



Religiosity and well-being: An IFLS study on differences between majority and minority religious groups

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ABSTRACT

Background: As a key component of well-being, happiness and life satisfaction are important issues of social welfare in sustainable development. In the context of Indonesia's multi-religious society, religiosity is believed to have an important role in shaping subjective well-being. However, the influence of religiosity on happiness may vary depending on the social position of religious groups. This study aims to examine the relationship between religiosity and subjective well-being by considering the role of religious groups (majority and minority) as moderating variables. **Methods:** The research data are sourced from the Indonesian Family Life Survey Wave 5 (IFLS-V) involving 24,596 adults aged 21-60 years ($M = 37.4$). The analysis was conducted using a moderation model with subjective well-being as the dependent variable, religiosity as the predictor variable, and religious group as the moderating variable. **Findings:** The results of the study indicate that religiosity has a positive role on each happiness ($B = 0.068$, 95% CI = 0.059 - 0.077) and life satisfaction ($B = 0.156$, 95% CI = 0.141 - 0.170). Minority religious groups tend to have lower levels of subjective well-being than majority religious groups. As a moderator variable, religious groups have a different role on the relationship between religiosity and each of the two indicators of subjective well-being. The religious group acts as a moderator between religiosity and happiness ($B = 0.036$, 95% CI = 0.006 - 0.065) where the effect is stronger for the non-Muslim group. However, the religious group does not moderate the relationship between religiosity and life satisfaction ($B = 0.029$, 95% CI = -0.019 - 0.077), so the effect of religiosity on increasing subjective well-being applies similarly for both groups. **Conclusion:** These findings confirm that the relationship between religiosity and subjective well-being is dichotomous and contextual, depending on the individual's socio-religious position. **Novelty/Originality of this article:** This article provides an original contribution by presenting national-scale empirical evidence on the differences in the role of religiosity on two indicators of subjective well-being between majority and minority groups in Indonesia.

KEYWORDS: IFLS; religiosity; religious groups; subjective well-being.

1. Introduction

The development of studies on well-being in a global context has attracted increasing attention in recent years. In particular, a cross-cultural study on human flourishing in 22 countries conducted by VanderWeele et al., (2025) found that Indonesia ranks relatively high in psychological well-being, particularly in the dimensions of happiness, life satisfaction, and the quality of social relationships. This finding is noteworthy because, although Indonesia is among countries with a low income ratio, social and cultural factors are suspected to play a significant role in well-being, such as communalism, a culture of

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mutual cooperation, and religiosity (Daulay et al., 2022; Nugroho et al., 2022; Unayah, 2017). These initial findings on the state of Indonesian social well-being then open up space for further study of how public well-being is constructed and influenced by contextual realities in Indonesia.

As fundamental components of measuring well-being or flourishing, life satisfaction and happiness represent an individual's subjective evaluation of their life and positive daily affective experiences (VanderWeele, 2017). In fact, these two elements are important indicators in assessing the quality of life of modern society. Within the framework of sustainable development, life satisfaction and happiness are seen as part of social development that emphasizes the balance between material progress and individual psychological satisfaction (Man, 2025). These two components are even seen as having the same urgency and status as Gross Domestic Product (GDP) as an indicator of progress in the standard of living of people in a country. A happy society and high life satisfaction can have a multidimensional impact on a country, including increasing the productivity of its people, so that the economy will also experience significant development (Agrawal et al., 2024; Gardiner et al., 2023; Jansen et al., 2024).

In general, happiness and life satisfaction are understood as a positive subjective evaluation of life based on an individual's personal standards, and are two complementary indicators of the pillars of subjective well-being (Diener et al., 2018; VanderWeele, 2017). These two components represent the affective and cognitive dimensions. Happiness refers to positive affective experiences, such as feelings of joy, pleasure, satisfaction, and comfort. Life satisfaction is a comprehensive cognitive assessment of how a person evaluates his or her life based on personal standards, goals, and aspirations (Diener et al., 2018). Happiness and life satisfaction are influenced by many factors, both internal and external to the individual. These factors are generally classified into three key components, namely material factors, social factors, and psychospiritual factors (Liu & Wu, 2025) which influence subjective mental states.

