The Significance of Religious Tolerance for University Students: Its Influence on Religious Beliefs and Happiness

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Abstract
This study investigates the relationship between religious belief, religious tolerance, and students' happiness. It aims to explore the moderating effect of religious tolerance on the relationship between religious belief and students' happiness. The study adopts a quantitative methodology, surveying 734 university students. The data is analyzed using Structural Equation Modelling in Mplus. The results indicate that religious belief influences students' happiness. Additionally, religious belief influences religious tolerance and happiness positively. Religious tolerance also has a direct effect on happiness. The study highlights the moderating influence of religious tolerance on the association between religious belief and happiness. It also suggests that the level of religious tolerance can influence the effect of religious belief on happiness. In order to increase students' happiness while pursuing a bachelor's degree, the implications of these findings highlight the significance of universities considering and promoting religious tolerance among students.

INTRODUCTION

Many students in Indonesia have faced challenging situations due to the overwhelming pressures of life. This condition is leading to several distressing incidents. For instance, there have been cases where students were unable to complete their thesis effectively, which tragically resulted in feelings of despair and even suicide (Dogra et al., 2011). Moreover, these circumstances have also led to financial difficulties, such as the inability to pay tuition fees, further exacerbating the students' distress (Gamayanti, 2016). There are also cases of students who almost committed suicide due to overthinking (Qasim et al., 2022) and disappointment with their families (Chaniang et al., 2022).

One of the reasons why these problems occur is because students are still in their teenage years, also known as the adolescent phase. In this phase, students' development of faith and belief is often marked by a period of identity crisis, where they experience confusion and struggle to differentiate between their beliefs and the reality they encounter (Nelson, 2009). Based on this argument, it could not be avoided that religious belief can strengthen self-concept (Kitchens & Phillips, 2021) and self-esteem (Nassir, 2008) which will provide a good direction of life for its adherents, provide meaning, and purpose to human life (Colón-bacó, 2010).

In the realm of research, happiness can be defined as the level of positive influence or excitement experienced by individuals, indicated by high satisfaction at some point, and the absence of negative feelings such as depression and anxiety (Argyle et al., 1989). In explaining

happiness, Argyle et al. (1989) describe the six factors that make up happiness in individuals: (1) life satisfaction; (2) joy; (3) self-esteem; (4) calm; (5) control; and (6) efficacy.

Individuals who are satisfied with their lives and do not criticize themselves or their surroundings are characterized by a sense of life satisfaction (Argyle et al., 1989). Meanwhile, individuals with positive emotional responses display happiness (Argyle et al., 1989). Argyle et al. (1989) further states that self-esteem and how ones' evaluation their circumstances are also components of happiness. Individuals appear cheerful with more positive self-evaluations. Moreover, happiness includes control, it means that individuals can regulate their thoughts and emotions (Argyle et al., 1989). Then, efficacy, this demonstrates the confidence of individuals who believe they can achieve their goals (Argyle et al., 1989).

Numerous studies conducted in the past two decades have consistently demonstrated that religious belief has the potential to enhance happiness among its adherents. For example, Lu & Gao (2017) examined the relationship between religious belief and happiness in China using data from the Spiritual Life Study of Chinese Residents in 2007. In addition, Hossain & Rizvi (2016) explored the relationship between religiosity and happiness in the multicultural community in Oman. Bosco-Ruggiero (2020) also examines the relationship between Americans' religious and spiritual beliefs and behaviors and their mental health using General Social Survey (GSS) data. Furthermore, Fidrmuc & Tunali (2021) findings state that individuals with a high religious level look happier than those with a lower spiritual level. Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that religion and religious beliefs have the capacity to contribute to an individual's happiness.

According to the Templeton Pew-Review Survey, a significant majority of the global population, approximately 5.8 billion individuals, which accounts for around 84% of the world's population, hold religious beliefs (Rosmarin & Koenig, 2020). This survey underscores the widespread presence of belief in God among humans. As a developed country, the USA turns out that ninety-five percent of the population believes in the existence of God (WIN-Gallup International, 2012). Reformed epistemologists state that religious belief is innate to all humans (Maitzen, 2006). In Islam, the belief is innate is called nature or religious instinct that humans have carried since they were still in the womb (Anisah, 2016; Fitria, 2020; Putra et al., 2020). The presence of God and belief in God can be considered universal aspects of human existence, shared across diverse cultures and societies.

The religious beliefs held by humans are supported by various studies, highlighting religion as a mechanism that fulfills fundamental human needs (Gebauer & Maio, 2012; Laurin & Kay, 2017; Magin et al., 2021). These needs include financial stability (Rashidi, 2016), the desire for prosocial behavior (Xie et al., 2020), the ability to cope with life's challenges (Farias & Newheiser, 2019), and even the capacity to manage stress (Cooper et al., 2019; Joseph, 1998; Munro, 1989). These studies suggest that religion is valuable in meeting diverse human needs.

