Religiosity and Happiness in Indonesia: A Phenomenological Study of Young Muslims

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Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to the most important people in my life, people that I can’t imagine living my life without, people who always make me feel loved and grateful, my beloved parents Prof. Dr. Achmad Dirwan, MSc and Yulna Zain, my husband Ahmad Agus Rifqi Jamil and my daughter Kinantya Ayu Fiqi Poetry.
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List of Conference Presentations


Abstract

This research explored the meaning of religiosity and happiness among young Indonesian Muslims. The aim of the study was to elucidate the relationship between happiness and religiosity as experienced and understood by a group of 12 young people studying at a large public Islamic university in Jakarta. Interviews with the participants about their understanding of religion and conceptualisation of happiness were analysed using Giorgi's descriptive phenomenological approach to elucidate the meaning of happiness and religion in young Muslims. The findings show that there were differences in how the participants described their happiness, that a range of factors affected their happiness and influenced their ability to cope with stress. While many of the participants had some of the same ideas about religion and its relationship to happiness that are common in Indonesia in general, religion was not a major factor in their happiness nor was it the main support for them in coping with stress. In this, the study suggests that the widespread assumption in Indonesia that religion is the most significant source of resilience and coping may not apply to younger individuals who typically have many more choices than may have been available in the past.
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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides an introduction to the study reported in this thesis. It contains sections on the background of the study; its nature, scope and purpose; its justification and significance; the research questions that shaped the study; and the limitations of the research. An outline of the structure of this thesis is also provided along with a note on translation.

1.1 Background of the Study
Understanding and facilitating happiness and subjective wellbeing is the central objective of positive psychology (Seligman, 2002). Happiness in this context refers both to positive feelings, such as joy or serenity, and to positive states such as those involving flow or absorption. The relationship between religion and happiness has been a subject of interest for some time, especially as religion is viewed as encompassing a number of the dimensions of positive psychology (see Seligman, 2002). Formal religious institutions have been seen as providing a means of social networking that can be beneficial in terms of individual happiness (Lim and Putnam, 2010). However, the impact of religion on happiness has been studied with varying results. Several authors have concluded that its effect is real but tends to be more significant for certain groups (see, for example, Veenhoven et al., 1994). Much of this work has been carried out among primarily Christian, western populations. Other studies have found, however, that there is little relationship between religion and happiness or that earlier findings were not reproduced (see, for example, Lewis, Malby and Burkinshaw, 2000; Abdul-Khalek, 2006; Snoep, 2008; Diener, Tay and Myers, 2011).

While most of the research on happiness has cantered on western societies, work has been done in some Asian communities, such as in
Turkey (Eryilmaz, 2010), China (Cheng and Chan, 2005), Taiwan (Chang, 2009), Malaysia and Indonesia (see Jafar et al., 2012). Happiness and its relationship to religion has not been as thoroughly studied in Islamic communities, although there is some literature on this topic (see, for example, Johansloo, 2013). In Indonesia specifically, happiness and its relationship to Islam has not been rigorously studied, despite Indonesia having the largest Muslim population in the world.

The Indonesian population is made up of people from many different ethnic groups that adopted various religions at different points in history, and Islam is one of six formally recognised religions. The religion exists alongside a much older, pre-existing culture, much of which is part of the Malay cultural mainstream. Nonetheless, most Indonesians, as well as western observers, feel that religion is an important social force in Indonesia, and there is some evidence to suggest that Islam has become more important in the last decade as an aspect of the social environment. For this reason, in order to better understand Indonesian society and the perceptions of Indonesians about their life and experience, an understanding of the relationship between religion and happiness is vital and will provide important information that can support a range of social and health initiatives.

1.2 Nature, Scope and Purpose of the Study

This study considers the relationship of happiness to religious sentiment and practice among Indonesian Muslims. It is intended to provide basic information for understanding this relationship and the ways in which religious feelings contribute to how Indonesians understand their experience. While a number of religions are recognised in Indonesia, the majority of the population is Muslim. This study will be limited to respondents of this religion because their experience will be relevant for approximately 85% of the population. Little work on the relationship between religion and happiness has been carried out in
Indonesia, so this study will serve as a basis for further investigation of this topic among other parts of the population.

In Indonesia today, religion is often seen as an appropriate means for addressing various social and wellbeing issues observed in modern society (Ferriss, 2002; Abdul-Khalek, 2006; Alavi, 2007; Holder, Coleman and Wallace, 2010). It is often suggested that individuals who are experiencing personal difficulties can be helped using a religious approach. Further, it is often believed that strong personal religious feelings are central to happiness and wellbeing in Muslim cultures such as Indonesia (Suhail and Chaudry, 2004; Diener, Myers and Tay, 2011). For this reason, it is especially relevant to study the actual relationship between religiosity and happiness in the modern context and to elucidate its specific nature in this community. The aim of the study, therefore, is to analyse the relationship between religious feeling and happiness in Muslim Indonesians in order to determine the role their religion plays in their perceived happiness and wellbeing and, in this way, determine the function of religiosity in modern Indonesian society in the context of people's lived experience.

Additionally, since the subjects in this research are young people who are still developing adult personalities, the results of this study may have implications for their future happiness and may also suggest ways that some of the problems experienced by this age group might be addressed. An understanding of the factors that contribute to people’s happiness in Indonesia in late adolescence may support the development of strategies and approaches to maximize positive emotions throughout the life course.

1.3 Justification and Significance of the Study

Studies about religiosity and happiness are rare in Indonesia. Most of the research on this topic has been conducted in western environments with Christian participants. Much less is known about the role of
religion in happiness in non-western societies and within the Muslim world. This study adds to our understanding of this relationship.

Many non-western societies, including Indonesia, are experiencing some of the same psychological stresses that have been recognised in the west. Addressing these issues requires an understanding of the nature of the psychological dimensions that contribute to the perceptions of individuals. This study provides this kind of insight into Indonesian society, which is likely to be relevant for other parts of the world with large Muslim populations as well, and may serve as the basis for more effective approaches to a range of social and wellbeing concerns that reflect the perceptions of the Indonesian public.

This study focuses on young adults who are currently engaged in university study. People in this age group in Indonesia have typically studied religious practice from a young age and have been socialized into the religious community of which they are a part. However, young adulthood tends to be a transitional period which has the potential to impact an individual’s life course into the future. It is also a period when many people are vulnerable to a range of social and psychological impacts they have not experienced before. For this reason, it is especially important to understand the factors that may support the formation and maintenance of positive emotions that can contribute to wellbeing as individual progresses into adulthood. Religion is one potential resource for this and is central to the lived experience of Indonesians in modern society.

1.4 Research Questions
This study is intended to answer a number of research questions. They are:

1. How do young Indonesian Muslims describe their happiness and the factors that contribute to it?
2. How young Indonesian Muslims internalize and practice religion in their daily life?
3. What is the relationship between religious practice and identification among young Indonesian Muslims?
4. In what ways and under what circumstances does religion affect the happiness of young Indonesian Muslims?

1.5 Limitations of the Study
This study has a number of limitations. Its respondents are all Muslim and come from an urban background in Indonesia. Their experiences may not reflect the experience of people of other religions and who live in other environments in the same country. Further, this study was limited to young adults aged 18-24 and included 12 participants which may not reflect the experience and perceptions of older or younger individuals. The definition of happiness has not been clearly established in Indonesian society, and this study was intended to better elucidate exactly how Indonesians conceptualise this emotion. In this, its findings may not reflect a comprehensive understanding of happiness or a conceptualisation that applies to all Indonesians. Finally, because this study was carried out at a public Islamic university, its participants were more aware of the role of religion in their daily lives than the population in general.

1.6 Translation Issues
The data for this study were collected through a process of interviews, as described in Chapter 3. These interviews took place in Indonesia, the national language of Indonesia and the language of instruction and general interaction at the university where the study took place. Where excerpts of those interviews are presented, the original Indonesian interaction, as transcribed from the recorded interviews, is presented along with an English translation. These translations were made by the author and were checked by her supervisors. Efforts were made to ensure that the English equivalent was colloquial and reflects the
content as well as the tone of the original. The purpose of presenting text from the interviews is to convey the ways in which the study participants explained their own experiences and perceptions and to provide examples of the language they used to discuss these issues.

1.7 Structure of the Thesis
This thesis is divided into six chapters. They are: Introduction; Review of Literature; Methodology; Findings; Discussion; and Conclusion. The Review of Literature (Chapter 2) discusses the large body of material relating to religion and happiness, while literature related to the specific methodology applied in this study is discussed in Chapter 3. The chapter on Findings (Chapter 4) contains a number of excerpts from interviews with the study participants which are intended to offer insight into the views and perceptions of these individuals. The final chapter (Chapter 6) summarises the study and suggests possible avenues for future research.

1.8 Summary
This chapter outlined the background and nature of this study and explained its justification and significance. The research questions for the study were presented, as were its limitations and a note on translation of interview data. The chapter provides an overview of the research reported in this thesis and highlights some of the main points to be investigated. Chapter 2 that follows provides a review of literature relevant to this study.
CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW and THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This literature review discusses selected literature that relates to happiness, religiosity, coping strategies and resilience and also the nature of Islam in Indonesia. In addition, literature relating to the causal relationship between religiosity and happiness is reviewed.

2.1 Happiness
Happiness is a general term and seems to be universally understood. However, it is important to note that, while all human beings presumably can feel happy, what exactly this feeling means to the individual and what makes them feel this way is subject to cultural, temporal and individual variations (Inglehart and Klingemann, 2000). Nonetheless, most people are capable of answering the question, “How happy are you now?” The answer to this question requires a subjective evaluation of the individual’s present state compared to other times that he or she recalls.

Many researchers and scholars have tried to identify a generally accepted meaning of happiness (see, for example, Veenhoven and Ehrhardt, 1995; Argyle and Martin and Lu, 1995; Cummins, 2013). In addition, many organisations have tried to measure happiness levels around the world for their own purposes. A number of them have developed their own tools for this purpose that incorporate a number of factors and variables (UN, 2017; OPHI, 2011). Most of these authors suggest that happiness is part of wellbeing, which is a more complex construct with multiple dimensions, not all of which are emotional (Ryan and Deci, 2001). Happiness is often felt to be one determinant of wellbeing, but happiness is not wellbeing (Raibley, 2012). Wellbeing is a broader condition which, to most people, involves more than emotion (happiness) and also includes other aspects of perception and state of being. Diener (2006) notes that wellbeing, especially what he called
subjective wellbeing, consists of affective and cognitive elements, where happiness is one of the main affective components (see also Cummins, 2013). In this view, happiness is central to wellbeing and can be triggered by ordinary events, such as the opportunity to spend time with loved ones, talking to friends, or simply smiling at others. In this conceptualisation, happiness seems easy to achieve and is not always related to more objective conditions, such as level of wealth, specific achievements, physical health, social relationships or being part of an organisation (Kesebir and Diener, 2008).

A somewhat different view is discussed by Veenhoven and Ehrhardt (1995), who define happiness or life satisfaction as “the degree to which one judges the quality of one’s life favourably” (p.34). Happy people tend to report higher life satisfaction, regardless of whether they feel they have purpose in life (Diener et al., 2011). Myers (1992) notes that happy people generally have higher self-esteem, feel more optimistic, are capable of simulating an outgoing disposition, and may display personal self-control (see also Ferriss, 2002). This understanding of happiness is connected directly to a range of personality or behavioural attributes that are generally considered to be positive and beneficial. In other words, happiness is seen as facilitating other affective states that may help the individual in his or her social and personal interactions.

Happiness can also be seen as a construct with two different sides. Kesebir and Diener (2008) distinguish between ideal happiness and actual happiness. Ideal happiness can be seen as happiness that is complete and lasting, affects every aspect of life, and may be the kind of happiness many people try to achieve. This type of happiness has extremely high standards and may not be possible to reach. Nonetheless, it is still possible for people to feel happy and be satisfied with their lives even though they cannot achieve this ideal. Actual happiness is what most psychologists are interested in and tend to study. This kind of happiness focuses on what people currently feel,
how they judge the experiences that make them happy, what kind of positive emotions they feel when they experience happiness, what terms they use in talking about their happiness and also how happiness affects their performance in their everyday life. Veenhoven (2009) states that happiness relates to how much people enjoy and like their life and to what extent they see their life positively. These understandings of happiness indicate that this affective state, regardless of its nature to a given individual, is related to wellbeing or life satisfaction. Additionally, these understandings stress that happiness is a feeling that is strongly related to a person’s present condition (Seligman, 2002). This is the basis for asking people how happy they feel at a given time and comparing this level of happiness to other points in their life that they can recall. There is no external baseline that can be established, and happiness must be seen as an individual phenomenon whose exact meaning and dimensions are relative for each individual.

Recent research on happiness has focused on the possible dimensions and indicators of happiness that may have wide application (Kesebir and Diener, 2008). Studies of this kind are intended to determine whether there are universal aspects of happiness that are relevant for every human being and that may hence be useful in understanding why some people are happy and others are not. In other words, some researchers believe there are certain universal factors that contribute to people’s happiness, regardless of their sociocultural context that may exist alongside or in addition to other factors that are specific to a certain group or community.

Most researchers agree that happiness always has an affective or cognitive dimension or both (Rojas and Veenhoven, 2013). Considering the cognitive point of view can explain how people evaluate their personal experience and whether those experiences meet their expectations or not. The expectations or standards in question refer to the extent to which people are able to achieve the things they want in
life. This may relate to a perceived purpose or their own actualisation. By contrast, the affective approach considers how people feel about their life as a whole. This is related to the presence of positive affect and the absence of negative emotions (Kesebir and Diener, 2008). This view of happiness focuses on the life course as a whole, rather than on a rational evaluation of personal achievement. Individuals may evaluate their experiences as valuable in and of themselves and feel satisfied with them, regardless of their achievement of other, external measures that may relate to happiness (Diener, Lucas and Oishi, 2002).

Argyle, Martin, and Lu (1995) identify three possible components of happiness: positive emotions, satisfaction, and the absence of negative emotions such as depression or anxiety. Kesebir and Diener (2008) suggest happiness involves a wider range of components that include life satisfaction (global judgments of one’s life), satisfaction with important life domains (satisfaction with one’s work, health, marriage, etc.), positive affect (prevalence of positive emotions and moods), and low levels of negative affect (prevalence of unpleasant emotions and moods). These components are likely relevant to most individuals, regardless of background, although the specific factors within these groupings as well as the trigger factors for affective state may vary for different groups and individuals.

Expanding on this, Ryan and Deci (2001) consider what they call the hedonic and eudemonic domains of happiness. Hedonic happiness refers to the highest level of positive feelings that may emerge when a person has achieved something he or she really wants. The idea of hedonic happiness dates to the ancient Greeks and represents a maximum of positive emotion (see, for example Beardsley, 1975, for a discussion of this). By contrast, eudemonic happiness results when a person has reached his or her individual potential. These distinctions in type of happiness are important in the study of affect but may have little meaning to the individual person. Most people seem to evaluate
their own happiness by considering how they feel relative to the things they want or lack. Happiness, in this sense, is a balance between all the things that represent positives in life and all the others that represent negatives. People probably make different evaluations, depending on their experience and personality as well as how they see their life overall, but it has been suggested that broad trends in happiness can be observed that seem to apply to a majority of people from the same background.

Veenhoven and Ehrhardt (1995, pp.34-36) proposed a “livability” theory that suggests people will be feel happier and more satisfied with their life if they appreciate what they have and achieve in life. The premise of this theory is that people in countries with better living conditions will be happier than those in countries with less good conditions. For Veenhoven, livability stems from the idea that there are universal human needs that must be met for an individual to feel happy. Veenhoven (1999) finds that there is a clear, positive relationship between happiness and conditions in 34 countries that includes level of education, economic status, and life satisfaction.

The livability theory of happiness contrasts with the comparison theory of happiness which suggests that people make a conscious estimation of their actual experience as compared to an ideal experience they can imagine. These comparisons are assumed to be relative and are based on the impression of what might be possible in any given circumstance (see Kesebir and Diener, 2008). The theory has two variants: the social-comparison version suggests that people will be unhappy even with good conditions if they feel that other people are doing better. Conversely, people may be happy in poor conditions if they feel other people are doing worse (Diener and Lucas, 2000; Radcliff, 2001; Diener and Biswas-Diener, 2002). Another possible theory of happiness has been referred to as the folklore theory. This theory holds that happiness comes from a generally known conceptualisation of happiness that is
common to people who come from the same cultural background. This subjective quality should be unrelated to the actual conditions people experience. Ostroot and Snyder (1985) and Inglehart (1990) discuss this understanding of happiness in the context of several different nations. These theories relate to happiness at the national level and suggest that it is possible to generalize about happiness at the population level. Populations, however, are made up of individuals. Each individual will have his or her own subjective conceptualisation of happiness that derives from personal experience over the life course. It is individual happiness that is most relevant in the fields of psychology and psychiatry, in the context of counselling and support, and in interpersonal relations at every level of human interaction.

The conditions that are viewed as contributing to happiness and wellbeing represent a determination made by individuals. The state of the place where they live can contribute to people’s happiness and wellbeing through economic growth and the wealth of the country. Good economic conditions and rising GDP may allow governments to provide for and fulfil the basic needs of every person in the form of basic guarantees of food, security, housing, health care, employment and educational opportunities. However, this situation might also lead to unhappiness. The revenue required to provide for the needs of the public may come from taxation and other public money, which may mean that governments have to push their citizens to pay more tax and work harder to maintain economic growth (see Cummins, 2012).

Countries vary in how they treat citizens and how they contribute to welfare by providing job opportunities and an environment conducive to wellbeing which in turn can improve people’s perception of quality of life and state of happiness (see for example, Joseph and Lewis, 1998; Hessami, 2010; Rothstein, 2010). Nonetheless, it may be difficult to compare levels of happiness across countries and regions because the subjective perception of satisfaction and the elements that contribute
to happiness tend to include cultural determinants and may vary considerably. This may contribute significantly to the frequent surveys that show high levels of happiness reported by people in countries with low GDP and other economic measures that suggest their basic needs may not be met to the level generally thought to be required for happiness in developed nations (see, for example, Halliwell et al., 2015).

Levels of happiness have been viewed as more stable and resistant to change in developed countries as compared to developing nations. In the developing countries, governments often struggle to increase GDP which may lead to policy change. The changing environment may affect people’s perception of happiness because of uncertainty associated with new initiatives and approaches in the economic context. The standard of living tends to be lower in these locations as compared to developed countries. For this reason, people may react with greater happiness to smaller changes in economic status, and this effect may be more pronounced for people with lower SES. For this reason, governments may not have to put much effort into making the public happy. This may also have negative implications, however, because a government may not be strongly motivated to improve living conditions, since the public tends to be satisfied and feel happier as a result of only small changes in economic status (Easterlin, 1974; Easterlin, 1995; Diener and Biswar-Diener, 2002; Inglehart, et al., 2008).

Money has been shown to increase happiness and wellbeing for those who are very poor. More income tends not to have this effect for the middle class or upper class, which suggests that resources only contribute to happiness up to a certain point when it becomes possible for people to meet their basic needs. Beyond this, happiness does not seem to be very dependent on money. Once basic needs are fulfilled, people tend to perceive a need for more beyond this level which then becomes a new challenge to meet (see Drakopoulos, 2008 for review). However, it has also been suggested that, when people reach a level
where their income meets their needs in the way they aspire to, they may become more productive, which can have further benefits for their overall wealth and wellbeing (Diener and Biswar-Diener, 2002).

It should be noted, though, that the level of wealth required to trigger a perception of happiness seems to be culturally based (Zinam, 1994). Culture contributes to how people appreciate their life and the satisfaction that they have achieved up to the present time. Factors like culture, ethnic identity and the political situation also contribute to people’s preferences and ability to achieve the things they want (Fee, 2001). For instance, in capitalist countries, where people do not have any control over the country’s economy and are also highly dependent on the market, economic concerns may lead to anxiety that makes them unhappy (Radcliff, 2001). This suggests that external factors may be highly influential in contributing to the perception of happiness. Since these factors tend to vary over time as well as culturally, socially, geographically and politically, it is to be expected that a great deal of variation can be observed in the level of happiness reported by different groups in different locations.

The relative standards theory proposed by Diener and Lucas (2000) states that, for people to have the same standard of happiness, they have to experience the same process when making judgements and the same feelings throughout their life. For this reason, it may be difficult to compare levels of happiness between individuals in a quantifiable way. It is necessary to take into account a range of personal factors, including experience and personality that can affect the perception of happiness. Nonetheless, because people in a given location tend to share many aspects of experience and background, they may react in the same general way to a certain set of conditions. This is where cultural factors may come in to affect the way people from a specific background, and often with a shared language and belief system, view their situation and evaluate their level of happiness. For example,
Uchida, et al. (2009), using multidimensional scaling analysis, found that happiness and unhappiness are defined differently by people in western and eastern cultures. McMahon (2006) compared the definition of happiness in 30 countries and found that luck and fortune are considered to be central to the conceptualisation of these states regardless of culture.

Based on the World Happiness Report 2013, Indonesia is ranked 76 among 156 countries that were included in the survey. This suggests that it is placed somewhere in the middle of surveyed countries. In Indonesia, studies on happiness are rare, and this is still a new area of research. Nonetheless, there have been attempts to apply some of the theories on happiness in Indonesia. One example of this is work by Veenhoven (2009) to develop a database of happiness around the world. Indonesia is one of the countries that was part of this study. This study did not include a large amount of data to show the level of happiness of people in Indonesia; it was limited to fewer than five people and did not represent levels of happiness across the population.

Jaafar et al. (2012) investigated sources of happiness for Indonesians. Their findings showed that family, social relationships, and self-autonomy/freedom/self-fulfilment were the most important sources of happiness for their study population. Suh, et al. (1998) conducted research on the importance of subjective wellbeing to college students in several nations, including Indonesia. This research considered how often and intensely the respondents felt pleasant emotions. The results showed that college students in Indonesia thought more about happiness and life satisfaction compared to other countries that were included in the research. They also felt that life satisfaction and happiness were the most important things in life. Diener, et al. (1999) noted the importance of personality, temperament and individual differences to people in maintaining happiness and pleasant affect. These studies suggest that, at least for the individuals who took part,
happiness was an important concern and related, as in other parts of the world, to a range of interpersonal relationships and the social context.

A study by Sujarwoto and Tampubolon (2015) focused on the social and political context of Indonesia. They found that fiscal decentralization was significantly associated with happiness for the Indonesians they studied. This very specific finding relates to the establishment of Regional Autonomy that took place in Indonesia beginning in 2001 and resulted in the previously hierarchical system of administration being decentralized and local governments being given authority for numerous public services. Their findings suggest that economic improvement (or at least the promise of such improvement) is related to happiness for many Indonesians. However, it is difficult to know whether this is generally true in all contexts or whether these findings represent a special case because of the contrast between the economic situation and available opportunities before Regional Autonomy as compared to after it. Nonetheless, it is notable that economic improvement may be associated with happiness in Indonesia, at least in the recent past.

Research by Landiyanto, et al. (2011) produced different results. Their research on wealth and happiness in Indonesia included respondents aged from 14 to 97 years old and indicated that the most significant factors relating to happiness are marriage, expenditure and asset ownership, while education and health do not affect happiness to a significant degree. This research also found that older people tend to be less happy than younger ones. In addition, these authors noted that religious people tend to be happier than less religious people. This may be a reflection of dominant social norms which may be an aspect of local and national culture in Indonesia.
Diener and Lucas (2000) suggest that there are universal needs experienced by all people in the world. Income, nutrition, equality, freedom, and education are all seen as factors that contribute to happiness (Veenhoven, 2009). These factors represent a combination of survival needs but also intellectual needs. This contribution of needs fulfilment to happiness and life satisfaction is often associated with the work of Maslow (1954) who considered this in the context of the relative importance of specific aspects of experience and attainment to the individual. Maslow’s (1954) hierarchy of needs suggests that basic human needs can be categorized according to their importance in achieving satisfaction. This theory holds that people must have their needs fulfilled to achieve life satisfaction. Maslow’s needs can be broadly expressed from bottom to top as physiological, safety, love/belonging, esteem, and self-actualization. Maslow’s hierarchy has been used as a model to understand happiness, wellbeing, quality of life and other subjective and affective states. This model is also the basis of some of the theories of national happiness, including the livability theory discussed above (see, for example, Radcliff, 2001). It has been suggested that when people have achieved the needs contained in Maslow’s hierarchy, they can begin to think beyond their own needs to those of other people (see Diener et al., 2011). Maslow (1954) also added that the lower needs in the hierarchy more strongly affect the psychological health of the individual compared to the higher needs.

Maslow’s hierarchy of needs has not been universally accepted. For example, it has been criticized as being ethnocentric, in that it does not consider differences in social and intellectual perceptions that may emerge in individuals from different cultural backgrounds (Hofstede, 1984). It has also been suggested that the order of items in the hierarchy may not reflect social norms or prerogatives in more collectivist societies where the highest level of need may relate to the needs of acceptance and community, not to conditions that are more
relevant to the individual (Gambrel and Cianci, 2003). These issues are especially relevant in this research which relates to the Indonesian context and involves respondents who come from the cultures that make up modern Indonesia. Very little is known about the components of happiness in this community, which may be quite different from those in a western society. This study is intended to elucidate the nature of happiness in Indonesia in relation to religious feeling which plays an increasingly important role in Indonesians’ conceptualisation of their own identity (see Fee, 2001; Intan, 2006).

Specifically, this study involves young adults and the relationship between their religious feelings and their happiness. As is the case in many locations around the world, the young adult population in Indonesia is seen as vulnerable to the effects of negative emotion, stress and anxiety (Anjarsari et al., 2012). In considering the specific nature of the experience and perceptions of young adults, it is important to understand the characteristics of this period of life and the specific challenges to individuals in the transition to adulthood and the development of adult relationships and networks.

The causes and effects of happiness may be different in individuals from different age groups. Young adults are of particular interest in this context because, in a cognitive sense, they are old enough to have some idea what happiness is (in the sense of a cultural concept) and have likely begun to think about the form their adulthood will take. At this period of life, they have the ability to understand many kinds of emotions and have personal experience with some of them (see Berk 2000). In the older stage of young adulthood (from about 18 to 25 years), they will have more responsibilities, and the causes of their happiness may be more associated with job satisfaction, marital satisfaction and their social inclusion in their community.
Several theories emphasize the role of social relations of this kind in happiness (see, for example, Tkach and Lyubomirsky, 2006; McGregor et al., 2006). These theories suggest that the capability to build a social relationship with others and the ability to express emotions without fear of what will happen next is integral to happiness. This ability may alleviate potential stress and anxiety because the existence of stable emotional relationships can be an important source of support, especially when these relationships are mutual. Shared experiences, in the context of social relationships, may also increase enjoyment of certain activities. This aspect of happiness may be especially relevant to the young adult age group as it is typically in this period of life that people begin to form long-term, meaningful adult relationships.

At this stage of life, relationships with parents may contribute to happiness that will last a lifetime. The parent-child relationship itself seems to be important in this but may involve substitutes who are not necessarily a person’s parents but rather play that role. Nonetheless, multiple transitions in family structure may be detrimental to happiness and wellbeing (Knoester, 2003; Longmore et al., 2013). Parent-child closeness is not always related to frequency of meeting but more to the quality of the relationship (see Harvey, et al., 1991; Amato, 1994; Hills and Argyle 2001; Cheng and Furnham 2002, 2003; Hayes and Joseph 2003). This suggests that negative psychological states may result from an absence of this kind of relationship during young adulthood, or at least that an unsatisfactory family relationship (from the point of view of the young adult) must be considered as a potential impact on happiness.

Specifically, happiness in adolescence and young adulthood are primarily influenced by family interaction and peer influences (Wallace and Williams, 1997). Family connectedness and family roles have been shown to impact on behaviour in young adulthood in many ways. The extent to which the individual feels connected to their family and the
attachment he or she feels within the family may help prevent loneliness and a feeling of emptiness. This type of relationship may be an important resource for young adults in avoiding negative or non-adaptive behaviour.

Religion also has an impact on young adult happiness (Francis et al., 2003; Lelkes, 2006). Participation in religious activities, social support from religious institutions, and prayer may provide a sense of inclusion and purpose as part of a community. Peer involvement may be significant, however. In this age group, peers tend to play an important role in young adults’ perceptions of their own experience. For this reason, it has been found that the religious outlook of a young adult’s social group is influential in predicting religious involvement (Desrosiers et al., 2011).

Religion is just one potential component of happiness. To facilitate the creation of meaningful relationships, young people need appropriate social skills. This is to some extent related to personality, which also has an indirect relationship to happiness by determining how people react to emotional distress and how emotional they are (see Garcia and Moradi, 2012). Further to this, research among adults also shows that personality is a major source of adult happiness as well (Lyubomirsky et al., 2005). In fact, personality traits have been shown to account for as much as half the variance in people’s happiness (Cheng and Furnham, 2002). High self-esteem has also been found to be one of the strongest predictors of happiness, especially for young adults (Shrauger and Schnohr, 1995), as has friendship (Argyle, 1987). Friendship tends to evolve throughout the early life course to reach its adult form in late adolescence (Berndt, 1982). Argyle (1987) notes the central importance of friendship to happiness in young adults.

Ethnic identity, as an aspect of psychological acculturation, may be closely related to religion for some cultural groups. Despite assimilation
to the dominant culture, members of some ethnic groups may display a strong sense of their ethnic identity (Phinney et al., 2001). This is often the case in Indonesia. This ethnic identity, in turn, may also be protective against depression and stress, especially when social support is strong within a specific group (Shelton et al., 2005). This type of social belonging may make people more satisfied with their life (Lieber et al., 2001). For young people specifically, a link between ethnic identity and wellbeing has been shown to exist in a number of societies (Gray-Little and Hafdahl, 2001; Ryff, Keyes and Hughes, 2003; Umana-Taylor, 2004), and it has also been suggested that ethnic identity may be capable of moderating life stresses in which their group affiliation seems to be the crucial element (Kiang et al., 2006).

Physical activity has also been identified as a factor that can increase people’s happiness which, in turn, can impact on morbidity and life expectancy (Palmore 1969; Kawamoto 2002; Schnoehr et al., 2005). This physical activity may include household activities, sporting activities, avoidance of harm and risk behaviour such as smoking less, drinking less alcohol, and participation in leisure activities. It is assumed that these factors contribute to happiness indirectly by improving health which may bring greater hope and enhanced life expectancy. For young adults, however, health may be taken for granted, since this age group tends to be healthier than older people anyway.

Having a good job after graduating from high school or university can also be a source of happiness in young adults, but can also trigger greater anxiety for them as well. Nonetheless, a good job may lead people to greater life satisfaction (Khattab and Fenton, 2009) and better mental health (Paul and Mosser 2009). Related to this, a good job may enhance the feeling of satisfaction and allow people to obtain a higher income which has been shown by some researchers to be an important source of happiness.
The happiness of young adults is closely connected to their mental health (Perneger, et al., 2004). This relationship seems to exist in various societies. Ahmed (2006), for example, using a large sample of Kuwaiti Muslims, found that the main predictor of happiness in young people was mental health. In this study, mental health accounted for 60% of the variance in predicting happiness. The author expected that religiosity might be important considering the nature of Kuwaiti society, but found that it accounted for only around 15%. This suggests that religiosity was not the most significant factor in happiness in this population, but the author was not able to further elucidate this issue.

Having good mental health may allow young adults to enjoy their life, make good decisions, and potentially determine what things will make them happier than before. However, other research suggests that young adults place more value on their interactions with peers and having intense social interactions with significant others (Duncan and Gavazzi, 2004). This relates to the establishment of romantic relationships, which is an expectation of this period in life and acts as a predictor of happiness in young adulthood (Demir, 2008). At this stage of life, people tend to explore themselves and their needs in the areas of love, work and worldview, which can affect happiness as well as personality (Arnett, 2000).

Having purpose in life has also been found to have an association with young adult happiness in some locations (Sillick and Catchart, 2013; Aghababaei, 2014). Having purpose in life refers to an individual conceptualisation of what a person will reach and achieve in their life and allows them to choose behaviour they think will assist them in reaching their goals. It has been suggested that young people who feel they have a purpose in life are psychologically healthier than others who do not (Shek, 1993), and purpose has also been associated with resilience in this age group (Benard, 1991) as well as with positive development (Benson, 2006). Religious beliefs have been shown to be
closely associated with the presence of life goals and purpose in a range of contexts and individuals (Emmons, 2003).

