Husnul Khatimah Nursing Home in Pekanbaru. Amidst declining memory for general matters, religious memories demonstrated remarkable resilience and served as a significant source of spiritual energy. Deep memories of past religious practices, as expressed by A3 about her childhood memories of being taught to pray by her parents, serve as a persistent source of psychological and spiritual resilience, a foundation that remains strong.

These results are consistent with Westerhof et al.'s (2010) research on the restorative function of reminiscence. However, this study makes a new contribution by revealing the uniqueness of religious memory in the socio-cultural context of religious Indonesia. Memory not only serves as a passive mental archive, but also actively forms a framework of meaning that helps older adults maintain their religious identity amidst various physical and social changes, in line with Hu's (2023) narrative identity theory, which emphasizes the role of memory in shaping the continuity of personal identity.

Informant A2 expressed that important religious experiences in their lives serve as a solid foundation for their faith in old age.

> Yes, memories of performing the Hajj pilgrimage and being entrusted with leading prayers at the mosque are always vivid in my mind. At this advanced age, when physical strength is starting to wane, it is precisely these spiritual memories that are the most valuable spiritual assets I continue to carry with me. These memories are like deposits of faith that strengthen my heart, support my faith, and remind me of His love that always accompanies me on my journey through life (A2 informant interview, July 15, 2023).

These transformative memories are not merely ordinary memories, but serve as a source of ongoing inspiration and motivation. For those who have not yet had the opportunity to perform the Hajj, other religious moments, such as completing the Quran or retreating to i'tikaf, remain valuable memories that strengthen their spiritual bond with God.

> Yes, I feel that the memories of my late husband with me during our night prayers or tadarusan (recitation of the Koran) give me great strength now. When I pray alone, I feel like he's still with me spiritually (A5 informant interview, July 13, 2023).

These memories are not merely nostalgic, but actively shape how older adults interpret and practice their religious practices today. These memories of the past serve as a frame of reference that gives spiritual meaning to each ritual. Thus, their religious practices become more devout and personal, colored by narratives of their lifetime of religious experiences.

The repetition and preservation of religious memories are carried out consistently by older adults. They continue to practice the prayer recitations, short prayers, and religious advice they learned from their youth, demonstrating how long-term memory plays a role in maintaining the continuity of spiritual practice. This process helps maintain the quality of worship despite physical limitations.

Field observations reinforced the interview findings by demonstrating the elderly's ability to recite short verses and daily prayers fluently, albeit in a low voice. Some elderly actively guided their peers in reciting prayers or pointing out the direction of the Qibla, demonstrating how religious memory functions not only personally but also communally. The rhythm of daily worship, performed without instruction, reflects the internalization of religious values ingrained since youth.

Interestingly, this religious memory not only impacts the individual's spiritual life but also develops into a form of sharing knowledge and experience. The elderly use their life stories, full of spiritual journeys, to advise and motivate fellow residents and family members, demonstrating the transformation from intrapersonal to interpersonal communication. These findings enhance understanding of the function of intrapersonal communication by demonstrating how internal processes can develop into meaningful social contributions, creating a chain of spiritual value transmission that strengthens the cohesion of the religious community in nursing homes, consistent with the concept of generativity in lifelong development theory.

Thinking: Engaging in Reflective Self-Evaluation for Spiritual Growth

The thinking stage of the intrapersonal communication process demonstrates the rapidly developing cognitive and spiritual depth of older adults. Research findings reveal the capacity of older adults to develop spiritual maturity through in-depth reflective thinking. The self-evaluation and spiritual contemplation demonstrated by older adults are not merely cognitive but have evolved into a mature form of spiritual reasoning. As revealed in A4's statement, which demonstrates a transformation in understanding from a ritualistic aspect to an existential-spiritual dimension.

> Prayer is not just movements and recitations. For me now, prayer is medicine for the soul. When I face God, all burdens feel light (A4 informant interview, July 15, 2023).

These findings support the theory of spiritual development in older adults and provide empirical evidence from the Indonesian socio-cultural context, which is steeped in religious values. This is in line with the concept of transcendent wisdom proposed by Ardelt et al. (2023).

The reflective thinking process in older adults is characterized by their ability to holistically integrate life experiences, religious knowledge, and self-reflection. Elderly residents at the Tresna Werdha Husnul Khatimah Nursing Home in Pekanbaru stated that religious messages from religious

teachers or parents in the past remain a guiding principle for their lives, serving as a moral framework for their thinking and self-evaluation, as A1 stated.

> My parents' advice is always vivid in my memory, that prayer must be maintained even in difficult times. I used to just follow it, but now, in my old age, I truly realize that this advice is the moral framework that guides my life. Maintaining prayer in all circumstances is the most important provision I have prepared for my future life (A1 informant interview, July 12, 2023).

The thought processes of these elderly individuals reflect mature spiritual development. For them, worship has transformed from a routine into a meaningful, reflective experience. Their ability to critically evaluate themselves, maintain the motivation to learn, and develop a deep spiritual understanding demonstrates that the intrapersonal communication process in the elderly is active and continues to develop toward a higher level of spiritual maturity. This shows that spiritual growth can continue throughout life and even reach its peak in old age, as A4 concluded.

> Worship in old age feels different. It's deeper, more solemn, as if every second is precious in preparing for an encounter with God (A4 informant interview, July 15, 2023).

The contemplative process undertaken by the elderly involves a comprehensive evaluation of their life journey. As A3 explained, this reflection process involves a complex blend of regret, gratitude, and hope, which ultimately strengthens faith and inner peace in old age.

