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ARTICLE

Exploring Social Identities in Indonesia: The Role of Religious and Ethnic Identities in Evaluating Well-Being

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the role of religious and ethnic identities on individuals' reported relational well-being (RWB) in Indonesia. Our findings reveal that religious identity significantly impacts life evaluations, with active engagement in religious practices positively correlating with RWB. Conversely, ethnic identity does not demonstrate a significant association with RWB, particularly among younger adults, suggesting that positive religious relationships may supersede ethnic affiliations in well-being assessments. Notably, while particularistic and religiocentrism beliefs do not correlate with RWB, the salience of religious values, such as the principle of treating others as one wishes to be treated, exhibits a positive relationship with life evaluations. This underscores the importance of religious identity over ethnic identity in shaping well-being. The study contributes valuable insights for scholars and policymakers aiming to foster intergroup harmony and enhance life satisfaction through social identity interventions.

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KEYWORDS
social identity, religiosity, ethnic identity, relational well-being, Indonesia

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Introduction

Research on well-being has experienced increased scholar attention in the past three decades (Armitage et al., 2012; Riasnugrahani et al., 2024; Steptoe et al., 2015; White, 2015). Previous studies have covered the construct development of well-being, its measurement, and its association with various domains of a person's life. The United Nations (UN) has even included it as one of the sustainable development goals (Conceição, 2019). Among the many studies, one thing that is agreed upon is that well-being is an important aspect of human life as it is related to a person's mental and physical health (Salvador-Carulla et al., 2014; Steptoe et al., 2015).

Relational Well-Being

Generally, well-being research is categorised into two approaches: objective, e.g., economic, basic needs, life expectancy, and capability; and subjective, e.g., assessment of life satisfaction and quality of life (Diener et al., 1999; Hu et al., 2011; Ryan & Deci, 2020; White, 2008). Each approach focuses on the aspect considered most important in an individual's life. However, White (2015) argued that these approaches have limitations, especially in looking at situations or relationships that occur in the process of achieving well-being; not to mention that contextual knowledge of how societies work in different parts of the world is crucial in investigating well-being. For instance, most individuals living in the Global South prefer to eat together than alone because "to share rice in Bangladesh is to indicate shared identity" (White, 2008, p. 4). A fulfilment of one commodity in some countries, such as rice, is not only a personal satisfaction but also a symbol of social status. Therefore, in evaluating well-being, we should consider the cultural representation of one's society to ensure that personal and societal values of an individual are captured in the assessment.

Following up on this line of idea, we aim to pursue a more contextual approach to understanding the perception of well-being in Indonesian society by incorporating both individualistic and basic needs into a broader framework of socio-psychological needs. This recognizes individuals' well-being as a process, in which they take an active role in achieving it (Armitage et al., 2012). As such, the current study views well-being as an intimate concept, specifically defined by the individual who experiences it, and is deeply rooted in societies in which people live in (White, 2008).

To this end, we opt to employ the notion of relational well-being (RWB), which defines well-being as an ongoing evaluation undertaken by individuals towards their current state of life involving their subjective, e.g., own self-concept, relational, e.g., sense of security in their living space, and material aspects, e.g., income and access to public facilities (White, 2008, 2015). The three aspects are constantly interrelated, and no aspect is more important than the other. Therefore, White (2015) suggested seeing well-being in a relational framework. By relational, White and Jha (2023) consider individuals as naturally relational beings. This identifies active participation of individuals in their life, rather than mere objects of others. Furthermore, the proposition also recognizes the influence of social interactions, along with social and material environments that surround individuals on their life evaluations or RWB. In addition, White and Jha (2023) claimed that individuals' social relationships are not only to fulfil the identity-formation developmental stage but also to fulfil various life requirements.

In other words, individuals' personal and material attainment only does good when it provides for others, which then allows individuals to achieve a high level of well-being. This implies that individuals view their social relationships not only as a means, but also as an end or value that they aim to achieve. As shown by Jamal et al. (2023), strengthening individuals' social networks is found to have a positive impact on community development in Indonesia, which then relates back to the individuals' personal development. Therefore, actively participating in the community is equally as important as achieving a high level of individual income.

In summary, relational well-being acknowledges the importance of individual context that includes sociocultural aspects that are rooted in specific times and places (Armitage et al., 2012; White, 2015). The attainment of well-being cannot be reduced to just being wealthy or happy, or even a combination of the two. It should be viewed as a constant process of personal achievement that considers the context of one's relationships in a specific time and place.