Other research involving young adults indicates that happiness may be related to emotional intelligence (Ruiz-Aranda, et al., 2014). Emotional intelligence can help individuals manage their emotions to remain in control of their feelings, express emotion appropriately in every situation, and view stressful situations as helping them grow and reach personal wellbeing (Mayer and Salovey, 1997). Many of the demands of young adulthood, such as school, work, forming romantic relationships, relationships with peers, and a changing role within the family, may be very stressful (Martikainen, 2009). Emotional intelligence may allow people to think positively, even though they are facing difficult situations, and may help them feel that they can control the negative emotions they experience. This might support happiness and facilitate resilience.

O’Donnel, Chang and Miller (2013) studied the relationship between autonomy, attribution style and happiness in college students. Their results show that autonomy and attribution style have a significant relationship to happiness. Having autonomy allows people to have control and determine what they want to do while being responsible for their own behaviour. It offers them the freedom to judge and think for themselves (Collins, 1990). Similarly, a feeling of autonomy has been associated with decreased depressive symptoms (Allen, Porter, and McFarland, 2006), increased job satisfaction and greater subjective wellbeing (Sheldon and Niemiec, 2006). In a study of young adults in Scotland and Italy, independence was found to explain variance in psychological wellbeing (Duncan, Ornaghi and Grazzani, 2013).

Attribution style refers to the ways people make judgments about whether the cause or explanation of their experiences comes from within themselves or from an outside source and whether these
experiences are positive or negative (O’Donnel, Chang and Miller, 2013). Positive and internal attribution has been found to have a significant relationship with happiness, where positive attribution may lead people to judge a situation as beneficial or good. Because positive attribution does not support placing blame on the situation or environment, it may also support feelings of autonomy and independence as well as encourage the taking of responsibility for one’s actions.

There are other psychological constructs, such as subjective wellbeing, quality of life, and life fulfilment that are related to happiness. One difference between these concepts and happiness is that happiness tends to vary considerably and may change in a short period of time (Moons et al., 2006). These other states tend to span longer time periods and represent more consistent states (Diener et al., 1997). While these measures are sometimes used interchangeably, happiness is, in fact, an affective state that is subject to change and that may result from or be adjunct to more stable, longer term perceptions (Bartels and Boomsma, 2009). For young adults specifically, the link between happiness and longer-term perceptions of wellbeing have been investigated in a number of studies (for example, Currie et al., 2008; UNICEF, 2007). Important for this study, some researchers in this area found a significant decrease in happiness in young people aged 11 to 15 (Tugade and Fredrickson, 2004; Cohn et al., 2009). This suggests that many young people may enter the older teenage years with comparatively low levels of happiness and life satisfaction. While this is probably not surprising as popular wisdom holds that this is a difficult life period, research on various factors and their relationship to happiness has indicated that much of this relates to the individual’s genetic make-up (Lykken, 1999; Bartels and Boomsma, 2009). However, one of the factors that has been shown to moderate the effects of the gene-environment interaction in young people is religion. For example, Ciarrochi and Deneke (2005) found that religious people report feeling happier as compared to how non-religious people evaluate
their feelings. Boomsma et al. (1999) suggest that a religious upbringing moderates the influence of genetic make-up on happiness in young people. Even negative behaviour, such as alcohol consumption, has been shown to be significantly lower among young people raised in a religious home environment (Koopmans et al., 1999). This suggests that religiosity may be an important factor in understanding individual happiness among young adults and requires further study in different social and cultural contexts, which will contribute to the growing interest in cross-cultural comparisons of happiness and wellbeing (Diener et al., 2003; Bartels and Boomsma, 2009).

2.2 Religiosity
Religiosity is the degree to which a person engages in religious activity, is dedicated to their religion and believes in the doctrines of their faith. The literature contains several theories about this aspect of psychology. A basic concept in these theories is the existence of an intrinsic as well as an extrinsic religious orientation. Individuals with intrinsic religion orientation are described as having strong beliefs and being committed to their religion; they may use religion as a guide in their everyday decisions and daily activities (Allport, 1966). This kind of religious orientation may help people adapt, even to very difficult situations, and can support them in thinking positively about stressful events. On the other hand, individuals with extrinsic religious orientation tend to use religion as a means to obtain social support, social status, protection and consolation (Allport and Ross, 1967). Further, extrinsic religious orientation can be divided into two dimensions, extrinsic-personal which means that a person prefers to obey and be involved in religious activity because he or she wants to obtain personal benefit such as protection, happiness, comfort, peace and consolation. An extrinsic-social orientation means that a person is involved in religious activity because he or she wants to be acknowledged and recognised by the environment or build a network for personal reasons.
A number of studies have identified variables that can be used to evaluate religiosity. These include general religious involvement (e.g. frequency of attendance at a place of worship, membership in religious organizations), private religious activity (e.g. prayer, fasting, reading religious texts) and specific religious beliefs (e.g. belief in God, belief in an afterlife) (see Konig et al., 2001 for detailed discussion of this). These variables are most applicable to those religions that have established social practices at the community as well as individual level. In the context of this research, they are relevant because Islam, as the majority religion in Indonesia, is commonly practiced in a form that includes the availability of both formal and informal religious institutions, as well as highly developed rituals that shape social norms related to religious behaviour. For this reason, participation in various aspects of religion is an appropriate measure of religiosity in Indonesia. This will be discussed further below.

In contrast to religious practice, religious feelings vary from person to person, as does the level of intensity of religious feeling an individual has (Hackney and Sanders, 2003). Difficult life circumstances have been found to strongly predict religiosity at both the societal and individual levels. At the same time, the level of religiosity of a country is associated with the religious feelings of individuals. This is an indication that social factors play a role in determining whether an individual is religious (Diener et al., 2011).

The formation of adult identity is especially important in young adults, and religion can play an important role in this process. Hinde (1999) finds that religion can serve as a source in the search for meaning in life; provide order and structure in daily life; and support the integration of thought, emotion, and action. Piedmont (1999) suggests that religion may provide a way to understand the inconsistencies people experience by suggesting the existence of a larger, invisible structure of which they are part. In terms of personal identity
specifically, Marcia (1980) notes that religion encourages exploration but also commitment that can be understood in terms of a model that describes four identity states: achievement, which is characterized by high exploration and high commitment; moratorium, characterized by high exploration and low commitment; foreclosure, characterized by low exploration and high commitment; and diffusion, characterized by low exploration and low commitment.

A number of researchers have found that there tends to be a positive association between religion and achievement or foreclosure and a negative association between religion and/or moratorium and diffusion (Tzuriel, 1984; Markstrom-Adams, Hofstra, and Dougher, 1994; Verhoeven and Hutsebaut, 1995; Markstrom and Smith, 1996; McKinney and McKinney, 1999). When other dimensions of religious feeling are considered, it has been shown that an intrinsic orientation is associated with a higher level of achievement and that extrinsic orientation or orthodoxy is associated with foreclosure (Fulton, 1997; Hutsebaut, 1997). People who question religion tend to be high in moratorium (Hutsebaut, 1997; Hunsburger et al., 2001). Other authors have found that quest religiosity may also be associated with high moratorium (Fulton, 1997; Klaassen and McDonald, 2002). These studies suggest that religiosity in young adults is associated with high commitment but potentially lower exploration. The desire to explore personal identity may be more prominent among those young people without a religious orientation, who doubt their religion, or who have a quest-religious outlook.

The personal and developmental challenges, related to personal identity as well as other issues, that many young adults face are well-known to both scholars and lay people. Risk behaviour tends to be high in this period of life (Somerville, et al., 2010). Psychological problems that may last throughout a person’s life also tend to emerge at this time (Christie et al., 1988). Religious belief as well as participation in religious
activities has been shown to potentially reduce risk behaviour and also improve depression among young adults (Regnerus, 2003; Regnerus and Uecker, 2006). There is also general acceptance that religion has beneficial effects on people’s perceptions and can be an advantageous force in their life (McCullouch and Willoughby, 2009; Smith and Snell, 2009).

The basis of religious identity is formed in childhood and may change during a person’s lifetime. However, a person who already has a strong religious identity in young adulthood tends to maintain that identity throughout life (Desmond, et al., 2010). In the adolescence, the development of religiosity is mostly affected by parents and peer involvement. Adolescents have a tendency to adapt to the behaviour of peers, such that when their peers’ religiosity decreases, their religiosity also tends to decrease (Myers, 1996). In young adulthood, however, attachment to peers and parents tends to become less intense. At this point, religiosity is not affected much by the environment, and many people in this age group are able to form their own religious identity that may be stable throughout life (Desmond, et al., 2010).

The development of religiosity is different from other types of religious change such as “religious conversion” and “religious transformation”. Regnerus and Ucker (2006: 223) define religious transformation as a “considerable (and rapid) increase or decrease in...religiosity.” Conversion can be seen as a fundamental change in people’s religious behaviour and values in response to stress (McGuire, 2002). Young adults might undergo religious development or experience religious conversion and transformation up to the point when their religious identity is established.

As young people become increasingly less attached to their parents and peers, their religiosity increases or decreases and may become more stable over time (Desmond, et al., 2010). This is a reflection of the
perceived relevance of religion to their personal experiences. This was observed by Dillon and Wink (2007) and suggests that young adulthood is a significant period in the formation and solidification of religious feeling. It is also a period of emotional settling that relates to current and future happiness. For this reason, it is particularly interesting to consider the relationship between these two aspects of the cognitive and affective context of the individual to better understand how they are related.

In considering the effects of religion in the experience of young adults, it is important to distinguish between spirituality and religiosity, although there is some indication that it is useful to consider them together. Spirituality is often seen as a personal and individual search for meaning, whereas religiosity is often conceptualized as the doctrinal, institutional, and ritual aspects of a given belief (Koenig et al., 2001). The advantage of combining spirituality and religiosity into a single concept lies in the fact that the two aspects of individual psychology overlap and also because of the strong negative stereotypes associated with organized religion in many contexts (Koenig et al., 2001; Hill and Pargament, 2008).

The distinction between religiosity and spirituality is relevant to this study because the ritualistic aspects of Islam in Indonesia shape social norms as well as familial and community expectations for behaviour. Individual spirituality has not been studied in Indonesia, and most understanding of religious feeling relates to ritual practices or theological interpretation. For this reason, the personal, more individual aspects of Indonesian Islam are much less clear than the formal, ritual practices of the community.

2.3 Coping, Resilience and Religion
The relationship between religion and happiness can be direct or indirect. One factor that will contribute to this relationship is the
nature of coping strategies available to the individual. Coping strategies are the different methods that people might use to overcome stressful events in their lives and also manage the distress that is associated with them. In young adulthood specifically, five dimensions have been identified that relate to stressful experience: life traumas, life events, chronic strain, major discrimination, and day to day discrimination (Eliassen, 2013).

Young people’s coping strategies can vary based on the individual’s personality, environmental context and the parenting style used by their elders (Aldwin, 2007). For example, when parents teach their children to deny problems instead of to look for solutions, these children may continue to use denial as a coping strategy (see Skinner and Zimmer-Gembeck, 2007, for discussion of this). Coping strategies of some kind are necessary to deal with uncomfortable situations and any related stress. Stress is actually any specific situation that might involve harm (in a psychological sense) or loss and challenges (Lazarus and Folkman, 1984). Stress may also be caused by traumatic events or personal life events (divorce, job loss, chronic illness, physical violence, poverty, sexual harassment, caregiving, etc). A range of coping strategies is available in every situation, but individuals will choose a strategy that fits their personality and that they have the cognitive and affective resources to use.

Lazarus and Folkman (1984) identify two different types of coping strategies. The first is problem-focused coping, which refers to a person’s effort to modify or change the stressor itself, such as finding a solution to the problem, seeking the advice of others, or developing a plan to approach the problem. The second is emotion-focused coping in which the individual tries to accommodate to the stressor in order to reduce emotional distress. Examples of this second type of strategy include distraction, avoidance and denial as well as talking about the problem, accepting the problem, and focusing on the positive. Nolen-
Hoeksema, Parker and Larson (1994) suggest that rumination is also a coping strategy. Rumination, which involves thinking about the problem, may result in an overly deep focus on the problem which may interfere with effective coping. However, if rumination involves discussing the problem with another person, coping may be more effective.

Aspects of coping can be divided into two groups that can be viewed as approach strategies, that include problem-solving and seeking social and emotional support, and avoidance strategies, such as denial, distraction, blame, behavioural engagement, and substance use. While avoidance strategies can be considered maladaptive ways to overcome stress, approach strategies are generally seen as adaptive (Moskowitz, Hult, Bussolari, and Acree, 2009).

Religious coping, which may involve attending formal religious services, reading religious texts, praying, and so forth, is considered an important form of positive coping strategy. Religious coping involves including God in the individual’s response to adversity and making a decision to solve the problem. Working collaboratively with God, seeking God’s love and care, seeking spiritual support from others, and reappraising a situation in a benevolent way is central to this (Pargament, 1997). This is positive religious coping which is associated with strong faith in God. It can also be the case that people blame God for their adversity which constitutes negative religious coping. This type of negative coping may be observed in people who feel that God should not let bad things happen to people who believe in Him, and may interpret negative experience to mean that nothing good can happen again. Pargament (2001) concludes that positive religious coping strategies are associated with self-esteem, life satisfaction and quality of life. On the contrary, negative religious coping tends to be associated with more depressive symptoms.
Pargament et al. (2000) identify several forms of both positive and negative religious coping. The positive strategies include: (1) religious purification/forgiveness; (2) religious direction/conversion; (3) religious helping; (4) seeking support from other members; (5) collaborative religious coping; (6) religious focus; (7) active religious surrender; (8) benevolent religious reappraisal; (9) spiritual connection; and (10) marking religious boundaries. The negative strategies include: (1) spiritual discontent; (2) demonic reappraisal; (3) passive religious deferral; (4) interpersonal religious discontent; (5) reappraisal of God’s powers; and (6) pleading for direct intercession. These are useful categories of behaviour that can help to identify actions that may be associated with religious belief and can contribute to understanding how an individual applies his/her religious interpretations to experience and may have predictive value. They also represent categories that can be applied in analysing a person’s past reactions to events and contribute to an overall assessment of religious feeling.

Wu and Liu (2014) note that religious coping represents positive strategies and can improve mental health. This type of coping can lead to positive emotions, inner peace, comfort, higher self-esteem, forgiveness, kindness and altruism. Additionally, religious coping activities include private religious acts such as prayer or reading a holy book and also public religious activities that include participating in organized activities, performing religious rituals, or doing social work and helping others. People often fall back on these religious coping strategies when they have negative experiences; their religious feelings may not be evident under other circumstances when coping is not required (Pargament, 1997).

Resilience has also been identified as a determinant of happiness (Cummins, 2012). Psychological research has produced various definitions of resilience that include resilience as “a virtue that is expressed in the ability to adapt positively to significant adversity”
(Russell, 2015). Rutter (2012) proposed that resilience consists of “the reduced vulnerability to risk experiences, the overcoming of a stress or adversity, or a relatively good outcome despite risk experiences.” Resilience is defined by Robins and Friedman (2010) as “the ability to achieve successful outcomes in the face of challenging circumstances.” Hughes et al. (2012) suggested that resilience can be viewed as the ability to recover from very stressful and probably traumatic experiences or the ability to maximise personal function throughout life regardless of the stressful events encountered. This ability differs in individuals because of personality development, personal experiences before the traumatic event and the presence of positive transformations in life. While resilience can help people adapt to many kinds of situations, it is not always related to traumatic events and stressful situations. It can be the case that resilience develops as people make decisions that turn out to be adaptive in dealing with the usual kinds of adversity human beings face on a daily basis. This type of adversity consists of ordinary failures, misfortunes or disappointments (Russell, 2015).

There is a connection between resilience and happiness as well as the broader concept of wellbeing. One model of this relationship has been termed the broaden-and-build theory which relates to positive emotions, including happiness (Fredrickson, 1998; Cohn and Fredrickson, 2009). This model suggests that positive emotions are capable of expanding the range of actions and ideas an individual can use to address some situation he or she faces (Ashby et al., 1999; Cohn and Fredrickson, 2009). Fredrickson and Joiner (2002) noted that positive emotions lead to improved resilience in the future, and the existence of resilience has also been found to generate higher levels of positive emotion. When people experience negative events, those who are more resilient tend to experience more positive emotions than others who are less resilient. This difference in positive emotions has been suggested to be the cause of their ability to recover better from
adversity, continue to develop and avoid depression or other consequences (Fredrickson et al., 2003; Tugade and Fredrickson, 2004; Ong et al., 2006).

In the broaden-and-build theory, positive emotions like happiness are more significant than higher level concepts like wellbeing. These short-term emotions encourage growth and build emotional resources over time and contribute to the build effect of the model (Cohn et al., 2009). To experience this increase, it is not necessary that people have no negative emotions. In fact, it has been observed that people who experience uncompeting positive and negative emotions in a given period of time tend to have better psychological outcomes (Bonanno and Keltner, 1997; Bonanno et al., 2007). One of the individual factors that seems to contribute to positive emotion in many contexts is religion, which for some individuals is a component of happiness and other positive emotions.

People with strong religious beliefs may be happier than others for several reasons. This issue has been given serious consideration within the field of psychology. First, religion may help and support people in ascribing meaning to life and believing that good things will happen in the future (Seligman, 2002). Individuals may gain confidence in managing stressful situations because they believe that the stressful event is a part of God’s plan and can see it as a positive opportunity to gain wisdom and achieve personal maturation (McLintosh et al., 1993). Second, involvement in routine attendance at religious services and being part of a religious community provides people with social support, which in turn may make people happier as well. People who feel a close proximity to God tend to be happier compared to people who don’t believe in God (see Rosmarin, et al., 2009).

Several empirical investigations have found positive correlations between religiousness and happiness, and this is typically seen as proof
of the universal beneficial effect of religion. For example, in a survey conducted in the USA, the Netherlands and Denmark, Snoep (2008) found that, in these three countries, the correlation between religiousness and happiness appears to be positive but weak. These countries are ranked among the happiest in the world, but this perception is not affected by religiosity. In similar work in Taiwan, Liu, Koenig and Wei (2011) concluded that belief in God is not associated with happiness in the population they worked with, but praying every day did correlate with higher levels of happiness. Among adults in the UK, however, Lewis, Maltby and Day (2005) found no significant associations between religiosity and happiness. Their study also suggested that future research should consider religiosity in terms of the domains of intrinsic and extrinsic religious orientation discussed above to better elucidate the relationship between religiosity and happiness.

While interest in the relationship between religion and happiness has been great and can be seen as part of the concern with positive psychology, the results of scholarship in this area have not been unequivocal. A number of studies have shown a consistent positive relationship (for example, Inglehart, 1990; Frankel and Hewitt, 1994; Veenhoven, 1994; Myers, 2000; Mookerjee and Beron, 2005; Abdel-Khalek, 2006; among others). Other studies have not shown this type of result (examples include Poloma and Pendleton, 1989, 1990, 1991; Brinkerhoff and Mackie, 1993; Abdel-Khalek and Nacuer, 2007; Janssen et al., 2005; and others). These studies made use of a range of measures and approaches and, as a result, their findings are difficult to compare.

In an attempt to resolve this problem, Lewis and Cruise (2006) reviewed two sets of studies that were undertaken in a rigorous manner using the widely accepted Francis Scale of Attitude toward Christianity (Francis and Stubbs, 1987) and the Oxford Happiness Inventory
A second set of studies used the Francis Scale and the Depression–Happiness Scale (Joseph and Lewis, 1998). An analysis by Lewis and Cruise (2006) indicated that eight of nine studies using the Francis Scale of Attitude toward Christianity, which is seen as a measure of religiosity, and the Oxford Happiness Inventory found a positive association, while one showed no association. Of five studies that use the Francis Scale and the Depression-Happiness Scale, four found no association between religion and happiness. Lewis and Cruise further noted that the finding of no association is consistent with other work that attempted to operationalize the definition of religiosity (see Lewis, 2002; Lewis, Maltby, and Day, 2005).

In evaluating the work on the relationship between religion and happiness, Lewis and Cruise (2006) noted that there are methodological inconsistencies between studies, and a large number of measures have been used, even though their theoretical basis may not be strong. They also suggest that cross-sectional research has been too heavily relied upon, and the findings from this work may be limited in application. They also recognize a need for other types of study design and also for consideration of factors that may mediate both religiosity and happiness.

The difficulty in operationalising relevant concepts and identifying measures that will accurately capture the experience of individuals and the nature of the phenomena of interest is a recognised problem in the study of religiosity and happiness. Part of this difficulty is a result of the highly personal nature of experience and the impact of personality on perception. For this reason, this study takes a phenomenological approach that will allow for the elucidation of individual interpretation and understanding among young people in Indonesia. It is expected that this will provide insight into the nature of happiness in the context
of Indonesian Islam and will support a better understanding of happiness as a universal human experience.

2.4 Religion in Indonesia

In recent years, religion has been recognised as playing a greater role in the public sphere in some parts of the world, including in Indonesia (Hefner, 2000). The Indonesian government recognizes a number of religions and guarantees protection for their followers. The law also requires that every citizen state a religion which is noted on identity documents, even though personal religious practice is not prescribed. A national Ministry of Religious Affairs is responsible for overseeing religious activity and protection in Indonesia (Bagir, 2012).

Indonesia is the largest Muslim country in the world in terms of population. However, Islam is not the state religion. The guiding principle of the Indonesian state, Pancasila, allows for a number of officially recognised religions. Historically, the Indonesian government has recognised five religions, which are Islam, Protestantism, Catholicism, Hinduism, and Buddhism; other belief systems, which include traditional animist and nature religions, are also recognised but are categorized together. Confucianism is now acknowledged as well. Adherence to religion is expected in Indonesia, at least formally, and expression of Islam, as the majority religion adhered to by more than 80% of the population, is visible in a range of public and private contexts.

Lippman and McLintosh (2010), in their survey on religiosity and spirituality among youth around the world that included Indonesia, concluded that 75% of the nation’s young adults believe in God and say that religion plays a very important part in their life. This is likely related to the strong position that religion holds in the public and private spheres and its central position in many of Indonesia’s local cultures. For example, a number of Indonesia’s ethnic groups state that
adherence to Islam is a defining characteristic of group membership. In these cultures, it is not possible for a person to claim another religion and still be considered part of the cultural group because membership is based on being Muslim (Fee, 2001).

Indonesian Islam is quite different in certain respects from Islam as practiced in the Middle East and elsewhere in Asia. Religion in general in Indonesia is often said to be syncretic (Picard and Madinier, 2011), referring to the mixing of various traditions that has taken place through the region’s history. In practice, this means that many people retain beliefs that come from an ancient period before outside religions, including Islam, were present in Indonesia. Many of these syncretic beliefs can be categorized as magic or superstition and are not felt to be in conflict with the more formalized beliefs of Islam or Christianity.

Islam has five pillars that represent the religious obligations of all Muslims. They are: declaration of faith; obligatory prayer; obligatory giving of alms (zakat); obligatory fasting during the month of Ramadhan; and pilgrimage to Mecca (hajj). While these five activities describe the basics of religious observance around the world, the way in which they are carried out may differ from one region to another. In Indonesia, specifically, culture and demographic factors affect the way people practice religion. This dates to the origins of Islam in Indonesia when, tradition has it, nine preachers who were fundamental in spreading Islamic teachings adopted traditional dress and used traditional songs to familiarize the public with the new religion (Burhan, 2013). This attempt to fit the religion into existing cultural practices can be seen as a syncretic force intended to make a new belief system more compatible with then-current practices.

Indonesian Muslims are often characterized as moderate and practicing a form of religion that includes a range of non-Islamic beliefs and views that derive from the much older practices of the region. In Java, for
example, it has been observed that these older practices still exist among many segments of society, regardless of religion. This suggests that certain types of religious or supernatural practices are common to members of the Javanese ethnic group, regardless of religion. In fact, both Islam and Christianity have many followers in the Javanese community, and members of both groups share certain traditional religious practices that long predate both modern religions (Salim, 2013). A concrete example of this can be seen in the terms used to refer to religious concepts. For example, the common term in Indonesian for the five daily prayers of Islam is *sembahyang*, which is often used in preference to *shalat*, which comes from Arabic. *Sembahyang* comes from a Sanskrit root and can refer to prayer in any religion (Islam, Christianity, Balinese Hinduism, etc) (Depdiknas, 2014). The original Indic concept of *sembahyang* was expanded to include new forms of prayer associated with later religions as they were adopted in Indonesia. Other examples can be found in language, such as the use of the term *langgar* to refer to a mosque. *Langgar* is a Malay root that exists parallel to the term *mesjid*, which comes from Arabic (Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 1991). In addition, a number of Arabic terms are used to refer to specifically Islamic practices, even though many of these are carried out in a way that reflects Indonesian traditions, not those of the Arab world. This situation has contributed to widespread observations that Indonesian Islam tends to be moderate and flexible.

These characteristics of Indonesian Islam can be seen in a range of cultural practices that integrate Islamic beliefs with other kinds of cultural practices, often involving some form of mysticism. Indonesian Muslims tend to believe strongly in the value of prayer, or *doa*. Many feel that this type of prayer can help people to gain inner peace (Suriana, 2011) but also that it can cure people from any kind of illness. For this reason, Indonesian Muslims have specific *doa* for each type of disease (Sukandar, 2011). This practice has elements of an older belief system where specific gods or supernatural entities were called upon
for various kinds of assistance they were felt to have the capacity to address. Additionally, in many parts of Indonesia various kinds of non-Islamic activity have become associated with an Islamic practice to the point where a notable number of people view them as having the same status. For example, many Indonesians hold a ceremony for women in the seventh month of pregnancy that is intended to ensure that the mother and child are blessed by God. While the Quran may be read at this time, the ceremony, as well as its timing, are not related to Islam as it is practiced elsewhere in the world, and in fact comes from indigenous cultural practices that significantly predate Islam (Wieringa, 2012). In some communities, a similar ceremony is held when the woman is four months pregnant because it is believed that this is the point where God gives a soul to the baby. Again, this practice represents a blending of indigenous beliefs and Islamic practices. Similar rituals that come from indigenous traditions but that have been given an Islamic dimension are often held to give thanks to ensure the success of important events, including at the national level, for people about to go on the hajj, to encourage rain after a period of drought, and so forth (Woodward, 2011).

An important concept that derives from Islam that is significant for many Indonesians is the idea of takdir, or fate. *Takdir* specifically refers to the idea that each person has a lot in life that has been determined by God and must be accepted because it can only be changed by God (Von Vacano and Schwarz, 2014). A belief in this kind of predetermination has been noted to act as a source of resilience for many Indonesians, even in times of extreme stress, because it allows them to accept their experience with a certainty that God would not subject them to something they could not stand and, if they or another person dies or suffers some other kind of misfortune, it was necessary and unavoidable and must be approached with resignation and acceptance. As a result, belief in *takdir* allows many Indonesians to feel
happy and content, even under very extreme circumstances (Fanany and Fanany, 2013).

Nonetheless, a number of observers have noted that the situation in Indonesia seems to have changed over the period since the end of the New Order government. The first years of the 2000s have been characterized by the emergence of Islam as an important social trend in the public environment, as opposed to a more personal aspect of people’s experience. It is not clear whether this represents a change in people’s beliefs or whether there is some other reason for the change, but it is the case that Islam is currently more prominent as a social force than it has been in the past.

The period of reformasi [reform] that followed the resignation of President Suharto in 1998 was characterized by economic instability and social unrest. These issues eventually settled, but the political and social situation in Indonesia has remained extremely dynamic. This is a significant contrast with the Suharto era which was characterized by high levels of social and economic stability maintained through government control (Heiduk, 2014). Among the many changes to the political system since the end of the New Order has been the emergence of a large number of political parties, several of which are Islamic. It has been suggested that this is a response to a kind of moral degeneration perceived by some members of the public as well as the political elite (Bush, 2008). It is also possible to see this as a manifestation of ethnic identity, in contrast to national culture, that has also been a feature of the current period and is associated with the phenomenon of Regional Autonomy that took effect in 2001 and resulted in a large-scale decentralization of many government functions (Erb et al., 2013). Regardless, the importance of Islamic practices in the public sector seems to be increasing (Rinaldo, 2008). For example, recent years have seen a widespread move to Islamic dress among Indonesian women. The use of the hijab has not been common in this
society and does not fit with traditional forms of dress or the more standard, western style clothing common during the New Order period. In fact, many women who did not dress in an Islamic manner in the 1990s changed to a more Islamic style that included a hijab in the 2000s. While some Indonesians have interpreted this change as a desire by women to empower themselves and address the perceived lack of morality in the public context, it is also possible to see the change in dress as another reflection of ethnic and/or cultural identity or a desire of individuals to associate themselves with a source of prestige. Regardless of the underlying motive, anecdotal evidence suggests that the change in dress convention has a strong aspect of social pressure as Indonesian society is highly conformist and people generally do not like to be different from the majority in any way that is readily observable (see Hofstede, 2001). Another manifestation of Islam in the public sphere is the phenomenon of syariah banking. Banking services that accord with Islamic principles banning interest were not popular in Indonesia during the New Order, although one Islamic bank did exist at the time. At present, by contrast, virtually every bank offers syariah services and products, which are growing in popularity (Vernardos, 2012). While this might be seen as manifestation of Islamic feeling among the Indonesian public, it is worth noting that the Asian economic crisis of 1997-1998 that led directly to the resignation of President Suharto was accompanied by a collapse of the banking system which severely damaged public confidence in these institutions. The rise of syariah banking may also be seen as a reaction to mistrust in regular banks and an aspect of the same identity movement that has led to widespread regionalism and favouritism in the public environment (see Republika, 2013).

Regional Autonomy, which gave the authority for a wide range of government function to county-level administrative areas and has led to the proliferation of new provinces and regions since 2001 (Holtzappel and Ramstedt, 2009), has also been characterized by the appearance of
local laws grounded in religion in many areas. In some cases, for example, the ability to read the Quran, a basic aspect of Islamic teachings, has been made a requirement for school children, university applicants, applicants for government jobs, and couples who want to get married (Bush, 2008). Again, this can be seen as a desire to make Indonesian society more Islamic (Hefner, 2000) but may also have other interpretations grounded in the political and social contexts. Regardless of the origin of these phenomena, the impact has been to make Islamic practices, principles and symbols more prominent in the public environment in Indonesia, despite the constant emergence of high level corruption cases and similar issues that seem to contradict the possibility of increasing religious feeling. Some of these cases have even involved religious institutions, such as the Ministry of Religious Affairs, that many Indonesians feel should serve as examples of ethical practices (see, for example, Tempo, 2015).

Interestingly, Islam in Indonesia is sometimes used to justify and rationalize behaviour that might otherwise be criticized. For example, polygamy is not a dominant social norm in Indonesia, although it is allowed by Islam under certain circumstances. Men who wish to have more than one wife sometimes use the fact that this is allowed by religion to gain the consent of their first wife and family members and to justify their behaviour to the community (Fathurrohman, 2007). Similarly, an understanding of public views of religion can sometimes be taken advantage of by people who wish to commit fraud or other crimes, where outwardly religious behaviour may be a means to gain the trust of potential victims (see Republika, 2014).

Despite the fact that Indonesia is not an officially Muslim country and recognizes a number of religions in its national philosophy, the interests of the large Muslim population have dictated government policy in a number of areas. For example in the month of Ramadhan, when Muslims are supposed to fast during daylight hours, the operation of
entertainment venues, such as bars, night clubs and karaoke clubs, has been limited by law (Wicaksono and Georgina, 2015). The official aim of such rulings is to facilitate members of the public in participating in the *tarawih* prayers held at night during the fasting month, by removing other opportunities that may act as a temptation. Similar rulings in various parts of the country limit the operation of restaurants during daylight hours when Muslims are supposed to be fasting and require those that do remain open to cover their windows so that people who are fasting do not have to see others eating (see, for example, Tribunnews, 2015; Ngazis and Maulida, 2015).

While it is comparatively easy to see manifestations of Islamic principles in the public environment in Indonesia, it is much more difficult to elucidate what individuals believe. Up to the present time, Indonesia has been comparatively free of radical activity, despite several terrorist bombings in the early 2000s that were associated with Islamic groups. There has been little support at the national level for *syariah* law, although such a measure has occasionally been proposed, and the province of Aceh has implemented *syariah* as part of its special autonomy arrangements (Cammack and Feener, 2012). Nonetheless, the impact of Islamic principles and practices on individuals is significant and may direct a range of personal behaviour. There is also a large body of folk religion that is known and used by many individuals that encompasses a belief in supernatural creatures, magic, traditional healing practices, folklore relating to the prophet Muhammad and other religious figures, and a range of other phenomena not directly related to Islam as it is practiced in the Middle East or elsewhere in the world (Joll, 2012). These aspects of religious belief, which are closely related to the individual’s cognitive and affective perceptions, contrast with the formal expression of Islam, which largely takes the form of ritualized practice whose outward form may be most significant (Katz, 2013). Nonetheless, it should be noted that participation in these rituals may
be a source of happiness or satisfaction for some Indonesians, in addition to any other impacts that come from their beliefs.