> I often regret not being more active in my worship. Now, in my old age, I'm trying to catch up by increasing my istighfar (repentance) and charity (A3 informant interview, July 13, 2023).

A2 explained that through prayer, dhikr (remembrance of Allah), and dua, they systematically introspect, reassess their actions, improve their intentions, and strengthen their spiritual connection with God.

> After every prayer, I always sit for a moment, reflecting on what I've done today. Did I go wrong? Was my worship accepted? It's like a daily self-evaluation with myself and with Allah (A2 informant interview, July 15, 2023).

Interestingly, the motivation to continually improve the quality of worship remains strong even as they age. Many seniors actively participate in Quran recitation classes, inquire about the proper procedure for ablution, or strive to improve their prayer recitations. A5 shared his perspective.

> Old age is not a barrier to learning. In fact, I'm now more enthusiastic about improving my Quran recitation. Just now, I asked the religious teacher about correct tajweed (A5 informant interview, July 13, 2023).

Field observations reinforced the findings regarding the depth of the elderly's spiritual thought processes. There were expressions of regret accompanied by a commitment to improvement, recognition of the benefits of worship for inner peace, and an awareness of the importance of consistent worship even when ill. Statements such as "prayer is a pillar of religion" repeated by several elderly people, indicate the internalization of religious values that have become deep convictions. A2 emphasized that even when she was sick, she tried to pray as much as she could. This was not compulsion, but an inner need, she said.

The implications of these findings emphasize the importance of facilitating spaces for reflection and spiritual dialogue in elderly support programs. Meaning-centered therapy and spiritual reminiscence therapy approaches can be developed by considering the unique characteristics of Indonesian elderly spirituality, in line with the principles of culturally sensitive geriatric care (Cheon & Cesario, 2022).

Dynamics of the Intrapersonal Communication Cycle

This study successfully identified the dynamics of the intrapersonal communication cycle, which is circular and mutually reinforcing between the four fundamental aspects. The process begins with adapted sensations, where older adults optimize remaining sensory abilities to receive religious stimuli. It then develops into meaningful perceptions through the interpretation of spiritual values. This is further enriched by religious memories that serve as an existential foundation, and finally, it is formulated through a reflective thought process that transforms experiences into spiritual wisdom.

This cycle is not linear, but rather dynamic and cyclical, with each stage influencing and reinforcing each other, creating a holistic religious experience. These findings expand Rakhmat's (2019) model of intrapersonal communication by demonstrating the complexity of interactions between components in the context of aging, while also supporting the concept of reciprocal determinism in social cognitive theory, which emphasizes the reciprocal interaction between personal, behavioral, and environmental factors (Schunk & DiBenedetto, 2020).

This cyclical mechanism creates a continuous reinforcement system that enables older adults not only to maintain but actively enhance the quality of their religious engagement despite various physical and cognitive limitations. Each cycle results in a progressive deepening of spiritual meaning, where religious understanding evolves from a practical to an existential level, as explained in the theory of spiritual transformation (Janhsen et al., 2021).

This process explains why some older adults experience an increase in spiritual quality in their later years, contrary to the common assumption that religious capacity declines with aging. These findings support the theory of selectivity-optimizing compensation (SOC) by providing empirical evidence of compensatory strategies in the spiritual domain, while also reinforcing the concept of positive aging, which emphasizes the potential for growth and development in later life (Regier & Parmelee, 2021; Reynolds et al., 2022).

A4's statement, "Worship in old age feels different. It's deeper, more solemn, as if every second is precious in preparing for a meeting with God" (A4 informant interview, July 15, 2023), represents the peak achievement in this cycle of intrapersonal communication, where the entire process culminates in profound spiritual maturity.

The theoretical implication of this finding is the development of a context-sensitive model of intrapersonal communication in the aging context, which explains not only cognitive mechanisms but also the spiritual dimension of successful aging. Practically, understanding this cycle allows for the development of integrated interventions in nursing homes, where programs of sensory stimulation, deepening of religious meaning, activation of spiritual memory, and facilitation of reflection are designed synergistically, in accordance with a holistic geriatric care approach (Wilfling et al., 2023).

Conclusions

Based on the overall analysis of the research exploring intrapersonal dialogue among elderly residents in nursing homes, it can be concluded that intrapersonal communication processes play a fundamental and dynamic role in improving the religious quality of elderly residents at the Tresna Werdha Husnul Khatimah Nursing Home in Pekanbaru. This research successfully uncovered the complexity of psychospiritual mechanisms through four stages that form a synergistic cycle: sensations adapted through compensatory strategies to receive religious stimuli; perceptions that transform the meaning of worship from an obligation to an existential need; religious memory that serves as a source of psychological and spiritual resilience; and reflective thought processes that crystallize experiences into spiritual maturity.

The research findings demonstrate that despite facing age-related physical and cognitive limitations, older adults develop extraordinary abilities to maintain and enhance the quality of their religious engagement. Sensory adaptation to religious stimuli, the transformation of the meaning of worship into a personal and authentic one, the utilization of religious memory as a source of spiritual restoration, and the capacity for deep self-reflection collectively form a system of spiritual resilience that enables older adults not only to adapt to the aging process but also to actively achieve significant spiritual growth.

The implications of these findings underscore the importance of a holistic approach to elder care that integrates the spiritual dimension as an essential component. Recognizing the significance of this intrapersonal dialogue provides a crucial foundation for developing a model of care for the elderly that

not only meets physical needs but also facilitates spiritual growth, respects human dignity, and supports the achievement of religious maturity in old age. This research thus contributes to enriching the body of spiritual gerontology and offers a new perspective on viewing the aging process as a meaningful and transformative period of spiritual development.

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