Well-being is essentially a psychological construct that is not culture-independent. Research on well-being has tended to focus on individualistic Western definitions and values and has not adequately encompassed the collective and communal values of Eastern cultures (Biswas-Diener, 2022). According to Joshanloo et al. (2021), well-being from a Western cultural perspective is more oriented towards hedonic happiness and self-enhancement, while well-being from an Eastern cultural perspective is oriented towards eudaimonic happiness and harmonious social relations. Furthermore, Eastern cultures and the majority of religions generally adopt similar values, one of which is a tendency towards self-transcendence and selflessness. Therefore, well-being in an Eastern cultural context emphasizes the principles of altruism and concern for others rather than self-orientation (Aren & Hamamci, 2021). Interestingly, previous studies in the Indonesian context noted that the factors driving happiness and life satisfaction are relational (Sujarwoto et al., 2018). This means that subjective well-being does not stop at one's internal evaluation, but is largely shaped by social connectedness with others and spiritual connectedness.

Religion is a complex entity encompassing both personal and collective dimensions, where beliefs not only influence self-concept and existential well-being but also strengthen social functioning through group support (Mavor & Ysseldyk, 2020). These beliefs are manifested in the form of ritual participation and reverence for sacred symbols (Brandt, 2019), which specifically narrows down to the concept of religious obedience. Within this dynamic, a person's evaluation of their religious obedience becomes an indicator of self-perception tied to social standards of obedience, religious identity, and motivation to present themselves as part of a religious group (Saroglou et al., 2020).

As a country with a culturally religious society, religiosity is a crucial aspect in promoting subjective well-being. In Indonesia, the link between welfare issues and religiosity is interesting to study, given the importance of identifying factors that drive societal well-being. As a multi-religious country, the diversity of religions and beliefs not only shapes the socio-cultural landscape for individuals within it but also influences perspectives on the meaning of life, life satisfaction, and happiness (Davie, 2022; Villani et

al., 2019). Various studies have shown that religiosity can improve psychological well-being. Religious individuals tend to have a stronger sense of meaning in life, lower stress levels, and higher life satisfaction (Pöhls, 2021; Sanjana et al., 2025; Yıldırım et al., 2021). In fact, religiosity can contribute as a core value in shaping environmentally conscious behaviour (Zafar & Abu-Hussin, 2025). Religiosity and religion provide a value system and source of social support that helps individuals manage negative emotions, expand gratitude, and increase optimism for the future.

However, the influence of religiosity on subjective well-being is not always uniform. Several cross-cultural studies have found that the influence of religiosity on happiness can vary depending on an individual's social position or socio-religious context (Koçak, 2021; Liu & Wu, 2025; Wnuk et al., 2022; Zimmer et al., 2019). The discourse of majority-minority groups is still associated with the number of group members. The majority refers to a group with a large number of members, while the minority refers to a small number. In societies with a dominant religious group, religiosity often becomes merely a normative value and merely part of an established social identity. Conversely, for minority groups, religiosity can serve as a significant psychological resource in coping with social pressures and feelings of alienation (Conley et al., 2022; Engel et al., 2024). This condition makes religiosity both a reflection of faith and a resource for increasing psychological resilience. Thus, it is important to examine how religiosity plays a role in increasing happiness in a religiously diverse society like Indonesia, especially considering the differences between majority and minority religious groups.

Although numerous studies on religiosity and subjective well-being have been conducted in Indonesia (Amir, 2021; Rusman et al., 2023), most have limited sample sizes, making them less able to reflect the more concrete conditions on the ground. Studies using national-scale data to examine the role of socio-religious context in the relationship between religiosity and well-being are also relatively rare. Empirical research explicitly comparing minority religious groups with minority religious groups is also relatively limited. Yet, different social characteristics have the potential to yield findings on different psychological dynamics and groups in interpreting religiosity and subjective well-being.