Social Identity Theory

The social identity theory explains that individuals naturally identify themselves with certain social groups as an effort to understand their social world (Tajfel, 1974). Once they define their social identity, they socially differentiate themselves from others who are not part of their chosen group, such as ethnic or religious groups. Additionally, individuals constantly compare their social group membership with relevant outgroups (Spears, 2011; Tajfel & Turner, 1979). This tendency has two functions; the first is to maintain or achieve superiority, and the second is to preserve one's uniqueness. As such, not only is social identity integral in individuals' lives, but it is also vital for them to be a part of a certain social identity. Indeed, the social identity provides not only moral support to individuals, but also financial assistance, access to health, and even access to a good physical environment. Recently, Riasnugrahani et al. (2024) demonstrated that family participation, a proxy to individuals' social identity, positively impacts individual resilience. This, in turn, positively associates with their well-being. Hence, social identity is assumed to positively affect individuals' well-being (Phinney et al., 2001; Yip & Fuligni, 2002; Ysseldyk et al., 2010).

Furthermore, social identity theory posits that individuals' social identities can be seen through their attachment to their ingroup, e.g., to what extent they participate in their ingroup's practices, affective evaluation towards their ingroup, e.g., to what extent they show positive attitudes to the ingroup's norms and beliefs, and centrality, e.g., to what extent they place importance of their ingroup's values (Ashmore et al., 2004; Cameron, 2004). In line with this, we employ Cameron's three-factor social identity model. The first factor is ingroup ties, which refers to individuals' perceptions towards their bond and belongingness with other ingroup members. The second is ingroup affect, which refers to individuals' positive feelings towards their ingroup membership. Finally, the third is centrality, which refers to the degree individuals think about themselves as an ingroup member. The consensus is that the longer they think about their ingroup membership, the more central the identity becomes. Therefore, the concept of centrality is often analogous as identity salience, in which a specific time and situation might determine which identity becomes more salient or important (Setiawan et al., 2020; Yip & Fuligni, 2002), although there are other scholars who distinguish between the two concepts (Stryker & Serpe, 1994). In short, these three factors make up individuals' social identity which plays an important role in individuals' level of well-being (Haslam et al., 2009; Knez et al., 2020; Mccubbin et al., 2013).

Religious and Ethnic Identities. Among many social identities, we argue that there are two important social identities— religious and ethnic—that most Indonesians highly regard. In the Indonesian context, religious identity is still perceived as an important identity that provides more personal meaning and significance than most other forms of social identity (Hadiz, 2017; van Bruinessen, 2018). There is a strong emotion involved with religion in Indonesia, such as moral authority that is almost unquestionable (Wellman & Tokuno, 2004). This resonates with a high number of interreligious conflicts recorded in the country (Mengatasi intoleransi, merangkul keberagaman, 2022; Sigit & Hasani, 2021). Similarly, ethnic identity still poses a high authority in certain aspects of most Indonesians' lives. Marriage and community are still developed through shared ethnic identity (Bazzi et al., 2017). Indeed, along with religion, ethnic identity is still politicised to generate collective action among ingroup members (Barron et al., 2009; Humaedi, 2014), although the separation between religious and ethnic identities can often be vague in Indonesia, since certain ethnic identities are historically associated with a certain religious belief. Therefore, these identities have high importance in most Indonesians' life experiences and may provide a significant meaning for their RWB.

The identification with a particular religious affiliation alone results in higher overall individuals' life satisfaction (Bergan & McConatha, 2001). This finding is consistent with a study by Ysseldyk et al. (2010) that claims religious identity does not only provide social support among ingroup members, but is also positively related with mental health and a healthier lifestyle. Further, Yeniaras and Akarsu (2017) scrutinised religious identity in detail, looking at how different religiosity dimensions are related to individuals' life satisfaction. They found that consequential dimension or adopting religious values as a consequence of identifying with a specific religious affiliation, is positively related to life satisfaction.

On the other hand, previous research has shown that by identifying with a certain ethnic group, along with their national identity, individuals are reported to have a higher level of well-being (Phinney et al., 2001). Umaña-Taylor et al. (2014) further suggest that by positively viewing one's own ethnic identity results in a positive regard about the group and thus the self. Ethnic identity has also been found to be a buffer in dealing with racial discrimination in the United States (US), and eventually, is related to increased psychological well-being (Mossakowski et al., 2019), although this relation is found only among foreign-born and not for US-born individuals. This conclusion is consistent with the study by Balidemaj and Small (2019), which found that people with high levels of ethnic identity are positively associated with higher levels of psychological well-being.

The Interplay of Religious and Ethnic Identities and Relational Well-Being

In connection with the importance of these two social identities, we intend to conduct a study on the relation between religious and ethnic identities on the one hand, and individuals' RWB, on the other. There are two main reasons why this study is important to purse. Firstly, although scholars agree on the importance of social relationships to individuals' well-being, research related to the Indonesian context is still very rare. Secondly, investigation into well-being using RWB is also uncommon, especially within the Indonesian context. However, the relationality of social and community relations, along with personal accomplishments, is key to developing a positive evaluation of one's state of life.