2.5 Theoretical Framework

As noted above, the focus of this study is to understand the role religious practice and religious beliefs play in the self-perceived happiness of Muslim young adults in Jakarta, Indonesia. There is little research on this issue in Muslim societies, including Indonesia, but there is evidence that depression and similar conditions are increasing among this age group.

This suggests that there is a need to understand Islam in Indonesia from a perspective that allows comparison with other religions and/or locations and that can identify some of the religious principles or feelings that are most important to younger people who will be significant in shaping national culture and outlook in the future. To do this, this study makes use of Corliss’ (2014) framework of the religious view of life. Corliss sees religious belief as having six components, namely beliefs about values, happiness, human nature, rituals, authority, and God (or gods or some similar conceptualisation, depending on the religion). These six areas of beliefs interact and create the culture and traditions associated with a religion. Beliefs about happiness are particularly relevant to this study. Corliss suggests that this category of beliefs contains “spiritual hypotheticals” that can indicate the religious source of happiness and wellbeing for individuals as well as for society as a whole.

Corliss’ framework of these six elements represents a challenge to western liberalism and its view of religion as a kind of universal that is experienced through different cultures. Corliss suggests that there is a standard of truth and realism that is part of human experience and that religions adapt to human experience to accommodate this standard while also allowing for the things that really do make people happy.
Corliss’ framework has an inclusionary approach and has been applied to a number of western and non-western religions. His analysis focuses on the moral evolution that has characterized the development of each tradition.

Corliss’ approach is relevant for this study because it provides a model by which the interaction of beliefs about happiness and beliefs about religious principles interact and are affected by human experience. This is especially important in this context because Islam, despite being the religion of a majority of Indonesians, came from outside the region in historical times and overlays highly evolved religious systems that are much older but that are still significant in people’s lives. The syncretic nature of Indonesian Islam means that it must be conceptualized in a way that allows for non-Islamic traditions and values to emerge and be accounted for, even when they may be identified as Islamic by members of Indonesian society. Corliss’ approach does not require that a religious explanation be the only acceptable understanding of the factors that may affect the perception of happiness, but permits the religious elements of such a perception to be understood in the context of the cultural context that allowed them to develop in the society of interest.

2.6 Summary
This chapter discusses selective literature that relates to happiness; religiosity; coping, resilience and religion; and religion in Indonesia. As the literature suggests, there has been a great deal of interest in the concept of happiness and its relationship to religious feeling and behaviour. However, investigation into the nature of this relationship has not been conclusive. In Indonesia, in which reported levels of happiness tend to be high, there has been an observable increase in the importance of religion in the public environment reflecting the Islamic faith of more than 80% of the population. Nonetheless, Indonesia is not an officially Muslim country and recognizes a number of religions, all of
which are syncretic in nature. This suggests that study of relationship between religion and happiness in this context may offer new insights and help illustrate the nature of happiness and religious belief and practice in the Muslim world.
CHAPTER 3
METHODOLOGY

This section describes the methodology used in this study, including the identification of respondents, the collection of data, and how those data were analysed. The background and justification for the chosen methodology are also discussed and an analytical framework is presented.

3.1 Study Design
This study uses a phenomenological approach that allows for an in-depth exploration of the personal experience of the young people involved. Phenomenology provides a means to understand the personal experiential dimension of events as they are understood by the people involved and allows for the development of deep insight into human psychology (Hein and Austin, 2001). Phenomenology is well-established as a discipline and focuses on the nature of individual experience. Early work in this area was done by Husserl, Heidegger, Sartre, and others, and phenomenology is considered one of the basic branches of philosophy (Smith, 2013).

Phenomenology, as a discipline, has been classified as empirical or hermeneutic (see Moustakas, 1994; Klein and Wescott, 1994). Empirical phenomenology focuses on what appears to the individual and centres on the structure of meaning to those involved (Aspers, 2009). By contrast, hermeneutic phenomenology depends on the idea that the most fundamental human experiences are meaningful, and it is possible to understand individuals’ perceptions of this basic experience before any theorizing, interpreting, or explaining is done (Laverty, 2003). Another classification that is sometimes used is descriptive (in the Husserlian tradition) versus interpretative (in the Heideggerian tradition). The descriptive tradition holds that human experience has inherent value and is worthy of study. It requires that
the investigator discard his or her prior knowledge in order to understand the experience being studied and assumes there are common features that will be experienced by every person who has a given experience. The interpretive tradition focuses on what individuals experience, rather than what they know. The meaning of this experience may not be consciously grasped by the individuals involved but can be derived from the way they describe their experience (Lopez and Willis, 2004). This research uses a Husserlian approach developed by Giorgi (2012) for use in psychological studies.

Giorgi (2012) notes that a researcher cannot control or predict the process of by which “becoming” occurs in individuals. There always exists a dynamic relationship between the person and his or her environment. In studying this and avoiding a reductionist position, Giorgi calls for the researcher to ignore his or her assumptions about the phenomenon of interest and consider the descriptions provided by respondents without reference to pre-determined categories. In this, Giorgi agrees with Husserl that experience and interpretation represent two separate levels of discourse, and there is a place for both description and interpretation, but the researcher must carefully note and separate them. Giorgi’s method is very open to respondent experience. The researcher need not, and in fact should not, place deeper interpretations on what respondents say or look for unexpressed meaning behind their narrative. The process of analysis is based on the terms and expressions used by respondents and requires the researcher to intuit the essential elements of the experience. Giorgi stresses that every human being has a unique interpretation of his or her experience and will respond in highly personalized ways to the situations he or she encounters. This reflects a view that human beings are self-determining and have the ability and desire to choose their own actions and interpretations.
The methodology developed by Giorgi has been widely used and represents the four essential characteristics of phenomenological research. Specifically: it is rigorously descriptive; it makes use of phenomenological reductions; it investigates the intentional relationship between individuals and the context in which they live; and it is capable of exposing the essences, or meanings, of human experience through imaginative variation (Giorgi, 1989). Many authors have used variations of Giorgi’s methodology adapted for their particular area of study. They include Karin et al. (2007); Van Manen (1990); Ashworth (2003, 2006); Todres (2005, 2007); Halling et al. (2006); and Garza (2007). While each of these approaches was somewhat different, they all tended to focus on the lifeworld of the subjects. Some focus on the experience of the individual while others attempt to explicate the nature of a phenomenon of interest as experienced by people in general. Giorgi himself (2008) states that his method provides a means for understanding the nature of a phenomenon of interest in a more normative and scientific manner. The ultimate aim is to elucidate the phenomenon as a whole, separate from the specific individuals involved. In this sense, Giorgi’s method is suitable for understanding the essential nature of an experience of interest as it might be understood by a number of individuals whose lifeworld has certain similarities and consistencies. This contrasts with a number of other scholars who seek to understand the individual and whose results may not be applicable in a broader context. Work of this type that focuses on idiographic meaning includes Osborn and Smith (2008); Ashworth (2006); Eatough and Smith (2006); and King et al. (2008).

The aim of this study is to understand the relationship between religiosity and happiness among young people in Indonesia. It seeks to elucidate the way in which the lifeworld of these young adults, their individual experiences, and personal history contribute to their interpretation of experience as pleasant or unpleasant. Specifically,
their background includes being brought up as a Muslim in the social and cultural context of modern Indonesia, a multilingual and multicultural environment where a majority of people are Muslim but where the stresses and social change associated with increasing globalization are strongly felt. The results of this study are expected to characterize the nature of happiness and its relationship with religion in this specific context in a way that might be generalizable in Indonesia and, as a result, will be useful in addressing some of the mental health issues now recognised among this demographic. The relationship between religious feeling and other positive psychological states is well established in the West (as discussed in the review of literature) but has not been explored to the same extent in non-western societies. As a result, much less is known about the nature of happiness in relation to religious identity and practice in Muslim societies or in communities that have experienced rapid modernization and social change. Indonesia has both these characteristics, and it is here that this study will make a contribution to our understanding of human experience and perceptions.

3.2 Giorgi’s Method

The phenomenological method is an attempt to rigorously explicate the meaning and structure of experience as perceived by the individuals involved. At the centre of this are two main principles of the approach, namely intentionality and phenomenological reduction. Intentionality refers to the concept that human beings are intimately and permanently connected to the world around them and try to make sense of what they experience (Husserl, 1970). In this view, consciousness must always be conscious of something, which suggests that people perceive their surroundings relative to their own experience and the sociocultural context in which they live. Phenomenological reduction refers to the process of listening to respondents and making an effort to faithfully represent the phenomenon of interest. In doing so, the researcher must
separate his or her ideological, theoretical, and personal views and document the lived experience of the respondents (Keen, 1975).

Giorgi’s method, which has been widely used in the field of psychology, has four steps which provide a framework within which the phenomenon of interest can be viewed. A description of these steps and the way in which they were carried out in this study follows:

1. “The original data consist of naïve descriptions, prompted by open-ended questions, of experiences . . . it should be noted that this emphasis on description does not necessarily rule out quantification (a form of description) but simply that there is no pressure to quantify unless the demand arises intrinsically from the situation” (Giorgi, 1985:10).

In this study, respondents provided a narrative description of the phenomenon of interest (in this case their understanding of their religion and their experience of happiness) in response to a number of open ended questions that allowed them to express their perceptions and views in their own way. These were recorded as the respondents provided them, without any type of interpolative or editorial process by the researcher.

2. The researcher breaks down the descriptions provided by respondents into smaller units applying what is termed a psychological attitude. This “means that we operate within the assumption the psychological reality is not ready-made in the world and simply seen and dealt with but rather that it has to be constituted by the psychologist” (Giorgi, 1985:11).

In applying this step, it is necessary that the researcher begin to identify and separate out significant units of meaning from the respondents’ narratives. However, in doing so, the researcher must maintain a high
level of faithfulness to the data. This means that respondents’
descriptions of their experience must be accepted as provided and taken
to represent the individuals’ lived experience.

3. Based on the units of meaning collected, the researcher must
then identify themes that illustrate the psychological insights
that can be obtained from the meaning units. This step involves
elaborating the situated structure of the phenomenon of interest.

In this study, this is related to the nature of happiness to Muslim young
adults in Indonesia based on the conceptual boundaries supplied by
their religious views and experiences in the sociocultural context of the
modern nation.

4. The researcher must then synthesize the units of meaning into a
description of the phenomenon of interest that characterizes its
nature within the psychological context of the individuals who
experienced it. Giorgi (1985:10) describes this as seeking “a
coherent but more general description that captures the
complexity and richness of the psychological structure of all the
participants’ lived experiences.” Garko (1999:173) characterized
this step as “[transforming] a phenomenal description of the
meaning units into a phenomenological understanding of the
meaning of the phenomenon.”

This study used the method outlined by Giorgi as described above. This
method has the advantage of allowing a comparatively unknown
phenomenon to be elucidated. This study, then, is descriptive and
allows for the application of Husserl’s concepts of intentionality and
phenomenological reduction. In doing so, it maintains both faithfulness
to the lived experience of the individuals involved and also constitutes
an analysis of this experience in the sociocultural context where it
occurred.
3.3 Research Design and Methods
This project involved semi-structured interviews with 12 young adults aged 18-24 who are current university students in Jakarta. Seven men and five women were recruited from the of Universitas Islam Negeri (UIN) Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta (Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University of Jakarta) by advertisement. All those who responded were screened by the researcher to determine that they fit the profile for participants. All participants in this study were Muslim and were currently enrolled in an undergraduate degree in various fields, with the exception of psychology. Psychology students were excluded from this study because they might have known the researcher who is a member of University staff in Psychology which might have affected their responses. These participants were interviewed and given the opportunity to talk in detail about their views of their religion, the value of religious practice and its role in their life, the things that make them happy, and the extent to which they see the two as being connected. Each interview took approximately one hour and was recorded in audio format to ensure reliability. No restrictions were placed on participants in terms of how the open-ended questions that made up the interview should be interpreted or on the type of responses they were expected to give.

In addition to being recorded, the researcher took notes that include impressions of the participant’s manner, specific terminology used, code switching between languages if observed, and other aspects of behaviour that were not be evident from the recordings. The interviews were transcribed, de-identified and stored on the researcher’s personal computer in password protected files. Following transcription, phenomenological descriptive analysis using the methodology developed by Giorgi (2009) was carried out in order to create a nuanced description of the participants’ experience that contains the meaning they ascribe to their experience and their interpretation of the larger concept of religiosity.
3.4 Study Setting
Universitas Islam Negeri (UIN) Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta developed from the Religious Sciences Academy (ADIA) established on June 1, 1957. ADIA was a public institution under the management of the Ministry of Religious Affairs intended to educate and train civil servants to teach Islamic courses at the secondary level. ADIA merged with Perguruan Tinggi Agama Islam Negeri (PTAIN) (State Islamic College) to form the State Islamic Institute (Institut Agama Islam Negeri = IAIN) in 1960 with two faculties: Tarbiyah (education) and Adab (literature). At this point, IAIN opened its admissions to the general public, and became known by its present name in 1963, when it also added a Faculty of Islamic Theology. In 1998, IAIN began to prepare for conversion to a full-scale university, with the opening of a Faculty of Psychology and also a Faculty of Islamic Studies. In 2002, IAIN became Universitas Islam Negeri (State Islamic University, UIN) with 12 new programs in computer science, information systems, accounting, management, agribusiness, psychology, and mathematics, among others. At present, the university has 12 faculties and has tried to integrate both scientific investigation and the study of Islam into its educational approach. In 2014, the university had 23,099 students from around Indonesia and is considered one of Indonesia’s foremost religious institutions.

3.5 Study Participants
The participants in this study were young adults between the ages of 18 and 24 who were currently enrolled in an undergraduate degree at UIN Syarif Hidayatullah located in Indonesia’s capital, Jakarta. In this, their experience reflects that of a large portion of this demographic. Estimates of Indonesia’s Muslim population range from 80-87% of the total population of almost 250 million (Pew Research Center, 2013). The nation has experienced rapid urbanization, and approximately 52% of the population now lives in urban centers (DESA, 2014). The pace of social change in recent decades combined with a large and
comparatively young population has made Indonesian society increasingly competitive in terms of employment and educational opportunities. A rising standard of living and the resulting evolution of social aspirations has resulted in the widespread perception that a university degree is desirable and required, with as much as 70% of the relevant age group currently seeking a place in a tertiary institution (OECD, 2012). The nation has some 3170 public and private colleges and universities serving more than 5.6 million students (Kementrian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, 2013). There are considerable differences between the types and location of institutions, which may be significant in the choices of young people and their perception of their own experience.

Mental health among young adults constitutes a major public health problem around the world, including in Indonesia. Much of this relates to depressive illness, perceived isolation and loneliness, and lack of social integration. Individual happiness (a subjective affective state) is closely related to these conditions, but little is known about happiness in non-western societies like Indonesia. Similarly, the relationship between Islam and health in the broad sense, and also the cognitive dimension that relates to emotion, has not been rigorously studied. This study contributes to filling this gap by providing an understanding of these issues.

As noted above, seven men and five women were asked to participate in an interview that lasted about an hour and that was recorded in audio form. The number of participants was based on the requirements of the analytic technique to be used (see Giorgi, 2009). The inclusion of both men and women was intended to elucidate differences in perception and experience that may be associated with the norms that relate to religious practice. The use of current university students in this age group reflects the demographic that is vulnerable to mental health problems that are associated with affective state (see Kieling et al.,
Students personally known by the student researcher were excluded.

Interviews were conducted on campus where the researcher is a lecturer, in either her academic office or public places where the students felt comfortable. Students were encouraged to take as much time as they needed and to explain their experiences and perceptions in their own words. In addition to their conscious perceptions about their experiences, the way in which study participants used language and terminology to explain their interpretation was of interest in this study.

3.6 Translation

The interviews for this study were conducted in Indonesian. A number of excerpts from these interviews are presented in Chapter 4 and were translated by the author into colloquial English. The use of languages other than Indonesian (Arabic, English, Indonesian local languages) are indicated. All translations were checked by the author’s supervisor who is fluent in Indonesian and is a native speaker of English.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

Ethics approval for this study was received from the Human Ethics Advisory Group of the Faculty of Arts and Education of Deakin University. The study posed no risks to participants and did not require them to volunteer any sensitive personal information. None of the participants experienced distress during the interviews, but arrangements had been made to refer participants to the University counselling service had such an event occurred. Religion is considered to be a general topic of discussion in Indonesia and is part of the public environment. The official philosophy of the Indonesian state holds the belief in God as one of its five principles. Based on this, Indonesia
officially recognizes a number of religions, with Islam being the largest of these in terms of number of adherents.

3.8 Summary
This chapter describes the methodology of this research, including the rationale and justification of the methods used and their underlying theoretical framework. The method of recruiting participants and background on the research setting were also provided. Finally, the chapter explains the procedures related to translation of the interview material and the ethical considerations of the study. The findings obtained by the method described here are reported in Chapter 4.
CHAPTER 4
FINDINGS

This chapter presents the findings from this study. It is divided into seven sections that correspond to the themes that emerged from the data. They are: religion and happiness; religious behaviour; family influence; being Muslim; religion and stress; the obtaining of religious knowledge; and religion as a constraint on happiness. A selection of excerpts from interviews with participants are presented along with translations into English.

4.1 Religion and Happiness
The participants in this study placed a high value on being happy. When asked how they would define ‘happy,’ their responses were varied and quite individual in nature. For some of them, the definition of happiness relied on the absence of negative emotion. For others, however, there were specific conditions they saw as contributing to happiness.

“Punya mood bagus, tidak memiliki beban apapun, melihat orang lain bahagia.”
[It’s when you are in a good mood and don’t have any burdens (also) seeing other people happy.]
Participant 1

“Ketika selalu ada orang yang sayang sama saya... dan mereka ga pernah ninggalin saya.”
[When there are always people who love me . . . and they never leave me.]
Participant 2

“Tidak ada beban, banyak tertawa, sering senyum, tidak banyak hal yang dikeluhkan.”
[[When you] have no burdens, you can laugh a lot, you’re always smiling, and there is nothing much to complain about.]
Participant 3

“Kita bahagia jika bisa melakukan sesuatu tanpa ragu-ragu.”
You’re happy when you can do things without having any doubts.

Participant 5

“Bahagia itu ketika merasa puas dan bermanfaat serta bisa membantu orang lain, bisa mendapatkan apa yang diinginkan.”
[You’re happy when you feel satisfied and useful and can help other people. When you can get what you want.]

Participant 8

“Ketika bisa melihat orang yang disayangi bahagia, nyaman, berkumpul dengan orang yang disayangi, orangtua sehat.”
[When you see the people you love are happy, contented, when you’re with the people you love, when your parents are healthy (you are happy).]

Participant 10

“Bisa bersyukur dan mensyukuri apapun keadaannya saat ini.”
[When you can be grateful and give thanks for whatever the situation is at the moment.]

Participant 11

One of the participants specifically associated her happiness with religious beliefs and a religious lifestyle.

“Dengan punya agama maka kita memiliki pedoman, di Al-Qur’an tercantum semuanya tujuan hidup, apa yang boleh dan tidak boleh dikerjakan.”
[When you have religion, you have a guide. The Quran contains everything (you need to know) your direction in life, what you can and cannot do.]

Participant 4

Some of the participants explained a situation when they had been able to use their religion as a means of support and resilience in difficult times. In these situations, they felt their religious behaviour had the potential to make them happier and better able to cope.

“Karena waktu itu…teman saya kehilangan ibunya…jadi saya takut…makanya saya mengikuti apa yang dibilang sama ibu saya untuk mengenakan jilbab.”
[At that time, my friend’s mother had died…I became frightened, so I took my mother’s advice to start wearing a headscarf.]

Participant 1

“Saya memiliki keinginan untuk bunuh diri yang pada akhirnya membuat saya sangat percaya dan kembali kepada agama…saya juga kehilangan orang orang yang dicintai dan disayangi (ibunya).”

[I have thought about killing myself which finally made me truly believe in and turn to my religion. . . I have also lost people I loved [her mother].]

Participant 2

The 12 participants in this study all felt that their religion played an essential part in determining their life’s purpose and setting their behaviour. However, the way in which religion contributed to their sense of self differed, as did its social value in relation to the larger community and its availability to the participants as a source of resilience and meaning in life. The participants explained this in various ways:

“Sebagai pedoman hidup mengenai bagaimana berperilaku dalam kehidupan sehari-hari.”
[Religion is a guide for living that tells how you should behave in your daily life.]

Participant 1

“Sangat penting, punya Tuhan juga menjadi sangat penting, membantu untuk kembali mengarahkan ke jalan yang benar, karena pernah memiliki keinginan untuk bunuh diri dan tidak jadi dilakukan karena agama.”

[It [religion] is extremely important, having God is also extremely important. It helps you return to the right path. I once thought of killing myself but didn’t because of religion.]

Participant 2

“Sebagai pedoman hidup, bisa membantu mengatasi stres terutama dengan mengaji dan sholat.”
[As a guide for living, it can help you overcome stress, especially by reading the Quran and praying.]

Participant 3
“Membaca Al-qur’an bisa memberikan ketenangan dan kenyamanan, dengan melakukan semua ibadah merasa terlindungi, dipermudah semua urusan.”
[Reading the Quran can make you calm and relaxed. By performing all the required religious rituals, you feel protected, and everything you do is easier.]

Participant 8

Most of the participants believed themselves to be knowledgeable about religion and had clear feelings about the role of religion in life. In Indonesia, religion is a common topic of discussion and is presented to children from a very young age. Parents and grandparents often refer to religious principles in dealing with children’s behaviour and in explaining their experiences to them. In addition, the nature of Islam means that formal instruction in religious practice is required for an individual to participate in the rituals of the faith. The participants in this study all experienced this type of formal and informal religious instruction, which served as the basis for their views at the time of this study. When asked about the specific relationship between religion and happiness, participants tended to present this as a contrast between people who are Muslim and people who profess to have no religion. Their comments included:

“Bagi orang yang tidak memiliki agama, kebahagiaan yang dimiliki empty karena dia tidak punya ritual keagamaan yang dilakukan, karena berdasarkan pengalaman pribadi, ketenangan itu berasal dari ritual keagamaan yang kita lakukan.”
[For people who don’t have religion, their happiness will be empty because there are no rituals that they do, because based on my personal experience, contentment comes from the religious rituals you do.]

Participant 1

“Bisa jadi mereka bahagia dengan lingkungannya, dengan teman-temannya, namun sebenarnya mereka selalu mencari satu kebahagiaan yang bisa membuat mereka benar-benar bahagia…yaitu agama.”
[It is possible they (people with no religion) are happy with their situation, their friends, but they are actually looking for one thing...agama.]
that can make them truly happy, which would be religion.

Participant 2

“Bahagia yang sehat adalah bahagianya orang-orang yang beragama karena upaya mendapatkan kebahagiaan dengan cara-cara yang baik.”
[The healthy kind of happiness is the happiness religious people have because they try to find happiness in good ways.]

Participant 6

“Kebahagiaan yang sebenarnya adalah ketika orang mempunyai agama.”
[True happiness is when you have religion.]

Participant 9

In discussing this issue, all of the participants were speaking about Islam specifically as a source of happiness. They did not seem to consider whether other religions might have this same benefit and tended to view the context of a person’s faith in a binary manner, as professing Islam or not having any religion. It is important to note, however, that this view is likely not well thought through and represents an artefact of the situation in Indonesia, where a large majority of the population is Muslim, and young people from this background typically have little knowledge or understanding of other religions, even when they have non-Muslim friends and acquaintances. In other words, adherence (at least in outward form) to Islam is the unmarked condition in Indonesian society, and few people think very much about the impact of other religious views on their adherents.

All the participants in this study viewed religion as the path to the kind of ideal happiness described by Kesebir and Diener (2008). However, when asked to explain more specifically what a state of happiness involved, several participants expressed this in terms of feelings separate from religion, while others associated happiness directly with religious participation:
“Sesuatu yang dirasakan oleh hati, ketika merasa senang walaupun tidak mengetahui penyebab, ketika berkumpul bersama dengan teman-teman yang dipercayainya, bahagia ketika diberi hadiah oleh teman-temannya.”

{(Happiness is) something you feel in your heart, when you are happy even though you don’t know why, (like) when you are with friends you trust or you’re happy because someone gave you a present.]

Participant 2

“Ketika bisa melihat orang yang disayangi bahagia, nyaman, berkumpul dengan orang yang disayangi, orangtua sehat.”

{(Happiness is) when the people you love are happy and content, when you are with people you love, when your parents are in good health.]

Participant 10

“Tidak ada beban, banyak tertawa, sering senyum, tidak banyak hal yang dikeluhkan.”

{(Happiness is when) you have no burdens, when you can smile, when there isn’t much to complain about.]

Participant 3

“Bahagia itu tenang, bahagia itu ketika berkumpul atau bertemu dengan orang-orang sholeh (taat agama), bahagia itu jujur dan bahagia itu bisa sholat tepat waktu.”

[Happiness is serenity, when you meet or are together with people who are religious. Happiness is honesty and happiness is praying at the right times.]

Participant 9

“Punya mood bagus, tidak memiliki beban apapun, bertemu teman-teman, ketika sudah selesai melaksanakan sholat, melihat orang lain bahagia.”

{(Happiness is) being in a good mood, having no burdens at all, being with friends, after having prayed, and seeing other people happy.]

Participant 1

A number of the participants indicated that it was possible for a person who had no religion, or whose religious faith was weak, to be happy. However, they also felt that this type of happiness would not be a truly deep emotion and would not be ‘real’ happiness. Nonetheless, they were aware that different people might have different experiences.
“Bisa saja, tapi kebahagiaan yang dimiliki empty karena dia tidak punya ritual keagamaan yang dilakukan, karena berdasarkan pengalaman pribadi, ketenangan itu berasal dari ritual kegamaan yang kita lakukan.”

[(People who don’t have any religion) may feel happy, but the feelings they have would be empty because they don’t have any religious practices. Based on my experience, happiness comes from the religious rituals you take part in.]

Participant 1

“Bisa bahagia, namun tidak kebahagiaan batin karena tidak ada pedoman dalam hidupnya.”

[(They) might be happy, but it wouldn’t be true happiness because they have no guidance in their life.]

Participant 4

The participants in this study generally viewed happiness as the absence of things that might make a person unhappy, such as anxieties, worries, and problems that represent the emotion ‘burdens’ some of them spoke of. It is notable that, for all the participants, happiness had a strong group dimension, and almost all of them explicitly associated happiness with the presence of friends and family members. This is a reflection of the norms of Indonesian society which places high social value on being part of a group, which may be an extended family, a group of peers, or a group with some other social basis. From a very young age, Indonesians learn that it is better to be with others than to be alone, and doing things, such as eating, by oneself is considered anti-social. For this reason, it is perhaps not surprising that the participants in this study associated happiness with being with friends and expressed a strong concern for the happiness and wellbeing of others.

It is equally significant that many of the participants expressed a view of happiness that centred on the individual and his or her personal emotional state, separate from religion. The participants who believed
that happiness might come about from carrying out their religious obligations were in the minority in this study but were expressing a view that is widely known in Indonesia. Many Muslims expect that the performance of religious obligations should make them happy. However, in practice, this is not necessarily the case, and many people find happiness more easily from other sources. In this, the participants who associated happiness with a more general emotional state were describing a view more aligned with modern mainstream society in Indonesia, which is secular and is subject to some of the same influences that have shaped western societies in recent decades.

These influences, which are often seen by Indonesian observers to be associated with the forces of globalisation, increased competition for jobs and status, rising cost of living, and political and social uncertainty, are often significant to younger Indonesians and may be especially important in shaping their emotional response to their experience. Some of the participants expressed a general dissatisfaction with their situation when asked about their recent happiness:

“Merasa sebulan terakhir lebih banyak kecewa dibandingkan bahagia.”
[For the last month, I have felt more disappointment than happiness.]
Participant 10

“Tidak ada yang membuatnya bahagia selama sebulan ini.”
[Nothing has made me happy in the last month.]
Participant 11

These participants echo a sentiment observed among young people at a similar stage of development in other parts of the world (see, for example, Hunagund and Hangal, 2014; Collishaw, 2015). For them, the ability of their religion to suggest ways to manage their feelings was inadequate to counteract their feeling of discouragement and unhappiness which led to confusion and dismay.
The group or social aspect of their religious practice was very important to these participants in allowing them to fit in with others and to be able to benefit from the support of their friends. In Indonesia, which has a strongly communal and group-oriented society, this offered the participants a kind of contentment that allowed them to be more resilient and cope better with the challenges they faced. The group dynamic also served to enforce certain types of behaviour as the participants often did not want to be left out or to be viewed as different by their classmates.

“Teman-teman banyak mempengaruhi untuk bisa lebih religius, termasuk mengajak saya untuk bergabung ke LDK (lembaga dakwah kampus), seringkali mereka memberikan reminder untuk melakukan ibadah Sunnah.”
[My friends influence me to be more religious. They have encouraged me to take part in LDK (Campus Dakwah Organization), and they often remind me to do (voluntary) rituals.]

Participant 3

“Tergabung dalam organisasi keagamaan LDK. Memiliki banyak teman baik dan juga sholeh membuat saya ikut menjadi baik dan sholeh.”
[I joined the LDK (Campus Dakwah Organization). I made a lot of good friends who were religious which made me a better person and more religious.]

Participant 6

“My friends encouraged me to join LDK (Campus Dakwah Organization) and take part in a mentoring program. The transformation process was hard, they told me, but I kept at it
until I felt comfortable. LDK has strict rules about praying and reciting the Quran. Being part of it keeps me practicing (my religion) well.]

Participant 4

When asked about what makes them happy, the participants in this study gave a variety of answers. Some of them felt happiness was a force that could motivate them to achieve their goals. Generally, all the participants felt it was important to be happy, even if it was difficult for them to define what exactly this meant.

“They didn’t have any burdens, they laugh a lot, they smile often, they don’t have much to complain about.”
[Having no pressures, laughing a lot, smiling often, not having much to complain about.]

Participant 3

“But something is felt in your heart even when you don’t know the cause... You’re happy when your friends give you a gift.”

Participant 2

“Being happy is liking things, being sincere and feeling humble.”

Participant 6

“Happy is when you feel calm and relaxed and can do what you have to easily.”

Participant 7

“When you see people you love happy, relaxed; when you are with loved ones, when your parents are healthy.”

Participant 10
Happiness was viewed by some participants as not being depressed, being relaxed, and being able to do the things required of them. Being with people they loved was also seen as a source of happiness by participants. Many of the participants said that their parents and family are significant in their happiness.

“Bisa pulang bertemu dengan orangtua, sempat jalan-jalan juga.”
[(I am happy) when I can go back home and see my parents, it’s also a chance to get a change of scene.]
Participant 8

“Kesembuhan orangtua dari sakit yang cukup lama.”
[(I was happy) when my father recovered from a long illness.]
Participant 9

At this stage of life, young people generally need support from family in developing their adult identity. This may have motivated the definition of happiness given by some participants. It is also the case that family bonds are generally strong in Indonesia; children are expected to be concerned about parents, whose wellbeing plays a central role in their feeling of success.

However, there were also participants in this study who were unable to describe what happiness is. This might have been because their happiness is more related to their current situation, such that when they did not feel happy recently, they were not be able to conceptualize what happiness is.

“Tidak tau apa itu bahagia dan apa yaaa kira-kira yang membuat saya bahagia.”
[I don’t know what happiness is or what might make me happy.]
Participant 5

“Merasa sebulan terakhir lebih banyak kecewa dibandingkan bahagia.”
[I’ve felt more disappointed than happy over the past month.]
Participant 10

“Tidak ada yang membuat saya bahagia selama sebulan ini.”
[There was nothing that made me happy in the past month.]