Based on this explanation, this study aims to examine the role of religiosity in two key indicators of subjective well-being: happiness and life satisfaction. Furthermore, this study examines the role of religious groups in moderating the relationship between these variables. These findings are expected to broaden understanding of the contextual role of religiosity in psychological well-being and enrich the body of knowledge in inclusive social development in multireligious societies. The hypotheses in this study are:

H1: Religiosity plays a positive role in subjective well-being (happiness and life satisfaction).

H2: Religious group status (majority-minority) is related to subjective well-being.

H3: Religious group status moderates the relationship between religiosity and subjective well-being (happiness and life satisfaction).

2. Methods

2.1 Data, participants and measurement

This study uses data from the Indonesian Family Life Survey (IFLS) conducted by the RAND Corporation (Strauss et al., 2016). IFLS is a survey study that focuses on the health characteristics and socioeconomic factors of approximately 80,000 individuals and 10,000 households from various regions in Indonesia. This survey data collection has been conducted 5 times in Indonesia. The first wave was conducted in 1993, and four other waves were conducted in 1997, 2000, 2002, and 2015. The latest IFLS data, namely the fifth wave (IFLS-V), was conducted by the RAND Corporation in collaboration with Gadjah Mada University. Data collection was conducted in 13 provinces in Indonesia, namely North Sumatra, West Sumatra, South Sumatra, Lampung, Jakarta, West Java, Central Java, Yogyakarta, East Java, Bali, West Nusa Tenggara, South Kalimantan, and South Sulawesi. The

IFLS-5 data collection and all procedures have received ethical approval from the Ethics Review Board at the RAND Corporation in the United States and from Gadjah Mada University in Indonesia (Strauss et al., 2016). All data are anonymous and the researchers did not have access to the participants' identities. The use of IFLS data for this study follows secondary research ethics guidelines, which are solely for academic purposes and maintain participant confidentiality. This study uses data related to happiness and religiosity found in the 3A book of the IFLS as well as several related demographic variables, namely age, gender, and religion.

The participants involved in this study amounted to 24,596 people aged 21–60 years ($M = 37.4$) who had undergone a researcher-led filtration process to eliminate participants outside the specified age range and those who did not fully complete the survey related to the three research variables. The majority of participants were female ($N = 13,147$; 53.4%) and Muslim ($N = 22,163$; 90.1%). Then, the researcher grouped participants based on religion into two groups, namely the majority group (Muslim) and the minority group (non-Muslim). The demographic description of the participants can be seen in Table 1.

Happiness measured using a single question (SW12) in the 3A IFLS-5 book, which reads, "Considering your current circumstances, do you feel that you are very happy, happy, unhappy, or very unhappy?" This question is taken from the United States General Social Survey. (Strauss et al., 2016). The response options given were four, ranging from (1) "Very happy", (2) "Happy", (3) "Unhappy", and (4) "Very unhappy". Then, the researchers reversed the scores, so that higher scores indicated higher levels of happiness. Life satisfaction was measured using a single question (SW00) in the 3A IFLS-5 book, which reads, "Reflecting on your life as a whole, how satisfied are you with your life right now?". There were five response options ranging from (1) "Extremely satisfied," (2) "Very satisfied," (3) "Somewhat satisfied," (4) "Dissatisfied," and (5) "Very dissatisfied." The researcher then reversed the scores, so that higher scores indicated higher levels of life satisfaction.

Table 1. Demographic description of participants ($N = 24,596$)

Demographic Characteristics	Category	Amount	Percentage (%)
Gender	Man	11,450	46.6
	Woman	13,146	53.4
Religion	Islam	22,162	90.1
	Catholic	301	1.2
	Protestant	909	3.7
	Hindu	1,180	4.8
	Buddha	36	0.1
	Confucianism	8	0.0
Religious groups	Majority (Islam)	22,162	90.1
	Minorities (non-Muslim)	2,434	9.9

Religiosity was measured using a single question (TR11) in the 3A IFLS-5 book, which reads, "In your opinion, how devout are you in your religion?" Response options for this question ranged from 1 to 4 (1 = "Very devout"; 2 = "Obedient"; 3 = "Not devout"; 4 = "Very disobeyed"). The researchers then reversed the scoring for this question, so that higher scores indicated higher levels of religiosity. Religious groups were measured using a single question (TR12), which read, "What is your mother/father/brother's religion?". The response options given to respondents were (1) Islam, (2) Protestantism, (3) Catholicism, (4) Hinduism, (5) Buddhism, and (6) Confucianism. The researcher then used a dummy coding technique to group participants based on these religions. The majority religious group, namely Muslim participants, was coded 0 (zero), while the minority religious group consisting of adherents of religions other than Islam was coded 1 (one).

