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Religiosity and Quality of Life: A Meta-Analytic Synthesis of Global Evidence (2015–2024)

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Abstract: This study aims to examine the relationship between religiosity and quality of life through a comprehensive meta-analysis, motivated by inconsistent findings in previous research that range from strong positive correlations to weak or non-significant associations. Understanding this relationship is crucial for clarifying the psychological and social functions of religiosity in contemporary societies. This research employed a quantitative meta-analytic design by synthesizing 31 Scopus-indexed empirical studies published between 2015 and 2024. Data were extracted in the form of correlation coefficients and analyzed using a random-effects model, accompanied by heterogeneity tests, publication bias assessments, and robustness checks. This methodological approach ensured systematic data integration without presenting technical details excessively. The findings show a significant positive correlation between religiosity and quality of life ($r = 0.32$; 95% CI [0.20, 0.44]; $p < 0.001$). Substantial heterogeneity ($Q = 656.535$; $p < 0.001$) suggests that cultural, demographic, and methodological differences may moderate this relationship. The absence of publication bias and a high fail-safe N value (5,109) further confirm the stability of the results. These findings imply that religiosity functions as a meaningful psychological, social, and spiritual resource capable of enhancing individual well-being across diverse populations. The results contribute to the development of resilience- and spirituality-based interventions in psychological, health, and community settings. The originality of this study lies in its synthesis of a full decade of empirical evidence, offering the most updated meta-analytic confirmation of the religiosity–quality of life relationship. This research provides new value by integrating large-scale data, addressing inconsistencies in prior findings, and strengthening theoretical and practical understanding of how religiosity contributes to human well-being.

Keywords: Meta-analysis; psychological resilience; quality of life; religiosity; spirituality.

Abstrak: Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji hubungan antara keagamaan dan kualitas hidup melalui meta-analisis komprehensif, didorong oleh temuan yang tidak konsisten dalam penelitian sebelumnya yang berkisar dari korelasi positif yang kuat hingga hubungan yang lemah atau tidak signifikan. Memahami hubungan ini sangat penting untuk mengklarifikasi fungsi psikologis dan sosial keagamaan dalam masyarakat kontemporer. Penelitian ini menggunakan desain meta-analisis kuantitatif dengan mensintesis 31 studi empiris yang terindeks Scopus yang diterbitkan antara tahun 2015 dan 2024. Data diekstraksi dalam bentuk koefisien korelasi dan dianalisis menggunakan model efek acak, disertai dengan uji heterogenitas, penilaian bias publikasi, dan pemeriksaan ketahanan. Pendekatan metodologis ini memastikan integrasi data yang sistematis tanpa menyajikan detail teknis secara berlebihan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan korelasi positif yang signifikan antara keagamaan dan kualitas hidup ($r = 0.32$; 95% CI [0.20, 0.44]; $p < 0.001$). Heterogenitas yang signifikan ($Q = 656.535$; $p < 0.001$) menunjukkan bahwa perbedaan budaya, demografis, dan metodologis mungkin memoderasi hubungan ini. Ketidakhadiran bias publikasi dan nilai fail-safe N yang tinggi (5.109) semakin mengonfirmasi stabilitas hasil.

Temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa keagamaan berfungsi sebagai sumber daya psikologis, sosial, dan spiritual yang bermakna, mampu meningkatkan kesejahteraan individu di berbagai populasi. Hasil ini berkontribusi pada pengembangan intervensi berbasis ketahanan dan spiritualitas di lingkungan psikologis, kesehatan, dan komunitas. Keaslian studi ini terletak pada sintesisnya atas bukti empiris selama satu dekade penuh, menawarkan konfirmasi meta-analitik terbaru tentang hubungan antara keagamaan dan kualitas hidup. Penelitian ini memberikan nilai baru dengan mengintegrasikan data berskala besar, mengatasi ketidakkonsistenan dalam temuan sebelumnya, dan memperkuat pemahaman teoretis dan praktis tentang bagaimana keagamaan berkontribusi pada kesejahteraan manusia.

Kata kunci: meta-analisis; ketahanan psikologis; kualitas hidup; keagamaan; spiritualitas.

1. Introduction

Religiosity and quality of life have become two interrelated constructs that attract increasing academic attention across psychology, sociology, and health studies. In contemporary society, religiosity is not only viewed as a spiritual dimension but also as an integral part of social capital that contributes to subjective well-being, social cohesion, and mental resilience. According to the 2024 annual global survey by U.S. News & World Report on countries with the best quality of life, Denmark ranked first, followed by Sweden and Switzerland, while Indonesia was positioned 39th globally (Haines, 2024). Although Indonesia has a strong religious identity, its relatively low ranking suggests that religiosity alone may not directly translate into a higher quality of life. This paradox invites further exploration of how religious commitment influences people's lived experiences and overall well-being.

In the Indonesian context, religion permeates daily life and underpins collective morality. Religiosity has been shown to foster inner peace, strengthen social relations, and help individuals cope with adversity (Sudarman, 2021; Utari & Hamid, 2021). Previous findings indicate that religious involvement can enhance psychological resilience and subjective well-being (Nuha, Arifin, Kuswandari, & Razak, 2021; Piko, 2023; Solichin & Muhlis, 2020). However, despite this cultural centrality of faith, the extent to which religiosity empirically improves quality of life remains unclear. This gap between religious devotion and measurable well-being outcomes constitutes an important social phenomenon warranting systematic investigation.