Participant 11

One of the difficulties participants expressed when asked to think about what made them happy was related to the conceptualisation of happiness as reported in the literature which is used as the basis for research in this area. Because much of the literature in this area derives from experience in western, and often English-speaking societies, the use of the term ‘happiness’ reflects an implicit understanding of what the word means to native speakers of English and represents a conceptualisation of this affective state that is based on their culture. By contrast, Indonesian has three terms that can be translated as ‘happy,’ but none of them is exactly similar to ‘happy’ in English, especially when the range of use of the English term is considered. Indonesian has *senang*, which can mean ‘happy’ but has the connotation of being satisfied and also of ease. In Malay, *senang* is used to mean ‘easy;’ the link between these concepts is apparent. A second possible choice to convey the idea of ‘happy’ in Indonesian is *gembira*. *Gembira*, however, relates to situational happiness and has connotation of ‘fun’ and ‘joy.’ A person might feel *gembira* at a party or similar event. The third possibility, and the one most of the participants used, is *bahagia*. *Bahagia* means ‘happy’ in a more long-term context and suggests a situation that is free from discord. Marriages or life can be said to be *bahagia*, conveying the same idea as the expression ‘a happy marriage’ does in English; the participants are likely to get along and be financially and socially secure, but the expression does not convey anything about their personal feelings.

This reflects the fact that Indonesians rarely think about personal happiness, and their traditional cultures do not encourage this type of
focus, which may be seen as being too egocentric and not supportive of the communal social context. However, the participants in this study, like all Indonesians today, have been exposed to western popular culture and western ideas translated into Indonesian that reflect Indonesia’s longstanding interest in outside elements (see Rickelefs, 2008). The idea that is common in the English-speaking world that ‘being happy’ is an important personal goal is beginning to be known in Indonesia (largely through TV and movies as well as internet sources), but is not fully compatible with the traditional life goals associated with the nation’s local cultures.

### 4.2 Religious Behaviour

The practice of Islam in Indonesia is associated with certain types of behaviour. Some of this is directly related to religious practice and includes praying at the prescribed times, fasting during the month of Ramadan, and paying religious taxes as appropriate. Other behaviours are seen as being associated with religion but are, in fact, an interpretation of religious principles. One of the latter is the wearing of Islamic dress, especially for women, which is an observable sign of religious affiliation and also may be taken as an indication of how religious a person is. In this study, several of the participants felt that demonstrating a religious appearance is important in their identity as Muslims. As is the case in other parts of the world as well, Islamic dress is distinctive and, for women, includes covering the head with a tight-fitting scarf (hijab). It is important to note that this type of dress is foreign to Indonesia and has only become mainstream in the last 15 years. However, Islamic dress for women is now associated with a fashion trend (see Beta, 2014) and is, of course, the norm at the Islamic university where this research was conducted. Some of the participants in this study discussed the meaning of the hijab as a symbol of Islam and explained what it meant in terms of their personal identity:
“Berupaya menunjukkan perilaku yang baik, tidak lagi suka berbicara kasar dan tertawa keras-keras lalu juga tidak lagi perilaku memikirkan model-model baju apa yang sedang trend dan harus diikuti.”
[It is an attempt to show respectable conduct, that you don’t use bad language or laugh too loudly anymore. [You also] don’t need to think about what clothing styles are fashionable that you have to follow.]

Participant 1

“Dengan menggunakan jilbab merasa dilindungi oleh Allah SWT, dulu, kadang-kadang saya masih suka lepas hijab saya kalau di luar, tapi sejak pergi umroh, saya selalu memakai hijab.”
[Wearing a hijab you feel protected by God, Sometimes I didn’t used to wear it when I was not at the university, but for the past few months, especially since I got back from a pilgrimage to Mecca, I’ve been wearing it all the time.]

Participant 2

Nonetheless, the requirements of maintaining an Islamic appearance did not appeal to all of the female participants. One of them expressed this problem as follows:

“Disuruh Mama untuk pake jilbab syar'I sampai sekarang masih suka kepikiran model baju/rambut yang mungkin bisa dipake.”
[My mother says I have to wear a long hijab, but I still think about the clothing and hairstyles I could be wearing.]

Participant 1

This stresses the internal conflict that some young Indonesians feel between the attractions of a more secular lifestyle, such as is visible in popular culture and advertisements, and a religiously directed one that fits with certain traditional cultural precepts. This is one manifestation of a larger conflict felt by Indonesians of all ages, namely that the elements of the increasingly globalized world in which they, and Indonesia as a nation, want to participate in but that do not fit with cultural concepts that are traditional in their local communities. This dilemma is the source of a great deal of social and cultural stress (see Rubdy and Alsagoff, 2013).
When asked to think more broadly about the nature and impact on their religion in their lives (separate from comparatively superficial aspects such as dress), the participants in this study expressed a range of views that are characteristic in Indonesia. In this, they reflect the views of their communities and families and, like most Indonesians, the participants have not been encouraged to think deeply about religion and form their own views based on their experiences and social context.

“Agama Islam adalah agama yang paling sempurna, semua peraturan yang dibuat untuk kebaikan umat manusia, agama memberikan ketentraman jiwa.”
[Islam is the most perfect religion. All its rules are for the good of the human race, and the religion gives you serenity.]

Participant 3

“Tuhan adalah zat tempat kita semua berserah diri, Tuhan tempat kita meminta solusi dari segala masalah.”
[We surrender ourselves to God, and God is whom we ask for the answers to all problems.]

Participant 5

“Gaya hidup, dengan memilih agama ini, jalan ini dijamin bahwa kita bakal selamat.”
[It’s a way of life where you choose religion. This path is guaranteed to bring us to salvation.]

Participant 11

“Orang yang tidak memiliki agama tidak akan bahagia karena ia tidak memiliki pedoman dalam hidupnya dan tidak ada aturan dalam hidupnya.”
[A person with no religion is not going to be happy because they won’t have any guidance and there wouldn’t be any boundaries in their life.]

Participant 8

“Islam itu ya sempurna karena ya dikasih tau, apa yang membuat kamu ke surga dan ke neraka, dan udah jelas apa aja
gitu, dan udah dicontohin sama manusia yang bisa kita ikutin, Rasullah kan.”

[Islam is the only perfect religion because you’re told what will make you go to Heaven and Hell, and this is clear, and there are people you can copy in this, like the Prophet.]

Participant 4

While all the participants in this study expressed a view that the rules and practices of their religion were intended to make them better as individuals and to support a beneficial lifestyle, one participant discussed the converse of this, namely that failure to carry out the requirements of the religion could have negative consequences. This was in contrast to other participants who felt a source of security in the rules and principles of religion.

“Memiliki aturan yang juga bisa membuat bahagia atau cemas, menjadi gelisah dan cemas ketika meninggalkan sholat.”

[Having these rules can make you happy or frightened. You might be anxious and scared if you don’t pray.]

Participant 9

Islamic practice in Indonesia has a strong focus on ritual, and children are taught how to conduct the five daily prayers from a very young age. They also learn how their community carries out other types of religious activity and are trained to read and recite Quranic verses that are part of prayer. Arabic is not used as a language of communication in Indonesia, so most people memorize specific blocks of text and are generally familiar with the meaning through a translation into Indonesian. The practices associated with Islam are often presented as beneficial to the individual involved because they represent divine prescriptions for human behaviour that are pleasing to God. This type of interpretation is the official position of religious authorities and is frequently discussed as the rationale for religious observances. One participant explained the type of religious training he experienced from a young age:
“Jadi saya dari kecil itu diajak, dipaksa sama mereka berdua untuk ikut pengajian. Dari awalnya tuh bener-bener ga pengen, maksudnya... apaan sih pengajian ngapain masih kecil diajak-ajak pengajian itu... trus tapi ternyata memang kebiasaan dari kecil itu kan orang tua itu... bener-bener... ada gitu nempel banget di kepala, jadi ketika udah besar ngerasa kalo ga dateng tuh kurang itu.”

[From the time I was very young, my parents invited me, actually forced me, to go with the two of them to Quranic recitation classes. At the beginning, I really badly didn’t want to go, I mean . . . what was the point of that when I was so little and they wanted to take me to these recitations . . . but it turned out that experience from the time I was young, my parents . . . really . . . well it stuck in my head, so when I was older, I felt like if I didn’t go, I was missing something.]

Participant 4

While many of the participants felt that the kind of religious training they had received was beneficial in that it gave them the advantages felt to be associated with religious practice in their communities, several saw the religious practices they had been taught from an opposite perspective, believing that religious participation was a way to avoid divine punishment:

“Semua kegiatan keagamaan dilakukan agar terhindar dari bencana dan malapetaka.”
[You do all religious activities to avoid disaster and catastrophe.]

Participant 3

“Menghindari gelisah, menghindar dari api neraka.”
[To avoid anxiety and the fires of Hell.]

Participant 9

The understanding of Islam in Indonesia reflects this binary distinction made by the participants. On the one hand, religious participation according to the norms of the community is supposed to bring benefit both in life and afterwards; on the other hand, failure to carry out religious obligations is associated with divine punishment, as expressed
by some of the participants. While it is not possible to assess the extent to which any person believes this interpretation, it is notable that many Indonesians attempt to convey a religious demeanour through the parts of the behaviour that are visible to others, but also engage in activities that are forbidden by their religion when they feel others cannot connect such behaviour to them. One example is the level of corruption at every level in Indonesia that has been a constant concern since the end of the New Order in 1998 (see, for example, Mietzner, 2015).

The participants in this study are students at an Islamic university, and many of them (both male and female) feel pressure from their peers to portray a more religious identity. For several of them, the university where they are studying was not their first choice of school, but they had not been accepted at more prestigious universities. These individuals felt they had been forced to adapt to an environment that reflects the orientation of the university but that does not necessarily coincide with their own religious beliefs. Interestingly, several of the participants stated that the university community seemed to them to be the same as what they would expect at a secular school.

“Awalnya mengira masuk ke UIN semua orang akan lebih religius, ternyata sama saja dengan sekolah umum biasa, ketika sudah menyangkut urusan sholat, semua sendiri-sendiri.”
[At first, I thought everyone at UIN would be more religious, but it turned out to be the same as at a regular school when it comes to religious duties. Everyone goes their own way.]

Participant 3

Many of the participants described the influence of peers on their religious behaviour. This was mentioned more often than the influence of family, which was also significant to many participants. For many of them, though, the religious views and practices of family were less important than the outlook of their classmates. Several participants expressed this explicitly:

Participant 1

“So, I got a chance to go along, like . . . not exactly Quranic study. It was more like meeting with my friends who knew about religion. We would share things, talk about things. We have to do this; Muslim women should be like this; all kinds of things . . . because my friends would give me advice (about it).]

Participant 4

“Kayak misalnya jam-jam tertentu organisasi saya kan yang saya bilang tadi dakwah itu, jadi kalo misalnya ada grup mereka tuh sering ngingetin kayak misalnya sholat dhuha. . . cuman kayak kalo misalnya dulu kan masih males-males, trus tapi ga tau ajakan-ajakan itu jadi kayak ngerasa, kayak... dia aj sholat dhuha masa aku ngga, itu.... Kaya gitu dan jadi baliknya tuh jadi kayak pengen aja berlomba-lomba supaya lebih baik dimata Allah gitu, jadi apa yang dia lakuin mungkin bisa saya lakuin, kayak gitu-gitu sih.”

[It’s like, for example, at certain times, the organization I’m in, the one I mentioned before, the dakwah [religious proselytizing] one, there is a group of them who often remind the rest of us like about the dhuha prayer [optional prayer between required morning and midday prayers] . . . so, like before, I never felt like doing this, but I don’t know, when they said to, it was like I felt something, like . . . if he was going to say the dhuha prayer, why wouldn’t I do it, too? And behind that, it was like I wanted to compete to seem better in the eyes of God, so whatever he did, maybe I could do, too. Like that.]

Participant 5

“Dulu sebenarnya waktu SD kelas 6 itu kompakan sama temen...Ayo kita di pesantrennya bareng-bareng.”

[Actually, when I was in the 6th grade, I made a pact with my friends, ‘Let’s all study at the pesantren [Islamic boarding school] together.’]

Participant 5

“Alhamdulillah gak tau kenapa ngerasa gak nyaman aja sama pacaran gitu, dan mungkin Allah tunjukkan, lingkungan yang lebih bagus gitu. Tadinya nyari-nyari sendiri lingkungan-lingkungan yang bagus gitu, termotivasi sih dari teman, ada satu teman sekelas, dia anak rohis gitu, ketika dia bilang ‘Nih bangga belum pernah pacaran.’ . . . ‘Iya yah enak juga gitu belum pernah pacaran, kenapa gue gak bisa,’ gue putusin deh akhirnya. Saya
For these participants, changing their behaviour in line with the norms of the social group did not begin at the university. Many of them were accustomed to using this strategy to fit into a social group and explained how, in the past, it had also led them to do things they knew were disadvantageous or that their families would not approve of.

“Waktu di SMA, kondisi di sana masih jelek, karena ikut... ikutan orang pacar-pacaran itu...”

[When I was in high school . . . it was pretty bad because I just did what my friends did dating people and stuff.]

Participant 4

Formal education and parenting style has the potential to influence the religious behaviour of young adults. A number of participants in this study had attended Islamic schools before coming to the university. Of these, some felt that their attendance at an Islamic boarding school (pesantren) did not greatly influence their religious behaviour and feeling. Others, however, felt that the experience of attending Islamic schools from a young age shaped their religious behaviour and supported them to maintain certain aspects of practice, such as wearing Islamic dress. Often the reason their parents chose to send the participants to an Islamic school related to their ethnic background and the kind of education that older members of the family had had.
“Kultur keluarga (berasal dari Minang) berpengaruh terhadap pendidikan agama yang saya jalani.”
[My family culture (we are Minang\(^1\)) determined the religious education I had.]

Participant 7

“Sangat dekat dengan keluarga terutama Ibu, namun pengajaran keagamaan lebih banyak diberikan oleh kakek dan Ibu juga berperan dalam mengajarkan pendidikan agama.”
[I am very close to my family, especially my mother. A lot of my religious instruction came from my grandfather, but my mother also played a part in teaching me.]

Participant 9

“Pesantren membantu saya untuk bisa lebih mandiri. Ketika di pesantren bisa rajin beribadah, namun ketika kembali masuk ke SMU umum, nilai-nilai yang didapat di pesantren hilang.”
[The pesantren helped me to be more self-sufficient. We would all pray together there, but when I went into a regular high school, the values I learned at the pesantren disappeared.]

Participant 10

In some cases, the participants in this study were the ones who influenced the religious behaviour and practice of others, including members of their family. Despite being a younger member of the family, their religious training and environment was sometimes seen as desirable by their elders, which may have been why the participant was sent to religious schools in the first place.

“Keluarga pada akhirnya mengikuti apa yang dilakukannya, baru-baru ini mulai ikut pengajian dan bahkan mengadakan pengajian di rumah.”
[My family finally started doing what I did. Recently, they have started taking part in Quranic interpretation and recitation and have even had this at the house.]

Participant 11

\(^1\) The Minang (or Minangkabau) people are one of Indonesia’s ethnic groups. They originate in the province of West Sumatra, have a traditional social structure that is matrilineal, and are viewed by other Indonesians as being both religious and conservative. Adherence to Islam is considered a required element of Minang identity. There is a great deal of anthropological literature on the group because of the unusual nature of matrilineal societies in the modern context.
Some of the participants mentioned acquaintances of theirs whose religious orientation was different from theirs. Interestingly, this included individuals who had rejected religion, an unusual circumstance in Indonesia, but also others who had become what is usually viewed as overly religious. One participant commented on two of her acquaintances as follows:

“Saya punya teman yang atheis...dia selalu mempertanyakan hal-hal yang enggak penting, pokoknya gelisah sendiri... apa sendiri... ya tapi itu sih udah indikasi orang yang enggak tenang yaa.”
[I have a friend who is an atheist... he always questions things that are not important, he’s always worrying... always... but that’s a sign of someone who isn’t relaxed.]
Participant 1

“Temen saya ada yang sudah bercadar...namun sepertinya tetap saja sepertinya tidak pernah mendapat apa-apa dari Allah SWT.”
[I have a friend who wears a chadar [complete covering from head to toe with only one’s eyes showing]... but it is still as if she hasn’t gotten anything from God.]
Participant 1

These comments, and similar sentiments expressed by other participants, suggest that a comparatively narrow range of religious behaviour is considered the norm among these participants, and that this norm is mostly based on certain aspects of religious practice that are mostly relevant in the context of interaction with other people. In other words, when these participants think about religious practice, they focus most strongly on the communal aspects of religious behaviour that are likely to identify them as a member of a specific religious community. This might be as specific as a group of their classmates or as large as their whole ethnic group. They tended to focus much less on the personal significance of their behaviour and their own search for meaning in their religious practice, and tended to accept the religious practice of their environment without question.
4.3 Family Influence

Young people are generally first exposed to religion practice and beliefs at home, where their parents and other relatives often serve as models of religious practice in their community. For the participants in this study, parents were often the source of explicit teaching about religion. In some cases, the participants seem to have gained more insight into their religion from their environment and experiences outside the family context. Often, their mother was an important source of religious knowledge.

“Ibu saya lebih banyak mengajarkan kepada saya agar bisa mengaji.”
[It was mostly my mother who taught me how to read the Quran.] Participant 2

“Orangtua mempunyai pengajian dan sejak kecil saya selalu diajak, dan dari situ banyak belajar, dengan begitu, saya merasa cukup mengetahui ilmu agama, saya cukup dekat dengan orangtua meskipun mereka cukup sibuk, orangtua selalu mengingatkan untuk melakukan ibadah Sunnah.”
[My parents take part in a Quranic interpretation group and would take me, too, from the time I was very young. I learned a lot there. I feel I know a lot about religion. I am quite close to my parents. Even though they are very busy, they always remind me to say (the voluntary) prayers.] Participant 4

“Orangtua saya sangat rajin beribadah, melakukan hampir semua ibadah sunnah yang mungkin tidak banyak orang yang melakukannya.”
[My parents always pray and do almost all the voluntary prayers that a lot of people probably don’t do.] Participant 4

“Orangtua selalu menekankan untuk tidak meninggalkan sholat wajib, namun untuk mengaji karena mereka juga tidak terlalu lancar jadi tidak terlalu banyak mengajarkan.”
[My parents have always stressed that I shouldn’t neglect the compulsory prayers, but (they didn’t teach me much about) reciting the Quran because they are not that good at it themselves.] Participant 5
“Sangat dekat dengan ibu dan ibu jadi acuan dalam menjalankan ibadah, ibu selalu pergi ke pengajian.”
[I am very close to my mother, and she has been my guide in carrying out religious obligations. She always goes to a Quranic interpretation group.]
Participant 5

“Keluarga jarang melakukan ibadah bersama, saya pun tidak terlalu mengetahui kegiatan ibadah rutin keluarga karena jarang di rumah.”
[My family rarely prays together. I don’t know that much about this kind of routine activity because I am not at home that much.]
Participant 6

“Tidak terlalu dekat juga dengan keluarga terutama dengan ayah, jarang berbicara dan sering sekali dimarahi, sehingga memilih untuk menjauh dan tidak berbicara, sama ibu juga tidak terlalu dekat.”
[I am not that close to my family, especially my father. I rarely talk with him, and he often yells at me. So I usually keep my distance and don’t talk to him. I am also not too close to my mother.]
Participant 12

Several participants explained how they had been sent to Islamic boarding schools by their parents. The popularity of *pesantren*, Islamic schools taught on a traditional model that engenders loyalty to a teacher from a group of students who live at the school, has increased greatly since the end of the New Order (see Buang and Chew, 2014). These schools use a very limited range of religious texts, and graduates may have difficulty continuing their education or finding work because of the very restricted nature of their studies. For this reason, some *pesantren* are starting to introduce a broader curriculum, but this is still not the norm in Indonesia. In addition, *pesantren* have been linked to the dissemination of terrorist ideologies and radicalization of their student bodies.

“Orangtua memaksa saya untuk masuk ke pesantren…saya merasa tertekan, mengapa mereka melakukan ini kepada
There is some indication that more students are choosing to enter public Islamic universities in Indonesia. This may be an aspect of the growing role of religious identity in individual and group experience that has been noted by some observers (see, for example, Kersten, 2015). This may also reflect the views of parents which tend to be influential in the decision-making process of young adults in Indonesia. In Islamic universities, students study the full range of general subjects but may also study Arabic and other religious subjects. Most young people in Indonesia feel that being part of a religious group and having a religious identity is important, and all participants held this view. While some of them felt that studying at an Islamic university would support their identity as a Muslim, others chose Islamic education for a number of more practical reasons that did not relate to the perceived benefits the experience might give them.

“Masuk UIN karena memang diminta orang tua dan tidak lulus di UI, dan UIN adalah kampus Islam.”
[I choose the State Islamic University because my parents wanted me to and I didn’t get into the University of Indonesia, and because the State Islamic University is an Islamic school.]
Participant 7

“Menyadari kemampuan yang dimiliki dan tidak mungkin masuk ke UI jadi memilih UIN saja.”
[I realized my abilities would not get me into the University of Indonesia, so I just chose the State Islamic University.]
Participant 11

“Karena tidak diterima di tempat lain dan akhirnya hanya diterima di jurusan farmasi UIN...merasa tidak ada pilihan lain . . . tapi masuk sini membuat saya lebih religious.”
[Since I didn’t get in anyplace else and was finally accepted in Pharmacy at the State Islamic University, I felt I had no other
choice, but starting here made me more religious.]
Participant 4

“Disuruh orangtua...termasuk dalam memilih jurusannya juga...yaa karena faktor biaya dan tidak diterima dimanama...akhirnya sekarang kuliah saya anggap permainan...tidak usah terlalu serius, nanti juga lulus.”
[My parents told me to . . . they also chose my department . . . because of the tuition cost and also I didn't get in anywhere else. So now I consider my studies a joke . . . I don't have to be too serious. I'll pass anyway.]
Participant 10

The participants in this study were very much aware of the perceptions of members of the public about the Islamic university system, which is managed by the Ministry of Religious Affairs as opposed to the Ministry of National Education (which oversees secular universities). Some of the perceptions are negative, despite the overall positive associations of religious behaviour.

[When I enrolled at UIN, my relatives would ask me, “Do you want to become a terrorist? What are you going to do? Why would you want to be a religious scholar?” As if that’s all you can do at UIN.”]
Participant 11

Several of these participants contrasted UIN, the State Islamic University, with Universitas Indonesia, one of Indonesia’s premier universities that is also located in the Jakarta metropolitan area. As is the case in many parts of the world, a majority of students aspire to attend a top university because of the potential opportunities that might result. While some religious universities like UIN are quite highly ranked in Indonesia, they do not have the prestige of the top secular universities, and some people see them as a last resort if they want to attend a public institution. However, one of the participants in this study really wanted to study at an Islamic university because he felt
that being around religious people would influence him to be more religious himself.

“Pengaruhnya karena memang berkumpul bersama dengan orang-orang yang religius, sama-sama giat menjalankan ilmu agama.”
[I thought] there would be an effect because I would be with religious people, and we would be practicing our religion together.]

Participant 9

A number of participants reflected on the fact that they knew very little about the university before enrolling there. This is likely related to the fact that most of them would have preferred to attend a secular university and had been aspiring to do so during their high school years. One participant commented as follows:

“Shock ketika masuk UIN pertama kali...ga nyangka ternyata kelasnya campur antara laki-laki dan perempuan dan interaksinya pun bebas seperti universitas umum.”
[I was shocked when I first started at UIN . . . I never guessed the classes would be mixed and the men and women would be able to interact as freely as at a regular university.]  
Participant 5

This situation reflects the nature of Indonesian Islam, which, as noted above, is very different from the Middle East or other locations and also relates to Indonesia’s pre- or non-Islamic cultural elements. It also underscores the fact that the Indonesian interpretation and practice of Islam is based on the social and cultural norms of the nation’s various ethnic groups, not all of which are Muslim, and that widespread adherence to Islam is fairly recent in the history of the region.

4.4 On Being Muslim

When asked if they had ever experienced something that caused them to feel more religious, a number of participants were able to identify a specific instance or situation that had affected them in this way. In
some cases, participants connected this directly to the carrying out of some prescribed religious activity or ritual.

“Ada doa yang langsung dikabulkan oleh Allah SWT, percaya kalau sholat akan memudahkan semua urusannya dan sudah mengalaminya berkali-kali, dimudahkan dalam bimbingan dan urusan lainnya.”
[I have had my prayers directly answered by God. I believe that if you pray, it makes everything easier, and I have experienced this many times, like it made it easier for me to get along with my (thesis) supervisor and things like that.]
Participant 1

Pengalaman ketika selesai bersedekah, Allah memberikan ganti yang jauh lebih besar meskipun dalam jangka waktu beberapa lama.”
[I experienced this after giving money to charity. God repaid me many times over in a not very long time after.]
Participant 8

“Keinginan yang besar untuk umroh akhirnya dikabulkan setelah berdoa terus menerus dan beribadah, meskipun awalnya orangtua mengatakan bahwa mereka tidak akan membiayai, namun akhirnya bersedia.”
[I really wanted to go on a pilgrimage to Mecca and was finally able to do so after praying and carrying out religious rituals, even though at first, my parents said they couldn’t afford it, but finally they agreed.]
Participant 2

Nonetheless, the participants in this study tended to view their religious identity as earning them favour from God that should result in their prayers being answered. In other words, they seemed to feel that because they were Muslim, which they believed to be the best or even the “correct” religion, and they carried out prescribed religious rituals, they were entitled to receive some direct effect from it. When this did not occur, some participants were disappointed but others concluded that they needed to perfect their religious behaviour. Nonetheless, they sometimes also had additional motives for religious behaviour.
“Ada saat dimana saya tidak percaya pada tuhan... karena dia membiarkan saya berada dalam situasi ini dan tidak mengabulkan doa saya.”
[There have been times when I have not believed in God . . . because He has let me be in these kinds of situations and did not answer my prayers.]
Participant 2

“Kadang niat saya untuk puasa senin kamis supaya kurus...atau sholat dhuha biar doa bisa dikabulkan Allah.”
[Sometimes I decide I am going to fast on Monday and Thursday so I’ll lose weight . . . or do the dhuha prayer so that God will answer my prayers.]
Participant 1

The participants were asked about their religious orientation, and specifically the reasons they carried out religious rituals or participated in religious activities. For some of them, the motivation to do these things was internal and derived from their own feelings, perceptions, and experiences about the value to themselves. In other cases, participants were motivated by fear of punishment on the idea that had been taught to them that such behaviour is required by God as part of their religion.

“Karena kewajiban, memberikan perasaan lega jika sudah melakukan seluruh kewajiban itu, memberikan perasaan tenang.”
[Because it is an obligation, it gives you a feeling of relief when you have fulfilled your obligation. It makes you feel calm]
Participant 6

“Melakukan kegiatan keagamaan membuat tenang dan tenstram dan sudah ada perasaan butuh untuk selalu melakukan kegiatan itu.”

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2 Fasting on Monday and Thursday is practice associated with various folk interpretations of Islam that are widely considered by Indonesian and other Muslims to have health benefits in addition to religious ones. It is interesting to note that fasting on Monday and Thursday is actually a much older Jewish practice intended to commemorate certain events of political and religious significance. This may have been adopted by Muslim communities when Islam came into being (see Greenstone et al, 2011).
Carrying out religious activities make you calm, and you feel a need to always do these things.

Participant 7

“Membaca Al-qur’an bisa memberikan ketenangan dan kenyamanan, dengan melakukan semua ibadah merasa terlindungi, dipermudah semua urusan.”

[Reading the Quran can make you feel calm and happy. By carrying out religious rituals, you feel protected, everything seems easier.]

Participant 8

“Karena kita memang sudah diciptakan dan seharusnya mengikuti apa yang diperintahkan dan dilakukan Rasulullah, cari aman . . . menghindar dari api neraka . . . Seluruh kegiatan keagamaan yang dilakukan memang bisa membuat bahagia.”

[We were all created by God and are supposed to do what He commands and what the Prophet did. It keeps you safe . . . you avoid the fires of Hell. All the religious activities you do can really make you happy.]

Participant 9

“Di pesantren, saya sholat dan mengaji karena akan dihukum jika tidak mengikuti aturan.”

[In the pesantren, I would pray and recite the Quran because they would punish you if you didn’t.]

Participant 10

In addition to the more standard religious activities, many of the participants had significant exposure to the folk practice of Islam that is widespread in Indonesia. Similar to the cases of Christianity and traditional religions, this consists of a mixture of earlier beliefs (including traditional magic) and Islamic ideas and is, for many Indonesians, more significant than more orthodox aspects of practice. One element of this is ruqiyah which some people believe is a means for exorcising any evil spirits that might be causing someone to be ill or tormenting them mentally and emotionally. This practice is very old and sometimes involves the whole community and is carried out in a public place. One of the participants explained:
“Teman saya menyarankan...kamu ikut ruqyah saja... Saya juga mikir... ya kalau misalnya saya ke sana sendirian tuh... saya takut gituu, karena kalau ruqyah itu kalau orang yang enggak kuat itu bisa kenapa-kenapa gituu looh. Kalau orang di ruqiyah itu biasanya suka lemas, kalau saya sendirian kan enggak mungkin bu.”

[My friend advised me . . . just have ruqiyah . . . So I thought about it . . . If I went there alone . . . I would be too scared because, if you’re not strong enough to take it, all kinds of things can happen. Sometimes people pass out during the ruqiyah, I couldn’t risk that if I were by myself.]

Participant 2

Many of the participants had their own interpretations of Islamic values based on what they had learned from their parents and society. This interpretation tended to have been influenced by their life experience, age and community involvement. Because of their age, the participants in this study had all experienced very significant social change over the course of their life and, for this reason, likely had religious views that were different than their parents as members of an older generation. One participant explained that she had considered suicide, even though she knew what the Islamic view on this was. Her own experience, however, suggested that this was a possible choice, even though she eventually decided against it.

“Saya tau kalau bunuh diri itu benar-benar hal yang dilaknat sama Allah, bahkan katanyaa... saya baca di hadits nya... orang yang bunuh diri itu akan kekal selamanya, di neraka itu”

[I knew that killing yourself was something really despised by God . . . I read that in the Hadith . . . people who kill themselves will reside in Hell for all time.]

Participant 2

Despite coming from religious families and studying at a religious university, several of the participants in this study did not have a very deep understanding of their religion and the reasons behind the behaviours they had been taught. In this, they tended to accept whatever their parents had taught them and generally did not question
what they were told. This extended both to their broad understanding of religious principles but also to the routines of daily life. For the female participants, this extended to their mode of dress.

“Aku tuh dari kecil karena . . . mungkin Islam itu buat aku satu kepercayaan keluarga, yang ya udah dari lahir...dari lahir aku agamanya Islam gitu... karena orang tuanya Islam dan segala macamnya . . . dan aku pakai kerudung itu juga karena mama bilang, pakai kerudungaja...Sejak masuk kuliah juga, karena ya udah UIN ya terpaksa kerudung lagi.” [Since I was little . . . Islam was our family belief, I was that was since birth... from birth, my religion was Islam... because my parents were Muslim dan so forth... and I wear this headscarf because Mama said I should, just wear the scarf... Since I've been studying here, because I'm at UIN, well, I have to.”

Participant 1

“Sekarang ga pacaran...kalau jodoh juga nanti ga kemana.” [I'm not in a relationship now... if he's the one for me, he won't be going anywhere.]

Participant 1

This participant was characteristic in her willingness to unquestioningly behave in a way her parents felt was best, no matter how she herself felt. She refers to the Indonesian concept of jodoh, which suggests there is a perfect partner for every person. A relationship that involves two people who are not jodoh will not work out, while if they are fated to be together, nothing can interfere. This idea is sometimes associated with religion, but is likely a deeply embedded cultural conception.

4.5 Religion and Stress

The participants in this study face many of the stressors usually associated with their age group, which include concern about future employment, relationships with family and friends, romantic problems, problems in their studies, and so forth. Life in Indonesia’s capital is very difficult as well; extremely high population density is associated with extreme traffic problems, environmental degradation, high cost of
living, intense competition for opportunities, and other issues that characterize major cities in Asia (see Schneider et al., 2015 for discussion of this). Several participants described the things that upset them as follows:

“Kuliah . . . tidak bisa melupakan hubungan pacaran masa lalunya yang telah berjalan cukup lama namun karena agama melarang dan pasangannya pergi begitu saja . . . kalau teringat suka stres.”
[(Even though) I was going to class, I couldn't forget my relationship with my old boyfriend that went on for a long time. Religion forbade it, and he left me just like that. Whenever I think about it. It makes me stressed.] Participant 4

“Deadline tugas, banyak tugas kuliah yang deadlinenya bersamaan, sulit membagi waktu antara kuliah dan organisasi.”
[I have assignment deadlines, all my assignments are due at the same time, and it's hard to divide my time between my classes and my organization.] Participant 10

“Ketika dimarahi orangtua, masih banyak mata kuliah yang belum diambil... Merasa hanya dirinya saja yang sering dimarahi, kedua adiknya tidak pernah dimarahi.”
[When my parents are mad at me (because of) all the classes I still have to take, I feel like it’s only me they are angry with. They are never mad at my two younger brothers.] Participant 12

For some of the participants in this study, religion provided an outlet for their stress and also the means by which to alleviate it. For those individuals, it also seemed to support resilience and help them deal with negative events. For others, however, stress relief was likely to come from other kinds of activities and strategies that were unrelated to either religious practice or religious faith. For example:

“Upaya untuk mengatasi stres biasanya menceritakan semua masalahnya kepada orangtua. Lalu wudhu, sholat dan membaca Al Quran sampai akhirnya lupa masalahnya.”
[I usually try to overcome stress by telling all my problems to my parents. Then I do wudhu [ritual washing before praying], pray, and read the Quran until I forget what was bothering me.]