2.2 Data analysis

Before conducting moderation analysis for hypothesis testing, descriptive analysis was conducted to determine the data profile of the variables religiosity, happiness, and life satisfaction. The correlation between the research variables was analyzed using Pearson's Correlation analysis. The correlation analysis on the religious group variable was analyzed using a point-biserial correlation considering that the variable is classified as a nominal variable. Moderation analysis was conducted separately for each subjective well-being indicator, namely happiness and life satisfaction. Moderation analysis aims to determine whether a variable can determine how strong the influence or role of the predictor variable is on the dependent variable (Hayes, 2018). Regression assumption tests, which include the assumptions of collinearity and residual normality, were conducted before testing the research hypothesis, where the results showed no significant violations of the assumptions. The statistical significance level was set at 0.05. The data in this study were analyzed using Jamovi v2.3.21 software.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Descriptive analysis and correlation between variables

Information related to the mean score and standard deviation, as well as the correlation scores between the research variables, can be seen in Table 2. The happiness variable had a mean score of 3.04 (SD = 0.50). Based on the response range of 1-4, a score of 3 represents the response of "happy." Therefore, it can be concluded that the average participant stated that they were happy. Life satisfaction had a mean score of 3.31 (SD = 0.81), which also indicates that the average participant stated that they were quite satisfied with their lives. Regarding religiosity, the mean score was 2.90 (SD = 0.69), or close to a score of 3. Based on the response range of 1-4, a score of 3 represents the response of "devout." Therefore, it can be concluded that the average participant stated that they were devout in their religion. This pattern indicates that people tend to rate their well-being and religiosity in the moderately positive range, or can be said to be high enough to support a relationship between the two, but do not display very intense expressions of religiosity and happiness. Cultural studies have also highlighted this issue, noting that people in collectivist cultures tend to have a balanced or moderate logic, avoiding extreme intentions (Joshnloo et al., 2021). Consequently, evaluations of religious observance are expressed moderately, as are perceived life satisfaction and happiness.

Table 2. Mean, standard deviation, and correlation between research variables (N = 24,597)

Variables	Mean (SD)	1	2	3	4
Happiness	3.04 (0.50)	1			
Life satisfaction	3.31 (0.81)	0.347***	1		
Religiosity	2.90 (0.69)	0.089***	0.127***	1	
Religious groups	-	-0.030***	-0.037***	0.112***	1

***) $P < 0.001$; **) $P < 0.01$; *) $P < 0.05$

On the other hand, the finding that, on average, research participants claimed to be happy aligns with several global survey reports on happiness, one of which is the Ipsos Happiness Index (2025). In 2025, Ipsos released the results of a survey on happiness among global populations under the age of 75 in 30 countries, including Indonesia. Of the 23,765 participants involved, 71% stated that they felt happy and satisfied with their lives. Specifically in Indonesia, the survey also revealed that the two biggest factors driving happiness in individuals are feeling appreciated and loved and perceiving the meaning of their lives. This further strengthens the argument that the primary source of well-being in Eastern cultural societies, such as Indonesia, lies in eudaimonic well-being and healthy social relationships between individuals and their surroundings.

Overall, the variables in this study have a significant correlation. Happiness and life satisfaction, two indicators of subjective well-being, have a significant positive correlation of 0.347 ($p < 0.001$). Religiosity and life satisfaction have a significant positive correlation with an r value of 0.089 ($p < 0.001$), while life satisfaction is also positively correlated with religiosity, as evidenced by an r value of 0.127 ($p < 0.001$). The results of this study indicate that religiosity is generally related to subjective well-being. This finding is in line with previous studies in Indonesia, which stated that religious life and obedience to religious rules are positively correlated with happiness and life satisfaction (Aziz et al., 2022; Kamarni et al., 2025).