In this study, we posit the implementation of religious dimensions proposed by Stark and Glock (1970) within Cameron's (2004) three-factor identity framework. According to Stark and Glock (1970), religiosity includes religious practices, beliefs, and consequences (how central religion is in a person's daily life). Religious doctrine is considered to provide a positive aspect of individuals' religious identity (Ysseldyk et al., 2010). By embracing their religious beliefs, individuals are susceptible to particularistic views, in which their own religion is seen as the only true vision of the supernatural, and others will not be saved unless they follow it (Stark & Glock, 1970). Moreover, individual beliefs are also related to religiocentrism, which is a combination of a positive attitude towards one's own religious ingroup and a negative attitude towards outgroup religion (Brewer, 1999; Sterkens & Anthony, 2008). These religious beliefs have been shown to be positively related to individuals' collective efficacy when their community is considering a collective action to ameliorate their state of living (Takwin & Setiawan, 2023). Thus, we expect that by adopting a high level of particularism and religiocentrism, individuals are likely to feel accepted by their religious group thereby, maintaining a good social relationship with ingroup members.

Furthermore, ingroup ties in religious identity can be reflected in the extent to which individuals regularly perform religious rituals and liturgical actions, which can be further divided into formal institutional ritual modes, e.g., attending church, and more private modes of worship practices, e.g., reading scripture and praying privately (Anthony et al., 2015). Religious practices are assumed to strengthen ingroup cohesion by providing opportunities to share experiences, increasing coalition commitment,

and cooperative behaviors, although not all cooperative behaviors can fall into socially acceptable behaviors (Ginges et al., 2009). However, through religious practices, individuals can gain social support from their religious group. We expect that those who perform religious practices frequently are likely to be accustomed to actively participate in other communal practices in their living space, thus providing them with a sense of accomplishment with their social surroundings.

Lastly, the centrality dimension is reflected in religious identity salience or "the importance of being religious" (Roof & Perkins, 1975). In relation to an individual's tendency to identify themselves with a religious group that displays more positive than negative aspects, we argue that the importance of religion is not merely about being a follower of a certain religion, but also being a good follower of that religion. This is related to a positive self-evaluation (Luhtanen & Crocker, 1992). We expect that those with high religious salience are likely to care for their relationship with significant others, as well as with their community. Based on this, we hypothesise that religious identity, which is represented by religious practices, beliefs and salience, is positively related to individuals' RWB (**Hypothesis 1**, or **H1**).

Furthermore, ethnic identity will also be measured using the three-factor social identity model (Cameron, 2004). Ingroup ties in ethnic identity refer to the extent individuals feel they belong to their ethnic group. By having a high level of ingroup ties, individuals are able to participate in their ethnic group practices. Not only will this provide them with social relationships, this might also provide them with social support in times of adversity. Next, ingroup affect in ethnic identity refers to the extent individuals feel positively towards their ethnic group. By having positive evaluation, individuals are able to incorporate their ethnic identity in their global self-evaluation, which then paves a way to a positive self-concept (Umaña-Taylor et al., 2014).

Finally, centrality refers to the extent individuals think about being part of their ethnic group. This notion is important to develop a sense of self-worthiness which, in turn, pertains to developing social relationships with others (Sharma & Sharma, 2010). If individuals constantly hold negative thoughts about their ethnic identity, then this is likely to withhold their subjective attainments and social relationship development. On the other hand, if individuals constantly hold positive thoughts about their ethnic identity, they are likely to develop a sense of pride which enables them to pursue healthy social relationships. Therefore, we predict that individuals' ethnic identity is positively related to their RWB (**Hypothesis 2**, or **H2**).

To serve the aim of the present study, we will use a mixed data collection method (online and on-site) to gather random samples from the general population living in Jakarta and West Java provinces of Indonesia. The study locations are deliberately chosen as they are melting pots for many Indonesians and thus increase the possibility of collecting information on different religious and ethnic identities. The results of the study provide a contribution to exploring the role of social identity in shaping individuals' well-being, especially in the Indonesian context. Due to the use of the RWB approach, the findings are expected to be useful for the development of policies and interventions aimed at improving well-being in Indonesia, for example, by promoting positive intergroup relations. Overall, the study aims to answer the

following research question: To what extent are religious and ethnic identities related to individuals' relational well-being among the general population in Indonesia?

Method

Following the Resilient Indonesian Slums Envisioned (RISE) project launch in 2021, we have followed their footsteps in applying the notion of RWB in a greater context. To do this, we ran a survey using a mixed data collection method (i.e., online and offline) to randomly gather participants from West Java, Banten, and Jakarta provinces in Indonesia[1]. We purposively selected the locations due to their nature as economic migration destinations (Rizaty, 2021). Thus, this selection is probably the most effective way to represent Indonesia's vast urban communities, while the mixed method of data collection is the most accessible method for that purpose (de Leeuw, 2005).