Research on the relationship between religiosity and quality of life has been conducted across various academic disciplines, yet the findings remain inconsistent. Broadly, these studies can be grouped into three major tendencies. First, a large body of literature reports a positive correlation between religiosity and indicators of subjective well-being. Religious individuals tend to experience greater life satisfaction, stronger emotional regulation, and lower levels of anxiety and depression (Bagheri-Nesami, Kazemi, Goudarzian, Nasiri, & Davari, 2017; Bozkurt, İnal, Yantiri, & Alparslan, 2019; Majda et al., 2022). These findings suggest that religiosity functions as a protective factor that supports coping mechanisms and provides existential meaning (Kocak, 2022; Trevino & McConnell, 2015). Second, other studies reveal weak or context-dependent relationships. For instance, the strength of the association varies according to demographic and cultural factors such as age, gender, socioeconomic background, and religious tradition (Kholidah, 2022; Warwer, 2024). Some individuals derive substantial psychological benefits from religious engagement, while others treat religion primarily as ritual or tradition with limited personal impact (Massarwi, Khoury-Kassabri, & Eseed, 2019; Shamsalinia, Pourghaznein, & Parsa, 2016). These variations indicate that religiosity does not universally predict quality of life but may depend on contextual moderators.

Third, a smaller but growing strand of research questions the universality of the religiosity–well-being link altogether. Certain studies report non-significant or even negligible correlations, especially in secular societies or among individuals with alternative sources of meaning (Leite, Vidal, Dinis, e Sousa, & Dias, 2020; Santos et al., 2017). The multidimensional nature of religiosity—encompassing belief, practice, and spiritual experience—has led to differing measurement approaches, producing

heterogeneous results. Despite numerous empirical efforts, the evidence regarding the correlation between religiosity and quality of life remains fragmented. Prior research varies in terms of sample characteristics, measurement instruments, cultural contexts, and operational definitions of religiosity. Consequently, the cumulative effect of religiosity on life quality has not been quantitatively synthesized. Moreover, most studies are limited to specific populations or regions, hindering the development of a generalizable understanding. A comprehensive meta-analysis is therefore needed to integrate findings across studies, quantify the overall effect size, and identify potential moderating variables that explain heterogeneity in previous results.

This study aims to quantitatively synthesize the relationship between religiosity and quality of life using a meta-analytic approach. Specifically, it seeks to (1) estimate the overall strength and direction of the correlation between religiosity and quality of life, (2) assess heterogeneity across studies, (3) examine potential publication bias, and (4) evaluate the robustness of the aggregated findings. By addressing the inconsistencies found in previous literature, this study provides a more comprehensive and updated empirical understanding of the religiosity–quality of life relationship.

Building on prior theoretical and empirical frameworks, this research argues that religiosity—encompassing cognitive (belief), affective (spiritual experience), and behavioral (ritual practice) dimensions—serves as a meaningful resource that enhances individual well-being. Religious belief provides existential meaning; spiritual experience fosters emotional balance; and ritual practice reinforces social connectedness. Therefore, it is hypothesized that religiosity has a significant positive correlation with quality of life, although the magnitude of this relationship may vary depending on contextual moderators such as cultural background, measurement dimensions of religiosity, and demographic characteristics.

2. Method

This study employed a quantitative correlational meta-analysis design to synthesize empirical findings on the relationship between religiosity and quality of life. The research procedure followed the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) guidelines (Page et al., 2021) to ensure methodological transparency and analytical rigor throughout the identification, screening, and inclusion of relevant studies. The systematic search was conducted in March 2025, identifying 243 records through the Publish or Perish application using the keywords: "religiosity" AND "social life", "religiosity" AND "quality of life", "religiosity" AND "academic life", and "religiosity" AND "academic achievement." After removing duplicates and applying inclusion criteria, 31 eligible studies were retained for quantitative synthesis.

All selected studies were Scopus-indexed journal articles published between 2015 and 2024, written in English, and focused on human participants. Articles were included if they:

First, examined the effect or correlation between religiosity and quality of life. Second, reported a correlation coefficient (r) or other convertible statistical indicators (t or F values), and third, provided the total sample size (N). Studies that did not report effect sizes or involved non-human subjects were excluded. The final dataset consisted of 96,177 participants from diverse populations across Europe, Asia, North America, and South America, representing various cultural and social contexts.

Data extraction was conducted systematically, recording each study's author(s), year, sample size (N), target variable, and correlation coefficient (r). The religiosity variable was measured across instruments such as the Religiosity Scale, Religious Coping Inventory, and Religious Orientation Scale. To ensure construct equivalence, all subscales were mapped onto three shared dimensions of religiosity: First, Belief (cognitive dimension), second, Practice (behavioral dimension), and trhird, Experience (affective-spiritual dimension).

Meanwhile, quality of life was conceptualized as a multidimensional construct encompassing psychological-emotional, social, spiritual, physical health, and academic aspects. These dimensions were standardized under a unified well-being framework to ensure comparability across studies (Borenstein, Hedges, Higgins, & Rothstein, 2021; Retnawati, Apino, Kartianom, Djidu, & D. Anazifa, 2018).

The meta-analytic computations were conducted using R Studio (version 4.3). The analysis involved calculating both the individual study effect sizes and the overall pooled correlation coefficient under a random-effects model, as heterogeneity among studies was expected due to cultural and methodological diversity (Borenstein et al., 2021; Lipsey & Wilson, 2001).