These needs can be effectively fulfilled through religious practices. For instance, individuals with religious beliefs seek employment that aligns with their religious principles, allowing them to meet their financial needs while maintaining their religious integrity. Religion also provides a moral foundation that promotes kindness and consideration towards others, fulfilling the need for prosocial behavior. Moreover, religious individuals often find solace and strength in surrendering their burdens to a higher power, viewing God as a source of hope and support to navigate life's challenges and manage stress. Thus, people's faith in religion is rooted in its ability to address these essential human desires.

According to Emblen (1992), religion refers to an individual's belief in and worshiping God. Chiang et al. (2017) also provided four key points to understand religious belief. Firstly, religion holds significant importance as individuals believe in the existence of a superior being (God) who has the power to bestow blessings or disasters upon all living beings. By worshiping God, individuals seek safety and protection. Secondly, it is acknowledged that destiny is an

undeniable aspect of life. From birth, individuals have a predetermined destiny outlined by God. Thirdly, religion teaches individuals how to conduct themselves. Individual behavior plays a crucial role in determining their karma. Lastly, there are punishments associated with violating religious rules. Consequences such as hell are believed to be faced by those who transgress religious principles. Consequently, religious believers may experience anxiety and fear when they make mistakes. Chiang et al. (2017) categorized these dimensions of religious belief into two sides: the bright side, comprising the positive effects and divine dimensions, and the dark side, encompassing religious questioning and stress.

The other side of religion is that it is the most vital trigger of conflict and violence between groups (Atran & Ginges, 2012), which can hinder tolerant, peaceful, just, and happy social relations. The common phenomenon of intra-religious tensions is usually triggered by differences in theological interpretations (Regus, 2020). What is even more fatal is that there are terrorist groups that consider violence a divine assignment or a sacramental act conveyed by scripture (Evans, 2017; Hoffman, 1995). Several studies have examined the occurrence of conflicts in Nigeria, attributing them to the misinterpretation of religious teachings by leaders of terrorist groups and their followers (Adetoye, D and Omilusi, 2015; Cerván, 2010; Ngwoke & Ituma, 2020). These studies shed light on the role of distorted religious interpretations in contributing to the conflicts experienced in the country.

Moreover, the terrorist attack that occurred on September 11, 2001, was widely recognized as having religious motives, as acknowledged by the perpetrators themselves, who were driven by distorted religious beliefs (Jainah & Handayani, 2019). Sadly, many students are also involved in radicalism cases in Indonesia (Muliadi & Baharuddin, 2021; Cherney et al., 2021). The number of students suspected of being involved in terrorism continues to grow (Malik et al., 2018). Since 2015, Densus 88, a special counterterrorism unit of Republic of Indonesia, has arrested 24 university students on suspicion of involvement in terrorism (Riyanta et al., 2021). The exclusive adherence to a singular truth without openness to diverse perspectives can foster extremism and intolerance (Dauda, 2021; Maulana, 2017).

According to Nico (2014), religious tolerance is an individual and group attitude. It encompasses the act of perceiving and regarding individuals from diverse religious backgrounds with respect and empathy. This attitude involves recognizing and defending the rights of individuals and groups, enabling them to uphold their respective values and beliefs freely. Additionally, religious tolerance allows individuals and groups to establish a sense of continuity in aligning their values with those derived from their religious teachings. In the context of religious tolerance, Nico (2014) draw upon Olthuis's (2012) perspective on how individuals perceive and interact with their environment. Olthuis (2012) proposes three significant factors that contribute to religious tolerance in individuals: the values associated with one's religion, respect for others, and the avoidance of exclusivity.

Rationale of the Study

Verkuyten & Killen (2021) argue that fostering tolerance is crucial in addressing social tensions and promoting peace and happiness. However, to the knowledge of the authors, studies that examine religious tolerance have tended to focus on four things. First, studies examine religious tolerance in countries affected by conflict (Balpanov et al., 2018; Kalin & Siddiqui, 2020; Suradi et al., 2020). Second, studies that examine the learning of religious tolerance in schools (Alabdulhadi, 2019; Fahmi et al., 2021; Muhid, 2020; Rahmat & Yahya, 2022; Raihani, 2016; Wajdi & Tobroni, 2020; Wang & Froese, 2020. Third, studies examine the relationship between religious tolerance, the quest for religiosity (Van Tongeren et al., 2016), and intellectual humility toward religious beliefs and values (Hook et al., 2017; Lubis & Sianipar, 2022). Fourth, studies examining inter-religious tolerance (Destyanto et al., 2022; N. Hula et al., 2021; Tabroni et al., 2022; Walton, 2015). These various studies have consistently proven

the importance of religious tolerance, but they are limited to one variable, dependent or independent. In addition, there are no studies that focus on religious tolerance as a moderator variable. In other words, existing studies ignore the ideal message that other factors can make someone happy outside of their religious beliefs, namely religious tolerance.