Prior to the survey, we applied for an ethical approval and received a positive response by October 2022 from the university we are affiliated with. The survey was then conducted from October until December 2022. Specifically for the offline survey, we performed a random walk to inadvertently gather participants which started from a purposively-selected address, for instance, from a local sub-district office of a city or from a local university. This method was selected because we did not have access to the local population registry, but it can still be considered a better approximation of the general population than a simple purposive sampling method (Babbie, 1989). In detail, we relied on a dice rolling to determine the random interval of a walk. Once determined, for instance, number three from the dice rolling, we approached the fourth house or address from the starting point. Next, we moved to the seventh house or address from the starting point and kept repeating it until we have reached the target number of participants. We similarly applied the same random method to the online survey. First, we created a mailing list or database which contains participants' emails, obtained by asking our extended networks. Second, we sent out the online survey by randomly selecting people from the database by rolling a dice to determine our starting point (participant's number). Then we used the same number to proceed to the next participant. Table 1 table shows the number of participants gathered in each location.

Table 1

Distribution of Participants by Location and Data Collection Method

Location	Online	Offline	Total
Bandung	45	81	126
Bekasi	3	18	21
Cimahi	2	23	25
Cirebon	1	–	1
Depok	–	19	19
Sukabumi	1	–	1
Tasikmalaya	2	–	2

[1] For further explanation of mixed data collection method, see de Leeuw (2005).

Table 1 Continued

Location	Online	Offline	Total
Tangerang	1	19	20
Jakarta	–	39	39
Overall	55 (21.65%)	199 (78.35%)	254 (100%)

Based on the data of 254 participants, we found five officially recognized religions in Indonesia. The largest religious affiliation found is Islam with 63%, followed by Christianity (Protestants and Catholics combined) with 31.1%. The rest of the participants practice either Buddhism (3.1%), local indigenous beliefs (1.6%), or Confucius (1.2%). As for ethnicities, we successfully covered various ethnic groups, although the number is not equally distributed. Sundanese is the largest sample group with 33.9%. Betawi comes second with 22.0%, and Chinese-descendants and Javanese are in subsequent positions with 16.5% and 15.7%, respectively. We also acquired participants who are Batak (6.3%), Toraja and Melayu (each with 1.2%), Dayak (0.8%), and Flores and Nias (each with 0.4%). There are four participants who did not disclose specific ethnicity and claimed a national identity instead (1.6%).

Measures

We ran confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) in lavaan package in R (Rosseel, 2018) to calculate the validity and reliability of the employed measures. For the validity criteria, we used the following parameters: one, following the work of Hu and Bentler (1999; see also Hooper et al., 2008) on the recommended model-fit estimates, we relied on a combination of two different fit indices in forms of standardised root mean square residual (SRMR ≤ .09) and comparative fit index (CFI ≥ .96). Two, factor loading of each item should be at least .40 in order to be retained (Ellis, 2016). All of the *a priori* factor structures were derived from previous research on each scale.

Finally, we calculated average variance extracted (AVE) to establish a convergent validity for each dimension or a latent construct from each scale. Ideally, the value of AVE of a latent construct should be at least .50 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). However, if less than the proposed value but the value of composite reliability (CR) of that construct is greater than .60, then the construct can still be considered valid (Fornell & Larcker, 1981, p. 47, Table 8). Finally, we computed Cronbach's coefficient alpha (α) as well as CR to determine the reliability level. Since coefficient alpha has now been considered a lower bound of the true reliability (based on the classical test theory claim that the true reliability represented by the ratio of true score divided by error), CR complements the calculation of reliability level in a manner that suits with CFA (Peterson & Kim, 2013). We also provide bivariate correlations between variables in Table 2. The following sections delineate all of the scales employed in this study in detail.

Relational Well-Being Scale. The scale is a multidimensional scale consisting of six dimensions: (a) community participation, (b) security and competition, (c) subjective material well-being, (d) facility satisfaction, (e) religiosity, and (f) self-concept (Riasnugrahani et al., 2022). However, since we also focused on religious identity,

we modified the original scale by removing religiosity dimension to avoid overly high correlation between the constructs. Family and community participation refers to statement items like "I can participate on the election of neighbourhood leaders without any pressure." Security and competition dimension refers to items such as "The presence of the newcomer groups threatens my family and my group survival." Next, subjective material well-being deals with individuals' satisfaction with their material aspects, such as "I have a good life at the moment." Facility satisfaction is related to statements concerning individuals' satisfaction with their access to public facilities, such as "I am satisfied with the access to health facilities." Finally, self-concept deals with statements concerning one's confidence and evaluation towards their competence, such as "I am a dependable person." In total, we ran a validity test on 18 items of RWB (four items in dimensions of community participation, security and competition and self-concept, and three items in facility satisfaction and subjective material well-being).