For studies that did not report the correlation coefficient (r) directly, the effect size was derived using the following conversion formula:

$$r = \frac{t}{\sqrt{t^2/N-2}} \qquad \text{Equation (1)}$$

After obtaining the correlation coefficients, Fisher's Z transformation was applied to normalize the distribution:

$$z = Y_i = 0{,}5 \times \frac{1+r}{1-r} \qquad \text{Equation (2)}$$

The standard error (SE) for each transformed value was computed to assess variability:

$$SE_z = SE_{Yi} = \sqrt{V_z} \qquad \text{Equation (3)}$$

These *z*-transformed values were used to calculate the overall weighted mean correlation and its 95% confidence interval. Heterogeneity was assessed using *Q* and I^2 *statistics*, while publication bias was examined through funnel plots and Egger's regression test. The robustness of the results was verified using Rosenthal's fail-safe N.

The 31 studies included in this meta-analysis represent diverse research contexts, ranging from psychological health to academic performance and social adjustment. Table 1 summarizes the studies incorporated in the synthesis.

Table 1. Studies included in this meta-analysis

No	Author	Factor	N	r
1	Achir Yani S. Hamid. (2021)	Academic Stress	109	-0.43
2	Mohammad Muchlis Solichina, at al. (2020)	Achievement Motivation	135	0.57
3	Bettina F. Piko a (2023)	Importance Of Religion	2239	0.07
4	Bettina F. Piko b (2023)	Going To A Place Of Worship	2239	0.1
5	Abid Ali, at al. a (2020)	Zest For Life	200	0.28
6	Abid Ali, at al. b (2020)	Social Support	200	0.23
7	Orhan Kocak (2022)	Meaning Of Life	1571	0.07
8	Anna Majda, at al. a (2022)	Health	101	0.52
9	Anna Majda, at al. b (2022)	Physical Function	101	0.2
10	Anna Majda, at al. c (2022)	Life Role Fulfillment	101	0.28
11	Anna Majda, at al. d (2022)	Emotional Functioning	101	0.31
12	Anna Majda, at al. e (2022)	Social Function	101	0.35
13	MasoumehBagheri-Nesami, at al. (2016)	Work Life	285	0.38
14	Gulcin Bozkurt, at al. a (2019)	Religious Emotional	91	0.17
15	Gulcin Bozkurt, at al. b (2019)	Social Support	91	0.19
16	Gulcin Bozkurt, at al. c (2019)	Optimism	91	0.18
17	Kelly M. Trevino, at al. a (2015)	Experiential Religiosity	105	0.32
18	Kelly M. Trevino, at al. b (2015)	Overall Religiosity	105	0.25
19	Paulo Roberto Santos, at al. a (2017)	General Health	161	0.17
20	Paulo Roberto Santos, at al. b (2017)	Zest For Life	161	0.18
21	Abbas Shamsalinia, at al. (2016)	Life Expectancy Level	150	0.9

No	Author	Factor	N	r
22	Zahra Ahmadian Niyazmand, at al. (2018)	Hope	109	0.54
23	Angela Leite, at al. a (2020)	Purpose Of Life	90350	0.33
24	Angela Leite, at al. b (2020)	Religious Tradition Values	90350	0.34
25	Angela Leite, at al. c (2020)	Reject Homosexuality	90350	0.35
26	Angela Leite, at al. d (2020)	Reject Abortion	90350	0.39
27	Angela Leite, at al. e (2020)	Reject Free Sex	90350	0.38
28	Angela Leite, at al. f (2020)	Against Euthanasia	90350	0.4
29	Sitty Aizah Mangotara, at al. (2022)	Depression Rate	200	-0.46
30	Alimni, at al. (2022)	Study Perseverance	140	0.59
31	Fredrik Warwer (2024)	Integrity	231	0.63

Total sample size: 96,177 participants

Based on theoretical and empirical foundations, the hypotheses tested in this meta-analysis are as follows:

H_0: There is no significant relationship between religiosity and quality of life.

H_1: There is a significant positive relationship between religiosity and quality of life.

This meta-analysis thus aims to provide a comprehensive and statistically robust synthesis of how religiosity contributes to individual quality of life across different social and cultural contexts.

3. Results

Effect Size and Descriptive Analysis

All studies included in this meta-analysis reported data in the form of correlation coefficients (r), eliminating the need for conversion from other statistical indicators such as t, F, or β. To ensure a normal distribution and homogeneity of variance across studies, each correlation coefficient was transformed into Fisher's z value. This transformation is a standard procedure in meta-analytic methodology because the sampling distribution of r tends to be skewed—particularly when the correlation value approaches ±1—while Fisher's z transformation stabilizes the variance and produces a more symmetric distribution of effect sizes. Consequently, the z values provide a more reliable basis for weighting each study and estimating the overall summary effect.

Table 2. The correlation coefficients (r) transformed into Fisher's z, variance (Vz), and standard error (SEz) for each study

Author	r	z	Vz	SEz
Achir Yani S. Hamid. (2021)	-0.43	-0.460	0.009	0.097
Mohammad Muchlis Solichina, at al. (2020)	0.57	0.648	0.008	0.087
Bettina F. Piko a (2023)	0.07	0.070	0.000	0.021
Bettina F. Piko b (2023)	0.10	0.100	0.000	0.021
Abid Ali, at al. a (2020)	0.28	0.288	0.005	0.071
Abid Ali, at al. b (2020)	0.23	0.234	0.005	0.071
Orhan Kocak (2022)	0.07	0.066	0.001	0.025
Anna Majda, at al. a (2022)	0.52	0.571	0.010	0.101
Anna Majda, at al. b (2022)	0.20	0.199	0.010	0.101
Anna Majda, at al. c (2022)	0.28	0.286	0.010	0.101