Aims or Hypothesis

The study of religious belief and happiness is nothing new, but studies in this field that are conducted on university students are still limeted (Abdel-Khalek, 2015; Francis et al., 2014; Lewis, 2002; Lewis, 2002; Sahraian et al., 2013). Some studies discuss religious belief and religious tolerance, and studies on religious tolerance and happiness have yet to be carried out, even though religious belief should be able to strengthen religious tolerance, and religious tolerance can increase happiness. This research aims to test religious tolerance as a moderator of the influence of religious belief on happiness. So it is essential to study religious tolerance as a moderator of the influence of religious belief on happiness because happiness is not only related to how to maintain and maintain good relations with God through religious belief, but happiness will also occur when individuals can build and maintain good relations with others through religious tolerance. This argument prompted the writer to raise the issue by involving students. Meanwhile, the hypotheses formulated in this study are: (1) There is a significant positive effect of religious belief on student happiness; (2) Religious tolerance moderates the effect of religious belief on student happiness.

METHODS

This research took place based on three processes: preparation, the research process, and post-research. At the time of preparation, the researcher formulated the basic theory and findings of previous studies related to this research theme. In addition, researchers also prepare valid and reliable research measuring instruments. The research process takes place using research measuring instruments and applying the specifications of the sampling method. After the data is collected, the researcher performs statistical analysis of the data and reports and dissemination of research findings. Specifically, the method used in this study consisted of research participant presentation, research design, research procedures, measuring instruments, and data analysis.

Participants

This study included undergraduate students from various universities in South Sumatera, Indonesia, encompassing both public and private institutions under the Ministry of Religion and the Ministry of Education. Furthermore, the researchers involved as many as ($n = 735$) students who participate the study using the convenience sampling and snowball sampling (Clark-Carter, 2018), which means the researcher distributed the Google form link to each university. For this study, we recruited participants from the pool of undergraduate students who expressed their willingness to voluntarily complete a Google form. These individuals became the participants in our study. Additionally, we requested the participants to share the Google form links with their friends who also met the criteria for participation, expanding the potential pool of participants.

Of the 734 students, ($n = 198$, 26.9%) came from Universitas Sriwijaya, followed by ($n = 180$, 24.5%) students from Universitas Islam Negeri Raden Fatah Palembang, and the rest came from Universitas Islam Ogan Komering Ilir Kayuagung ($n = 65$, 8.9%) and other private universities in South Sumatra (see table 1). In addition, the participants consisted of students aged 17–44 years ($M = 20.21$, $SD = 3.022$), with details of the distribution frequency as shown in Table 1. They were also actively studying from semester 2 ($n = 326$, 44.4%) to semester 8 (n

= 75, 10.2%), female (n = 553, 75.3) and male ($n = 181$, 24.7%), Muslim ($n = 730$, 99.5%), Christian ($n = 2$, 0.3%), and so on (Table 1).

Research Design

This research is a quantitative study that aims to examine the moderating role of religious tolerance in religious belief and happiness. In addition, this study applied a survey to students to determine their religious tolerance, religious belief, and happiness. In this case, the participants carried out a self-report by completing all the questions and statements contained in the Google form link that had been shared.

Table 1. Participants' Demographic

Demographic Components	f	%
Colleges		
Institut Agama Islam Al-Azhar Lubuklinggau	34	4.6
Institut Agama Islam Al-Qur'an Al-Ittifaqiyah Indralaya	34	4.6
Politeknik Kesehatan Kementerian Kesehatan Palembang	1	0.1
Politeknik Negeri Sriwijaya	1	0.1
Sekolah Tinggi Agama Islam Rahmaniyah Sekayu	5	0.7
Sekolah Tinggi Ekonomi Islam Al Furqon Prabumulih Sumatera Selatan	8	1.1
Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Al-Qur'an Al-Lathifiyyah Palembang	30	4.1
Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Ekonomi APRIN	3	0.4
Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Ekonomi Serasan	1	0.1
Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Sosial dan Politik Candradimuka	1	0.1
Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Syariah Subulussalam	5	0.7
Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Tarbiyah Misbahul Ulum Gumawang OKU Timur	29	4.0
Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Tarbiyah Muara Enim	5	0.7
Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Tarbiyah Raudhatul Ulum	2	0.3
Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Tarbiyah Yayasan Pendidikan Islam Lahat	48	6.5
Sekolah Tinggi Keguruan dan Ilmu Pendidikan Muhammadiyah OKU Timur	4	0.5
Universitas Islam Negeri Raden Fatah Palembang	180	24.5
Universitas Bina Darma Palembang	16	2.2
Universitas Indo Global Mandiri	14	1.9
Universitas Islam Ogan Komering Ilir Kayuagung	65	8.9
Universitas Muhammadiyah Palembang	40	5.4
Universitas Nurul Huda	1	0.1
Universitas Palembang	5	0.7
Universitas PGRI Palembang	19	2.6
Universitas Prabumulih	3	0.4
Universitas Serasan Muara Enim	4	0.5
Universitas Sriwijaya	198	27
Universitas Terbuka	9	1.2
Year Entry/Semester		
2019/Eighth Semester	75	10.2
2020/Sixth Semester	173	23.6
2021/Fourth Semester	160	21.8
2022/Second Semester	326	44.4
Gender		
Female	553	75.3
Male	181	24.7
Age		
15 – 19	352	48
20 – 24	358	48.8
25 – 29	8	1.1
30 – 34	8	1.1
35 – 39	1	0.1
40 – 44	7	1
Religion		
Buddha	1	0.1
Islam	730	99.5
Catholic	1	0.1
Christian	2	0.3