Participant 4

“Terlalu banyak hal yang harus dikerjakan, cara mengatasi mendengarkan orang mengaji dan melihat drama Korea. Agama bisa membantu mengatasi stres.”

[If I have] too many things to do, I manage by listening to (a recording of) someone reciting the Quran and by watching Korean drama series. Religion can help overcome stress.]

Participant 5

“Cara mengatasi stress dengan menyendiri dan menarik diri dari lingkungan untuk sementara, ibadah atau berdiam diri di masjid.”

[I deal with stress by going off by myself and withdrawing from things for a while, (then) I pray or meditate at the mosque.]

Participant 7

“When I have a problem or burden and have to deal with it right away, I have always coped by reciting the Quran and praying.”

Participant 8

“Agama membawa kepada ketentraman jiwa.”

[Religion gives you serenity.]

Participant 3

Some of the participants felt that religion could be used as a means to cope with stress, but other participants specifically stated that religion was not much help in dealing with their problems. They preferred to listen to music or go shopping or talk to family members to deal with what was bothering them. These participants based this on their experience that had showed them that religion did not provide enough support. Some of them commented that they used to pray, fast and give alms, but these activities did not suggest a solution to their problems or help them manage their emotions. The participants described this as follows:
“Untuk mengatasinya berusaha untuk mengatur waktu sebaik-baiknya, jalan-jalan, baca novel, nonton dvd.”
[To deal with stress, I try to manage my time as best I can, go out, read novels, or watch DVDs.]

Participant 3

“Mengatasi stres dengan mendengarkan musik, shopping.”
[I deal with stress by listening to music and going shopping.]

Participant 10

“Upaya untuk mengatasi stres biasanya menceritakan semua masalah kepada orangtua.”
[I try to deal with stress by talking to my parents about what is bothering me.]

Participant 4

“Cara mengatasi stres dengan mendengarkan orang mengaji dan melihat drama korea.”
[One way I deal with stress is to listen to (recordings of) people reciting the Quran and watching Korean (TV) dramas.]

Participant 5

“Cara mengatasi stres dengan menyendiri dan menarik diri dari lingkungan untuk sementara.”
[I deal with stress by going off by myself and leaving the situation for a while.]

Participant 6

Stress in young adults can be significant and may lead to destructive behaviour, such as suicide or drug use and may affect their academic performance. For this reason, it is important to understand the situations that lead to stress in young people. When being asked about this, most of the participants were familiar with stress and felt that it is common among university students in general.

“Stres jika tidak memiliki jalan keluar dari masalah yang dihadapi, bingung mau melakukan apa, tiba tiba bisa sakit maag (psikosomatis).”
[Stress is when I can’t find a way out of my problems, I’m confused about what to do; I might suddenly get a stomach ache (which is psychosomatic).]

Participant 4

“Terlalu banyak hal yang harus dikerjakan... tidak punya uang dan jauh dari orangtua.”
[Stress is when there are too many things to do... when you don’t have money are far away from your parents.]

Participant 5

“Memiliki tekanan, banyak memiliki masalah yang sulit.”
[It’s when you’re under pressure and have a lot of complicated problems.]

Participant 6

For several of the participants, stress was strongly connected with time pressure and the volume of demands they faced. They were also aware of the potential for it to cause physical symptoms. One participant, for example, spoke repeatedly about loneliness as a source of stress.

“Kurang perhatian dari orangtua karena orangtua terlalu sibuk kerja... Merasa kesepian; tidak memiliki kedekatan dengan orangtua dan teman, merasa tidak punya sahabat dan terkadang merasa kalau teman-temannya jahat.”
[My parents don’t have much time for me because they are busy with work. I feel lonely. I don’t have that closeness with my parents and friends. I felt like I don’t have (real) friends and sometimes think my friends don’t like me.]

Participant 2

“Jadi aku di rumah ya sendirian gitu. Kan kakakku sekarang sudah kerja juga, jadi aku merasa lebih kesepian lebih sendirian di rumah.”
[So I’m always home alone. My sister has a job now, so I’m lonely alone in the house.]

Participant 2

The issue of loneliness is especially significant in Indonesia. In traditional society, it was unusual for people to be alone, and being by oneself is still considered both undesirable and also inappropriate.
However, rapid social change, including changes in employment, and the time pressures and travel distances involved in living in a very large city like Jakarta, have changed the pattern of many people’s daily life. As a result, loneliness is an increasing problem for all age groups, and it is a source of stress that a majority of Indonesians are unequipped to deal with (see, for example, Purwono and French, 2016).

4.6 Obtaining Religious Knowledge

Internet use is extremely high in Indonesia, and Indonesians have rapidly taken up use of the online environment and social media (Balea, 2016). Not surprisingly, for the participants in this study, online sources are an important means of learning more about religion. Many of the participants interact in forums devoted to this topic, of which there are many that use Indonesian. The aim of this for most of them was to learn more about their religion but also to develop a more Muslim identity and discuss their experience with others of similar background.

“Buka buka Youtube. . . pengajian-pengajian atau ngga kalo misalnya kan kadang-kadang, kan kalo pengajian bosen ya, kayak cuma sekedar gitu. Saya buka yang kayak dari luar dari luar tuh yang diedit-edit gitulah. Jadi misalnya cuma lima menit tapi kayak ngebentuk suatu topik, trus kayak ada efek-efeknya, kan saya dramatal banget ya orangnya, ya.”

[I like to look at Youtube . . . religious discussions or whatever, for example, the religious discussions can get boring, you know, that’s all it is. I look at the ones from outside [Indonesia] that have been edited. So, for instance, there might only be five minutes but it’s like about a certain topic, so it’s like it has an effect. I think those people are really engaging.] Participant 4

“Yang saya nonton videonya segala macem. . . Di film itu ngejelasin secara benar-benar semuanya, terstruktur yang ada di Al-Qur’an, apa yang jadi ini. . . apaa . . . terus sehingga . . . ada perbedaan, jadi saya tekanin Islam rahmatan lil ‘alamin. . . kami juga sering mencoba berdiskusi untuk membandingkan berbagai macam kitab dan ternyata di kitab bible pun ada tertulis larangan untuk makan babi.”

[I watch all kinds of videos. In these films, they really explain everything. They’re structured like in the Quran, what this
is...then what . . . . There are differences, so I concentrate on Islam as God’s gift to the whole universe. We also always try to discuss and compare the various holy books and it turns out that in the Bible, there is a prohibition against eating pork.\]

Participant 10

“Pada saat saya follow itu... yang namanya konten Islami itu, banyak banget yaa.”
[When I follow something . . . what you could call Islamic content, there is so much of it.]

Participant 2

Many of the participants in this study tried to reflect on and internalise Islamic values. They generally hoped this would strengthen their faith and make their religious observances more effective. However, it was Islamic discussion relating to relationships, love and marriage that most of them found most interesting.

“Kajian keislaman dikaitkan dengan cinta atau apa kaya gitu, kan itu lebih . . . lebih menarik gitu Bu.”
[Islamic interpretation that relates to love and things like that is more . . . more interesting.]

Participant 7

This should probably not be surprising, considering the age and situation of the participants. Like young people of the same age anywhere, they were anxious to experience adult relationships and find a life partner.

Many social observers in Indonesia and also the government are concerned about the potential radicalizing effect of the heavy social media use that is increasingly the norm for young people. It has been suggested, for example, that Indonesians may be vulnerable to recruiting efforts of terrorist organizations and exposed to non-mainstream religious interpretations (see, for example, Kompas, 2016). For young people who may be questioning their identity or forming a new adult persona, the increasing social role for Islam in the public
environment and within the middle-class may magnify the influence of open access to such information, in terms of radicalization (Lestari, 2016) but also secularization (see, for example, Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia, 2016).

The participants in this study did not comment on radical information they had seen on the internet, but all of them were familiar with the existence of such material. Additionally, there had been incidents in the past connecting UIN students to radical groups that some of them knew about. This is discussed further in Chapter 5.

4.7 Religion as a Constraint on Happiness

Many of the participants were concerned about their romantic relationships, as might be expected among individuals in this age group. They were all very aware of the restrictions on interaction with the opposite sex that are imposed by their religion, and many felt stress because of this. This was particularly the case for the female participants, many of whom had experienced relationship breakups.

“Putus hubungan dengan pacar yang membuat saya sampai sekarang sedih dan sulit untuk melupakan karena hubungan yang dijalani sudah cukup lama”
[I broke up with my boyfriend which makes me sad, even now. It's hard to forget this relationship which went on for a long time.]
Participant 1

“Pacar saya memutuskan hubungan tanpa sebab yang jelas dan ternyata dia selingkuh dan saya dan pacar saya sudah cukup lama berpacaran.”
[My boyfriend broke up with me for no real reason, and it turned out he had been with someone else for quite some time.]
Participant 2

“Sebenarnya aku sayang banget sama dia, tapi dia hmmm kayak gak nganggap aku penting, Makanya itu gak ada saying good bye, tau-tau dia gak mau bales chat aku, balesnya kayak gitu-gitu doang, aku telepon gak diangkat-angkat.”
I really loved him, but he, well, it was like I wasn’t important to him. So there were no goodbyes, suddenly he didn’t want to respond to my chats, he would just say whatever, when I called him, he wouldn’t answer.

Participant 3

“Tidak bisa melupakan hubungan pacaran masa lalunya yang telah berjalan cukup lama namun karena agama melarang dan pasangannya pergi begitu saja, kalau teringat suka stres.”
[I can’t forget my boyfriend from before. That lasted a long time but because religion forbade it, he just left me. It makes me stressed to think about it.]

Participant 4

Some participants specifically mentioned that they dislike the religious restrictions on romantic relationships between people who are not married.

“Hubungan dekat dengan teman perempuan, ingin pacaran tapi agama tidak membolehkan jadi selalu kepikiran.”
[You have a close relationship with a girl and you want to date but religion doesn’t allow it – this is always on my mind.]

Participant 6

“Terkadang ada sedikit penyesalan kenapa agama melarang orang untuk berpacaran, yang membuatnya sampai sekarang masih sulit untuk ikhlas dan melupakan hubungannya tersebut.”
[Sometimes I wonder why religion forbids people to date. This is still hard for me to accept and to forget about this kind of relationship.]

Participant 1

Again, perhaps characteristic of their age group, some of the participants found their family to be a source of stress. In most cases, this related to relationships within the family and the expectations of parents that were not consistent with the desires of the participants. However, one participant felt anxiety for his parents because of their religious behaviour.
“Ketika dimarahi orangtua . . . Merasa hanya dirinya saja yang sering dimarahi, kedua adiknya tidak pernah dimarahi.”
[When I am scolded by my parents (I feel stressed) . . . I feel like it is only me they get mad at. My two younger brothers never get in trouble.]

Participant 11

“Sebenarnya aku mau nikah cepet...tapi tidak boleh sama orangtuaku.”
[I just want to get married . . . but my parents won’t let me.]

Participant 5

“Faktor orangtua juga bisa membuat saya tidak bahagia, tidak dipercaya lagi untuk melakukan sesuatu.”
[My parents can also make me unhappy. They don’t trust me to do anything.]

Participant 12

“Melihat orang tua yang tidak beribadah.”
[(I am stressed when) I see my parents don’t pray.]

Participant 10

The participants in this study expressed many of the same stresses that characterize young adults’ relationship with parents and other family members. These issues centred on the participants’ aspirations that were different from their parents’; the desire of parents to see their children succeed in the ways considered socially acceptable, such as through higher education; incompatible social goals; and general conflict because the participant felt restricted at home or unfavourably compared to siblings. The participants in this study felt unhappy because of them but were not always able to alleviate the stress and unhappiness using religious strategies, even when they expected and hoped that intensifying their religious activity might have this result.

4.8 Summary
This chapter outlined the findings of this study and presented selected quotations from participant interviews that illustrate the way in which
the young people who took part in this study expressed their views and experiences. The findings are presented in seven sections that relate to the themes that emerged from the interviews. These findings will be discussed in Chapter 5.
CHAPTER 5
DISCUSSION

This chapter discusses and analyses the findings of this study. It is divided into seven sections and themes that come from the findings. They are: the nature of happiness in Indonesia, the importance of ethnic identity, membership in a social group, the use of religious observance to achieve non-religious goals, religious observances as a custom, religious practices as stress management, and happiness and religiosity in young Indonesian Muslims.

Religion is an integral part of life in Indonesia, regardless of the specific religious practices of certain individuals or in a given area. Belief in God is part of the national philosophy, and it is not possible in a legal sense for a person to have no religion, as religious affiliation is recorded on the national identity card and other administrative documents. It is also the case that most Indonesians don’t question their religion, as often occurs in western societies (see Gertz, 1971; Brenner, 1996, for example). In a social sense, it is very difficult to convert to another religion. Because religion is embedded in community and family life, a change in religious practice can have the effect of disrupting a person’s social networks and position in their environment. Indonesians are generally communally oriented and feel it is important to be part of a group (see McCullough and Willoughby, 2009). For many people, it is extremely uncomfortable to feel different from other people in ways that are important and will be viewed negatively by others; converting or changing the visible way in which one practices religion is likely to be seen as negative. This social perception tends to prevent young adults from questioning their religious affiliation. This is different from many western societies where it is considered usual and appropriate for people in this age group to think about religion and its role in their life and perhaps choose to practice a religion different from the one they were raised in (see Voas and Crockett, 2005; Smith, 2003; McGuire,
Religion in Indonesia is an important component of personal identity that allows a person to be part of a community mainstream, which is generally very important to their psychological wellbeing and happiness.

The aim of this research was to elucidate the relationship between religion and happiness among young adults in Indonesia. The participants in the study were all Muslim and were enrolled at a public Islamic university in Jakarta, Indonesia’s capital. In terms of religion, they represent the majority of the public; Indonesia’s population is estimated to be up to 88% Muslim, making it the largest Muslim population in the world and accounting for about 13% of the world’s Muslims (Pew Research Center, 2010). Like many other Indonesians their age, the participants in this study aspire to professional careers and expect to join Indonesia’s growing middle class when they graduate. Like other young people of a similar age in Indonesia and elsewhere, they had many of the same concerns that included the difficulty of finding employment, the desire to be involved in a romantic relationship, the desire to please their family but also to pursue their own interests, and so forth. The aim of the study was to determine whether and to what extent the religious beliefs and practices of these young people were related to their happiness and, if so, in what way. The central role that religion plays in both the public environment and personal life in Indonesia suggests that religion may be significant in contributing to the happiness of young people and, by extension, to their wellbeing.

5.1 The Nature of Happiness in Indonesia

The concept of happiness is not universal and relates to culture, worldview and also to the language in which these areas of experience are expressed. One of the aims of this study was to understand the factors that contribute to happiness in young Indonesian Muslims. The exploration of these factors also revealed the study participants’
understanding of what happiness is. Overall, however, it appeared that
the participants had not thought much about these issues in the past
before they were asked to do so as part of this study. That is, while the
participants had undoubtedly felt happy or unhappy at many times in
their lives, they had generally not thought about the broader meaning
of these emotional states to themselves and to others.

The Indonesian cognitive framework conceptualizes happiness
differently from English. When English speakers talk about being
‘happy’ in connection with their life experiences, they are including
elements of satisfaction, acceptance, as well as the idea of being
pleased. To Indonesians, each of these perceptions is different and
derives from a different domain. For example, many Indonesians talk of
feeling satisfied (puas) with their life. In general, this means that they
are able to meet their basic needs and have what they feel to be an
acceptable position in their social environment. This is sometimes
expressed using the term senang (be happy with, like), which is a less
strong term than ‘happy’ in English. As noted previously, senang is also
linguistically related to the concept of being ‘easy.’ This connotes the
idea of being able to meet one’s basic needs. By contrast, the need to
accept one’s lot in life is widely seen by Indonesians as a religious
concept, often expressed by the term pasrah (be accepting of). Muslims
in Indonesia tend to see any challenges they face as being part of a lot
determined for them by God and believe that such things must be
accepted because they cannot be changed (see Fanany and Fanany,
2013). There is no single term that is exactly equivalent to the term
‘happy’ as applied to life or personal situation in English. In addition to
senang noted above, there are also words like bahagia, which is usually
used to describe a situation free from strife, and gembira, which is
applied to specific events or instances and has a connotation of ‘fun’ in
addition to meaning ‘happy.’ As a result, it is difficult to encourage
Indonesian speakers to think about their experiences in a way that is
comparable to what English speakers mean when they talk about being happy.

While the emotion of happiness is felt by people everywhere in the world and is universally understood in an emotional context, the way in which aspects of this feeling are expressed are different, and it is possible for background and cultural context to affect people’s understanding of the concept (Shaver et al., 2001). This understanding cannot be separated from language, which develops to express culture but whose usage is also affected by cultural practices (Kramsch, 1998). Indonesia, which has more than 300 local cultures in additional to a highly developed national culture, has been subject to multiple outside influences throughout its history. Each of these has added to local culture and also to the practice of religion. It is for this reason that Islam, as well as other religions in Indonesia, are said to be syncretic; they incorporate elements from earlier belief systems and cultural practices (Brakel, 2004; Corliss 2014). Islam was one of the most significant influences in Indonesia, having been brought to the region by traders and scholars from India and the Middle East beginning in the 13th century (Ricklefs, 2008). The gradual spread and adoption of Islam led to the introduction of many Arabic words into Malay (the precursor of modern Indonesian) and also local languages. For example, one term that relates to happiness that was used repeatedly by participants in this study and that is used to discuss the connection between happiness and religion more generally is ikhlas. Ikhlas means ‘sincere’ or ‘genuine’ and conveys the idea of doing things of one’s own free will. This contrasts with terms like senang, bahagia, and gembira mentioned above that are Malay in origin. Another important source of terms used in Indonesian is local languages, such as Javanese, which is the first language of some 100 million people in Indonesia. Pasrah is an example of such a term. Because Indonesian speakers, including the participants in this study, have various cultural concepts that correspond to elements of the
emotion of happiness, the way they conceptualize and then express the blanket term ‘happiness’ is somewhat different from English speakers.

Despite these differences, a Varkey Foundation survey that concerned the happiness of young people in nations around the world indicated that Indonesian young people are the happiest, with around 90% reporting that they are happy (Gray, 2017). This stands in contrast to the perceptions of some observers in Indonesia who suggest that young people increasingly experience stress, anxiety and rising levels of mental illness that would seem to be incompatible with this reported level of happiness (see, for example, Widowati, 2015). For this reason, it is important to analyse what exactly Indonesian young people mean when they talk about being happy. It is certainly the case that Indonesians do not traditionally understand their life in terms of whether or not they are happy (although a more western conception is beginning to be used by a certain part of the public that is more western-oriented). Happiness is not considered to be a relevant life goal, and, in practice, most people, like the participants in this study, think very little about being happy. Many of them have never considered whether they are happy and do not feel they are searching for happiness. Instead, very different from the West, people think a lot about fitting in and conforming to social norms and expectations of family, friends, and society in general. This different orientation is no doubt related to the nature of resilience among Indonesians, which has been noted to be very high (see Fanany and Fanany, 2013) and also means that they do not have a perception of happiness as fleeting. This view is widespread in many cultures and ironically leads to a great deal of unhappiness (see Jashanloo et al., 2015).

For many of the participants in this study, happiness meant simply the absence of identifiable negative emotions, such as sadness or anger and the absence of emotional burdens (bebān). As is generally the case for people of the participants’ age, emotional burdens often take the form
of worries and concerns, such as passing exams, interacting with friends, and getting along with family members. They also experience a great deal of stress related to their personal situation, their responsibilities to their parents, their future career, and so forth. Because happiness for them centres on not having such problems or not feeling stressed, it may be difficult to achieve. The participants in this study generally did not have a larger concept of happiness that was consistent with feeling happy despite having problems, and perhaps the realization that problems of the kind they experienced would be transient. Instead, they tended to characterize their current happiness based on the presence or absence of such ‘burdens’ at the time they were asked to think about their affective state. The converse of this was also the case. Because they tended to see their happiness in terms of a lack of problems, it was difficult for them to find happiness or satisfaction in day to day events, such as doing well in class or gathering with friends and family. In fact, some participants found it very difficult to define happiness or to recall a recent moment of happiness. It was also notable that the participants in this study tended to compare their situation to that of other people as a gauge of their own happiness. They tend to think that the things that make other people happy should also make them happy and, increasingly, this focuses on material possessions that are an obvious measure of status or success, such as having a car or house. This reflects the importance of the group in Indonesian society and the characterization of the community as collective in nature (see Mangunjaya, 2013).

For many of the participants, happiness derives from their perception of other people’s emotional state, especially those people who are very close to them and have a significant impact on their lives. In this study, parents were found to be an important factor in their children’s happiness. The idea that adult children have a responsibility to please and support their parents is a part of many of Indonesia’s traditional cultures and is seen as important in the national culture as well. For
this reason, the participants tended to feel happy if they were able to please their parents by behaving in a way that coincided with their parents’ goals for them. For several of them, this was a reason they were attending the Islamic university where this study took place. In many cases, the participants reported that religious behaviour and practice was important to their parents, which extended to religious dress and participation in religious activities, and the young people were willing to comply because they felt that pleasing their parents, by definition, would make them happy. This view was especially problematic for several participants who were not close to their parents or who did not get along well with them.

For some participants, happiness comes from comparatively easily achievable external factors such as having friends or being part of the group. Friends for them have an important role in determining their feelings. The importance of these social connections in happiness in Indonesia has been noted in the literature (see, for example, Jaafar et al., 2012). Having an extensive social network and being part of a group was significant to all the participants, especially those who reported that their family relationships were not very close. As discussed above, however, these social networks did not seem to be a source of happiness for the participants but instead were seen as a prerequisite for happiness that was more significant if absent. In other words, participants felt they were unable to be happy if they lacked friends and a social group but that having these things was not enough to make them happy. This relates closely to a very prevalent idea in Indonesia that it is not normal to want to be alone. Privacy is not highly valued, and most people prefer to have a companion or at least another person around at all times. In the case of certain activities, such as eating, it is considered antisocial to do them alone, and children are taught this from an early age. This idea is contained in a number of proverbs and other traditional expressions that convey desirable social values, such as: *Duduk seorang bersempit-sempit, duduk bersama berlapang-lapang*
[When you sit alone, it feels cramped; when you sit together (with other people), there is plenty of room]. This important social norm, then, is understood by the participants to reflect the correct or appropriate social status, and they feel it is not possible to be happy without the social validation that comes from being part of a group.

The existence of social relationships alone is not enough to make a person happy, however. The quality of such friendships is also important and allows for the development of social skills (see Demir, et al., 2012). Some of the participants felt unhappy because they did not feel that their friendships were of high quality, which they seemed to understand as relating to the degree that such relationships were smooth and socially satisfactory. Their friendships were mostly based on specific interests that they hoped might be personally beneficial. Some felt a dilemma in the desire to be part of a group and the reliance on group perceptions they had developed, and the conflicting desire to be more independent and make their own decisions. This was mentioned by a number of participants in the context of their desire to do something or behave in a certain way, but at the same time knowing that the social context required a different type of behaviour. This kind of conflict ranged from comparatively insignificant issues, such as wearing Islamic dress (which is now the norm in the Islamic university they attend as well as in many Indonesian communities), to much more significant matters, such as the desire to have a boy- or girlfriend but not being allowed to by their social context because dating was seen as inappropriate by family and friends because of religious precepts or practices. This kind of internal conflict seemed to greatly affect the self-esteem of participants who experienced it. In young adults and adolescence, low self-esteem has been associated with depression and anxiety (see Orth et al., 2008; Lee and Hankin, 2009), as well as lack of purpose in life and uncertainty about the future (Dukes and Lorch, 1989; Kennedy, 1998). The participants who felt this tended to just go along with their current situation, often doing what they observed
others doing without any real desire to engage in that specific activity. This often made them unhappy, but their lack of personal goals was also an impediment to making positive change. It has been noted in the context of Indonesian society, that a collective society is typically associated with external sources of happiness (Triandis, 1995), such as described by many participants and including family and friends as the source of happiness. There is not much research on happiness in Indonesia specifically, and one of the reasons may be that people tend not to think very much about their feelings and desires as individuals but instead focus on relationships that conform to social norms and that are seen as a required component of happiness. This external focus means that many people likely view the achieving of happiness as out of their direct control and dependent on a range of outside factors that they have learned are proxies for happiness. It is perhaps for this reason that Indonesians rarely express their anxieties or depressive feelings in terms of whether or not they are happy, and members of the public are not sympathetic to such interpretations, especially if the person in question has the easily observable external attributes, such as a large network of friends, that are considered to be socially desirable. In a collectivist society of this kind, people tend to be highly motivated by group norms and must be willing to submerge their personal desires in order to fulfil group goals (Hofstede, 2001).

The participants in this study seemed to lack awareness of an inner dimension of happiness that might be unsatisfied, even if external requirements were fulfilled. For some of them, this created an internal conflict that greatly impacted on their self-esteem and feelings of personal value. They found it difficult to accept that they were not happy or satisfied, despite having the things considered socially desirable for their age groups (a strong social network, supportive family, a place at a major university, and so on) and that they had been socialised to believe defined a person’s happiness. They tended not to have a concept of subjective happiness that might be different for every
individual. Even if they had had such a concept, it is typically extremely difficult for Indonesians, and especially younger people, to violate social norms by behaving in a way that is not socially sanctioned. The levels of smoking and drug use are very high in Indonesia, especially in certain communities, and this is a frequent topic of discussion among professionals as well as in the media (see Ardjil, 2016). This may be a widespread attempt by young people to manage their incompatible feelings and accommodate to the internal conflict many of them feel.

Religion was not always a means for the participants to reach happiness but, for some of them, it did have value in overcoming stress by making them feel better about a situation that was bothering them. A number of them reported having had a bad experience and asking God for help. They felt that, if God answered their prayers, this would make them happy and give them more trust in religion. Some participants, who related religion to happiness, believed that religious people should be happier because they have something to guide them that would bring eternal happiness. These participants also felt that people with no religion would only experience shallow happiness because they would inevitably end up feeling lost and lonely since they do not have a source of guidance and no certainty to rely upon. The view that more religious people are happier and that religious observation should be a source of happiness is widely accepted in Indonesian society. There are many self-help books on the market that promote this view, which is frequently discussed in the traditional as well as social media (see, for example, Femina, 2013) and is also espoused by religious organizations and groups (see, for example, Islamiyah, 2014).

For the young people in this study, while the definition of happiness was difficult to pin down, they were very much aware of specific experiences or situations that made them feel unhappy. In fact, this was clearer to many of them than comparable contexts that made them feel happy. They expected that the possession of certain external
attributes as well as religious participation should make people, including themselves, happy and experienced internal conflict when this did not seem to work for them. The idea that a certain type of social participation automatically means the participants are happy, and a similar view that practicing religion in the ways that are accepted by the community must make people happy, is very deeply ingrained in Indonesian society and had been internalised by the participants from an early age. A number of them did not find this to be the case, however, and tended to view this situation as implying something abnormal about them. They did not consider that their interpretation might be flawed or inaccurate. This might be a reflection of the collectivist nature of Indonesian society and effects this type of social organisation has on the thinking of individuals, including in the context of religion. The nature of Islamic practice may intensify this view. It might also be the case that the internal dilemma expressed by a number of participants reflects the rapid and pervasive social change that has occurred in Indonesian in recent decades, as well as the expansion of opportunities and access to information since the end of the New Order government in 1998 (see Aspinall and Fealy, 2003, for discussion of this).

5.2 The Importance of Ethnic Identity

Despite its focus on religion and happiness, the results of this study suggest a number of interesting aspects of the nature of ethnic identity among young people in Indonesia and its relationship to both religion and happiness. This is relevant to the main purpose of this study because it is accepted that part of normal development in young adulthood is to choose and build a personal identity that reflects the individual’s vision of him or herself (see Erikson, 1968). In Indonesia, ethnic background is an important part of personal identity, and it is usual for people to compare ethnic origins when they first meet. This suggests that ethnic identity is a fundamental aspect of how individuals see themselves and also one of the most basic criteria for in-group out-group determination. In this context, it is important to note that the
Indonesian language and the mainstream national culture mediated by it are constructs developed in the 20th century to unite a very diverse population spread across thousands of islands that happened to be part of the Netherlands East Indies before 1945. Indonesia has about 300 ethnic groups and more than 700 languages (see Simons and Fennig, 2017). While the number of people who speak Indonesian as a first language is growing, the vast majority of Indonesia’s very large population speaks one of these local languages as a first language and only begins to use Indonesian when they enter formal education. The result is that ethnic identity is firmly established before the majority of the population begins to learn about their national identity at the age of 6 or 7.

The importance of ethnic identity for Indonesians can be seen in many aspects of daily life and was significant to many of the participants in this study. For members of a number of Indonesia’s ethnic groups, religion is one of the factors that allows a person to claim membership in the community; for groups like the Malay, Minang, Acehnese, and many others, it is understood that everyone with this ethnicity will be Muslim, and this is an immutable aspect of group membership. For other ethnic groups, such as the Javanese, individuals may profess one of several different religions and still be considered members of the ethnic group because inclusion is based on other criteria and does not include religion (see Suryadinata, Arifin and Ananta, 2003, for more discussion of ethnic identity in Indonesia). While identification with an ethnic group is generally part of the personal and family heritage of most Indonesians, and this identification tends to be strong, Indonesians are also generally quite adaptive to the national culture, which has developed rapidly in the decades since the nation achieved independence. This national culture uses the Indonesian language and applies to all modern and formal domains of experience (see Montolalu and Suryadinata, 2007). As a result, Indonesians usually have a dual identity, first as a member of an ethnic group and, second, as a citizen.
of the modern nation. Because of the way in which language, culture and social domains function in Indonesia, there is usually no conflict between these two self-perceptions. It is also the case that the formal educational system is an important vehicle for teaching the national language and also developing a feeling of participation in the national culture. This aspect of the system is considered to be fundamental in creating national unity and contributing to development (see Fanany and Effendi, 1999, for discussion of this).

Religion is a part of identity for many Indonesians but is not subject to personal choice, as suggested in some western models. Because religious affiliation is often part of ethnic identity (which cannot be changed or negotiated), most people do not question their religion, which also has to be reported in various public contexts, such as on national identity cards. This may explain why some of the participants in this study seem to take their religious identity for granted but are not that interested in the more personal dimensions of faith. The participants’ comments tended to focus on religious ritual and practice, but they spoke very little either about a personal meaning associated with religious belief, or of their own faith separate from what they had been taught the role of religion is supposed to be. Nonetheless, this does help explain why it is rare to hear about conversion from Islam in Indonesia (although conversion to Islam sometimes occurs). Since religious affiliation is part of ethnic identity for many Indonesians, it may be outside the framework of identity formation as discussed in much of the literature on this topic.

There are people and groups in Indonesia who believe religion (Islam) should be people’s first identity, but the majority of the population does not share this view. Instead, most people see themselves first as a member of their ethnic group, which may include adherence to a certain religion as it is understood and practiced in their own community. Religious expression often contains elements of culturally determined
behaviour or that date from before the advent of Islam (see, for example, Brakel, 2004). In many cases, these aspects of religious practice would be deemed to be contrary to the requirements of Islam in other parts of Indonesia or outside of the country. Nonetheless, they represent part of the cultural heritage of individuals and tend to be deeply held in the communities where they occur. When religion is associated with such practices, it is often viewed in a comparable way, namely as a key element in personal identity and a defining characteristic of individual experience. However, what exactly individuals or whole communities understand to be included in the concept of religious practice and belief can vary greatly. It is for this reason, while almost 90% of the Indonesian population is Muslim, it is very common for pre-Islamic beliefs to be practiced alongside behaviours that relate to a more standard interpretation of Islam. For instance, many Indonesian Muslims believe as deeply in the existence of malevolent ghosts and nature spirits that are dangerous to humans as they do in God. In fact, movies depicting these beings are very popular and are produced at a high level, as are similar features in other Southeast Asian countries. Similarly, milestone events are often celebrated with an Islamic ritual and also with a cultural one that predates Islam and has roots in a much earlier supernatural belief system.