Regarding religious groups, happiness and life satisfaction have a negative correlation with religious groups, with values of r_{pb} of -0.030 and -0.037 ($p < 0.001$), respectively, while the correlation between religious groups and religiosity obtained an r_{pb} score of 0.112 ($p < 0.001$). In the point-biserial correlation analysis between dichotomous and continuous variables, a negative r_{pb} score indicates that the group with the lower number code has a higher continuous variable score compared to the other group, while a positive r_{pb} score indicates that the group with the higher number code has a higher continuous variable score (Bonett, 2019). Based on this, the Islamic group (code 0) has, on average, a slightly higher level of happiness and life satisfaction than the non-Islamic group (code 1), while the non-Islamic group shows a higher level of religiosity than the Islamic group.

Regarding the comparison between majority (Islam) and minority (Christian, Catholic, Hindu, Buddhist, and Confucian) religious groups, the social position of religious groups also influences how religiosity is experienced and its psychological effects (Aksoy et al., 2021). These findings support the view that religiosity has different adaptive functions in individuals based on their social standing (Neely-Prado et al., 2021; Smith et al., 2024). In general, Islamic groups live in environments that support and normalise the expression of religiosity and are internalised in social culture, so variations in religiosity do not make a significant difference to individual happiness (Abdel-Khalek, 2024; Aksoy et al., 2021; Cragun & Speed, 2022). Social expressions of religiosity in Islam have become commonplace, such as greetings, wearing the hijab, having halal food, and performing prayers in public spaces. Furthermore, the large number of Muslims, the diversity of Islamic communities, and the proliferation of religious participation collectively expand access to social support (Shalihin et al., 2020). Being the majority religion makes Islamic practices and traditions commonplace and provides easy access to happiness and life satisfaction, regardless of how intensely Muslims practice their religious observance.

Unlike the Islamic majority, the position of minority religious groups is influenced by social contexts and structural challenges, such as more limited access to religiously based public facilities, social norms that are less supportive of religious expression, and the potential for discrimination or social exclusion (Thompson, 2023). However, for minority groups, religiosity and religion can serve as a source of meaning, identity, and psychological resilience in the face of social pressures, experiences of discrimination, and feelings of alienation (minority stress) (DeAngelis et al., 2024; Dornisch et al., 2024; Roszak et al., 2025; Skidmore et al., 2025). In other words, the stronger a person's spiritual identity within a minority group, the greater their potential to find meaning and happiness amidst structural inequalities.

3.2. *The role of religious groups as moderators*

Based on the information listed in Table 3, the results of the moderation analysis in the first model, namely on happiness, show that religiosity is positively related to happiness ($B = 0.068$, 95% CI = 0.059 – 0.077), so that increasing religiosity will also increase happiness. Religious groups have a negative relationship with happiness ($B = -0.075$, 95% CI = -0.095; -0.054), which indicates that minority groups tend to have lower happiness than majority groups. The interaction between religiosity and religious group proved significant ($B = 0.036$, 95% CI = 0.006 – 0.065), indicating that the strength of the influence of religiosity on happiness is determined by religious group status. The results of the simple slope analysis

clarify the pattern of this interaction (see Table 4). In both religious groups, religiosity was equally able to increase happiness. However, the effect of religiosity on minority religious groups (high moderator, code “1”) had a larger coefficient ($B = 0.079$, 95% CI = 0.066 – 0.091) than on the majority religious group ($B = 0.057$, 95% CI = 0.045 – 0.070). These data indicate that religiosity plays a more important role as a source of happiness for individuals belonging to minority religious groups than for those belonging to the majority religious group.