Procedures

Before conducting the research, the researcher identified several conflicts due to individual religious beliefs and religious tolerance, impacting their happiness. Then, the researcher conducted a literature study on religious tolerance, belief, and happiness after finding the measuring instrument used to access these three variables and adapting the measuring instrument.

The adaptation process of the Religious Tolerance Questionnaire (RTQ; Nico, 2014) and the Religious Belief Scale (RBS; Chiang et al., 2017) refers to Beaton et al., (2000). The first stage is carried out by two translators translating from English into Indonesian, each with a background in English education and psychology. Then, the process continues with the experts' judgment. In this case, the experts are lecturers and social psychology researchers concerned with religious tolerance and belief. Meanwhile, for the Oxford Happiness Inventory (OHI; Argyle et al., 1989), researchers used this measurement tool in a study conducted by Darmayanti (2022).

After the research measurement tools were standardized, the researchers conducted research in March and April 2023 by distributing research surveys via a Google form link. Research participants who are active students in South Sumatra were recruited as participants voluntarily. Participants were asked to complete a consent form indicating they voluntarily participated in this research. Furthermore, several participants were randomly selected to receive Shopee Pay vouchers and phone credit as rewards for completing the questions and statements and the Google form link.

Instruments

This research involves three research variables. Religious tolerance is a moderator variable measured using the Religious Tolerance Questionnaire (RTQ) developed by Nico (2014). Meanwhile, religious belief is an antecedent accessed using the Religious Belief Scale (RBS) developed by (Chiang et al., 2017). Finally, as an outcome, happiness is measured by the Oxford Happiness Inventory (OHI), which was developed by Argyle et al., (1989) and adapted in Indonesian by Darmayanti, (2022). A more detailed explanation is as follows:

Demographic Questions

The initial part of the research survey aimed at university students in South Sumatra consists of several points related to their demographic aspects. The five points of the demographic aspect are the origin of the tertiary institution, the semester being taken, gender, age, and religion.

Religious Tolerance Questionnaire (RTQ)

This measuring tool was developed by Nico (2014) concerning the theory put forward by Olthuis (2012). The theory presented by Olthuis (2012) implicitly discusses how individuals interpret other people and the world based on their perspective. Previously, Nico (2014) used three factors that were found to be valid in compiling the RTQ. These three factors are a value attached to one's religion (i.e., a value or belief originating from the individual's religion) (Nico, 2014), respect (i.e., respect for differences in society) (Nico, 2014) and exclusivity (i.e., individual tendencies to think and behave exclusively and self-centered/selfish) (Nico, 2014) The RTQ consists of 23 items with 6 points spanning the Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 6 = strongly agree). The validity test of the RTQ uses Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) (Figure 1), and the results indicate that the 26 items of the RTQ are valid in measuring the construct of religious tolerance. None of the 26 items were dropped ($t > 1.96$) (Raykov & Marcoulides, 2011). In addition, RTQ was also found to be reliable, with a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .845 ($\alpha > .60$) (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994).

Religious Belief Scale (RBS)

Previously, Chiang et al. (2017) developed an RBS referring to Emblen (1992), upon which Chiang et al. (2017) conducted a qualitative analysis of research participants' views regarding the concept of religious belief. Chiang et al. (2017) found that: (1) The importance of religion in daily life as God who gives individuals happiness and obedience in worship can prevent disasters; (2) Believing that there is a destiny that controls life in the world; (3) Religion is an individual guideline for thinking and behaving, such as doing good to others and believing in karma; and (4) Feelings of pressure from God's punishment if individuals violate religious provisions.