For many young Indonesians, such as the participants in this study, the somewhat fluid nature of religious association has become an aspect of personal identity that may be manipulated or altered for social purposes. Unlike ethnic background, for example, religion tends to be mutable because it focuses on practice, not on internal considerations of faith. As a result, religious behaviour of individuals tends to vary depending on context and may be emphasized in situations where it will confer social advantage, such as men participating in the communal Friday prayer at a mosque frequented by their work supervisor in order to be perceived as more religious. Similarly, religious behaviour may be abandoned when it is not beneficial; it is
not uncommon for people to eat surreptitiously during the fasting month when they are alone or to skip some of the five daily prayers because they are busy and the situation means no one will notice. It was notable in this study that many of the participants stated explicitly that they had altered their religious behaviour to fit in better with their peers and presumably gain social advantage. Some of them commented that the expected behaviour in the social group was different from their family’s normal practices, so they behaved as expected of them at home but differently among their friends. This was not problematic to any of them but simply reflected the way in which Indonesian society works.

However, many of the young people in this study did attempt to create a more religious identity for themselves as a way of gaining or enhancing social status among their peers. In the case of these participants, religious behaviour is an important measure of this status because they are studying at an Islamic university. For other young people in another setting, other personal attributes and non-religious behaviour may be emphasized and imitated. The fact that they are studying at a public Islamic university reflected how the family of some of the participants hoped they would be viewed with the expectation that this would lead to enhanced social status. There can be no doubt that Islam is increasingly observable as a social force in Indonesia (Kersten, 2015), suggesting that this strategy might have long-term benefit to the participants as well more broadly to their families. This may help explain the willingness of the participants in this study to adapt their behaviour to better fit what they saw the social situation to be, as a way of gaining the most benefit from portraying a more religious identity. They appeared to separate this behaviour from any personal religious faith they might have had and saw outwardly religious behaviour, such as wearing Islamic dress or participating in public religious activities, as more of a social attribute than an expression of personal belief.
5.3 Membership in a Social Group

For many Indonesians, being part of a specific group and being known as a member of the community makes them proud and increases their confidence and self-esteem. Being active in the community may also make them feel more valuable as a person. For many of the study participants, because they are Muslim, religious activities and organizations are especially appealing because they offer a way to fit in and have friends. In addition, the activities of such organizations are automatically relevant to them, regardless of how they feel or what they believe. For some of the participants, religious participation in this form is more to achieve social goals than for any other reason.

Many of the participants in this study had begun to take part in more religious activities and behave more religiously when they entered the university because they wished to fit in with other students they met there and be part of a large social group. Several of them mentioned the beneficial impact having a social circle of this kind had had on their religious practice, in that they would be more inclined to pray, go to the mosque, fast or perform other religious rituals, because their friends were doing so and that this type of participation made them happy. In this, it is likely that the social aspects of their religion, rather than personal faith, were more important in their happiness which derived from having a place in their social context and being seen as part of the group. The social aspects of religion in the context of happiness have been discussed in the literature (see, for example, Lim and Putnam, 2010) and have been observed in various locations to relate to the nature of the social context (Okulicz-Kozaryn, 2010). In Indonesia, and specifically for the participants in this study, the desire to be part of a social group composed of their peers as well as the increasingly visible nature of religion in the public sphere combine to influence their perception of the relationship between religious observance and happiness.
It is generally accepted that people feel very strongly about religion as an aspect of identity that often shapes in-group and out-group association (see McCullough and Willoughby, 2009). For this reason, cohesiveness within a religious group is often very strong. The participants in this study belong automatically to such a group at the university they attend, and this membership is part of their conception of personal identity as a student. As a result, they are generally proud to be seen as belonging to the religious community associated with their school, and present this aspect of their identity openly to others both on campus as well as in the broader community. Additionally, they tend to feel a strong loyalty to the group and have a sense of being connected to other students in this way. This reinforces their religious identity and, for many of them, increases their certainty in the validity of their religious beliefs. In the Indonesian context, this strong group identity along with the certainty it generates has encouraged students from various universities to take part in political demonstrations, often espousing Islamist or Islamocentric views that are contrary to the Indonesian Constitution and its underlying philosophy of Pancasila. An example of this occurred during the 2017 Jakarta gubernatorial election. During the campaign, a number of Islamic figures tried to persuade members of the public to vote against a specific candidate on the basis on religion. In fact, a number of religious communities called on their members from provinces all over Indonesia to come to Jakarta to demonstrate against one of the gubernatorial candidates who was not Muslim. Large numbers of students were involved in this and similar demonstrations (see Nasti, 2016).

Despite the sense of belonging and social advantage the participants generally associated with membership in the Islamic community of their university, some participants also felt that the demands of these groups were a burden or went against their feelings of what was appropriate. However, they also felt it was extremely difficult to reject or ignore the activities or behaviours the group seemed to demand. For example, one
participant who felt compelled to take part in religious activities he was uncomfortable with also feared being rejected by his peers and was worried about being seen as “secular.” In Indonesia, which is a collectivist society (see Hofstede, 1994), this type of social pressure and corresponding social ostracism is a threat to anyone who cannot or chooses not to conform to group expectations, and applies to all kinds of social groups, not just religious ones. This means, in practice, that any individual who wishes to be part of a group expects to have to adjust his or her behaviour in order to become and stay a member. For some Indonesians, the need to reformulate their actions and views based on the norms of the social groups they are part of is not problematic, and many seem to have no trouble compartmentalizing their actions in ways that allow them to shift between different types of social groups based on the perceived personal value associated with belonging to the group in question. For others, however, this is problematic, and there may be group norms that are very difficult to conform to. For several of the participants in this study who came from families that were less religious, even though all were Muslim, the expectations for religious behaviour in the context of the university were difficult to adjust to, and they felt at a disadvantage compared to their peers who had more familiarity with this social context. An additional aspect of this that is important in Indonesia is that religion and religious behaviour are viewed as socially desirable. For this reason, a person who does not feel comfortable with socially sanctioned religious activity is unlikely to be viewed sympathetically; he or she is more likely to be seen as antisocial or not respectable. For some of the participants in this study, attending an Islamic university was a social marker for their parents and themselves that identified them as a religious individual. This, in turn, placed them within the majority in Indonesia, and allowed them to see themselves as being more virtuous.

Interestingly, in addition to the perception that students at Islamic universities are more religious than students at other schools, there is
also an idea in Indonesian society that such environments may contribute to terrorist ideologies. It is the case that several terrorists that have been discussed in the media are known to have studied at the university where this study was located. In 2014, for example, a group of students at UIN made a declaration of support for ISIS whose activities in the Middle East were then being heavily reported in the media (see Tristiawati, 2014). Campus officials were very concerned and promised to investigate, but the incident suggests the power of group membership in supporting and spreading views that can be associated with religion, even when they are not directly relevant to Indonesian society. While the university is aware of this potential and acknowledges that former UIN students have participated in terrorist activities, its administration also recognizes the difficulty in monitoring and controlling student participation in radical groups and believes they should be included, not ostracized (LPM Institut, 2017).

It is difficult to overestimate the importance of social conformity and group membership in Indonesian society. Being unique or having individual views and interests that are different from those of one’s peers is not seen as desirable, and children are socialized from birth to want to be like others around them. In many cases, being different from other people is seen as strange and will have negative social consequences, such as being bullied or shunned. For this reason, it is particularly difficult for a young person to express his or her individuality, especially if it relates to a domain such as religion that has high social value. For this reason, young Indonesians, like the participants in this study, tend not to question their religious beliefs and values or even, in many cases, to think about them in an introspective manner. Instead, they focus on the outwardly visible aspects of religious practice, such as praying, fasting, and attending the mosque. For the female participants in this study, the pressure to wear Islamic dress as well as the type of dress was sometimes troubling. For example, participants who had not attended a religious high school
reported feeling ambiguous about changing their style of dress to conform to the norms at the university because their school friends would see it as a potentially negative change that was strange in the context of their social group. On the other hand, they also felt enormous social pressure to conform to the dress practices of students at the university, that were often more conservative than what they were used to.

This points up an interesting aspect of religious identity in Indonesia. Islamic dress for women is one of the most visible aspects of religious affiliation and distinguishes Muslim women from Indonesian women of other religions. However, the hijab and other garments that are often associated with this type of attire are not native to Indonesia and, in fact, were rarely seen before the early 2000s. Traditional dress of the various ethnic groups (including those that are Muslim) is very different and does not provide the degree of body coverage required by some other Muslim societies. Prior to the establishment of Regional Autonomy in 2001, the majority of Indonesian women in professional contexts, including university students, wore western dress. Islamic dress was generally less restrictive than is the current norm; for example, the usual type of head covering was often a loose scarf that allowed part of the woman’s hair to be seen. The period of political and cultural development in Indonesia that followed the end of the New Order government of President Soeharto has been associated with modernization, democratization and also an increased focus on cultural identity (see Aspinall and Fealy, 2003, for discussion of this). A number of authors have discussed the emergence of the current form of Islamic dress as a response to these forces through which women are increasingly expressing their religious identity, despite the fact that these forms of dress originate outside of the Indonesian cultural milieu (see, for example, Jones, 2007; Rinaldo, 2008; Jones, 2010; among others).
For the female participants in this study, the adoption or intensification of Islamic dress to fit into the norm at their university was intended to allow them to be more like their peers and to identify with the larger group of Muslim students and Indonesian Muslims in general. The male students underwent similar behaviour changes relative to their pre-university activities for the same reason. These activities often centered on taking part in religious study groups and clubs, attending the mosque more regularly and trying to learn more about religion and religious thinking. All the participants recognised the social benefits they could gain from being part of this social group and experienced enhanced self-confidence, self-esteem and a feeling of protection as a result.

Despite the strong motivation felt by the participants in this study to fit into the norms of the group and to exhibit the types of behaviour considered appropriate in the religious environment of their university, it was not easy for all of them to do this, and some did experience internal conflict between their personal desires and the demands of their peer group. One participant, for example, despite having attended an Islamic high school, was unable to avoid behaviours considered inappropriate in the university context. His experience in the school he attended had not made him able to accept prohibitions on smoking, for example, and he had difficulty complying with this rule on campus despite the social repercussions. There is a tendency in Indonesia to view young people who engage in behaviours that are considered to be negative as having been influenced by other people who do not recognize the negative nature of the actions (see, for example, Masuroh et al., 2013; Hastuti et al., 2016; Kusdiarto et al., 2017). This generally means that the individual aspects of interpretation, experience, resilience, and coping ability are overlooked in considering behaviour of young people that violates social norms or that is seen as inappropriate.
In the context of this study, despite difficulties experienced by some of the participants in adjusting to the demands of the social group at UIN and adapting their behaviour to that of their peers as expected by their parents and lecturers, all the young people felt that the benefits of being part of the student community at the university outweighed any personal dilemmas they felt. They were aware of the importance of higher education and felt that they were lucky to have the chance to attend a prestigious university. They also understood that they would continue to benefit beyond their university years through the network they continued to build and through being seen as part of the most educated elite. The increased religious identity that went along with this was an added benefit, as Islamic associations are increasingly important in Indonesia at the present time, especially as there have been a number of national-level issues relating to the place of Muslims as the great majority of the public, such as in the context of the Jakarta gubernatorial election mentioned above. All of the participants were aware of this and accepted a widely held view in Indonesia that it is appropriate for members of the Muslim community to benefit from their religious affiliation relative to non-Muslims, despite the fact that Indonesia is not an officially Islamic nation. This aspect of religious affiliation was seen as separate from personal religious belief and practice and tended to centre, as discussed above, on visible attributes that would be recognised as signalling in-group membership by other people.

5.4 The Use of Religious Observance to Achieve Non-Religious Goals

For many of the participants, religious practice was seen as a means to achieving goals in other areas of their life. Many of them seemed to feel strongly that it was possible that carrying out various religious observances would bring them wealth, success, and other tangible forms of reward. Interestingly, they tended not to view this in terms of having their prayers answered by God; instead, several of them seemed
to have a kind of superstitious expectation that religious observance would ensure good fortune. The quality of their observance did not seem to be a concern, only the fact that the activity was completed. This is not compatible with the intention of such activities, but does reflect the syncretic nature of religion in Indonesia. Several participants openly discussed their interest in the mystic side of religion that borders on magic, the supernatural and so forth, such as *ruqiyah* mentioned in Chapter 4. This has been an important aspect of Islam (and other religions) in Indonesia historically, and it is interesting that this appears in young people today who are studying at a university, suggesting that awareness of the supernatural world as it is understood traditionally remains high in Indonesia.

There can be no doubt that one of the aims of the practice of Islam is to support positive emotional states that may contribute directly or indirectly to happiness (see Joshanloo, 2013). The orthodox understanding of this is that the Qur’an is the basis for happiness, as well as other aspects of individual affect, and should be the standard for behaviour likely to result in positive emotional states (Tiliouine, 2014). It is known in Indonesia that Islam holds that God will reward those individuals who carry out their religious obligations, although this reward is usually understood to refer to the afterlife, not more worldly gains. While it is likely that many Indonesians understand this in an intellectual sense and have been taught this principle as part of their religious training, the superstitious belief that material reward will closely follow the accomplishment of activities considered to be good is also very strong.

For instance, many people in Indonesia believe if they give money to charity, God will reward them by making a larger amount of money come to them. There is a similar belief that this type of material reward will come from carrying out an extra *dhuha* prayer (between sunrise and noon) in addition to the other set daily prayers. Many people,
including some of the participants in this study, expected that their prayers to God would be answered immediately. In other non-religious contexts, the view that every task should be compensated and that any favour carried out for someone else should be reciprocated is very strong. For example, university lecturers, in addition to their salary, are paid extra for participating in thesis examinations, developing teaching material, and acting as an investigator in their own research projects. Corruption remains a very significant social issue and may also be related to the desire for immediate reciprocation in a material sense. In this sense, the belief that religious practice should result in material reward from God can be seen as an extension of a culturally specific outlook that likely precedes Islam, and is too deeply rooted in Indonesian society to be replaced by a more orthodox religious view of such observances.

Fasting is another aspect of Islamic practice that is often uses by Indonesians for purposes other than moral improvement as intended in religious doctrine. Many Indonesians, especially younger women, are beginning to have views about personal appearance that are more similar to those in the west. One of these is a desire to be fashionably thin. For many of them, including some of the participants in this study, fasting, which is socially acceptable when done for religious purposes, also served as a weight loss or diet management strategy that allowed them to avoid eating without offending others or causing concern. Traditionally, refusing food is considered to be very impolite in Indonesia, and thinness is equated with illness (see Tas’ady, Fanany and Fanany, 2012, for discussion of this). However, an individual who does not want to eat as form of weight management can mask this intent by claiming to be fasting for religious purposes, which is likely to be met with approval and has the added benefit of showing the person to be of a religious nature.
It is common in Indonesia for people to adapt their religious beliefs and values in ways they think will better meet their needs. This flexibility can be seen as a strength that might contribute to individual and group resilience (see Bonanno and Burton, 2013) but also illuminates the nature of religious belief for many people in Indonesia. For example, Indonesians often use religion to rationalize doing certain things or avoiding others, when in fact their actual motivation is completely different. For example, many of the participants in this study wanted to be involved in a romantic relationship. Several of them seemed to view religious restrictions on interaction between men and women as important and were willing to adapt their behaviour accordingly. Others, however, actually lacked confidence and were hesitant about approaching a person they were interested in. They often used religion as an excuse that would allow them to avoid the risk of being unable to start or maintain a relationship. It is important to note that Indonesian society is not segregated by gender, despite Islam being the majority religion, and men and women interact freely in all social contexts, including the university.

The way in which the participants in this study view religious practice is likely characteristic of many people in Indonesia. This should perhaps not be surprising, considering that Islam came to the region in the 13th century but existed alongside earlier religions (Hinduism and Buddhism) that had many more adherents for centuries. Evidence for the larger-scale adoption of Islam in some parts of the country dates from the 17th century, but this was mostly limited to Java and Sumatra (Ricklefs, 2008). The fact that the existing culture of the region was extremely different from the culture of the Arab world where Islam originated meant that the cultural aspects of the religion did not always fit well with existing practices, and Indonesian Islam took on very different characteristics compared to other places in ways that are still seen today (see, for example, Woodward, 2010, for a discussion of this). While it is the case, as noted above, that some interpretations of religion
in Indonesia suggest that engaging in the full range of Islamic observances should increase personal happiness and wellbeing, it is also the case that concepts like happiness derive from the social and cultural context (Lu, Gilmour and Kao, 2001; Lu and Gilmour, 2004). In the case of Indonesia, these contexts were established long before Islam was the religion of most communities, and it has been observed that Indonesians tend to describe basic emotions like happiness in culturally distinct ways (see Heider, 2006). The view of the participants in this study that religious observance should properly be rewarded in a material sense is also a culturally-derived view, and suggests that religion may not contribute to their happiness unless the expected rewards are gained. This is an important dimension of the participants' understanding and interpretation of the meaning and value of religion that does not fit with the purpose of religion as described within Islam itself.

5.5 Religious Observances as a Custom

It is apparent that many aspects of religious observance have been instilled in participants by their family as part of day to day behaviour. They have never really thought about this, and they have never had a choice of whether or not to participate, because of the nature of social pressure and social control in Indonesia. The carrying out of religious practice is often more to demonstrate one’s personal identity to others, and also an attempt to gain personal benefit such as social status or to get something in return from God. This is very different from the west, where questioning religious practice is considered normal at a certain age (Voas and Crockett, 2005; Smith, 2003; McGuire, 2008). As a result, the participants in this study were not very introspective about their own motivations and beliefs and have never really thought about their own religious identity or why they do what they do. Many appear to have little understanding of their own religion, which seemed to affect their assessment of whether religious faith and practice might be able to increase their happiness. In other words, the participants were not
able to draw on religion as a means of psychological support, personal satisfaction or some other intangible benefit. Instead, they tended to participate in religious activities mostly because they did not want to disappoint or anger their parents or were afraid that people around them would view them as not religious, especially as they were studying at an Islamic University. They fully expected, however, that there would be concrete advantages from their religious activities that ranged from parental approval and support to career benefits and even having their prayers answered by God.

This view, which seems to be supported by observations in Indonesian society, did not suggest to the participants that religion is subject to personal choice. While they viewed their own religious practice as giving them certain, very clear social advantages, it did not occur to any of them that another religion might offer more benefits. In this, the participants were probably correct, with the understanding that the benefits they were probably thinking of related to the social, rather than the personal psychological, context. There are numerous examples in Indonesia that indicate the origin of this perception. For example, a well-known politician, who had not been seen wearing Islamic dress, was subpoenaed as a witness in a high-profile corruption case in 2016. She appeared in court wearing a head scarf and holding a set of prayer beads which she did not put down for the duration of her testimony. This politician was aggressively mocked in the media because she had never shown any religious behaviour in the past, and it was understood that her appearance on this occasion was intended to convey the impression that she was a religious person who would be unlikely to be a co-conspirator in a corruption case (see Prihatin, 2016, among others for discussion of this case). This politician was also a former beauty pageant winner and had never been seen in Muslim dress. She took part in the Miss Universe contest, which was controversial at the time because the swimsuit competition is widely viewed as violating Indonesian social norms as well as Islamic principles of modesty.
Another highly publicized case also involving a beauty pageant shows that many Indonesians are willing to give up various aspects of religious practice if they feel there is greater potential benefit. In this instance, a young woman, Qory Sandioriva, who had won the Putri Indonesia (Miss Indonesia) Pageant representing Aceh, which is one of the most religiously conservative parts of the country, caused a great deal of controversy by participating in the swimsuit competition in the Miss Universe pageant and later appearing in various television soap operas without a head scarf. She acknowledged that Islamic dress was required in the region she comes from but said she had to wear a bathing suit when she competed in the Miss Universe competition, and then dress in ordinary clothes in order to be able to work in national television. Nonetheless, many members of the public were critical of her behaviour, which was seen as being economically motivated (see Azzura, 2015, for discussion of this case).

The understanding of religious practice as a potential social asset that can be used or ignored depending on the situation may be a side effect of the way religion is taught to children in Indonesia. Muslim parents commonly train their children from an early age to memorize and recite portions of the Quran (Gulevic, 2004). However, this teaching method does not support a deeper understanding of the meaning of the verses themselves. These texts must be learned in Arabic, a language which is not used for communication in Indonesia. While there are many translations into Indonesian available, religious practice and custom requires the ability to recite the Arabic, not understand it. Required praying, fasting, and other activities are similarly a part of the social environment; while most people can state the reason for them, which they learned as a fact, they generally have little feeling beyond this about the place of these activities in the context of faith. For this reason, it is common for people not to pray or fast in situations where they are alone or, in the case of young people, when they are outside of their parents’ control. Socially prescribed religious behaviour may allow
people to be more flexible, but may also contribute to a lack of attention to the values associated with religious faith. This absence of personal motivation may be the reason the participants in this study were not able to use religion to support resilience and happiness to as great an extent as has been discussed in the literature in relation to other communities (Snoep, 2008; Liu, Koenig and Wei, 2011; Lewis, Maltby and Day, 2005). This also suggests that the widespread assumption in Indonesia that more intense engagement in religious behaviour should make people happier may not be accurate, at least not for younger people like the participants in this study.

It is generally very important to young people in Indonesia to do the things their parents expect of them and that they believe will make their parents happy. As a result of this, young Indonesians remain quite attached to their parents and family beyond the age where this is considered unusual in western countries (Keats, 2000). It is also common for young people to be willing to follow their parents’ wishes, even when this will make them unhappy. For example, among the participants in this study, several were attending the Islamic university because their parents wanted them to, when in fact they would have preferred to study at a secular school. Many Indonesians believe that the requirement that children obey their parents, regardless of age, comes from Islam and represents an important religious value prescribed by their belief system. This can extend to very significant, personal issues, such as whom to marry, that have the potential to have a lifelong impact on the person involved. Many young Indonesians believe that refusing to do what their parents want will isolate them from their family and lead to lifelong unhappiness. They are generally unwilling to risk this and seem to feel that any unhappiness they experience from following their parents’ wishes is less important and reflects a defect in their personality. In other words, many young people believe that they should be happy doing what their parents want and, if they are not, something is wrong with them. They rarely question the
content of their parents’ choice for them. Several of the participants in this study were in this kind of dilemma where they believed they should be happy because they were obeying their parents by attending the Islamic university, by avoiding social relationships with the opposite sex, or by dressing in a religiously conservative manner, but were not because this conflicted with their own desires and interests. Some of the participants tried to address this by engaging more intensively in the religious practices that are thought to bring peace of mind in Indonesia (additional prayers, reading the Quran, and so forth). However, this was not always effective, even though the participants were highly motivated to experience the desired effect. This emphasizes the internal conflict many young Indonesians feel where the nature of current society seems to offer numerous choices that are not compatible with things that are traditionally considered important and desirable in Indonesia. These new possibilities are often attractive and seem to have more promise for young people, but are often unacceptable to older people who have more traditional outlooks. Western style social relations, including dating and marriage at an older age, falls into this category, as do other activities that align more with personal interest as opposed to communal social norms.

As a way of reconciling their conflicting feelings, many of the young people in this study have tried to learn more about religion with the belief that, if their knowledge were deeper, they would feel less emotional turmoil and be better able to manage their feelings. The main means to do this is through the internet, which in itself is a manifestation of the conflict between modern and traditional ideas. The internet is extremely popular in Indonesia as is social media, but paradoxically is often used to reinforce traditional behaviour, such as through the transfer of religious practices that used to be carried out in other ways into social media formats. An example of this are the very popular religious study groups that interact through messaging applications like WhatsApp. In the past, such groups always met at a
local mosque, for example, and included people from the same
neighbourhood. Such groups still exist, of course, but virtual ones are
increasingly popular and may have members all over the world. The
young people in this study, however, tend to use various webpages to
try to gain more knowledge about Islam and apply it in their daily life.
However, it is difficult for people in this age group to evaluate the
material they come in contact with, and the problem of radical
organizations using such sites to recruit young people is well-known in
Indonesia (see, for example, BBC Indonesia, 2017).

One impact of the practice of using the internet to further their religious
knowledge is the development of a feeling of superiority among some
Indonesian young people that derives from what they see as purer
Islamic practice. The impetus for this seems to derive largely from
outside of Indonesian society, but has driven the widespread shift to
Islamic dress over the past two decades and is also impacting consumer
attitudes (see Rudnyckyi, 2009). It is now commonplace in Indonesia to
see television ads for halal cosmetics and Islamic fashion aimed
especially at young, middle-class women (see Jones, 2007, for
discussion of this). The existence of such products advertised in this
way can be seen as contributing to the formation of a new elite that has
a certain type of religious appearance as its main characteristic.

For the young people in this study, it is apparent that religious practice,
in itself, is not necessarily effective in supporting happiness, but they
do derive some benefit from being part of an Islamic majority that is
socially dominant and that they can see being morally correct. For those
participants who felt compelled to do the things their parents and
community thought were desirable even when they conflicted with their
own desires, the idea that a greater involvement in Islamic practice and
behaviours is associated with moral improvement somewhat balanced
the conflict they felt, and some of the participants tried to use this as a
way of rationalizing doing the things their family wanted in terms of
religious practice and religiously-based social norms. Despite this, many of the participants still experienced considerable emotional dissatisfaction which they found very problematic.

5.6 Religious Practices as Stress Management
The participants in this study reported that they believe religion has made them more able to manage their emotions and stress and be more resilient. A number of them use prayer and recitation of Quranic verses as a way of relieving pressure that they feel. Some of them specifically took part in religious groups which they believed would support them during periods of stress. Being part of a group for these participants provided a source of support and reassurance because they felt that they would always have people to turn to who would stand by them. In some cases, however, the views of such groups were more orthodox and rigid than the participants expected and became an additional source of stress and unhappiness. This led them to leave the group, which was also stressful because of their need for a network of friends and associates, but seemed preferable than the restrictive social norms group participation entailed. In this sense, religious activity did not make the participants happy and, in fact, seemed to intensify the internal conflict they already felt.

For other participants, religion did not seem to help in managing their emotions and stress. They expected God to help them immediately and answer their prayers right away. When this did not occur, they tended to blame God for not helping them to face a difficult situation. This expectation seemed to have developed over the course of their lives and reflects the way in which they, and many Indonesians, understand religious teachings. Parallel to interactions in Indonesian society, a number of the participants seemed to view prayer as a transaction with God where God was expected to fulfil the content of prayer in exchange for the act of praying. When this did not occur, the participants felt
disappointed and at a loss. However, this situation was often interpreted as an indication that their prayers were inadequate or not performed correctly; the participants did not appear to question the validity of their expectation.

Interestingly, various religious practices also represented a source of stress in themselves for some of the participants. For example, many of the female participants felt pressure to wear Islamic dress, which stands out in Indonesia because of the headscarf typically used by women in this context. This type of dress is associated with a number of social expectations that govern other aspects of behaviour. For example, people who are viewed as religious based on their manner of dress are also expected by others to limit social interactions with the opposite sex and not participate in romantic relationships. This view in Indonesian society in general and social disapproval experienced by the participants when their behaviour did not conform to the expectations of others was also a source of stress and a constraint felt by many of the participants. Another participant set himself a target for his own religious practice based on the ideals and views of the more orthodox segment of the community, and experienced stress if he could not achieve his set targets for prayer, Quranic recitation, or other activities. These and other participants saw religious practice as a constraint that did not help them in overcoming or managing stress. Instead, they felt restricted by the requirements of religious practice, based either on their own interpretation or on the social norms of the community, which did not allow them to do the things they wanted to, in particular limiting their social interactions.

Like many Indonesians, these participants had been explicitly taught from childhood that praying, reciting the Quran and taking part in other religious activities should make them feel calmer and help them find solutions for their problems. Whether successful or not, this coping mechanism was taught to some participants by their parents and other
family members. Nonetheless, a few participants had tried to learn more about the meaning of religion and believed that God’s help and compassion would come to them in some form. This encouraged them to find other ways to overcome and manage stress. In other words, they were aware that religion might not be the only resource available to cope with difficulty and that other methods might also be effective.

As noted above, the practice of using prayer to ask God for what they need or want is common in Indonesia. For example, a type of group prayer that takes place in a public context, referred to as *istighosah*, is sometimes held when there is a drought, or the community is facing a threat or danger (from natural disaster, for example). This can be seen as an example of positive coping that tends to lead to greater community solidarity and a higher level of acceptance of any adversity that has taken place or that may occur in the future. A similar phenomenon was reported by some participants at a personal level. For one participant, for example, more engagement in prayer and greater consistency in religious activities led to greater feelings of self-acceptance, and the participant felt grateful for what she had. This helped her to recognize that it was not beneficial to blame God for her problems, even though she had done this in the past. This participant had tried other means to cope with stress but had returned to the religious practices of the community with greater understanding than she had had previously. Other participants only turned to religious practice as a form of stress management after they experienced a major trauma. In this case, they viewed religion as a last resort when other strategies had not produced the effect they hoped for. It has been noted that religious practices and philosophy support coping and resilience in Indonesia, even in response to very serious events such as major natural disasters (see, for example, Fanany and Fanany, 2013). This same strategy was applied by some of the participants in this study to personal problems that distressed them and appeared to be effective at least some of the time in terms of their feelings. Interestingly, the
participants expressed a belief that God always listened to their prayers, even when He did not answer them, which also reflects an aspect of religious belief that is generally held in Indonesia.

5.7 Happiness and Religiosity in Young Indonesian Muslims
The literature about happiness and religiosity is very large. This literature points out the existence of differences and similarities in religious behaviour and attitudes about religion as it relates to happiness in various parts of the world. Some researchers have also considered happiness to be an aspect of wellbeing (Ryan and Deci, 2001; Raibley, 2012). In this study, however, the participants tended not to see happiness as related to wellbeing, in that they did not feel that it was necessary for them to be happy in order to feel satisfied and comfortable with their life. The participants, to some extent, were able to articulate their personal understanding of happiness but did not have an idea of how happiness they felt might result in or contribute to their wellbeing. One explanation of this might be that their conceptualisation of wellbeing is more complex and multidimensional, and it is difficult for them to isolate its individual components (see Kesebir and Diener, 2008). Another possibility is that wellbeing, as generally understood by Indonesians, relates more to economic sufficiency and social position, rather than to personal affective state. As discussed by Inglehart and Klingemann (2000), it appeared that the participants in this study were affected by a range of cultural understandings, personal experiences, and cognitive processes which shaped the way they give meaning to their experience. Factors such as parenting style, family relations and other individual variations were also observed to affect the participants’ perceptions, which is also consistent with the observations of these authors.

The literature notes that social relationships (Tkach and Lyubomirsky, 2006; McGregor et al., 2006) and having friends (Argyle, 1987) are significant in the happiness of young people. These elements of
experience were extremely significant for the participants in this study, who placed a great deal of importance on being part of a social group and having a network of peers they had something in common with. As discussed above, Indonesia has very strong social norms that support participating in group activities, getting along well with others, and being seen as a member of a larger group. These ideals, which are reinforced throughout a person’s life and represent a major element in traditional thinking (such as in proverbs and other kinds of sayings), seem to be more significant to the participants than their personal feelings, and several of them felt it was important to do what their peers did, even when these activities did not appeal to them. It was also notable that the participants tended to focus more on their current feelings and what would make them happy in the short term. They did not give much consideration to long term happiness or the idea that what they did now might affect their happiness in the future (see Veenhoven, 1991).

Participants in this study were asked to explain the meaning of being religious, which for them involved carrying out all religious practices on a regular basis. This, to them, showed their obedience to God’s will and demonstrated their identity as Muslims. Some of them did feel that religion guided them in their daily activities and helped them overcome stress. Similar findings are reported in the literature (see, for example, Allport and Ross, 1967; Kongachapatara, Moschis and Ong, 2014; Peterman and Labelle, 2014), but generally do not come from research in Muslim societies. The findings of the present study may suggest then that this is a more universal aspect of religion, regardless of the specific practice involved. For many people, the process of turning to a higher power may help relieve stress as it represents a sharing of the emotional burden but does not involve other people. This is an important aspect of stress management in Indonesia, where social norms dictate that people manage their feelings at all times in order to ensure harmonious social relations with others, even to the point of suppressing them. In
other words, it is considered extremely important to maintain the appearance of calm, good nature, regardless of what one might feel, because the group dynamic is more important than any one individual’s feelings (see Eisenberg, Pidada and Liew, 2001).