Table 2

Bivariate Correlations Between Variables

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Private religious practices	1.00	**.27**	**.41**	**.36**	**.40**	**.34**	**.38**	−.30	**.37**	**.22**	−.01	−.12
Religious attendance		1.00	−.01	.08	**.24**	.04	.11	−.02	**.21**	−.09	**.17**	.09
Religiocentrism			1.00	**.60**	**.43**	**.32**	**.39**	**−.46**	**.23**	**.31**	**−.27**	**−.25**
Particularism				1.00	**.39**	**.23**	**.21**	**−.39**	.11	**.18**	−.09	**−.17**
Salience					1.00	**.51**	**.48**	**−.51**	**.38**	.26	.04	.09
Ingroup ties						1.00	**.73**	**−.75**	**.37**	.44	−.04	−.03
Ingroup affect							1.00	**−.71**	**.33**	**.23**	−.01	.02
Centrality								1.00	**−.27**	**−.34**	**.12**	−.05
RWB									1.00	**.52**	**−.18**	**−.17**
Age										1.00	**−.31**	**−.20**
Educational level											1.00	**.31**
Income level												1.00

Note. *Bold indicates significance at the $p < .05$ level.

Based on the first three models of CFA, we found that the data did not fit the model. The model-fit indices turned out to be poor and some items have low factor loading (two items from security and competition dimension). After removal of those items, the subsequent analysis still shows a poor fit model. More items were also shown to have low factor loading; two items from self-concept dimension and one item from dimensions of security and competition and subjective material well-being. Further, we noticed that two items in community participation were highly correlated ($r = .92$) and each of those items were highly correlated with another item as well ($r = .91$). Therefore, we had to remove those two items, leaving community participation dimension with two items only. On the other hand, one item from public facility satisfaction dimension was also found to be double loaded in another dimension, which we had to remove and thus leaving the dimension also with two items. In the end, we resorted to Pearson correlation to validate all two-item dimensions of RWB. The inter-item correlation in

each dimension was found to be significantly correlated, ranging from .38 (subjective material well-being) to .82 (security and competition). In the analysis, we obtained the score of RWB by totalling all remaining items and dividing them by the number of items (N = 10) (Appendix).

Religious Identity Scale. We combined the notions of social identity theory from Tajfel and Turner (1979) and Cameron's (2004) social identity model to assess individuals' religious identity (see Setiawan et al., 2020 for further synthesisation of these theories). The former claims that once people decide to identify themselves with a particular social identity, here religious identity, they tend to view their religious group positively in comparison to other relevant groups (Spears, 2011; Tajfel & Turner, 1979). The latter then proclaims that this identification is encapsulated in three dimensions of social identity (Cameron, 2004). First, ingroup ties which refer to the extent to which individuals perform religious practices. Second, ingroup affect which refers to the extent to which individuals express their attitudes towards their religious beliefs. Third, centrality which refers to the extent to which individuals perceive the importance of their religious values.

Based on the above understanding, ingroup ties were assessed by using two items for private religious rituals participants usually perform, namely reading and praying, on a seven-point scale. The Pearson correlation between the two items is significant, r = .27, p < .05. In terms of public practices, we used a simple question of "How often do you go to religious services in mosques, churches, temples or other places of worship?" and asked participants to rate on a seven-point scale.

Next, ingroup affect was assessed by using particularism and religiocentrism scales. A three-item particularism scale was used to evaluate how much individuals believe that their religious doctrines represent the absolute truth on statements, such as "The truth about God is found only in my religion" (Anthony et al., 2015). The CFA shows a good-fit model, χ^2 = 2.74, p < .00, CFI = .99 and SRMR = .04. Also, the reliability is found to be a moderate level (α = .74) with a high level of CR (.91).

As for religiocentrism scale, it asks to what extent individuals show favourable attitudes towards their own religious group and negative attitudes towards other religious groups (Sterkens & Anthony, 2008). Positive attitudes are defined as good qualities of one's own religion (e.g., "My religious group is best able to talk meaningfully about God"), whereas negative attitudes are defined as opposing characteristics of other religious groups (e.g., "Other religions only talk about doing good deeds without practising them"). Participants were asked to rate themselves on a five-point scale on both measures. Initially, the CFA shows a poor-fit model due to a low factor loading of one item ("Other religions are often the cause of religious conflict"). After the removal, the second CFA shows a good-fit model, χ^2 = 0.11, p < .00, CFI = .99 and SRMR = .01, while its reliability is shown to be in a moderate level (α = .71) with a high level of CR (.80).

Finally, centrality was assessed using a three-item religious salience scale by Eisinga et al. (1991). On a five-point scale, participants were asked to what extent they agree with statements, such as "My religious beliefs have a great deal of influence on how I relate with others." The CFA demonstrates a good-fit model, χ^2 = 12.86,

$p < .00$, CFI = .96 and SRMR = .08. The scale is also found to be highly reliable (α = .83) accompanied with a moderate level of CR (.73).

Ethnic Identity Scale. Similar to religious identity scale, we adopted Cameron's (2004) social identity model and this time, we also employed its social identification measure to investigate the level of ethnic identification among participants. The scale consists of three dimensions, namely ingroup ties, ingroup affect, and centrality, which tallies up to a total of 16 items. Ingroup ties ask participants to rate themselves on a five-point scale on statements like "I feel strong ties to other ingroup members of my ethnic group." Ingroup affect asks participants to rate themselves on a five-point scale on statements, such as "In general, I'm glad to be a member of my ethnic group." Whereas centrality asks participants on statements, such as "I often think about the fact that I am a member of my ethnic group."