Furthermore, Chiang et al. (2017) constructed the RBS in four dimensions and with 17 items. The four dimensions of RBS are religious effect (i.e., religion has a role in individual life, such as social life, and overcoming natural disasters (Chiang et al., 2017), divine (i.e., there is God's power which is a gift to humans and moves destiny among humans) (Chiang et al., 2017), religious query (i.e., questioning God about the misfortune that befalls individuals and doubting God's goodness) (Chiang et al., 2017), and religious stress (i.e., individuals feel depressed when they think or do things that are not following religious provisions) (Chiang et al., 2017) consisting of 17 items in the RBS with a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree) were not eliminated, because the score $t < 1.96$ (Raykov & Marcoulides, 2011). The CFA results for RBS indicate that the RBS in this study is valid (Figure 2). In addition, the RBS in this study was found to be reliable with a Cronbach's α coefficient of .717 (α > .60) (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994).

The Oxford Happiness Inventory (OHI)

Argyle et al. (1989) compiled OHI to measure the happiness construct concerning the theory of happiness they developed. OHI consists of six dimensions (Argyle et al., 1989), (1) Life satisfaction (i.e., individuals feel satisfied in life at some time); (2) Joy (i.e., individuals often feel positive feelings); (3) Self-Esteem (i.e., individual judgments of themselves, both positive and negative judgments); (4) Calm (i.e., the individual feels calm both in feelings and thoughts); (5) Control (i.e., regarding how individuals can control their feelings, thoughts, and behavior); and (6) Efficacy (i.e., individual belief in their ability to achieve everything they want) (Argyle et al., 1989).

To manifest the six dimensions of OHI, Argyle et al. (1989) compiled 29 items with six Likert scale stretch (1 = strongly disagree to 6 = strongly agree). In this study, OHI was found to be valid and reliable. The validity test is shown in Figure 3 using CFA. The results of the CFA test found that four items failed because the coefficients $t > 1.96$ (Raykov & Marcoulides, 2011). The four items are items 19 and 21 (parts of the joy dimension), item 13 (part of the self-esteem dimension), and item 15 (part of the calm dimension). In addition, the reliability test results found that OHI was consistent in measuring happiness, with an internal consistency coefficient of .862. OHI is stated to be reliable due to the coefficient (α > .60) (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994).

Data Analysis

In the early stages, researchers screened the data and continued with a normality test (Gravetter et al., 2020). Next, the researcher conducted a descriptive analysis showing the average score and standard deviation (Gravetter et al., 2020) for religious tolerance, belief, and happiness. After conducting a descriptive analysis, the researcher conducted a correlation analysis (Gravetter et al., 2020) between variables. All processes at this stage are carried out using IBM SPSS version 22.

The second stage is a factor analysis test process using CFA to determine the validity of the measuring instruments used in the study. The device used to perform CFA is M*plus* version

Table 2. Descriptive Analysis and Correlational Variables

Variables	M	SD	1	2	3
Religious Tolerance	5.030	.527	–		
Religious Belief	4.257	.416	.539**	–	
Happiness	4.293	.584	.248**	.409**	–

Note. ** for $p < .01$

7 (Muthén & Muthén, 2017). The fit model reference is based on Hu & Bentler (1999). Model fit is achieved when the coefficient of the Comparative Fit Index (CFI) > .95, the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) < .06, and the Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) < .08 (Hu & Bentler, 1999).

In the last stage, the researcher uses path analysis to determine the moderator role of religious tolerance in religious belief and happiness using the Mplus application version 7 (Muthén & Muthén, 2017). Researchers determine the direct effect on religious belief and happiness. Then, the next step is to analyze the role of the interaction of religious tolerance and religious belief in predicting happiness in college students.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

The results section consists of four sub-discussions that summarize the findings from the results of statistical data analysis. The first part contains the results of the normality test and descriptive analysis. The second part contains the results of the correlation test between variables. Next, the researcher describes the results of structural equation modeling on RTQ, RBS, and OHI using the CFA approach. The last is the finding of the path analysis on the moderator role of religious tolerance in religious belief and happiness.

Descriptive Analysis Results

Data collected on religious tolerance, religious belief, and happiness were found to be expected. The normality test using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov one-sample (Currel, 2015; Stowell, 2014) found that religious tolerance is generally distributed with $D = .081$ ($p > .05$) and religious belief has $D = .106$ ($p > .05$). In addition, skewness and kurtosis on happiness range from ± 2 (Field, 2013) (skewness = −.064, kurtosis = −.069).