Religious practice was used by some of the participants to cope with stress and address their problems by praying and engaging in other types of religious ritual. As noted above, these activities had a transactional aspect, where the participants seemed to feel that they were entitled to God’s assistance or intervention in exchange for performing prescribed religious rituals. This view highlights one of the most interesting elements of the participants’ understanding of religion as compared to the literature, much of which relates to western societies. A number of authors working in western countries describe a concept of a personal relationship with God that defines some individuals’ conceptualisation of religion (see, for example, Park, 2005; Cohen and Hill, 2007; Pargament, 2001). The emotional benefits these individuals experience from religious practice, which often centers on attendance at church and unstructured, personal prayer, seem to derive from their understanding of God as a friend in times of need, someone who can be relied on and trusted, and someone who will always be available to listen to their prayers. This attribution of human-like attributes to God is absent in Indonesia, and in Islam in general. For this reason, the personal quality of faith is understood very differently in Christian and Muslim societies. As reported in the literature, personal faith for many western Christians encompasses the personal conceptualisation of God described above (see Francis and Kaldor, 2002; Wong-McdDonald and Gorsuch, 2000). Islam, however, does not stress this type of personal interpretation of faith; instead faith is understood to mean compliance with God’s will by carrying out certain activities that are embodied in syariah (religious) law (Neusner, Chilton and Graham, 2002). It has been noted that religious feelings may differ between individuals and groups because of background and
culture (Hackney and Sanders, 2003), but it is important to note that this extends to the interpretation of basic elements of religion, such as faith and belief, not just to the attitude towards religious activities.

Returning to the question of the relationship between religiosity and happiness, it appears that the nature of this relationship for any individual or group depends on this difference in perception of the nature of the basic elements of religion. The literature suggests that, for many people in western societies, the contribution of religious faith to a range of positive emotions and happiness derives from the deeply personal nature of their belief system, a relationship that seems to be most relevant for Christians (Cohen, 2002). The participants in this study did not appear to possess this personal dimension of religion. Instead, the fact that they are Muslim seems to represent one aspect of their identity, along with or as part of their ethnic identity, linguistic identity, and national identity as Indonesians. Religious identity tends to be viewed as fixed by Indonesians, and it is neither common nor desirable for young people to question their religious affiliation or question its content. By contrast, in western societies, people are much more open to the possibility of other religions and may change their beliefs in response to their situation. It is not uncommon for young adults in western societies to question and reassess the religious beliefs they have been brought up with, and this is seen as acceptable or even normal (Desmond, et al., 2010). The participants in this study, however, tended to take their religion and its practices as a given that simply forms a part of their experience; they do not seem to have ever considered whether another approach to religion might be more emotionally satisfying. As a result, in trying to address their problems, if they find that religious practices, such as praying, do not help, they generally seek other, non-religious strategies to change the situation and feel happier. Interestingly, the practices of Islam, such as prayer and fasting, have been found to correlate with happiness and wellbeing in a study of Kuwaiti university students (see Abdel-Khalek, 2010). It is
worth noting that Islam arose in the Middle East and may be more compatible with the earlier culture and cognitive framework of the societies there than in Indonesia, where adoption of the religion was fairly recent and overlaid other religions with very different orientations, such as Hinduism and Buddhism (see Ricklefs, 2008). The importance of original cultures and the syncretic nature of religious belief in Indonesia cannot be overlooked in attempting to understand the ways in which members of the society understand their life, including the ways in which they relate religion to affective state and interpretation of the meaning of their experience.

Nonetheless, there is a widespread idea in Indonesia that being more religious should increase a person’s happiness and sense of wellbeing. This view derives from certain verses in the Quran that are understood to mean that religious practice will bring peace of mind, which in turn will increase wellbeing. One example is:

“Dialah yang telah menurunkan keterangan dalam hati orang-orang mukmin supaya keimanan mereka bertambah di samping keimanan mereka (yang telah ada). Dan kepunyaan Allah-lah tentara langit dan bumi dan adalah Allah Maha mengetahui lagi maha bijaksana (QS. Al-Fath; 4).”

[It is He who sent down the sense of security into the hearts of believers so that their faith may increase with belief, -- God’s are the armies of the heavens and the earth; and God is all-knowing and all-wise. (Al-Fath, 48: 4)\(^3\)]

Many Indonesians also believe that the Quran indicates that true happiness will be found in the afterlife and one must expect a certain level of hardship in life. This view derives from verses like the following:

“Hai kaumku, sesungguhnya kehidupan dunia ini hanyalah kesenangan (sementara) dan sesungguhnya akhirat itulah negeri yang kekal (QS. Al-Mukmin; 39).”

[O people, the life of this world is ephemeral; but enduring is the abode of the Hereafter. {Al-Mukmin, 40: 39}]

The ways in which these and similar texts are interpreted is traditional in Indonesia, although at present there is a great deal of religious discussion on social media that many people read that contains new views and interpretations from Malaysia or elsewhere in the world. The result is that the idea that religious practice and happiness are linked is widespread, even though many people, such as the participants in this study, may not find this to apply in their own experience. Nonetheless, the expectation often leads people to try to address problems through increased religious practice or to alleviate stress and cope with misfortune in the same way. This was visible among the participants of this study by their own report, with varying results.

An important finding of this study relates to the concept of happiness itself. Much of the literature on religiosity and happiness was carried out in western contexts with the underlying assumption that seeking happiness is a universal goal and a central aspect of people’s experience. While this is likely the case to some degree, it is also likely that the importance of happiness as a goal varies from society to society. In Indonesia, it is difficult to explain to people what exactly is meant by the term “happiness” as it is used in western research and by English speakers when they talk about their own experiences. Indonesian has three common terms for “happiness” that have different connotations and their own contexts of use, but none that covers all the connotations of “happiness” in English. There is no doubt that Indonesians, like the participants in this study, recognize and understand a feeling of happiness, but they do conceptualize it differently from English speakers and have different expectations.

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For example, most Indonesians would not feel that it is reasonable to make major changes in one’s life in order to be happier. Fulfilling desirable social norms or complying with the wishes of family seem to be stronger motivations for action, especially for younger people like the participants in this study. As discussed above, achieving certain social goals (such as being married and having children) that are comparatively easy to attain are, by definition, associated with happiness in Indonesia, and their achievement is a common goal, not being happy. There is considerable literature on the connection between life goals, religion and happiness (see Emmons, 2005, for discussion of this), and it has been noted that while many people see happiness as the ultimate goal, in fact greater happiness can be achieved from participating in meaningful activities. This may be relevant to Indonesia in general and to the participants in this study, many of whom seemed to be seeking such activities (participation in social groups, having families of their own, finding permanent employment, etc). The fact that happiness is seen to come from achievements that most people can expect, including engaging in religious practice, may help explain why Indonesia consistently ranks among the happiest populations in the world (Gray, 2017). It is notable, however, that the participants in this study found it difficult to express exactly what would make them happy in the long-term and connect this to their religious feelings. This is a reflection of the fact that happiness is understood differently in Indonesia in terms of its construction as well as its importance and role in individual experience. This suggests that there is a need for additional research into this area and that neither happiness nor the nature of religious beliefs and faith are well understood in the context of Indonesia.

5.8 Summary
This chapter contained discussion and analysis of the findings of this study, which includes the conceptualisation of religion and happiness by study participants and the relationship of religion to happiness as
experienced by the participants in their daily life. The way in which the participants’ views and experiences relate to the broader Indonesian context was also discussed, as well as the differences between the participants’ perceptions and those found in the literature.
CHAPTER 6
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study concerned the nature and conceptualisation of happiness among young Muslims in Indonesia and this understanding related to their religious views. The study provided insight into the participants’ definition of happiness, the sources of their happiness, their sources of stress and the meaning of religion for them, including the extent to which religion might help them in facing adversity and overcome stress. The 12 participants were undergraduate students, seven male and five female, who were studying at various faculties of Universitas Islam Negeri Syarif Hidayatullah in Jakarta, Indonesia. The participants came from different cultures, family backgrounds and socio-economic levels. The aim of this research was to investigate the relationship between religion and happiness among these Muslim young adults in the context of existing work in this area, most of which has been carried out in western countries.

6.1 Summary of the Study

As described in Chapter 3, this study was carried out at Universitas Islam Negeri Syarif Hidayatullah, one of Indonesia’s foremost Islamic universities, which is located in Jakarta. Its student body comes from different parts of Indonesia and is recruited through a national examination and strict selection criteria. Because this is a public Islamic university, some students attended public Islamic high schools, while others graduated from non-religious public schools, and some attended pesantren, Islamic boarding schools run in a traditional manner.

The aim of the study was to supplement previous research on happiness and positive emotion in Indonesia and to elucidate the relationship between religion and happiness in the Indonesian Muslim community, with a focus on young adults. There are indications that
theories of happiness that exist in the literature and that were derived from western populations do not fully fit observations in Indonesia, and this study was intended to further investigate the specific nature of this relationship in Indonesian society today. The results of this study, then, provide insight into the conceptualisation of happiness among young Indonesian Muslims that derives from their cultural and social background as well as their individual experiences. Religion, and especially Islam, is increasingly visible in the public environment in Indonesia and is viewed by many Indonesians as a significant cultural factor in their understanding and interpretation of the events of their life as well as their emotional state. Young adults were the focus of this study because of observations in Indonesia that this generation is increasingly subject to emotional problems that may affect mental health, and that there may be differences in their religious interpretations that distinguish them from older generations.

A total of 12 students recruited from various faculties at UIN Syarif Hidayatullah took part in this study. They were interviewed and given the opportunity to answer open-ended questions about their religious behaviour and happiness by describing and explaining their experiences. This included the role religion and religious practice play for them in the management of negative emotions, such as stress, that may interfere with their feelings of happiness. The interviews were conducted in Indonesian and were transcribed for analysis. The excerpts presented in Chapter 4 were translated into colloquial English to indicate the way in which the participants characterised their feelings and experiences.

The findings of the study suggest that some participants did feel that religion impacted on their happiness, even though it was not their main means for achieving happiness. Like other young people around the world, the young adults who took part in this study felt that their family, friendships and social relationships made a contribution to their
happiness, and most were concerned about fitting into their social group and be like their peers. An equally significant concern was to fulfil their parents’ expectations for them, and participating in various religious activities was a major part of both these desires. Nonetheless, the participants generally felt that religion should allow them to achieve ideal happiness and help them in facing difficult situations.

The findings of this study suggest that the participants had unique definitions of happiness, but some of them had difficulty explaining exactly what happiness means to them. A few participants defined happiness as not being depressed, being relaxed, being surrounded by a loving family and friends, seeing others happy and having a good relationship with others. These definitions were an indication of their sources of happiness. The young people who took part in this study stressed the importance of family in achieving happiness as well as in the development of their religious behaviour, even though, at certain times of their life, their friends and the environment had played a bigger part in affecting the participants’ happiness. Generally, most of the participants carried out the religious practices that are understood by Indonesian Muslims to constitute the requirements of Islam. Some of them felt it was especially important to demonstrate religious behaviour to others as a part of their identity and as a way to be accepted as part of certain social groups. A few participants carried out religious practices for peace of mind, the hope of getting things they wanted, or having their prayers answered by God.

Religion played a role in the way the study participants managed stress. All of them had experienced stress deriving from different areas of their life. Some of them felt that religion could help them to overcome such stress and reported using religious practice to address stress, even though this approach tended not to occur to them until after they had already experienced the stressful event. The sources of stress reported by the participants in this study generally related to their university
studies and relationships with family and friends, including romantic relationships. A number of the participants wanted to be part of a romantic relationship or had broken off such a relationship because of religious prohibitions on interaction between men and women before marriage, often at the request of their parents. For this reason, some of them felt that religion in fact acted as a constraint on their happiness, rather than a potential support.

It was apparent that the participants in this study did not think much about happiness and things that might make them happy in the long term. The meaning of happiness did not seem to be important to them, as their main focus was on how to overcome problems in their daily life. It was in this context that religion sometimes played a significant part in the participants’ attempts to deal with stress and problems.

A number of identity issues also emerged as part of this study. Young adulthood is typically a period when adult identity is set, and many young people consider their personal identity seriously for the first time. For the participants in this study, religion was an important element of their personal identity and served as a social asset that positioned them as part of the large majority of Indonesians. None of the participants had questioned their religious identification, as often occurs among individuals of their age in the West. One reason for this may be the link between religious and ethnic identity and the way in which religion is learned and understood in Indonesia. It was also notable that several of the participants did not have a very deep understanding of Islam as it is practiced in Indonesia; like many Indonesians, their religious knowledge related mostly to practices they had been taught at a young age and interpretations that are common across Indonesian society.

Overall, the results of this study suggest that the young people who took part in the research understand their own happiness and its relationship to religion in a way that can be seen to derive from various
aspects of Indonesian culture, some of which likely precede Islam and are very deeply embedded in the society. It is also the case, however, that the nature of modern life has created a dilemma for many of them, in that the traditional sources of happiness and the role of religion in this are changing. The forces of globalisation, modernisation and urbanisation, all of which have characterised Indonesian society for the past several decades, seem to offer young people a much wider range of choices and expose them to diverse lifestyles which are not always compatible with traditional views, or with the demands placed on them by family and the larger community.

6.2 Research Questions

This study had four research questions. They were:

1. How do young Indonesian Muslims describe their happiness and the factors that contribute to it?
2. How young Indonesian Muslims internalise and practice religion in their daily life?
3. What is the relationship between religious practice and identification among young Indonesian Muslims?
4. In what ways and under what circumstances does religion affect the happiness of young Indonesian Muslims?

The answers to these questions are addressed in Chapters 5 but can be summarised as follows.

Question 1 related to the ways the young people in this study understood happiness and the sources of their feelings. Some of the participants in this study placed a high value on being happy. The participants defined happiness in a number of ways based on their individual perceptions, even though there were certain common elements. For some of them, happiness simply reflected an absence of negative emotion. For others, however, there were specific conditions they saw as contributing to happiness. These included a number of
social concerns, such as having friends, and also whether others, such as their parents, were happy. Generally, all the participants felt it was important to be happy, even if it was difficult for them to define what exactly this meant. It was also notable that the participants largely associated happiness with the presence or absence of circumstances external to the individual, and did not reflect on the internal dimension of the emotion.

Question 2 related to religious practice and how the participants understood their religious identity. The 12 participants in this study all felt that their religion was one aspect of their identity, but the way in which it contributed to their sense of self differed, as did its social value in relation to the larger community and its availability to them as a source of resilience and meaning in life. Islamic practice has a strong focus on ritual in Indonesia, and most of these participants were taught how religious activities are carried out in the community in which they live from a very young age. Like most Indonesians, the focus of their religious education was on carrying out religious duties in the accepted way and, again, the participants had never thought much about personal faith. It was also found that the understanding of religious practice of most of the participants included ideas that are widely held in Indonesia which likely derive from older cultural traditions that have been integrated into the understanding of Islam. These cultural traditions, even though they were associated with religion, form an important link between the participants’ religious and ethnic identity, which are inseparable for some of Indonesia’s ethnic groups. For this reason, the participants simply accepted their religious identity because it was strongly integrated with other aspects of their heritage, such as ethnic origin, local language, and cultural practices.

Question 3 related to the relationship between religious practice and identification among the participants. Many of them felt that it was important to portray a religious appearance in public as a sign of their
belonging to the Indonesian Muslim community. For women, in particular, Islamic dress is an important marker of religious affiliation but reflects a fairly new trend in Indonesia, where traditional dress does not reflect the styles used in the Middle East or elsewhere. All of the participants noted that their happiness depended to some extent on their identification as a member of the Muslim community because Indonesian society is communal, and people have been socialised to be a member of various social groups. For the participants in this study, their Muslim identity allowed them to interact in a range of groups on campus and in the community, which provided them with a social network that supported their self-esteem, resilience and happiness through participation and the availability of peers.

Question 4 related to the ways in which their religion might support the happiness of the participants. It is often assumed in Indonesia that people who are more religious might be more able to cope with adversity and more successful at managing stress through religious activities which should lead to greater happiness. For the participants in this study, however, religion was not the main way to achieve happiness. The participants reported other alternatives that were more effective, and some noted that religious strategies had proven ineffective for them. The participants’ view of religion and God tended, to at least some extent, to be transactional. They tended to expect some tangible result from carrying out religious duties, such as praying, or at least that God would answer their prayers.

Overall, this study suggests that religion may not be effective in achieving happiness, at least among the age group represented in this study. This finding is notable in that it contradicts a widely held view among Indonesians. It is possible that it was more effective in the past when access to knowledge and information, and hence meaningful choices, were much more limited for most people. For the participants in this study, it was apparent that non-religious conceptions of
happiness, especially those associated with social and economic achievements, such as finding a good job or being married, were more important than indicators of religious behaviour. It is likely that this is a reflection of the rapid social change Indonesia has experienced in recent decades accompanied by intense urbanisation, modernisation and globalisation. It is possible that this may also affect people’s resilience in the future, in contrast to past sources of resilience centred on religion, family and extended family. While there is no doubt that religion is important in Indonesian society and many people, including the participants in this study, expect to benefit from their membership in the majority religion, it may be more significant as a marker of identity than as a contributing force to happiness. It was apparent from this study that the concept of happiness, as it is constructed in the West and discussed in the literature, does not fit fully with the way Indonesians understand it, and the participants had not thought much about their longer term happiness and how their current actions might affect their future feelings. Instead, to the extent that they had considered it, their happiness was mostly situational and related to their feelings at the time. They had little concept of overall happiness with life, such as it is understood in the West, which is a difficult concept to express in Indonesian. Religion had less to do with this situational happiness than many Indonesians might believe, and instead tended to be viewed by participants as an element of identity that could also be a social asset they might use to gain an advantage in certain contexts.

6.3 Implications
The results of this study provide insight into the nature of the experience of Muslim young adults studying at a major university in Indonesia. Specifically, it elucidates some of their understanding of religion and the ways in which this understanding impacts on other aspects of their life. It also highlights the ways in which their lived experience differs from an accepted perception that is not fully
accurate, but is held by many Indonesians. This view has formed the basis for a range of educational, counselling and psychological initiatives aimed at young people. At the same time, it has been widely observed that young Indonesians are suffering from anxiety, depression and other mental health conditions at a greater rate than has been recognised in the past. Several participants in this study mentioned having considered suicide at some time in the past, which may reflect this. It is likely that the social change discussed above may be contributing to the observed mental health concerns and that existing resilience strategies are less effective in the current context.

For this reason, the results of this study may have practical implications in the design of strategies to support young adults in addressing their problems and developing more effective coping strategies. The study clearly identifies other sources of happiness for young adults in Indonesia besides religion and the extent to these factors affect their life and thinking. As such, the study will likely be of interest to psychologists as well as educators and other professionals who work with young adults in Indonesia. The study strongly suggests that the role of religion in these areas of individual psychology may be quite different from what has generally been assumed, and that it is important to investigate other social and cultural sources of resilience that are specific to the Indonesian context. Nonetheless, the findings also suggest that religion remains a very important aspect of Indonesian life and is relevant to individuals as well as to the community as a whole. Rigorous study of the unique Indonesian interpretation of Islam and other religions is very limited, however, and this study is only a beginning in this direction.

6.4 Recommendations for Future Research

The findings of this study suggest that there is a great deal of opportunity for study of the way Indonesians of all ages understand and experience religion. The importance of religion in the public
environment suggests that these interpretations affect people’s choices, perceptions, and attitudes on a daily basis, and an understanding of this would greatly expand our understanding of Indonesian society as a whole. The methodology used here is not widely known in Indonesia, but has great potential for further illuminating issues related to religion and experience.

The specific Indonesian conceptualisation of happiness is also an important area for future study. This study indicates that the western literature on happiness and its sources may not fit with Indonesian culture, and that Indonesians may understand the nature and role of happiness in human experience in ways that are significantly different from people in the West. A greater understanding of this might help address some of the mental health issues that are increasingly prevalent in Indonesia among people of all ages, but would also help explain the very high self-reported levels of happiness among the population.

Finally, this study revealed intriguing insights into the nature of resilience and the role of religion in coping strategies. This is also an area where further study has great potential to increase our understanding of the way Indonesian society works and to potentially add to our knowledge about the formation and development of resilience. It is increasingly clear in the literature that the development of resilience is important in young adulthood and may have culture-specific dimensions that must be identified through the type of research presented here. This would also have great benefit for psychologists and others who work with young adults in societies like Indonesia, where the sources of resilience are very different from the western societies where much of the previous research has been done.
6.5 Summary
This chapter presented a summary of the study and answered each of the four research questions. The applications of the study were discussed, as were a number of directions for future research. The relevance of the methodology used in this study to future work in Indonesia was also noted, along with importance of understanding culture-specific elements of understanding in locations like Indonesia.
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health-compromising behavior.


Appendix A

Interview Schedule

General questions for all participants

1. What religion are you?
2. What does it mean to be religious?
3. How do you practice your religion on a daily basis?
4. How do your family members and people you know practice their religion?
5. Do the members of your family and the people you know affect how you practice your religion?
6. What religious activities do you do every day?
7. Why do you do these things?
8. What kind of feeling does practicing your religion gives you?
9. In your opinion, what is happiness?
10. What makes you happy?
11. What things made you happy in the last month?
12. What kind of things make you feel stressed?
13. How do you cope with those stresses?
14. What is the most stressful thing that ever happened to you?
15. How did you cope with that?
16. What do you do in your most stressful situations?
17. Does religion help you cope? How?
18. Does practicing your religion help you deal with stress? How?
19. Does practicing your religion make you happy?
20. Does a person have to practice his or her religion to be happy?
21. Can people who have no religion be happy?
22. Are people who are more religious happier than people who are less religious?
23. If a person is unhappy, can practicing his or her religion make him or her happier?
24. Is it important to be happy? Why?
25. Is it important to be religious? Why?
Appendix B

Full Versions of Conference Papers

The Role of Religious Orientation in the Formation of Identity among Young Muslims in Indonesia

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Abstract

Religion is generally accepted to be one of the factors that contributes to the formation of personal identity. The paper considers the role of religion among Muslim young adults in Indonesia and the way in which their religious background influences how they see themselves relative to other groups, both in and outside of Indonesia. The contribution of Islam to the identity of young people is an issue of considerable interest around the world and is particularly relevant in Indonesia, which has the largest Muslim population in the world and is also extremely diverse in terms of culture and language. This paper is based on in-depth interviews conducted with young Indonesian Muslims aged 18-24 who were enrolled at a major public Islamic university in Jakarta. The data obtained in this way were analysed using the descriptive phenomenological method developed by Giorgi. Its findings indicate that religion is an important aspect of individual and group identity for these young people and one that connects them with the larger Muslim community worldwide. At the same time, the global cultural mainstream, dominated by English speaking nations, is extremely attractive to Indonesian youth, and, as such, represents a potential source of conflict that individuals are able to resolve by different means and to different degrees.

Keywords: religious orientation, identity formation, Islam, youth, Indonesia
INTRODUCTION

One of the key psychological tasks of adolescence is the formation of an adult identity that will support later wellbeing and overall health (Arnett, 2000). Religious belief is one factor that can help shape identity during this period of life and that may provide a framework for viewing oneself, making decisions and choosing a course of action (Regnerus & Uecker, 2006, Regnerus, 2007). Religious values may also affect self-control and the internalization of moral values, which may, in turn, have long lasting impacts for the individual in later life (Smith, 2003). For young people, it has been noted that religion may provide values that support the search for meaning in life, that suggest strategies for overcoming hardship and support resilience, and that allow for connection with a wider spiritual community as well as with God (King 2003).

The Indonesian population is young, with a median age of 23.1 years. The large number of teenagers and young adults are frequently referred to as a “demographic bonus” that is expected to have important economic benefits for the nation in the next 1-2 decades as large numbers of youth enter the workforce (BPS, 2016). Integrating so many young people into adult society, ensuring that they are part of the social, political and cultural life of the nation, and reducing social problems associated with youth (drug use, violence, antisocial behavior, mental health issues, etc.) is a major concern at the national and regional level and one which observers often believe religion might address. While the Indonesian national philosophy, Pancasila, acknowledges a number of religions, the majority of the population is Muslim, and public discourse about the role of religion in Indonesian society generally focuses on Islam. There is evidence that Islam is increasingly important in Indonesian identity and is increasingly visible in public contexts, a situation encouraged by regional autonomy that was established in 2001 to replace the previous administrative structure centered on the capital, Jakarta (see Kersten, 2015; Williams, 2015; Lindsay and Pausacker, 2016; among others). In addition, the population is made of numerous ethnic groups, each with its own language, culture, and specific historical and social context. These local cultures are far older than Islam in Indonesia. In some of these ethnic groups, religious identity has been integrated into local cultural identity; in others, religious identity is separate from ethnic affiliation. As a result, religion is one possible contributor to identity, alongside local cultural background and the mainstream national culture. Islam, as well as other religions practiced in the country, are considered syncretic because of the older cultural influences that color its interpretation and practice (Rudnyckyj, 2014), meaning that religion expression as well as personal identity tends to have numerous unique elements that are characteristic of Indonesia.

This study focuses on Muslim young adults who are currently enrolled at a public Islamic university in Jakarta. Indonesians in this age group have generally been instructed in religious practice from a young age and have been socialized into their religious community. Despite coming from a range of ethnic and geographic backgrounds in Indonesia, the participants in this
study all made the choice to study at an Islamic university, suggesting the importance of religion to them and their families and a desire to be associated with religion in an educational and professional sense. For some of them, this represented a continuation of their secondary studies at Islamic schools. For others, however, their secondary education had been in secular institutions where religion was not a part of their formal study.

IDENTITY IN YOUNG ADULTHOOD
There is a great deal of literature on the formation of adult identity among adolescents which has included a number of models that describe this process (see Schwartz, Luyckx, & Vignoles, 2011). A number of these models, such as Erikson’s (1950) life span approach, focus on development and have identity as a central issue. Erikson noted a tension between identity synthesis, a coherent and integrated sense of self, and identity confusion, which is incoherent and does not support autonomous and self-directed decision-making (see Dunkel, 2005). Building on Erikson, Marcia’s (1966) identity status model has been very influential (see Kroger and Marcia, 2011, for discussion of this). The identity status model describes identity in terms of exploration and commitment, which are further divided into levels that may be present or absent to create four types of identity status: identity achievement (high exploration, high commitment), moratorium (high exploration, low commitment), foreclosure (low exploration, high commitment) and identity diffusion (low exploration, low commitment). Each of these has been associated with various personality characteristics. While the identity status model has also been the subject of much criticism, it remains helpful in understanding adolescent identity issues, including the role of religion in self-perception.

The late ten years have been seen as a period of transition between the more structured and controlled experience of childhood and the period of adult responsibility characterized by participation in full-time work (Arnett, 1998). Arnett (2007) suggests that this transitional stage of life may be an opportunity for the investigation of different belief systems, among other things, with a focus on the emerging individual self. Religious beliefs and spirituality, along with a range of other issues, are often considered by young people as possible identities during this time and ultimately selected as their chosen identity (Schwartz, Donnellan, Ravert, Luyckx and Zamboanga, 2013).

Much of the study of adolescent identity formation, including in relation to religion, has been done in western countries. In the current political and social context, however, there is increasing interest in the role of Islam specifically in the formation of identity, especially in the context of immigration (see, for example, Verkuyten, Thijs, J., & Stevens, 2012; Ng Tseung-Wong, & Verkuyten, 2013; Kumar, Seay, & Karabenick 2015). Much of this work has identified intergenerational conflict, acculturative stress, and difficulties reconciling the differing social orientation of the culture of origin and the receiving culture (see, for example, Ajrouch, 2004; Ahmed, Kia-Keating, & Tsai, 2011; Goforth et al., 2014). In the western societies in which the majority of this work has been done, adherence to Islam has been observed to separate young people from the mainstream culture and identity of the society in which they live (Emmons and Paloutzian, 2003). Religion in this context often aligns with ethnic identity, and it has been observed that religious Muslims living in
western societies are often unwilling to participate in mainstream culture which they may see as a threat to both their ethnic as well as religious identity (Friedman and Saroglou, 2010).

The situation in Indonesia is quite different. While Indonesia is a plural society composed of numerous ethnic groups, each with a unique language and culture that includes multiple religious affiliations, the majority of the population is Muslim. While increasingly dominant in national culture, Islam has not been privileged historically and has played only a limited role in the national context (see Rosyidi, 2015 for discussion of this). For this reason, the role of religion in the identity perceptions of Indonesian youth is particularly important as elucidation of this issue may support better understanding of Muslim populations in general and especially their younger members who will become the decision-makers of the future. While there has been some study of young Muslims in Indonesia (for example, French et al., 2013; Parker and Nilan, 2013; French et al., 2014) their experience has not been fully investigated, and there are aspects of their religious views that remain unknown.

**METHOD**

In order to better understand the nature of personal identity among young Indonesian Muslims, seven male and five female undergraduate students aged between 18 and 24 who were enrolled at a major public Islamic university (UIN, which stands for Universitas Islam Negeri, is a generic term meaning “public Islamic university” that is followed by the unique name) in Jakarta were interviewed about their views on religion and experiences as Muslims in modern Indonesia. These participants were drawn from the range of disciplines offered at the university and had no special interest in religion, other than studying at an Islamic university. The aim of these interviews was to elicit the perceptions and interpretations of the participants as related to their own religious beliefs and outlook as a means of understanding how they saw themselves as members of the larger Indonesian community. The interviews were recorded for later transcription and analysis using the approach outlined by Giorgi (1985). All participants expressed an interest in taking part in this study and spoke freely about their experiences and views. It should be noted that religion is not considered a sensitive subject in Indonesia and is frequently discussed in public forums as well as in informal settings. Ethics approval for this study was granted by the Human Ethics Advisory group of the Faculty of Arts and Education at Deakin University and was considered to pose no risk to participants.

**RELIGION AS AN ASPECT OF IDENTITY**

The 12 participants in this study all felt that their religion was one aspect of their identity, but the way in which it contributed to their sense of self differed as did its social value in relation to the larger community and its availability to them as a source of resilience and meaning in life. A number of them viewed religion as an important means for determining appropriate forms of behavior that would be consistent with the moral view associated with their belief system. Examples of such views included:
“Sebagai pedoman hidup mengenai bagaimana berperilaku dalam kehidupan sehari-hari.”
[Religion is a guide for living that tells how you should behave in your daily life.]

Participant 1

“Sangat penting, punya Tuhan juga menjadi sangat penting, membantu untuk kembali mengarahkan ke jalan yang benar, karena pernah memiliki keinginan untuk bunuh diri dan tidak jadi dilakukan karena agama.”
[It [religion] is extremely important, having God is also extremely important. It helps you return to the right path. I once thought of killing myself but didn’t because of religion.]

Participant 2

”Sebagai pedoman hidup, bisa membantu mengatasi stres terutama dengan mengaji dan sholat.”
[As a guide for living, it can help you overcome stress, especially by reading the Quran and praying.]

Participant 3

“Membaca Al-qur’an bisa memberikan ketenangan dan kenyamanan, dengan melakukan semua ibadah merasa terindungi, dipermudah semua urusan.”
[Reading the Quran can make you calm and relaxed. By performing all the required religious rituals, you feel protected, and everything you do is easier.]

Participant 8

Islamic practice has a strong focus on ritual in Indonesia, and children are taught from a very young age how the five daily prayers should be done, how other types of religious activities are carried out in the community in which they live, and how to read and recite Quranic verses that are part of prayer. Because the average person does not speak Arabic for the purpose of communication, most people learn specific texts as a block and have an awareness of the overall meaning through a comparable text in Indonesian. For this reason, customary interpretations of aspects of religion seen as important locally in a moral sense or that have been seen as offering some form of social or personal benefit are generally shared by most members of the community and are understood in the same way. This is reflected in two of the participants’ statement that their religion serves as “a guide for living” [pedoman hidup], which is a common view among Indonesian Muslims. Similarly, the idea that the performance of religious rituals may alleviate stress is also common and underlines the ritual aspect of religious performance. The type of prayer referred to by Participant 3 above is the five required daily prayers and does not refer to a more personalized type of appeal to God. The importance of religious ritual in psychological well-being was expressed by other participants as well.
A number of participants expressed another rationale that reflects the teaching they had been exposed to from childhood that relates to the role of religion in their lives, namely religious participation as a means to avoid divine punishment:

“Semua kegiatan keagamaan dilakukan agar terhindar dari bencana dan malapetaka.”
[You do all religious activities to avoid disaster and catastrophe.]