The first two CFA models show poor results, due to low factor loadings in two items of centrality and each item in ingroup ties and ingroup affect. After the removal of those items, the CFA shows a good-fit model, $\chi^2 = 122.52$, $p < .00$, CFI = .96 and SRMR = .04, while the unstandardised factor loadings for each dimension range from middle to high level (from .41 to .94). Finally, the reliability for each dimension is found to be in the moderate to high range, with centrality having the lowest α of .77 and ingroup affect having the highest α of .90.

Individual Characteristics. We asked direct questions to determine the participants' age and gender. Additionally, we gathered information on their educational attainment, ranging from *1 = no schooling* to *6 = a Master's degree or higher*. Lastly, we inquired about their monthly gross household income, which could fall between less than Rp. 500.000 to Rp. 6.000.000 or higher. Table 3 provides the descriptive analyses for all variables.

Results

Table 3 presents descriptive analyses of all variables involved in the study. We find that there is a significant difference in most variables between participants gathered through online and offline methods. Specifically, although both sample groups scored highly on RWB (above three out of maximum five) we find that offline participants reported slightly higher scores on RWB ($M = 3.26$, $SD = 0.38$); $t(254) = -3.81$, $p < .05$).

Table 3

Descriptive Analysis of All Variables by the Level of Risk Perception

Predictors	Range	Online group		Offline group		*t* test
		M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	(Cohen's *d*)
Private religious practices	1–7	5.00	1.46	5.77	1.08	**−3.68** (*d* = .60)

Table 3 Continued

Predictors	Range	Online group		Offline group		*t* test
		M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	(Cohen's *d*)
Religious attendance	1–7	3.27	1.34	2.95	1.13	1.61 (*d* = .26)
Religiocentrism	1–5	2.59	0.80	3.13	0.94	**–3.91** (*d* = .62)
Particularism	1–5	3.00	1.12	3.10	0.94	–.58 (*d* = .10)
Salience	1–5	3.92	0.81	4.21	0.71	**–2.51** (*d* = .38)
Ingroup ties	1–5	3.59	0.54	3.96	0.77	**–4.06** (*d* = –.55)
Ingroup affect	1–5	3.95	0.43	4.46	0.59	**–7.19** (*d* = .98)
Centrality	1–5	2.91	0.67	2.21	0.89	**6.26** (*d* = .88)
RWB	1–5	3.03	0.44	3.26	0.38	**–3.81** (*d* = .39)
		Individual characteristics				
Age	18–62	21.76	4.82	32.26	13.47	**–3.90** (*d* = 1.03)
Gender (male as reference)	0/1	.90	.31	.59	.49	–
Educational level	1–6	5.16	0.96	3.98	0.67	**10.44** (*d* = 2.22)
Income level	1–8	6.13	2.35	5.43	1.99	**2.22** (*d* = .32)

Note. *Bold indicates significance at the $p < .05$ level.

Next, we proceed to Table 4 to investigate the extent to which religious and ethnic identities relate to RWB. We performed multiple regression analyses in a step-wise fashion to understand the changes, if available, in each model. First, we hypothesised that dimensions of religious identity, represented by religious practices, beliefs, and salience, are positively related to RWB (**H1**). Based on the regression analyses, we find that only private religious practices ($b = 0.08$, $p < .05$), i.e., reading and praying, and religious salience ($b = 0.14$, $p < .05$) are significantly related to RWB. This finding suggests that those who often read sacred scriptures, pray individually and conform to their religious values are more likely to have higher level of RWB. Whereas the other dimensions are found to be either non-significantly related or have an inverse relation, i.e., particularism, with RWB. Based on this, we conclude that **H1** is partially confirmed, with only private religious practices and religious salience able to be used to predict RWB.

Table 4

Stepwise Regression on RWB (N = 250), With Standard Error in Parentheses

Predictors	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Intercept	**2.11** (.14)	**1.68** (.37)	**1.91** (.34)
	Religious identity		
Private religious practices	**0.08** (.02)	**0.07** (.02)	**0.06** (.02)
Religious attendance	0.03 (.02)	0.04 (.02)	**0.05** (.02)

Table 4 Continued

Predictors	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Religiocentrism	0.05 (.03)	0.04 (.03)	−0.01 (.03)
Particularism	**−0.06** (.03)	−0.05 (.03)	−0.03 (.03)
Salience	**0.14** (.04)	**0.10** (.04)	**0.11** (.04)
Ethnic identity			
Ingroup ties		**0.13** (.05)	−0.02 (.05)
Centrality		0.04 (.04)	0.04 (.04)
Ingroup affect		0.01 (.06)	0.11 (.06)
Individual characteristics			
Age			*0.01 (.00)*
Gender (male = 0 as reference)			**−0.10** (.05)
Educational level			0.04 (.03)
Income level			−0.01 (.01)
Adjusted R^2	.20	.22	.40

Note. *Bold indicates significance at the $p < .05$ level

Second, we proceeded to Model 2 by factoring ethnic identity dimensions and hypothesised that these dimensions are positively related to RWB (**H2**). Similar to the previous model, we only find ingroup ties to be positively related to RWB ($b = 0.13$, $p < .05$). This suggests that individuals who feel that they belong to their ethnic group and are similar to other ethnic group members are more likely to have a higher level of RWB. As such, **H2** is partially accepted.