Author	r	z	Vz	SEz
Anna Majda, at al. d (2022)	0.31	0.323	0.010	0.101
Anna Majda, at al. e (2022)	0.35	0.367	0.010	0.101
MasoumehBagheri-Nesami, at al. (2016)	0.38	0.400	0.004	0.060
Gulcin Bozkurt, at al. a (2019)	0.17	0.172	0.011	0.107
Gulcin Bozkurt, at al. b (2019)	0.19	0.191	0.011	0.107
Gulcin Bozkurt, at al. c (2019)	0.18	0.185	0.011	0.107
Kelly M. Trevino, at al. a (2015)	0.32	0.332	0.010	0.099
Kelly M. Trevino, at al. b (2015)	0.25	0.255	0.010	0.099
Paulo Roberto Santos, at al. a (2017)	0.17	0.173	0.006	0.080
Paulo Roberto Santos, at al. b (2017)	0.18	0.185	0.006	0.080
Abbas Shamsalinia, at al. (2016)	0.90	1.457	0.007	0.082
Zahra Ahmadian Niyazmand, at al. (2018)	0.54	0.601	0.009	0.097
Angela Leite, at al. a (2020)	0.33	0.339	0.011	0.107
Angela Leite, at al. b (2020)	0.34	0.356	0.011	0.107
Angela Leite, at al. c (2020)	0.35	0.368	0.011	0.107
Angela Leite, at al. d (2020)	0.39	0.407	0.011	0.107
Angela Leite, at al. e (2020)	0.38	0.394	0.011	0.107
Angela Leite, at al. f (2020)	0.40	0.428	0.011	0.107
Sitty Aizah Mangotara, at al. (2022)	-0.46	-0.495	0.005	0.071
Alimni, at al. (2022)	0.59	0.682	0.007	0.085
Fredrik Warwer (2024)	0.63	0.740	0.004	0.066

Table 2 presents the correlation values (r) from each study, which were then transformed into Fisher's z along with the variance (Vz) and standard error (SEz) values used in the meta-analytic analysis. As shown in Table 2, the reported correlation values show a wide range of variation, from moderate negative relationships (e.g., r = –0.46 in the study by Mangotara et al., 2022) to very strong positive relationships (e.g., r = 0.90 in the study by Shamsalinia et al., 2016). Fisher's z transformation produces a more symmetrical distribution, as reflected in more stable z values across studies. The variance and SEz listed in Table 2 indicate the relative weight of each study in the calculation of the combined effect—studies with large samples have smaller SEz and therefore contribute more to the summary effect. Overall, the pattern in Table 2 indicates substantial heterogeneity between studies, which justifies the use of a random-effects model in the next stage of analysis.

The dataset analyzed comprised 31 studies published between 2015 and 2024, encompassing a total of 96,177 participants drawn from diverse demographic backgrounds and cultural contexts in Asia, Europe, North America, and South America. Each study investigated the relationship between religiosity—measured through validated instruments such as the Religiosity Scale, Religious Coping Inventory, and Religious Orientation Scale—and quality of life, which was operationalized through indicators including psychological well-being, social support, spiritual satisfaction, physical health, and academic performance.

The observed correlation coefficients ranged from –0.46 to 0.90, reflecting wide variability in the strength and direction of associations reported across the included studies. Following Fisher's z transformation, the standardized values displayed an approximately normal distribution, confirming the dataset's suitability for further meta-analytic aggregation. The observed variability likely stems from differences in population characteristics, measurement instruments, and sociocultural contexts, thereby underscoring the need to examine statistical heterogeneity.

Given this variability, a heterogeneity test was subsequently conducted to determine whether the effect sizes were consistent or significantly different across studies. The results of this analysis are presented in heterogeneity and summary effect.

Heterogeneity and Summary Effect

To determine whether the correlation coefficients obtained from the included studies were consistent or varied across different research contexts, a heterogeneity test was performed. The results of this test provide a statistical basis for selecting the appropriate analysis model—either a fixed-effect or a random-effects model. A significant heterogeneity value indicates that the observed variation among studies is not solely attributable to sampling error, but also to differences in study populations, instruments, or cultural settings.

Table 3. Heterogeneity Test of Effect Size

Fixed and Random Effects			
	Q	df	p
Omnibus test of Model Coefficients	26.379	1	< .001
Test of Residual Heterogeneity	656.535	30	< .001

Note. *p* -values are approximate.

Note. The model was estimated using Restricted ML method.

As shown in Table 3, the omnibus test of model coefficients yielded $Q = 26.379$, $df = 1$, $p < 0.001$, while the test of residual heterogeneity indicated $Q = 656.535$, $df = 30$, $p < 0.001$. These findings confirm that substantial heterogeneity exists among the included studies, suggesting that effect sizes differ meaningfully across samples and contexts. Consequently, the random-effects model was adopted for calculating the overall summary effect, as this model assumes true variation in effect sizes between studies and provides more generalized estimates.

This meta-analysis synthesized data from 31 studies published between 2015 and 2024, involving 96,177 participants from diverse age groups and cultural backgrounds. The analysis aimed to generate a comprehensive quantitative depiction of the relationship between religiosity and quality of life, as well as to examine the possibility of moderating factors influencing this association. The heterogeneity results ($Q = 656.535$, $df = 30$, $p < 0.001$) indicate that the variability among studies was statistically significant, confirming that differences in outcomes are not entirely due to random error but may reflect contextual moderators such as culture, demographics, or measurement instruments.

To estimate the pooled correlation coefficient, a summary-effect analysis was conducted using the random-effects framework and the Fisher's *z*–transformed data. The summary effect provides a weighted average representing the overall strength of association between religiosity and quality of life.

Table 4. Summary Effect under the Random-Effects Model

Coefficients						
					95% Confidence Interval	
	Estimate	Standard Error	z	p	Lower	Upper
intercept	0.317	0.062	5.136	< .001	0.196	0.438

Note. Wald test.