Participant 3

“Menghindari gelisah, menghindar dari api neraka.”
[To avoid anxiety and the fires of Hell.]

Participant 9

In addition to religious practice, several of the participants felt that demonstrating a religious appearance is an important aspect of their identity as Muslims. For women, in particular, Islamic dress is distinctive and includes covering the head with a tight-fitting scarf (hijab). It is important to note that this type of dress is not indigenous to Indonesia, and it is only in the last 15 years or so that this type of attire has become mainstream and associated with a fashion trend (see Beta, 2014). Some of the participants described the meaning of the hijab as a symbol of Islam

“Berupaya menunjukkan perilaku yang baik, tidak lagi suka berbicara kasar dan tertawa keras-keras lalu juga tidak lagi perlu memikirkan model-model baju apa yang sedang trend dan harus diikuti.”
[It is an attempt to show respectable conduct, that you don’t use bad language or laugh too loudly anymore. [You also] don’t need to think about what clothing styles are fashionable that you have to follow.]

Participant 1

“Dengan menggunakan jilbab merasa dilindungi oleh Allah SWT..dulu..kadang-kadang saya masih suka lepas hijab saya kalau di luar..tapi sejak pergi umroh, saya selalu memakai hijab...”
[Wearing a hijab you feel protected by God. . . Sometimes I didn’t used to wear it when I was not at the university, but for the past few months, especially since I got back from a pilgrimage to Mecca, I’ve been wearing it all the time.]

Participant 2

As students at an Islamic university, many of the participants (both male and female) felt pressure from their peers to take on a more religious identity. For a number of them, their current institution was not their first choice but they had not gotten in to more prestigious universities and felt compelled to adapt to the environment at a religious college. Interestingly, several of the participants noted that the environment of the university seemed to them to be the same as what they expected in a secular environment.
Many of the participants noted the influence of peers in their religious behavior. This was more commonly discussed than the influence of family, which was also significant to the participants but, for many of them, less important than the views of the classmates. Several participants expressed this explicitly:

[So, I got a chance to go along, like . . . not exactly Quranic study. It was more like meeting with my friends who knew about religion. We would share things, talk about things. We have to do this; Muslim women should be like this; all kinds of things . . . because my friends gave me advice (about it).]

Participant 1

“Kayak misalnya jam-jam tertentu organisasi saya kan yang saya bilang tadi dakwah itu, jadi kalo misalnya ada grup mereka tuh sering ngingetin kayak misalnya sholat dhuha... cuman kalo misalnya dulu kan masih males-males, trus tapi ga tau ajakan-ajakan itu jadi kayak ngerasa, kayak... dia ajakan sholat dhuha masa aku ngga, gitu... Kaya gitu dan jadi baliknya tuh jadi kayak pengen aja berlomba-lomba supaya lebih baik dimata Allah itu, jadi apa yang dia lakuin mungkin bisa saya lakuin, kayak gitu-gitu sih.”
[It’s like, for example, at certain times, the organization I’m in, the one I mentioned before, the dakwah [religious proselytizing] one, there is a group of them who often remind the rest of us like about the dhuha prayer [optional prayer between required morning and midday prayers] . . . so, like before, I never felt like doing this, but I don’t know, when they said to, it was like I felt something, like . . . if he was going to say the dhuha prayer, why wouldn’t I do it, too? And behind that, it was like I wanted to compete to seem better in the eyes of God, so whatever he did, maybe I could do, too. Like that.]

Participant 4

“Dulu sebenernya waktu SD kelas 6 itu kompakan sama temen temen “Ayo kita di pesantrennya bareng-bareng.”
[Actually, when I was in the 6th grade, I made a pact with my friends, ‘Let’s all study at the pesantren [Islamic boarding school taught in traditional manner] together.’]

Participant 5
"Alhamdulillah gak tau kenapa ngerasa gak nyaman aja sama pacaran gitu, dan mungkin Allah tunjukkan, lingkungan yang lebih bagus gitu. Tadinya nyari-nyari sendiri lingkungan-lingkungan yang bagus gitu, termotivasi sih dari teman, ada satu teman sekelas, dia anak rohis gitu, ketika dia bilang "Nih bangga belum pernah pacaran."... "iya yah enak juga gitu belum pernah pacaran, kenapa gue gak bisa", gue putusin deh akhirnya. Saya putusin, setelah pacaran, ikut dia, ikut dia gitu, nongkrong sama dia, ikutin apa kata-kata dia, sampai dia ikut ngaji pun saya ikut gitu."

[Thank God, I don’t know why I didn’t feel comfortable dating and maybe God showed me a better environment. I had been searching for something better and was motivated by a friend. There is one of my classmates who is very religious. When he said, ‘I’m proud to never have had a girlfriend,’ I thought, that would be good to not date, why couldn’t I be like that, too. So I broke it off. I broke it off and after that, I did what this friend did. I did what he did, I hung around with him. I did what he said. When he was studying the Quran, I even went along to that.]

Participant 11

Indonesians are among the most active users of the online environment and social media (Balea, 2016). Not surprisingly, many of the participants in this study reported using online sources to learn more about religion and interact in forums devoted to this topic. The aim of this for most of them was to enhance their knowledge but also to explore their identity as Muslims and discuss this aspect of their experience with others.

"Buka buka Youtube. . . pengajian-pengajian atau ngga kalo misalnya kan kadang-kadang, kan kalo pengajian bosen ya, kayak cuma sekedar gitu. Saya buka yang kayak dari luar dari luar tuh yang diedit-edit gitulah. Jadi misalnya cuma lima menit tapi kayak ngebentuk suatu topik, trus kayak ada efek-efeknya, kan saya dramatical banget ya orangnya, ya."

[I like to look at Youtube . . . religious discussions or whatever, for example, the religious discussions can get boring, you know, that’s all it is. I look at the ones from outside [Indonesia] that have been edited. So, for instance, there might only be five minutes but it’s like about a certain topic, so it’s like it has an effect. I think those people are really engaging.]

Participant 4

"Yang saya nonton videonya segala macem.. Di film itu ngejelasin secara benar-benar semuanya, terstruktur yang ada di Al-Qur'an, apa yang jadi ini. . . tapi . . . terus sehingga . . . ada perbedaan, jadi saya tekankan Islam rahmatan lil 'alamin. . . kami juga sering mencoba berdiskusi untuk membandingkan berbagai macam kitab dan ternyata di kitab bible pun ada tertulis larangan untuk makan babi."

[I watch all kinds of videos. In these films, they really explain everything. They’re structured like in the Quran, what this is . . . then what . . . . There are differences so I concentrate on Islam as God’s gift to the whole universe. We also always try to discuss and compare the various holy books and it turns out that in the Bible, there is a prohibition against eating pork.]

Participant 10

There is considerable concern in Indonesia on the part of various institutions as well as the government about the potential radicalizing effect of heavy social media use by young people. It has been suggested, for example, that
Indonesians may be vulnerable to recruiting efforts of terrorist organizations and to non-mainstream religious interpretations they come in contact with on social media (see, for example, Kompas, 2016). For young people who may be questioning their identity or forming a new adult self-conception, combined with an increasing social role for Islam among middle-class Indonesians, the influence of open access to such information is seen as increasingly serious, both in terms of radicalization (Lestari, 2016) and also secularization (see, for example, Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia, 2016).

DISCUSSION
The understanding of identity development in young people that is embodied in the literature no doubt has considerable relevance for Indonesia and other non-western societies, but in considering the role of religion specifically in this, the nature of Indonesian society and the ways in which it differs from the west where the models were generally developed is significant. Hofstede’s (2011) six dimensional model of national characteristics positions Indonesia as a strongly collectivist society where individuals are expected to conform to the norms of the group and to society as a whole (Indonesia’s score for the dimension of individualism is 14 compared to a score of 91 for the United States). Religious participation is an important aspect of social conformity, especially in communities that are homogeneous in terms of faith and ethnic make-up. Religious observance, especially in situation that can be observed by other people, is one way of conforming. Indonesians generally do not like to seem different from other people, especially in contexts the individual views as important. Indonesia is also characterized by a high level of power difference, where social hierarchy is important and many relationships are asymmetric (Indonesia’s score for this dimension is 78 compared to 40 for the United States) (Hofstede, 2011). For this reason, most people are always consciously aware of how they appear and wish to position themselves to gain as much social advantage as possible in any given interaction. This outlook is reflected in that statement of Participant 4 above, who felt a need to compete with his peers to be the most religious and also the willingness of Participants 1, 4, 5, and 11 to imitate the religious behaviour of their friends. These young people have attempted to create a more religious identity for themselves as a way of gaining or enhancing social status among their friends. In the case of these participants, religious behaviour is an important measure of this status because they are studying at an Islamic university. For other young people in another setting, other personal attributes and non-religious behaviors may be emphasized and imitated.

The adoption of Islamic dress is another interesting aspect of this constructed religious identity. Islamic dress for women is not indigenous to Indonesia, and the traditional clothing of many Indonesian ethnic groups is much more revealing than that associated with Islam which derives from the customs of the Middle East. For some women, who have taken to wearing the Hijab, this type of dress is intended to strengthen their identity as a Muslim and perhaps also the impression of other people who see them. For many, it is not enough to cover their head in the usual way. Many compete to make their hijab longer and cover more of their body. It is not uncommon for women to wear socks and layers of clothing as a way of emphasizing their use of Islamic dress despite the tropical climate and the fact that such attire goes beyond standard interpretations of what is required for modesty. There is evidence that the use of Islamic dress as an identity marker by Indonesian women is increasing. It is much more visible in advertising and on television, for example, and the
media frequently reports on celebrities who have begun to wear the hijab. This may be a result of regional autonomy which took effect in 2001 and gave a much larger role to regional governments in many areas of public administration. A side effect of this devolution of government authority has been to raise the visibility of ethnic identity and local cultures in the public environment (see Erb et al., 2013, for discussion of this).

Many of Indonesia’s ethnic groups are Muslim and adherence to this religion is a required aspect of local ethnic identity (Mandal, 2016). Groups of this kind include the Malay, Minangkabau, and a number of others. For members of these groups, religious identity is inextricably bound to ethnic identity. In regions where this is the case, regional autonomy has often resulted in a significant increase of the presence of Islam and Islamic practices in domains that had previously been associated with a secular, Indonesian national culture under the previous administrative system and earlier national governments. For members of ethnic groups whose members are by definition Muslim, religious affiliation is not a choice, and there may be considerable social capital to be gained in the current environment by emphasizing one’s religious behaviour. It should be noted, however, that the Javanese, who represent Indonesia’s largest ethnic group and make up some 60% of the population, religion is separate from ethnic identity, and many Javanese are Muslim while many others are Christian. They all speak Javanese as a first language though and share similar cultural practices, including those that originate in the Hindu-Buddhist cultural past before the advent of either Christianity or Islam to Indonesia.

The result of this is that religion is a part of identity for many Indonesians but is not subject to personal choice, as suggested in some western models. Because religious affiliation is part of ethnic identity (which cannot be changed or negotiated), most people do not question their religion, which also has to be reported in various public contexts, such as on national identity cards. This may explain why some of the participants in this study seem to take their religious identity for granted but are not that interested in the more personal dimensions of faith. The participants’ comments tended to focus on religious ritual and practice, but they spoke very little about a personal meaning associated with religious belief or of their own faith, separate from what they had been taught the role of religion is supposed to be. Nonetheless, this does explain why it is rare to hear about conversion from Islam in Indonesia (although conversion to Islam sometimes occurs). Since religious affiliation is part of ethnic identity for many Indonesians, it is not notable and may be outside framework of identity formation such as discussed in much of the literature on this topic.

An interesting aspect of the fact that religious identity in Indonesia relates mostly to practice with little focus on faith and a personal worldview structured by religious values is the widespread nature of corruption and other unethical behavior in Indonesian society. Despite focus on transparency in recent years, corruption remains endemic in Indonesia (Schutte, 2012). High profile cases are discussed constantly in the media, and even the Ministry of Religious Affairs has been implicated in scandals involving huge amounts of money and important religious rituals such as the annual Hajj pilgrimage (see Tempo, 2016, among others). One explanation for this and similar social problems that would seem to violate religious principles may lie in the social value of religion as a personal attribute, as discussed above. For
some individuals, more religious behaviour may create opportunities for personal enrichment that align with the specific social contexts where religion is an asset in enhancing individual social status.

Status relative to other people is very important in Indonesia, and people are skilled at presenting an identity that will give them the most social benefit. For example, even if he or she comes from a not very religious family, such as Participant 5 in this study, an individual may be willing to attend an Islamic school because friends are doing so or dress and behave in Islamic way, like Participant 1, because of the influence of others around them. There is considerable social value associated with Islam as the majority religion in Indonesia, and many individuals may perceive greater social benefit associated with a Muslim identity that other people can see. Political change in recent years along with rising income have raised the potential benefit further and has also given rise to a large number of local laws enforcing religious norms in the public context in many parts of the country (see Bush, 2008). This phenomenon can be seen as encouraging social conformity but also emphasizing the importance of observable religious affiliation as an attribute of personal identity.

For this reason, for many young Indonesians, religion has become an aspect of personal identity that may be manipulated or altered for social purposes. Unlike ethnic background, for example, religion tends to be mutable because it focuses on practice, not on internal considerations of faith. As a result, religious behaviour of individuals tends to vary depending on context and may be emphasized in situations where it will confer social advantage, such as men participating in the communal Friday prayer at a mosque frequented by their work supervisor in order to be perceived as more religious. Similarly, religious behavior may be abandoned when it is not beneficial; it is not uncommon for people to eat surreptitiously during the fasting month when they are alone or to skip some of the five daily prayers because they are busy and the situation means no one will notice.

The history of religion in Indonesia indicates that the region has been subject to successive cultural influences from various sources which have each affected the way in which all religions are understood and practiced today. In addition, since independence, Indonesian society has been characterized by distinct personal identities associated with citizenship of the modern nation on one hand and membership in a much older cultural tradition associated with a hereditary ethnic identity on the other. In this, the nature of religion and its role in society is different than in many other parts of the world. These factors must be considered in understanding the formation of identity among young Indonesians with an awareness that the models developed for western populations may be only partially applicable in explaining individual and group experience.
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Happiness is a psychological state which relates to life satisfaction (Veenhoven, 1995), having purpose in life (Diener et al., 2011), having higher self-esteem, feeling more optimistic and displaying personal control (Ferriss, 2002). Each individual at some time in their life will tend explore their own feelings and experiences, and this is especially likely during adolescence. This study focuses on young Muslims who are studying at an Islamic university in Jakarta and is based data from interviews and observations that suggest that the expression of happiness of this group is based on their specific cultural understanding and collective experiences of their cohort. The study used Giorgi's descriptive phenomenological approach to elucidate the meaning and expression of happiness meaning and expression in 10 young adults aged 18-24 who took part in a larger study of happiness and religiosity. Its findings suggest that there are a range of domains that are relevant to their conceptualization of happiness that include education, family situation, economic stability and romantic relationships that reflect the pressures and demands on Indonesian youth in an environment of rapid social and cultural change.

Keywords: Happiness, Life Satisfaction, Young Adults, Indonesia.
Introduction
Happiness has different meanings that depend, not just on the individual, but also on the person’s circumstances and environment. It can be difficult to predict what kinds of situations are likely to make people happy because reactions are highly individual (see Brickman, Coates & Janoff-Bulman, 1978; as well as Diener 1984; Lyubomirsky and Tucker, 1998; Diener et al. 1999); this may account for the often counterintuitive measures of national happiness that often do not appear to conform to expectations based on socioeconomic or political conditions (Kalmijn and Veenhoven, 2005). The literature on subjective wellbeing addresses a number of domains and activities that may contribute to the way in which an individual perceives his or her life experience. This has been seen as an indirect means of measuring the progress of society towards more equitable treatment of all citizens (National Research Council, 2014). One of the central domains that has been observed to potentially impact on happiness is religion and the context of faith.

Religion and Happiness
There is a large literature on the relationship between religious belief and practice and happiness, much of which relates to the study of positive psychology (Lewis, Maltby and Day, 2005). What exactly constitutes happiness, however, is difficult to ascertain because of the inherently subjective nature of the concept (Sillick and Cathcart, 2014). However, Seligman (2002) suggests that happiness has three elements, positive emotion, engagement, and pleasure. While there has been a great deal of research on the factors that contribute to happiness which has included study of personal factors intrinsic to the individual (age, gender, life circumstances etc) (see, for example, Myers and Diener, 1995; Lucas et al., 2004), it has also been suggested that about 50% of the predisposition to happiness appears to be genetic, while 40% can be attributed to action and activities undertaken by the individual (Lyubomirsky, Sheldon and Schkade, 2005). For this reason, there has been considerable interest in the potential of religion to support happiness and positive emotion in general.

Nonetheless, the research on the relationship between religion and happiness is not unequivocal. A number of studies have found that people with strong religious beliefs experience greater wellbeing than others who do not have such views (Koenig, McCullough and Larson, 2001; Ferriss, 2002; Green and Elliott, 2010). Similarly, some research has shown a positive relationship between religious factors and happiness (Argyle and Hills, 2000; Francis, Jones and Wilcox, 2000; Lewis, Maltby and Day, 2005). There are, however, other studies that have drawn the opposite conclusion, finding no relationship between religion and happiness (Lewis et al., 1997; Lewis, Maltby and Burkinshaw, 2000). There is some indication that this relationship varies for different populations (Sillick and Cathcart, 2014), but some studies suggest that this relationship is positive for Muslim
populations, including among young adults (see, for example, Abdel-Khalek, 2012; Sahraian et al., 2013; Abdel-Khalek, 2014).

Religion in Indonesia
Indonesia, with a population of more than 250 million of whom approximately 90% are Muslim, is often referred to as the largest Muslim country in the world. Its Constitution recognizes six religions that represent the beliefs of the population and include both the Catholic and Protestant branches of Christianity, the Hindu faith, Buddhism and Confucianism as well as Islam. Religious affiliation varies according to geographic location and ethnic group. For some of the 300 ethnic groups that are indigenous to Indonesia, religious affiliation is part of ethnic identity; for others, individuals of the same cultural and linguistic background may have different religions because of personal inclination and family history (Suryadinata, Arifin and Ananta, 2003).

Nonetheless, because of the large Muslim population, the influence of Islam is readily visible in Indonesian society. For example, work hours and events are typically scheduled around Muslim prayer times; a wide range of products and services related to the religion are heavily advertised and available around the country and Islamic banking services, travel packages for Umroh and the Hajj, halal cosmetics, and many more; and the public in general is expected to be aware of and respect religious activities such as fasting during the month of Ramadan. The national Ministry of Religious Affairs [Kementerian Agama] is responsible for matters pertaining to all of the nation’s religions, but, in practice, focuses largely on those of importance to the Muslim population because of its size. For example, the management of Indonesia’s quota of Hajj pilgrims is a major annual undertaking (see Bianchi, 2015, for discussion of issues related to the Hajj in Indonesia). In education specifically, Indonesia has a parallel system of public Islamic schools at the primary, secondary, and tertiary level that are comparable to secular public schools. These Islamic schools, as well as private schools associated with Islam and other religions, are overseen by the Ministry of Religion, which the Ministry of Education and Culture [Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan] supervises non-religious public and private schools. In fact, the majority of students in secular schools are Muslim and, for this reason, it is permitted for the standard school uniform to be altered to conform with Islamic practices.

While Indonesia is committed to the maintenance of religious pluralism, it is also the case that Islam has taken on increased importance in the public environment since 2001 when regional autonomy was established. This large-scale program of decentralization transferred responsibility for many public services from the central government to administrations at the regional and municipal level (see Holtzappel and Ramstedt, 2009). This major change in the political and social environment created a greater role for regional and ethnic identity in
the public sphere and resulted in a greater presence of religious, and specifically Islamic, expression among the public (Bush, 2008). While this likely reflects a desire on the part of the public to express as aspect of identity that was suppressed in the public sphere under the previous New Order government (see Ramage, 1997, for discussion of this), the increased significance of Islam in mainstream Indonesian society suggests that a deeper understanding of how its teachings and practices affect individuals is important in understanding the nature of the community and its views and behaviour.

Method

The findings reported here are based on a study of seven male and five female undergraduate students aged between 18 and 24 who were enrolled at Universitas Islam Negeri Syarif Hidayatullah, a major public Islamic university in Jakarta. The participants were interviewed about their understanding in terms of happiness, including how they defined happiness, their sources of happiness, the importance of happiness to them and how being happy affects them in their daily life. The participants were drawn from the range of disciplines offered at the university and expressed an interest in participating in the study by responding to an advertisement circulated on campus. The participants were encouraged to talk about their views and experience in their own words, and these interviews were recorded and transcribed for analysis using the approach outlined by Giorgi (1985). Religion is not a sensitive subject in Indonesia, and all participants spoke freely about their experiences and views. Ethics approval for this study was granted by the Human Ethics Advisory group of the Faculty of Arts and Education at Deakin University and was considered to pose no risk to participants.

Participants’ Definition of Happiness

When asked to discuss the importance of happiness, the participants in this study placed a high value on being happy. When asked how they would define this state, their responses were varied and quite individual in nature. For some of them, the definition of happiness relied on the absence of negative emotion. For others, however, there were specific conditions they felt contributed to happiness. Examples of participants’ views include:

“Tidak ada beban, banyak tertawa, sering senyum, tidak banyak hal yang dikeluhkan.”

[(When you) have no burdens, you can laugh a lot, you’re always smiling, and there is nothing much to complain about.]

Participant 3
“Bahagia itu ketika merasa puas dan bermanfaat serta bisa membantu orang lain, bisa mendapatkan apa yang diinginkan.”
[You’re happy when you feel satisfied and useful and can help other people. When you can get what you want.]
Participant 8

“Ketika bisa melihat orang yang disayangi bahagia, nyaman, berkumpul dengan orang yang disayangi, orangtua sehat.”
[When you see the people you love are happy, contented, when you’re with the people you love, when your parents are healthy (you are happy).]
Participant 10

“Bisa bersyukur dan mensyukuri apapun keadaannya saat ini.”
[When you can be grateful and give thanks for whatever the situation is at the moment.]
Participant 11

An interesting aspect of the participants’ responses was a focus reported by a number of individuals on the happiness of others. In addition, several participants used the word beban [burden], which can be literal or figurative in Indonesian. In this context, the term can refer to a specific problem but might also be a more generalized situation of worry or concern. The participants generally did not express their conceptualization of happiness in religious terms, except to refer to the broad concept of ‘giving thanks’ [bersyukur], a term whose root derives from Arabic but is not limited to religious contexts in Indonesian.

**Participants’ Sources of Happiness**

When asked about what makes them happy, the participants also gave a variety of answers. Some of them felt that happiness had the potential to motivate them to achieve their goals. While all of the participants felt it was important to be happy, it was difficult for many of them to define exactly this meant. Their responses included:

“Sesuatu yang dirasakan oleh hati, ketika merasa senang walaupun tidak mengetahui penyebabnya... Bahagia ketika diberi hadiah oleh teman-temannya.”
[[Happiness is] something that you can feel in your heart even when you don’t know the cause...You’re happy when your friends give you a gift.]
Participant 2

“Bahagia itu senang, ikhlas, merasa rendah diri.”
[Being happy is liking things, being sincere and feeling humble.]
Participant 6

“Bahagia itu ketika memiliki perasaan tenang dan tentram, bisa menjalani hidup dengan santai.”
Again, participants tended not to define happiness using religious concepts. Participant 6 above was an exception to this, using the term ‘sincere’ [ikhlas], which is of Arabic origin although it need not be used in a strictly religious sense in Indonesian. In this case, however, the connotation is of accepting and being content in one’s relationship with God and other people.

For some participants, happiness was viewed as the absence of negative emotion, not being depressed, being relaxed, and being able to carry out required activities. Many of the participants specifically mentioned being with people they loved as a source of happiness, with a focus on parents and family. Examples include:

“Punya mood bagus, tidak memiliki beban apapun, melihat orang lain bahagia.”
[It’s when you are in a good mood and don’t have any burdens . . . (also) seeing other people happy.]
Participant 1

“Bisa pulang bertemu dengan orangtua, sempat jalan-jalan juga.”
[(I am happy) when I can go back home and see my parents, it’s also a chance to get a change of scene.]
Participant 8

“Kesembuhan orangtua dari sakit yang cukup lama.”
[(I was happy) when my father recovered from a long illness.]
Participant 9

At this stage of life, young people generally need support from family in developing their adult identity. Additionally, most Indonesian university students are financially dependent on their family, and many live at home with parents, siblings, and other relatives. This may have had an impact on how some of the participants understand happiness. It is also the case, however, that family bonds are strong in Indonesia, and children are expected to be concerned about parents whose well-being plays a central role in their feeling of success. Nonetheless, there were also participants in this study who were unable to describe what happiness is. This might have been because their happiness is more related to their current situation. Examples from these participants include:
“Tidak tau apa itu bahagia dan apa yaaa kira-kira yang membuat saya bahagia.”
[I don’t know what happiness is or what might make me happy.]
Participant 5

“Merasa sebulan terakhir lebih banyak kecewa dibandingkan bahagia.”
[I’ve felt more disappointed than happy over the past month.]
Participant 10

“Tidak ada yang membuatnya bahagia selama sebulan ini.”
[There was nothing that made me happy in the past month.]
Participant 11

For these participants, a focus on recent experiences, which might have been stressful or worrying, may have influenced their response. In other words, they may have been thinking about short-term happiness and were perhaps expressing their immediate feelings. Adolescence is a transitional period, and it is not unusual for young adults to experience a range of context-based emotions that do not necessarily reflect their past or future feelings (see Veenhoven, 1994, for example).

**Discussion**
This study was carried out at an Islamic university with the idea that students who chose to complete a degree in this environment might be more religious than their peers who were studying at secular institutions and that their religious faith or practice might influence their understanding of happiness or the things that make them happy. In fact, very little mention of religious practice was made by participants in connection to their happiness or other emotions, even though many of them were heavily involved in religious activities and came from homes where religion was important. While several of them noted the importance of their religion as a component of their cultural background as a member of a specific ethnic group, they did generally derive satisfaction from religious practice or from their faith. This is in contrast to an idea that exists strongly among Indonesian Muslims that people who are more religious, as measured by participation in communal as well as individual expression of faith, should be happier, more content, calmer, and subject to a greater range of positive emotions. In addition, it is often assumed that those who are more religious will be better able to accept life’s challenges and perhaps deal with them.

Coming from religious families, it is likely that all of the participants in this study were exposed to such folk wisdom from childhood. Several of them referred to this idea in explaining that they expected religious observation, such as carrying out the five daily prayers, would make them calmer or happier and, in some cases, felt that this did indeed occur. Others, however, expressed a conflict they felt
between the view of religion and religious behaviour generally accepted by the community and their actual experience. This often surfaced in the context of relationships with the opposite sex. Many of the participants wished to have a girlfriend or boyfriend but felt they could not pursue such a relationship because of disapproval from parents and the community in the context of religious social norms. Others had been in romantic relationships but had broken them off because of religious difference or parental disapproval based on religious values. As a source of stress and unhappiness, this does not seem unusual for young adults like these participants, but it is notable that their religious views often did not have the enable them to accept the situation as they expected them to.

In this, as was the case in relation to a number of other problems the participants in this study discussed, the desire to conform to expectations of family and community and to fit in with friends and acquaintances was a central aspect of participants’ emotional state. The Indonesian community is collectivist in nature (see Jetten, Postmes and McAuliffe, 2002), and membership in the group is extremely important to most individuals. Children tend to be socialized from a very young age that it is better to do things with others than by oneself, and engaging in certain activities, like eating, alone is considered to be antisocial and inappropriate. Many of the participants in this study had begun to take part in more religious activities and behave more religiously when they entered the university because they wished to fit in with other students they met there and be part of a large social group. Several of them mentioned the beneficial impact having a social circle of this kind had had on their religious practice in that they would be more inclined to pray, go to the mosque, fast and so forth because their friends were doing so and that this type of participation made them happy. In this, it is likely that the social aspects of their religion, rather than personal faith, were more important in their happiness which derived from having a place in their social context and being seen as part of the group. The social aspects of religion in the context of happiness have been discussed in the literature (see, for example, Lim and Putnam, 2010) and have been observed in various locations to relate to the nature of the social context (Okulicz-Kozaryn, 2010). In Indonesia, and specifically for the participants in this study, the desire to be part of a social group composed of their peers as well as the increasingly visible nature of religion in the public sphere combine to influence their perception of the relationship between religious observance and happiness.

An interesting aspect of this study was the difficulty the participants had explaining happiness and even finding a term that expressed how they felt. While Indonesian has a number of words that can mean ‘happy’ in some specific context, there is no single term comparable to ‘happy’ in English that can refer to a current short-term emotion but
also to a long-term evaluation of one’s life. Most of the participants chose to speak about being happy using the word *bahagia* [happy] that is used in expressions like ‘a happy life’ or ‘a happy marriage’. Short-term happiness or happiness in the immediate context was usually expressed as *senang* [happy], which can also be used to mean ‘be fond of; like’, and the term *puas* [satisfied] was also used by several participants. This points up an important aspect of perception and aspiration in Indonesia, namely that most people do not see being happy as a goal, the way it is understood in many western societies (see Lyubomirsky, 2008). Most Indonesians assume that if a person is able to fulfil his or her basic needs, has a network of family and friends, and has been able to achieve the milestones deemed as socially desirable (marriage, children, grandchildren, etc), he or she should be happy. In other words, most Indonesians seem to accept that certain social markers mean a person is happy, regardless the individual’s emotional state. Interestingly, this was observed to be a source of conflict in the participants in this study.

Many of them explained that their parents and family members had expectations for them that conformed to the traditional social norms of marriage and family. Because they were studying at a university, the participants felt a great deal of pressure to graduate, find employment, and marry according to their parents’ wishes. While they generally did believe that this was an important and appropriate life path, it was also apparent that many of them were attracted by the availability of many more options now available to middle class Indonesians, such as travel and participation in global mainstream popular culture. However, many of the participants felt their religious background and the social norms and expectations of their university environment would not permit them to take advantage of such opportunities, and this was a source of internal conflict and unhappiness for several of them that was difficult for them to address in their current position.

**Conclusion**

The aim of the study reported here was to understand the experiences of young Muslims in Indonesia in relations to their happiness and religious views. In this, it was found that religion, in terms of either practice or faith, had comparatively little impact on happiness which was largely conceptualized in terms of family, friends, and life success, separate from any specifically religious goals. This may be a reflection of the fact that Muslim young people are part of the majority in Indonesia and, for this reason, their religious identity is not as marked as it might be for Muslim youth in a western country where it might distinguish them from other young people. Instead, this study suggests that Indonesian young people in general may be more affected by the very rapid social, political and cultural change that has taken place over the last two decades and that elements of the public and even global context may be increasingly important to them. More
study is required in this area as it is likely that the unique characteristics of Indonesian society are not fully comparable to those of other communities where happiness has been studied. Finally, the findings of this study suggest that the western view of happiness as a life goal may not be relevant in Indonesia, and possibly other non-western societies, and it might be necessary to develop a conceptualization of happiness that better fits the social patterns of the community of study.

References


of Southeast Asian Studies.
landscape: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies.


Appendix C
Ethics Clearance

Memorandum

To: Dr Rebecca Fanany
School of Humanities and Social Sciences

Re: Mrs Yufi Adriani

From: Faculty of Arts & Education Human Ethics Advisory Group (HEAG)

Subject: HAE-15-124
Religiosity and Happiness in Indonesia: A Phenomenological Study of Young Muslims

Please quote this project number in all future communications.

The application for this project has been considered by the Faculty HEAG under the terms of Deakin University’s Human Research Ethics Committee (DUHREC).

Approval has been given for Mrs Yufi Adriani, under the supervision of Dr Rebecca Fanany, School of Humanities and Social Sciences, to undertake this project from 3/06/2016 to 3/06/2019.

The approval given by the Faculty HEAG is given only for the project and for the period as stated in the approval. It is your responsibility to contact the Faculty HEAG immediately should any of the following occur:

- Serious or unexpected adverse effects on the participants
- Any proposed changes in the protocol, including extensions of time
- Any events which might affect the continuing ethical acceptability of the project
- The project is discontinued before the expected date of completion
- Modifications are requested by other HRECs.

In addition you will be required to report on the progress of your project at least once every year and at the conclusion of the project. Failure to report as required will result in suspension of your approval to proceed with the project.

The Faculty HEAG and/or DUHREC may need to audit this project as part of the requirements for monitoring set out in the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007).

Kylie Koukicoudias
HEAG Secretariat
Faculty of Arts and Education