Finally, to avoid making a false conclusion by having a spurious effect due to individual characteristics, we built Model 3 by including all the previous variables and adding individual characteristics. Here, we find that most of our earlier findings do not change, except that now religious attendance is shown to be positively related to RWB ($b = 0.05$, $p < .05$) and ingroup ties' relation is no longer present. Specifically, age is found to be positively related, although very small ($b = 0.01$, $p < .05$), and males are found to have a higher level of RWB. Thus, we find that there is no substantial spurious effect of both religious and ethnic identities in the presence of individual characteristics. Based on this, we can safely conclude that those who are over 30 (mean age for all samples) and are male, and more frequently perform religious practices (both private and public) and conform to their religious values, are more likely to have a higher level of RWB.

Discussion

The present study aims to investigate to what extent social identities in Indonesia are related to individuals' evaluation towards their present life, or conceptually known as RWB. Using a contextual knowledge of the country, we take two of the most highly relevant social identities to serve the aim of the study, namely religious and ethnic identities (Barron et al., 2009; Hadiz, 2017; van Bruinessen, 2018). Based on our robust regression analyses, we find that religious identity is evidently still regarded more highly over ethnic identity in explaining individuals' RWB. The following paragraphs will explore the findings in detail.

Before we discuss the findings further, it is important to reiterate that we purposively selected RWB instead of other popular well-being notions, such as subjective well-being (SWB), mainly because RWB takes the relationality of important aspects of an individual's life into account (White, 2008). These aspects involve subjective (e.g., self-concept, social relationships), societal (e.g., access to public facilities), and material (e.g., material well-being). However, the main strength of RWB does not lie in the inclusion of these three aspects, but rather its emphasis on the relationality of these aspects (White, 2015). By adding the fact that Indonesians mostly still live in a collectivist manner, in which individuals are encouraged to care for their family, their social relationships and their surroundings (French et al., 2008; Sterkens & Anthony, 2008), RWB is the perfect fit to explain individuals' evaluation towards their current state of life. In predicting it, there is no better identity than religious and ethnic identities that have often sparked collective action for better and worse (Hadiz, 2017; Takwin & Setiawan, 2023; van Bruinessen, 2018).

In regard to the findings, first, we find corroborating evidence that religious identity is still placed as an important influence in how people evaluate their current state of life. Historically, religiosity has been successfully used to push forward national agenda, e.g., family planning (Menchik, 2014), and to this date, it still plays a crucial role in a political agenda and policy making (Hadiz, 2017; Mulia, 2011). By religiosity, we mean actively participate in religious attendance as well as private religious practices, such as praying. Ginges et al. (2009) and Al Qurtuby (2013) demonstrated that religious practices are able to bring religious adherents together to trade ideas and opinions towards their ingroup as well as their outgroups. Although their study is focused on conflicts and peacebuilding, the underlying mechanism shows that religious identity indeed plays an important part in people's lives. The adoption of a particular religious identity enables individuals to fulfil their needs of self-concept, social relationships and, sometimes, also their material needs. Specifically for religious practices, those who frequently attend religious services are also more likely to interact with their ingroup members thus, providing a means to fulfil their social needs and their religious group's needs (Setiawan, et al., 2020). More importantly, religious practices enable individuals to fulfil their self-need of being close to their "creator" (Stark & Glock, 1970). As such, in this study, we find that those who perform religious practices frequently are shown to develop higher satisfaction with their current state of life.

As for religious beliefs, which are represented by particularism and religiocentrism, we find that they are not related to individuals' RWB. We suspect that this is due to the very nature of ideological dimension of religious identity. Since religious doctrines often constrain individuals from genuinely caring for religious outgroup members, e.g., some Muslim communities in Indonesia strongly advise to only vote for Muslim candidates (Hadiz, 2017), the ideological dimension will be an opposite of individuals' ongoing process of achieving balanced and positive social relationships. In relation to individuals' relationships, Riasnugrahani et al. (2024) claimed that religious beliefs can be a protective factor for individuals, but they can also harm their family and community when they promote prejudice and intolerance. In fact, Yeniaras and Akarsu (2017) found that the ideological dimension is non-linearly related (U-shaped relation) with life satisfaction

in their study. They suggest a similar reasoning; being too strict of a religious adherent prevents them from having a balanced satisfaction of the material and spiritual needs.