In the second model with life satisfaction as the dependent variable, religiosity and religious group were also found to significantly increase life satisfaction (see Table 3). Religiosity had a positive effect on life satisfaction ($B = 0.156$, 95% CI = 0.141 – 0.170), while religious group had a negative effect on life satisfaction ($B = -0.147$, 95% CI = -0.180; -0.113). This indicates that the second model has a consistent pattern with the first. However, the interaction between religiosity and religious group was not found to be significant for life satisfaction ($B = 0.029$, 95% CI = -0.019; 0.077). This indicates that the effect of religiosity is similar in increasing life satisfaction for both majority and minority religious groups. Although the interaction was found to be insignificant in the second model, the results of the simple slope analysis showed that religiosity had a significant role in increasing life satisfaction, both in the majority religious group ($B = 0.147$, 95% CI = 0.127 – 0.168) and in the minority religious group ($B = 0.164$, 95% CI = 0.144 – 0.184) (see Table 4).

Table 3. Moderation analysis between research variables

Happiness (Y ₁)						
	B	SE	z-value	p	95% CI	
					LL	UL
Religiosity (X)	0.068	0.005	14.84	< 0.001	0.059	0.077
Religious groups (W)	-0.075	0.011	-7.09	< 0.001	-0.095	-0.054
Interaction (X*W)	0.036	0.015	2.35	0.019	0.006	0.065
Life satisfaction (Y ₂)						
	B	SE	z-value	p	95% CI	
					LL	UL
Religiosity (X)	0.156	0.007	20.98	< 0.001	0.141	0.170
Religious groups (W)	-0.147	0.017	-8.59	< 0.001	-0.180	-0.113
Interaction (X*W)	0.029	0.024	1.17	0.243	-0.019	0.077

B = unstandardized beta; SE = standard error; LL = lower limit; UL = upper limit; CI = confidence interval

The findings of this study demonstrate the dynamics and important insights into how religiosity can improve subjective well-being through its two main indicators, namely happiness and life satisfaction, in the context of a multireligious society in Indonesia. The consistent positive role of religiosity in increasing happiness and life satisfaction is in line with findings in previous studies (Ambarukmi & Savira, 2024; Aziz et al., 2022; Sholihin et al., 2022; Yaden et al., 2022). Religiosity can act as a source of meaning, emotional regulation, and social support, which in turn can improve well-being (Al-Wattary et al., 2024). Religion is also considered to provide a moral framework and spiritual connectedness that can improve well-being, including through ritual practices that increase gratitude and psychological resilience in individuals (Nazam & Husain, 2024; Okwuosa et al., 2024).

The findings of this study also indicate differences in subjective well-being between majority and minority religious groups. Lower levels of happiness and life satisfaction in minority religious groups indicate that these groups are more likely to face discrimination and identity pressures, which can ultimately lead to a decline in perceived quality of life and overall well-being (Egede et al., 2024; Kira & Shuwiekh, 2021). Scheitle et al. (2023) conducted a study on religious discrimination experienced by minority religious groups in the United States. Among the findings, this study found that discrimination against minority

religious groups not only has the potential to worsen mental health but also has the potential to negatively impact an individual's physical health. Based on this, it is interesting to examine the impact of perceived discrimination by minority groups on physical health in the context of Indonesian society in future research.

Interestingly, the findings in this study indicate that the moderating role of religious group in the relationship between religiosity and subjective well-being only appears for happiness indicators, but not for life satisfaction indicators. The significant interaction in the happiness model indicates that religiosity functions more strongly as a source of happiness for individuals from minority religious groups. This can be understood through the perspective of the "buffering hypothesis" theory by Cohen & Willis (Uddin & Adhikari, 2024). As explained previously, minority groups are vulnerable to social pressure and discrimination. Religiosity can function as a psychological resource to "buffer" individuals from declining happiness due to stress arising from social pressure. Furthermore, for minority groups, religious adherence can also be a coping mechanism (Pargament in Supatmi et al., 2025). This is crucial and can simultaneously provide a sense of security, positive identity, and ways of positively interpreting difficulties in order to achieve affective well-being.