Based on Table 4, the meta-analysis produced an intercept value of $b = 0.317$, $SE = 0.062$, $z = 5.136$, $p < 0.001$, with a 95 % confidence interval of [0.196, 0.438]. These results indicate a significant positive correlation between religiosity and quality of life, with a moderate effect size ($r \approx 0.32$). The narrow confidence interval supports the precision and reliability of the overall estimate, implying that individuals with higher religiosity levels tend to report better quality of life across various demographic groups.

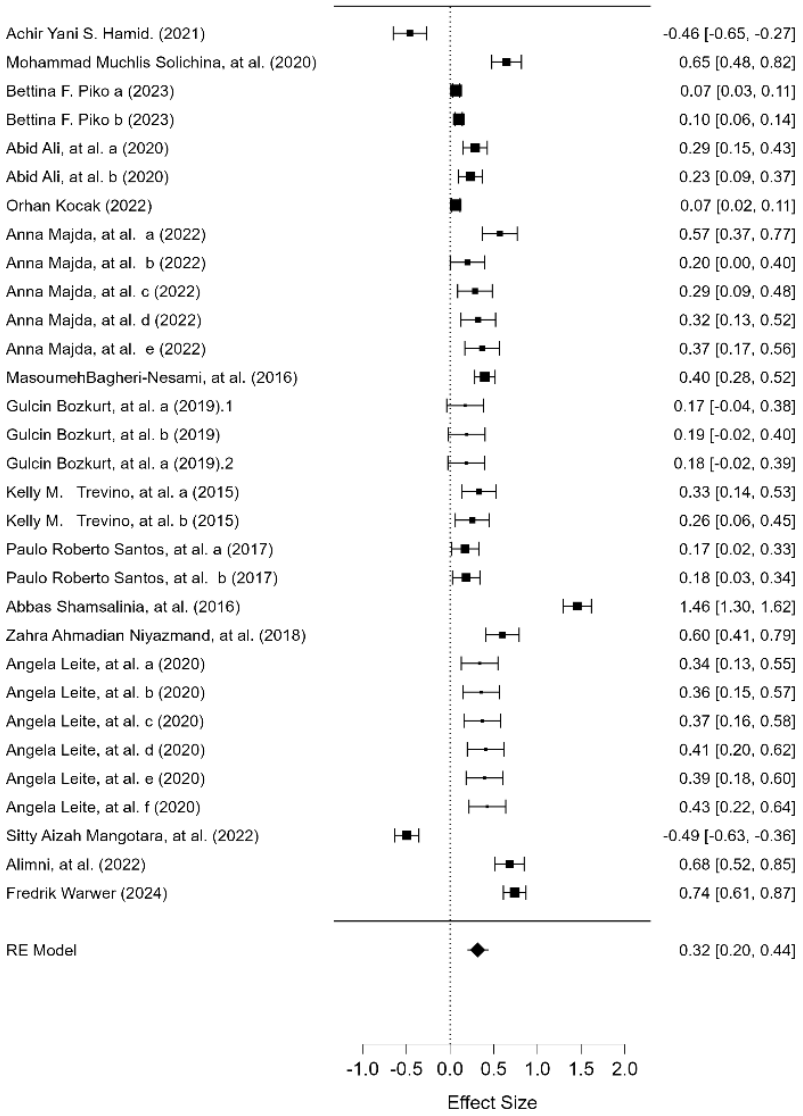

Figure 1. Forest Plot of Correlation Coefficients across Studies

The forest plot (Figure 1) visually demonstrates that most individual study effect sizes lie on the positive side of the distribution, reinforcing the robustness of the aggregated result. Although some variation is observed, the consistent direction of effects underscores the stability of the positive association between religiosity and quality of life. Overall, these findings support the rejection of the null hypothesis (H_0), confirming that religiosity is significantly and positively related to quality of life across diverse contexts.

Furthermore, the Rosenthal's fail-safe N test produced a value of 5109, indicating that more than five thousand additional unpublished studies with null results would be required to reduce the overall effect to non-significance at the 0.05 level. This large fail-safe N supports the robustness and stability of the meta-analytic findings, suggesting that the results are resilient to publication bias. Nonetheless, prior scholars have cautioned that the fail-safe N may overestimate robustness; therefore, its interpretation should be complemented by additional bias-assessment indicators.

Taken together, the results from the heterogeneity, summary-effect, and robustness analyses consistently demonstrate that religiosity exerts a moderate and statistically significant positive effect on quality of life. The heterogeneity observed across studies highlights potential moderating influences such as cultural variation, measurement dimensions, and demographic diversity, which warrant deeper examination in future research.

Publication Bias and Robustness

To assess the validity and stability of the findings, several diagnostic procedures were conducted to detect potential publication bias and to evaluate the robustness of the overall effect size. Publication bias occurs when studies reporting significant results are more likely to be published than those with non-significant findings, potentially inflating the estimated overall effect. In this meta-analysis, publication bias was examined using funnel plots, Egger's regression test, and Rosenthal's fail-safe N analysis.