Table 2 summarizes the descriptive analysis and the relationships between variables. Descriptive analysis found religious tolerance ($M = 5.030$, $SD = .527$), religious belief ($M = 4.257$, $SD = .416$), and happiness ($M = 4.293$, $SD = .584$). Furthermore, this study also showed a positive and significant correlation between religious belief and happiness ($r = .409$, $p < .01$). In addition, there is a significant positive relationship between religious belief and religious tolerance ($r = .539$, $p < .01$). Finally, a positive and significant relationship was also indicated between religious tolerance and happiness ($r = .248$, $p < .01$).

Results of Structural Equation Modeling

The CFA results found that the three measuring instruments' models fit. On RTQ, models fit with χ^2 (227) = 961.549, $p = .000$, RMSEA = .066 (90% CI .062 – .071), CFI = .854, SRMR = .064, $t = 4.872 − 41,573$. In Figure 1, the Second-Order Confirmatory Factor Analysis Model is applied to determine the path analysis results of each factor in the RTQ (Byrne, 2013). In Figure 2, the Second-Order Model determines the relationship between each factor and the higher-order factor in RBS. This model is declared fit with χ^2 (115) = 402.121, $p = .000$, RMSEA = .058 (90% CI .052 − .065), CFI = .924, SRMR = .046, $t = 4.249 − 50.761$. Researchers used the First-Order Model for OHI to know the path analysis between items with

higher-order factors in OHI. First-Order This model is fit with χ^2 (219) = 731.599, p = .000, RMSEA = .056 (90% CI .052 − .061), CFI = .923, SRMR = .079, t = 2.181 − 41.500.
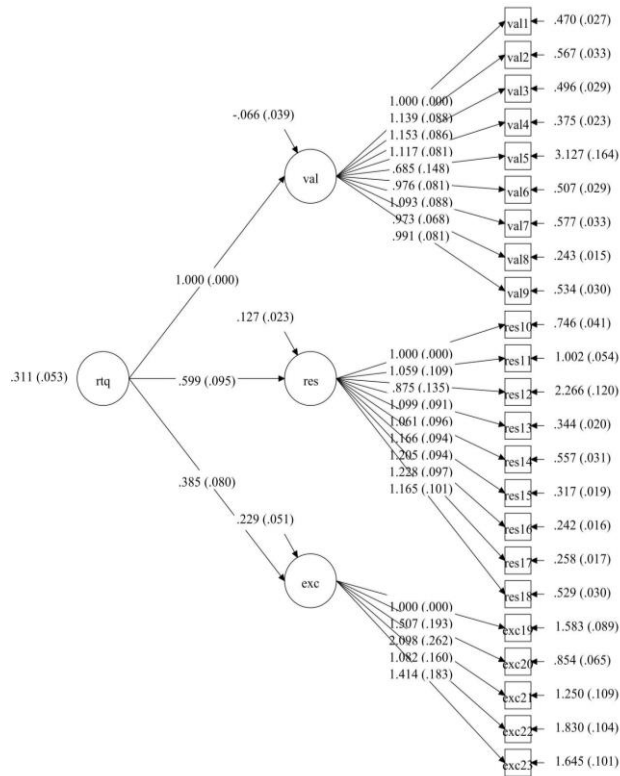

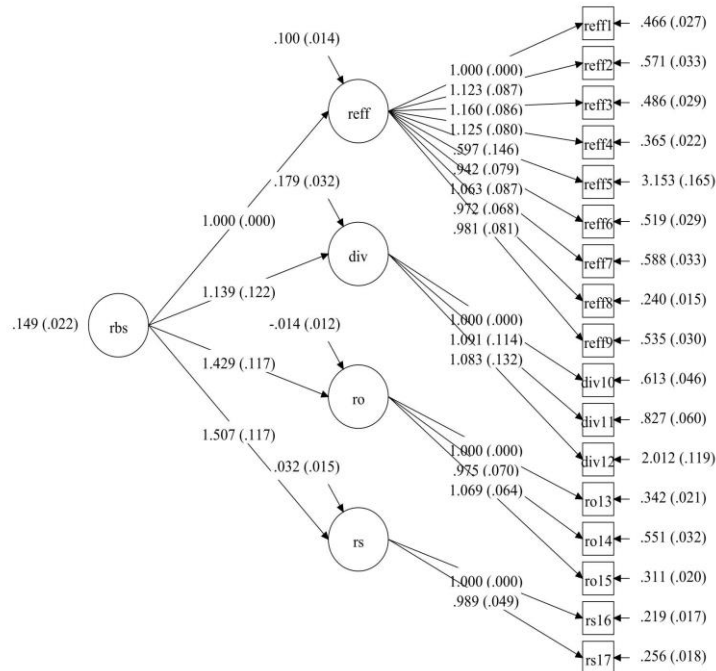Figure 1. Second-Order Model for Religious Tolerance Questionnaire