Table 4. Simple slope analysis of moderation analysis

<i>Simple slope analysis (Happiness)</i>						
	B	SE	z-value	p	95% CI	
					LL	UL
Average	0.068	0.005	14.84	< 0.001	0.059	0.077
Islamic groups (0)	0.057	0.006	8.86	< 0.001	0.045	0.070
Non-Islamic groups (1)	0.079	0.006	12.34	< 0.001	0.066	0.091
<i>Simple slope analysis (Life satisfaction)</i>						
	B	SE	z-value	p	95% CI	
					LL	UL
Average	0.156	0.007	21.0	< 0.001	0.141	0.170
Islamic groups (0)	0.147	0.010	14.0	< 0.001	0.127	0.168
Non-Islamic groups (1)	0.164	0.010	15.9	< 0.001	0.144	0.184

B = unstandardized beta; SE = standard error; LL = lower limit; UL = upper limit; CI = confidence interval

On the other hand, the lack of interaction in the life satisfaction indicator model suggests that the effect of religiosity on the cognitive (evaluative) component of well-being is stable across both religious groups. Life satisfaction is a reflective assessment that tends to be stable and is more influenced by long-term factors, such as economic conditions and life stability, rather than simply emotional responses (Busseri, 2018; Teixeira et al., 2025). While happiness may be judged more sensitive to the emotional support that religiosity can provide, life satisfaction may be more related to objective conditions that are not fully influenced by religiosity, for both majority and minority religious groups.

Overall, these findings emphasize the importance of viewing religiosity as a relational and contextual phenomenon. Religion not only serves as a universal guide to life and source of happiness, but also depends on the social context, group roles, and individual socio-religious experiences in a multireligious society like Indonesia. The author acknowledges that comparing majority and minority religions may be highly sensitive and likely to cause discomfort for some readers. Nevertheless, this study aims to identify practical patterns of religiosity and subjective well-being across both groups, acknowledging that each religion has complex dynamics of its social and personal religious life, and aspirations for improved well-being with equal opportunities. Furthermore, the majority-minority categorization in this study is based generally at the national level. At the regional level, the proportion of religious adherents can be reversed. For example, in areas such as Bali, East Nusa Tenggara, or Papua, the majority of religious adherents are actually Hindu or Christian. Therefore,

policy approaches and welfare interventions need to consider structural differences between religious groups and strengthen social support and spiritual meaning, especially for minority groups in pluralistic societies.

Along with the findings in this study, the researchers also recognize several limitations. First, all variables were measured using a single item from the Indonesian Family Life Survey (IFLS) data. The use of a single indicator has the potential to limit measurement reliability, especially for complex psychological constructs, such as religiosity and happiness. Future studies should utilize a multi-item measurement tool for a more structured and conceptual construct that encompasses the cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions of each variable. Second, this study did not include other demographic variables, such as education level and socioeconomic status, which are also considered relevant in examining the relationship between religiosity and subjective well-being. Future studies should incorporate these variables to provide a more comprehensive understanding. Furthermore, the use of secondary IFLS data is considered to limit researchers' scope in measuring specific constructs and contexts of respondents' experiences of diversity. Primary research with a more specific design focusing on the dynamics of minority groups would help deepen understanding of how religiosity functions as an adaptive resilience mechanism for each individual within that group.

4. Conclusions

This study found that religiosity plays a positive role in increasing happiness and life satisfaction as two indicators of subjective well-being. Religious group status was also shown to be related to subjective well-being, where individuals from minority religious groups tend to have lower levels of subjective well-being compared to individuals from majority religious groups. However, the moderating role of religious group was significantly found only in the happiness dimension. Religiosity increases happiness more strongly in minority groups than in majority groups, but this effect was not found in the life satisfaction dimension. Thus, it can be concluded that the effect of religiosity on increasing subjective well-being is contextual. The role of religiosity as a source of well-being appears more prominent for minority religious groups in the emotional-affective aspect (happiness), while the cognitive-evaluative aspect (life satisfaction) tends to be more stable and less influenced by religious group status.

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Author Contribution

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IFLS has obtained ethical clearance from RAND and Gadjah Mada University.

Informed Consent Statement

Not available.

Data Availability Statement

The data used in this study comes from the Indonesia Family Life Survey (IFLS). This data can be accessed by submitting a request through RAND. The authors do not have the right to redistribute this data.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Declaration of Generative AI Use

The authors used AI to explore theoretical explanations and language editing. All scientific content in this manuscript is the responsibility of the authors

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