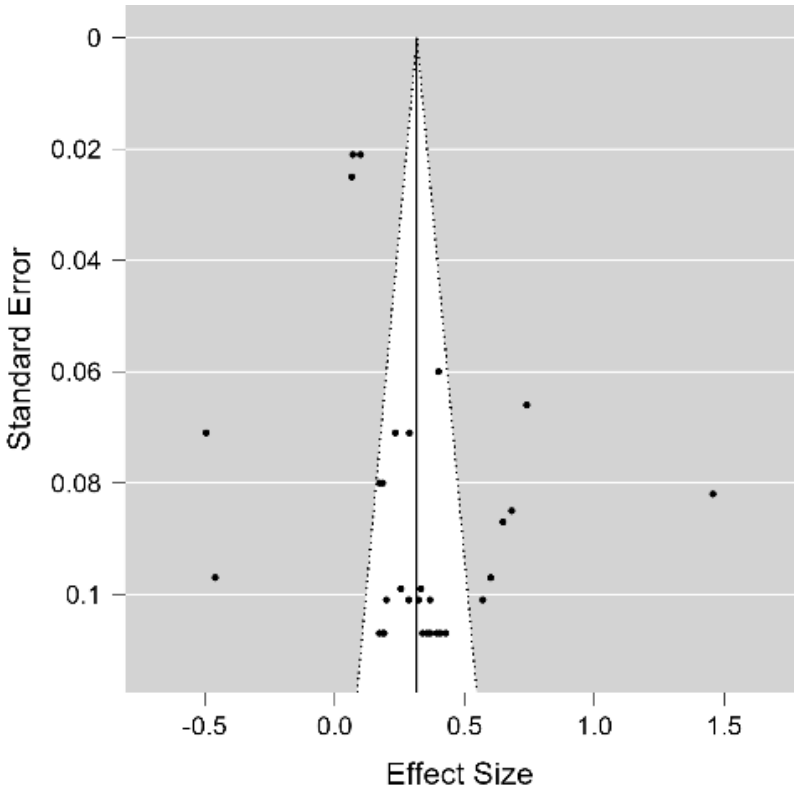

Figure 2. Funnel Plot of Effect Sizes across Studies

The funnel plot (Figure 2) presents the distribution of the effect sizes plotted against their corresponding standard errors. A symmetrical funnel shape indicates the absence of publication bias, while an asymmetrical shape suggests bias. Visual inspection of the funnel plot revealed a generally symmetrical distribution of data points around the overall mean effect size, implying that publication bias was unlikely to affect the results of this meta-analysis.

To statistically confirm this interpretation, Egger's test was performed to evaluate funnel-plot asymmetry.

Table 5. Egger's Regression Test **for Funnel Plot Asymmetry**

Regression test for Funnel plot asymmetry ("Egger's test")		
	z	p
sei	0.914	0.361

As shown in Table 5, Egger's test yielded a z-value of 0.914 with p = 0.361. Since the p-value exceeded 0.05, there was no significant evidence of asymmetry, confirming that the results of this meta-analysis were not influenced by publication bias. This finding reinforces the reliability and objectivity of the synthesized results.

To further evaluate the robustness of the overall findings, Rosenthal's fail-safe N test was conducted. This test estimates how many additional null-result studies would be required to overturn the significance of the meta-analytic result.

Table 6. File-Drawer (Fail-Safe N) Analysis

	Fail-safe N	Target Significance	Observed Significance
Rosenthal	5109.000	0.050	< .001

As presented in Table 6, the fail-safe N value was 5109, indicating that more than five thousand unpublished studies with null findings would be required to reduce the overall effect to non-significance at $\alpha = 0.05$. Such a large fail-safe N demonstrates that the results of this meta-analysis are highly stable and resilient to potential publication bias. Nevertheless, as some scholars have noted, fail-safe N may overestimate robustness, and thus its interpretation should be made cautiously and in conjunction with other bias-assessment indicators.

Overall, the results of these analyses confirm that the meta-analytic findings are both valid and robust. The absence of publication bias and the large fail-safe N strengthen confidence in the conclusion that religiosity has a significant and positive effect on quality of life across various contexts and populations.

4. Discussion

The findings of this meta-analysis confirm a moderate and statistically significant positive relationship between religiosity and quality of life, as indicated by the pooled correlation coefficient ($r = 0.32$; $b = 0.317$; $SE = 0.062$; $z = 5.136$; $p < 0.001$; 95% CI [0.196, 0.438]). This result was obtained from 31 studies published between 2015 and 2024 with a combined total of 96,177 participants across multiple regions, reflecting diverse cultural and demographic contexts. The heterogeneity test ($Q = 656.535$; $df = 30$; $p < 0.001$) revealed substantial variation across studies, suggesting that while the positive association is consistent, the magnitude of the relationship differs depending on contextual factors. The Egger's test ($z = 0.914$; $p = 0.361$) and funnel plot analysis indicated no evidence of publication bias, and the large fail-safe N value (5109) demonstrated the robustness of the results. These statistical outcomes jointly affirm the main hypothesis (H_1) that higher religiosity significantly correlates with better quality of life, thereby rejecting the null hypothesis (H_0).

The positive and significant relationship between religiosity and quality of life can be explained by the multidimensional nature of religiosity, which integrates cognitive (belief), affective (spiritual experience), and behavioral (religious practice) components. The meta-analytic findings indicate that religiosity serves not merely as a set of ritual behaviors but as a psychological and existential resource that enhances subjective well-being. Individuals who hold stronger religious beliefs or engage more consistently in religious practices may experience a heightened sense of purpose, optimism, and emotional stability, all of which contribute to improved perceptions of life quality.

From a statistical perspective, the moderate effect size ($r = 0.32$) reflects a balanced but meaningful relationship: religiosity exerts a consistent positive influence across studies, but it is not the sole determinant of quality of life. This magnitude aligns with the idea that religion operates in tandem with other psychosocial factors—such as social support, health, and economic stability—to promote well-being. The heterogeneity detected across studies ($Q = 656.535$; $p < 0.001$) implies that contextual moderators—such as cultural values, socioeconomic background, and variations in religious expression—affect how religiosity translates into lived experiences of life satisfaction. For instance, religiosity may have a stronger impact in collectivist societies where faith is embedded within social networks, while in more secular or individualistic cultures, its influence may be mediated by personal spirituality rather than institutional religion.