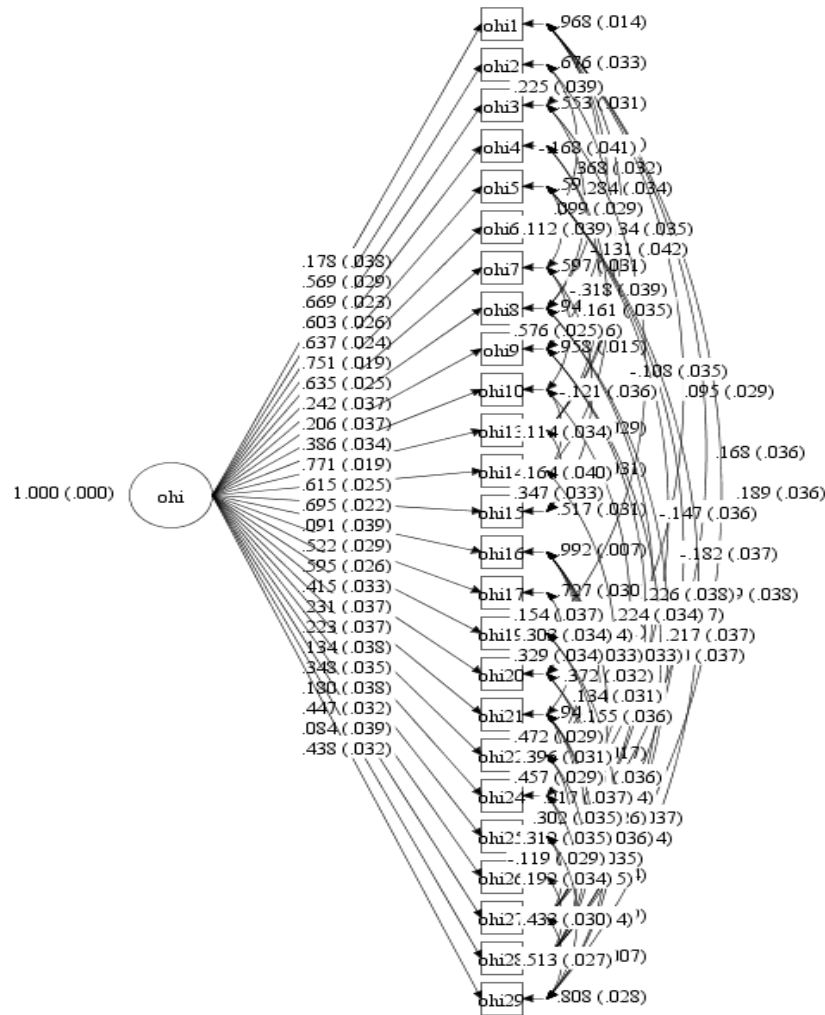Figure 2. Second-Order Model for Religious Belief Scale

Figure 3. First-Order Model for the Oxford Happiness Inventory
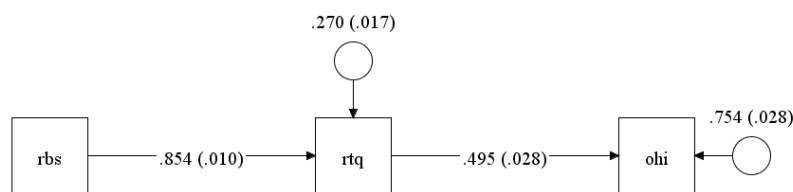

Figure 4. Path Analysis Model of Religious Tolerance, Religious Belief, and Happiness

The results of the path analysis indicate that the model fit with χ^2 (1) = .641, p = .423, RMSEA = .000 (90% CI .000 - .090), CFI = 1, SRMR = .004. In addition, religious belief significantly positively affects happiness (B = .495, p < .05). This finding shows that students with firmer religious beliefs can increase their happiness. Then, religious tolerance has a positive and significant effect on happiness (B = .495, p < .01). This condition means that students who are more tolerant of societal differences cause them to be happier. Finally, the interaction between religious belief and religious tolerance significantly contributes to happiness (B = .854, p < .05) (see Figure 4). If religious tolerance in students is high, then the influence of religious belief on happiness will be even more significant. The contribution of religious tolerance on the influence of religious belief on happiness is as much as (R^2 = .246) 24.6%.

Discussion

The study findings reveal a significant relationship between religious belief and happiness, with religious tolerance playing a moderating role. The influence of religious belief on happiness can vary depending on the level of religious tolerance among students. Higher levels of religious tolerance strengthen the impact of religious belief on happiness, while lower levels weaken this effect. These results provide a foundation for tertiary institutions to enhance initiatives promoting religious tolerance as a response to combat intolerance and extremist ideologies. Moreover, by fostering increased religious tolerance among students, it is anticipated that their overall happiness will be enhanced through the positive contribution of their religious beliefs.