Furthermore, we also find that religious salience is positively related to individuals' RWB. This suggests that the golden rule of religious values of one's religion, such as treating others as one would like to be treated, is more important than religious norms of one's religious group (Baumard & Boyer, 2013). By looking at RWB through a microscopic lens, individuals are expected to be an active agent in pursuing their individual attainments, while at the same time, caring for their social relationships and providing beneficial acts to the society (White, 2015). This implies that in their process of achieving self-success, individuals strive to act benevolently to families and people who are in need, even if those are their disturbing neighbours. Only through this act are individuals able to feel achieve and maintain a high level of RWB; individuals are expected to do well to feel well. Therefore, those with a high level of religious salience are likely to show positive evaluation towards their current state of life.

Second, we find that ethnic identity is not associated with RWB. Due to the addition of individual characteristics, particularly age, the relation between ingroup ties and RWB disappears, whereas, at the same time, religious attendance becomes related to RWB. There are two explanations for this. One, age has been shown to be positively associated with individuals' RWB, in which older adults report more meaningful and positive relationships (Birditt et al., 2021; Stone et al., 2020). By this, we assume that similarity in ethnicity may no longer play an important role in older aged adults; what matters is whether their relationships provide positive support or not. Meanwhile, age has also been found to be linearly related to individuals' religiosity, which is often represented by more frequent religious attendance (Bengtson et al., 2015; Hayward & Krause, 2013). By becoming more involved in religious attendance, ethnic identity may become less relevant, especially in individuals' social networks.

Theoretically, religious identity is often regarded as more important than any other identity (Ysseldyk et al., 2010). As a belief system, religion is expected to be taken whole heartedly by its adherents and even when it contradicts with other belief systems, e.g., ethnic beliefs, religious doctrine should be taken as the absolute truth. This is especially true in Indonesia. Despite the fact that one can convert to another religious affiliation, it has been shown to be a difficult and often life-threatening event which disallows the thought among most Indonesians (French et al., 2008). Altogether, this paves the way for religious identity to become more highly relevant in determining individuals' RWB.

Notwithstanding the important findings that the current study has drawn, we also acknowledge some limitations in the study. One, we acknowledge that some of our sample groups do not represent the cities they live in due to a small number acquired, e.g., Cirebon and Sukabumi. Therefore, the findings should be taken carefully to avoid over-generalisation. Two, considering that RWB is a process which fluctuates depending on the time and space in which they exist, cross-sectional data is limited to fully explain RWB and the plausible temporal changes among the measures. Therefore, we recommend that future studies aim to pursue longitudinal associations which may open a possibility of causal interpretation, if indeed, changes in religious and ethnic identities precede the change in RWB.

Conclusion

To conclude, the study has provided valuable insights into the relationship between social identities and individuals' evaluations of their current life, conceptualised as relational wellbeing in the Indonesian context. By focusing on religious and ethnic identities, we found that religious identity plays a more significant role than ethnic identity in shaping individuals' perceptions of their well-being. In this time of uncertainty and ever-changing society, this aligns with historical trends where religiosity has become more influential in individuals' lives and in shaping political discourse and policymaking.

Our findings indicate that active participation in religious practices fosters a sense of community and fulfils various personal needs, leading to greater life satisfaction. However, we also recognize that certain ideological dimensions of religious beliefs can hinder well-being by promoting exclusionary attitudes towards outgroup members. This highlights the complexity of religious identity, where the benefits of communal ties may be undermined by rigid doctrinal adherence. Fortunately, our findings indicate that if individuals highly value their religious values, such as empathy and altruism, over religious group norms, they will still be able to foster positive social relationships thus enhancing their well-being. This reinforces the notion that individuals who prioritise benevolent actions towards others are likely to experience greater satisfaction in their lives.

In summary, this research underscores the importance of understanding social identities within the framework of RWB, particularly in a diverse society like Indonesia. This contribution provides important insights for scholars and policy makers in developing interventions aimed at promoting life satisfaction through positive intergroup relationships and interreligious harmony. It also calls for further exploration into how these identities interact with various dimensions of well-being, offering a pathway for future studies to investigate the broader implications for social cohesion and individual fulfilment.

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Appendix

Final Analysis on RWB Scale (N = 254)

Construct					
Relational well-being	Unstandardized factor loadings (standard errors)				
	F1 Community participation	**F2** Facility satisfaction	**F3** Subjective material well-being	**F4** Security & competition	**F3** Self-concept
I can participate in the elections of neighbourhood leaders without any pressure	*r* = .82				
I can participate in the elections of President and Vice President without any pressure					
I am satisfied with the access to health facilities from my neighbourhood		*r* = .64			
I am satisfied with the access to educational facilities in my neighbourhood					
I feel my saving can cover the emergency needs of my family			*r* = .38		
I have a better job/ business compared to my friends					
The presence of the newcomer groups threatens my family and my group survival				*r* = .63	
I experienced physical threats while living in this neighbourhood					
I am a hard worker					*r* = .51
I am a reliable person					

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