The absence of publication bias and the high fail-safe N (5109) strengthen the reliability of these interpretations. The robustness of the data suggests that the positive religiosity–quality of life

relationship is not a statistical artifact but an empirically stable phenomenon. This confirms the hypothesis that religiosity plays a significant role in sustaining emotional resilience, coping with adversity, and providing existential meaning—especially in times of social or psychological stress. Moreover, religiosity may indirectly enhance life quality through social integration, prosocial behavior, and perceived moral coherence, which collectively strengthen individuals' adaptive capacity in facing life challenges.

The results of this meta-analysis are broadly consistent with the first tendency identified in previous literature, where religiosity is positively linked to indicators of subjective well-being. Studies by Bozkurt et al. (2019), Bagheri-Nesami et al. (2017), and Majda et al. (2022) similarly found that religious individuals report higher life satisfaction, stronger emotional regulation, and lower anxiety levels. This meta-analysis strengthens those findings by quantifying their overall magnitude and confirming that the relationship remains positive and significant across a large sample and diverse populations.

However, the heterogeneity results also resonate with the second tendency in earlier research, which observed that the strength of the religiosity–quality of life link depends on contextual and demographic variables (Warwer, 2024). For example, variations in gender, age, cultural background, and religious denomination can shape how individuals internalize religious meaning and translate it into well-being outcomes. The present meta-analysis empirically validates this variability by showing significant heterogeneity ($Q = 656.535$; $p < 0.001$), highlighting the role of potential moderators.

At the same time, the current findings diverge from the third research strand (Leite et al., 2020; Santos et al., 2017), which questions the universality of the religiosity–well-being relationship, especially in secular societies. While those studies reported weak or negligible correlations, this meta-analysis—by synthesizing data across broader samples—demonstrates that even in diverse contexts, religiosity still contributes moderately and positively to life quality. This underscores the novelty of the study: it offers an updated, decade-wide synthesis (2015–2024) confirming that religiosity continues to function as a meaningful determinant of well-being in contemporary, increasingly pluralistic societies.

Historically, the positive and enduring relationship between religiosity and quality of life reflects how religion has functioned as one of humanity's oldest institutions for organizing meaning, morality, and solidarity. From pre-modern societies to contemporary secular states, religion has consistently provided an ethical and emotional infrastructure through which individuals interpret suffering, hope, and destiny. The findings of this meta-analysis reaffirm that—even amid processes of modernization and rationalization—religiosity continues to play a stabilizing role by linking personal well-being with broader moral and communal orders. This continuity demonstrates that religion has not disappeared in the modern world but has instead adapted into a moral reservoir of resilience, helping individuals and societies recover from crises such as globalization, value dislocation, and post-pandemic uncertainty.

Empirical evidence from recent scholarship supports this conceptualization of religion as moral resilience. Religion and spirituality provide a unique reservoir of strength during difficult times by offering a connection to the sacred, guiding individuals toward emotional stability and psychological well-being (Wong, Pargament, & Faigin, 2018). Regular participation in religious services has also been found to enhance trait resilience, predicting lower levels of depression and faster reintegration after trauma (Manning & Miles, 2018). Beyond coping, religion contributes to the cultivation of moral competence—the integration of reason, emotion, and will in forming ethical judgment and self-discipline (Marek & Walulik, 2021). Traditional frameworks such as Chinese moral philosophy emphasize moral resilience through virtues like benevolence and determination, showing that spirituality and ethics intersect in fostering inner strength (Wang, Huang, & Chang, 2024).

At the social level, religious institutions and communities serve as collective mechanisms of resilience. The church, for instance, plays an essential role in sustaining moral and spiritual guidance during crises by uniting virtues and communal life under shared values (Bekavac, 2023). Likewise, faith-based organizations have contributed to community resilience in post-disaster contexts by mobilizing networks of care, leadership, and solidarity (Joakim & White, 2015). These findings illustrate

that religion operates not only as an individual coping strategy but also as a structural source of moral and social coherence, particularly when formal systems of support are fragile.

Ideologically, the moral framework provided by religion continues to shape personal and political worldviews, guiding social behavior and public responsibility (Mangum, 2017). Strong religious faith has been found to enhance emotional regulation and life effectiveness, especially during crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic (Cosmas, Gussago, Seok, & Ading, 2022). Even among marginalized communities, spirituality functions as a source of empowerment and resilience, helping individuals transform stigma into meaning and resistance (Bowling, Mbugua, & Piperato, 2021). These diverse findings converge on the idea that religiosity—whether institutional or personal—constitutes a moral-psychological infrastructure that strengthens both individual and collective capacities to endure and transcend adversity.

Thus, from a historical, social, and ideological perspective, religiosity can be understood as a dynamic force of moral resilience. Historically, it anchors meaning and solidarity; socially, it fosters cohesion and compassion; and ideologically, it resists moral fragmentation by reasserting the value of transcendence, ethical responsibility, and communal care. In this sense, religion continues to act as both an ancient and modern mechanism through which humanity cultivates stability, hope, and moral order in the face of uncertainty.

The results of this meta-analysis underscore the functional dimensions of religiosity as both a psychological and social mechanism that enhances human resilience and life satisfaction. Functionally, religiosity operates as a multidimensional system of meaning, integrating belief, emotion, and practice into a coherent moral structure that supports well-being. On the personal level, religion serves as a coping mechanism that nurtures emotional stability, optimism, and hope in the face of adversity. On the social level, it reinforces solidarity and moral order, cultivating empathy, altruism, and shared responsibility within communities. These functions illustrate that religiosity continues to fulfill a vital role in modern societies by offering moral guidance, existential coherence, and collective identity amidst growing secularization and individualism.