Moreover, findings about a direct relationship between religious belief and happiness are significantly positive. An increase in religious belief causes an increase in happiness. When the level of religious belief increases, it causes increased happiness in students. In Iraq, Sahraian et al., (2013) found a significant correlation between religious belief and happiness in medical students at Shiraz University of Medical Sciences. Attitude toward religion can be an important determinant of happiness; if someone feels they are related to God, they will also feel happier. (Sahraian et al., 2013). The survey results of 335 people in Oman of various religions, genders, and levels of education found that followers of Hinduism were slightly happier than others. People who did not follow any of the three religions (Islam, Hinduism, and Christianity) were found to be the most unhappy. The results of the European Social Survey, covering the years 2000–2008, also confirm that religious individuals are generally happier than those who are not religious (Fidrmuc & Tunali, 2021). Likewise, Ferriss, (2002) saw that happiness was associated with the frequency of attendance at religious services and denominational and doctrinal preferences. Happiness is also associated with religiosity (Hossain & Rizvi, 2016), remembering God, and carrying out religious actions and behaviors (Amiruddin et al., 2021). These studies prove that religious belief is essential for a person to feel happy regardless of religion.

Contrary to the majority of studies that have found a positive influence of religious belief on happiness, there are a few studies, such as the research conducted by Lu & Gao, (2017), which found that religion, in general, is not significantly related to happiness, while religious beliefs and practices—especially attending services—are negatively related to happiness. Research on Hindu students in India revealed that religious belief was not related to the frequency of service attendance, the importance of prayer, or the influence of religion on one's life and was positively related to depression, anxiety, and meaning in life. (Park & Kamble, 2020). Figure 4, presented by the researchers, provides support for the notion that religious belief is not the sole determinant of happiness, as other variables also play a role in influencing individuals' well-being. Happiness can weaken and increase based on students' religious tolerance, not just based on religious belief.

Despite the findings about a direct relationship between religious belief and happiness are positively significant. Nevertheless, an increase in religious tolerance will lead to increased happiness. While researchers have not found direct research on the relationship between religious tolerance and happiness, growing body of literature regarding intolerance have a statistically significant positive relationship with uncertainty and anxiety, prospective intolerance to uncertainty and anxiety, and intolerance inhibition of uncertainty and anxiety (Schlinger, 2020). Demirtas & Yildiz, (2019) conducted research highlighting a positive correlation between uncertainty intolerance and perceived stress. Individuals who exhibit higher levels of intolerance tend to experience increased feelings of uncertainty, anxiety, and stress. This circumstance reinforces the findings in this study that happiness is moderated by religious tolerance. Happiness does not only occur because of religious belief but also because of religious tolerance.

The research findings demonstrate that both religious belief and religious tolerance play significant roles in promoting happiness. These findings highlight the importance of universities and the authorities in prioritizing the reinforcement of religious tolerance among students. Furthermore, universities should concentrate on implementing programs through their human resource development section to enhance the happiness of both students and lecturers across various colleges.

Implications

The findings of this study have implications for campuses and the authorities to provide psychoeducational programs for students to increase their religious tolerance. Religious tolerance serves as an effective tool in combating intolerance and radicalism, which can disrupt harmony and unity within society. Students are widely recognized as agents of change and the future of the Indonesian nation. They play a crucial role in maintaining social control and upholding the nation's unity and integrity. If students' religious tolerance increases, then this can increase students' happiness. When students experience a predominance of positive emotions and feelings of happiness, it can help minimize the emergence of negative emotions. This, in turn, can contribute to reducing the occurrence of mental health issues among students.

Suggestions for Future Research

This study examined happiness, religious belief, and religious tolerance, and undergraduate students were participated in this research. According to this study, religious tolerance can moderate the relationship between contentment and religious faith. Future studies can utilize intervention-based research to promote religious tolerance among college students. Increased religious tolerance among students will enhance religion's contribution to contentment. Students from public and private institutions participated in this study as representatives from the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology and the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia. Students include both males and females. The effect of gender and educational background on differences in religious belief, tolerance, and contentment can be studied.

CONCLUSION

The study supports both hypotheses, indicating a significant influence of religious belief on happiness. The findings highlight that individual with a strong faith in their religion, perceiving everything in life as having a divine purpose, tend to experience increased happiness. These individuals exhibit a sense of surrender, avoiding excessive control over worldly desires and aligning their life goals with God's will. This mental stability contributes to their overall happiness. Furthermore, religious tolerance is crucial in shaping the relationship between religious belief and happiness. Individuals with high religious tolerance derive greater happiness from their religious beliefs, while those with low religious tolerance experience a diminished impact on their happiness. Promoting religious tolerance is essential in maximizing the positive influence of religious belief on happiness.

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AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION STATEMENT

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