Moreover, the study demonstrates that religiosity functions as a protective factor that mitigates the psychological effects of stress, uncertainty, and loss. Through ritual participation and spiritual reflection, individuals internalize values that promote self-control, patience, and meaning-making. These aspects contribute to quality of life not merely through spiritual satisfaction but also through measurable improvements in mental health, social integration, and prosocial behavior. For policymakers and practitioners, these findings suggest that religion can be a constructive partner in promoting mental health programs, community resilience strategies, and value-based education that strengthen social fabric and individual coping capacity.

However, the findings also invite critical reflection on the dysfunctional dimensions of religiosity—that is, the potential limitations and unintended consequences of religious influence in diverse societies. While religiosity generally promotes moral resilience, excessive dogmatism or exclusivist interpretations can foster social division, discrimination, or moral rigidity. When religion becomes overly institutionalized or politicized, its integrative potential may shift toward exclusionary practices that undermine social harmony. Similarly, the benefits of religiosity may not be uniformly experienced across all groups; marginalized populations may face stigma or exclusion in certain religious environments (Bowling et al., 2021). Such dynamics highlight that the moral power of religion can be double-edged: capable of inspiring compassion and justice, yet also vulnerable to being co-opted for ideological or cultural dominance.

From a methodological perspective, the heterogeneity identified in this meta-analysis ($Q = 656.535$; $p < 0.001$) also reflects this functional–dysfunctional tension. While religiosity significantly enhances quality of life in most contexts, its effects vary depending on cultural, socioeconomic, and denominational conditions. In highly plural or secular societies, the impact of religion may diminish or shift toward individualized spirituality, whereas in traditional or collectivist contexts, it may strengthen communal life but restrict personal autonomy. Therefore, the implications of this study are twofold: first, religion remains a powerful moral resource for resilience and social well-being; second,

its function must be continually balanced with inclusivity, critical reflection, and respect for diversity to prevent disfunctionality.

Ultimately, the dual character of religiosity revealed in this study calls for a nuanced understanding of religion's place in contemporary society. Rather than viewing religiosity as inherently positive or negative, it should be recognized as a dynamic moral force—one that simultaneously sustains, challenges, and transforms human life. Future research should explore this ambivalence more deeply by examining when and how religiosity enhances versus constrains quality of life, particularly in contexts shaped by cultural pluralism, gender diversity, and global ethical change.

To address the potential dysfunctions identified in this study—such as exclusivism, moral rigidity, and unequal access to the positive effects of religiosity—policy interventions should aim to promote inclusive, dialogical, and context-sensitive religious engagement across educational, social, and health domains. First, governments and educational institutions can integrate religious literacy and interfaith dialogue programs into curricula to foster empathy, critical reflection, and ethical pluralism among citizens. This approach prevents the instrumentalization of religion while strengthening its moral and humanistic functions. Second, community and faith-based organizations should collaborate with mental health and social service providers to develop spirituality-informed well-being initiatives, ensuring that religious resources contribute constructively to emotional resilience and social cohesion. Finally, policymakers must encourage cross-sector partnerships—between state, religious institutions, and civil society—to create environments where religion serves as a bridge rather than a barrier, amplifying its role as a moral resource for inclusive resilience, social harmony, and sustainable quality of life in plural societies.

5. Conclusion

This meta-analysis concludes that religiosity has a moderate, significant, and empirically robust positive relationship with quality of life ($r = 0.32$; $b = 0.317$; $SE = 0.062$; $z = 5.136$; $p < 0.001$; 95% CI [0.196, 0.438]). Based on data synthesized from 31 studies involving 96,177 participants, the analysis demonstrates that individuals with higher levels of religiosity tend to experience greater life satisfaction, emotional stability, and social cohesion. The findings also reveal significant heterogeneity ($Q = 656.535$; $p < 0.001$), indicating that the strength of this relationship varies across cultural, demographic, and methodological contexts. Overall, these results affirm that religiosity serves as a multidimensional psychosocial and moral resource that enhances subjective well-being and promotes resilience, particularly during times of social disruption, moral uncertainty, and post-pandemic recovery.

In terms of its scientific contribution, this study offers one of the most comprehensive quantitative syntheses to date (2015–2024) on the relationship between religiosity and quality of life. It advances the theoretical understanding of religiosity as moral resilience—a dynamic force that integrates psychological, social, and ideological dimensions in sustaining human well-being. Methodologically, this research reinforces the importance of meta-analytic approaches in consolidating fragmented empirical findings into a coherent framework, providing stronger evidence for the moderating effects of cultural and contextual variables. The study contributes to the sociology and psychology of religion by demonstrating that religiosity continues to function not only as a spiritual experience but also as a stabilizing moral structure that nurtures compassion, solidarity, and purpose in pluralistic societies.

However, this study also recognizes several limitations. The meta-analysis relies exclusively on published, Scopus-indexed studies, which may exclude relevant but non-indexed or unpublished research, potentially limiting the scope of generalization. Furthermore, variations in measurement instruments and cultural definitions of religiosity could affect comparability across studies. Future research should therefore expand the database to include gray literature, employ longitudinal or mixed-method designs, and systematically test moderator variables such as age, gender, cultural religiosity, and socioeconomic background. Such extensions will refine understanding of how religiosity, in its diverse expressions, contributes to human flourishing across global and interfaith contexts.

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