

Research Article

Prosocial Behavior, Religiosity, and Happiness: A Study of Special Needs Assistants in Malang

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Abstract.

Happiness is an overall condition of one's life that is pleasing. It also refers to two conditions: positive emotion and well-being. Special needs assistants' jobs include assisting the children in their learning process and helping them develop their skills and adapt to the environment. Special needs assistants' happiness is important for critical tasks. Religiosity is one of the many factors that can strengthen the motivation to do prosocial behavior and increase happiness. The study objective is to test religiosity's role as a moderation variable. The sample included 100 special needs assistants in Malang were chosen using an accidental sampling technique. We used a quantitative method, and the *Prosocialness for Adult Scale* (PSA), *The PERMA Profiler*, and the *4 Basic Dimensions of Religiosity Scale* (4 BDRS) were used for measurement. We analyzed the data using *Moderated Analysis Regression* (MRA). This study shows that religiosity can be a moderation variable and strengthen the relation between prosocial behavior and the happiness of special needs assistants ($\beta=0,015$; $p=0,000$).

Keywords: happiness, prosocial behavior, religiosity, special needs assistants

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1. Introduction

Based on the statistical data, in 2022, there are approximately 2,729 children with special needs (ABK) in Malang. Children with disabilities or children with special needs are those who have different characteristics in their physical, intellectual, and emotional (1). Children's limited physical, intellectual, and emotional capacity means they need special assistants to help them learn in an educational environment. The workload of the special needs assistants varies depending on the disability type. Therefore, special needs assistants must have knowledge, competence, and patience in dealing with special needs children because the children's behavior and communication difficulties might cause some emotional reactions.



Previous studies said that special needs assistants often get annoyed and exhausted when the children are going to throw a tantrums (2). They also go through difficulties that make them experience fatigue and stress and decrease their psychological well-being because they have to teach the same lesson repeatedly (3). They also cannot develop their potential and explore themselves (4). Educators of children with special needs have a higher risk of experiencing stress, burnout, and fatigue and are twice as likely to resign as teachers in public schools. Therefore, special needs assistants' well-being must come into the limelight because it can reduce turnover intentions and improve the quality of learning outcomes for children with special needs (5).

Happiness is the level at which an individual is satisfied with the overall quality of his life (6). Happiness refers to two terms. First, happiness is a term that includes well-being; second, happiness is an emotion, as defined by emotional psychology experts (7). Aristotle classified happiness into two, namely eudaimonic, which is obtained by carrying out good values such as living with purpose, meaning, loyalty, devotion, and sacrifice (8), and hedonic, which is obtained through achieving everything desired like material and relational well-being (9) even though this condition has a short period (10).

Happiness has five dimensions: positive emotion, engagement, relationship, meaning, and accomplishment (11). The positive emotion element in the well-being theory has appeared in the authentic happiness theory, but in the well-being theory, happiness and life satisfaction, which were previously the goal of all measurements, have now become one of the factors under the positive emotion element. The second element, namely engagement, refers to the condition when an individual is in a "flow state" or a condition where the individual feels integrated or fully involved in an activity. The third element is relationships, which include positive social relationships. Then the fourth element is meaning, which is how a person interprets life and what the purpose of his life is. The final element is accomplishment, which is a goal that an individual can achieve. According to Seligman, prosperity will be achieved when individuals have these five elements (12).

According to the eudaimonic perspective of happiness, prosocial behavior is a means to gain happiness. Prosocial behavior is a behavior carried out to benefit other people. Prosocial behavior also includes all actions such as helping, caring, sharing, and collaborating (13). Previous studies state that prosocial behavior generally has a positive relationship with the happiness or well-being of prosocial actors (14–19). Besides that, prosocial behavior also has a positive relationship with health and happiness (14), increasing life satisfaction (18).

Social psychologists argue that prosocial behavior can increase happiness when the behavior includes the three components of self-determination theory: autonomy, competence, and relatedness (20). Autonomy is defined as awareness of one's own will, meaning that when prosocial behavior is carried out based on awareness and without coercion from other parties, this behavior can potentially increase the perpetrator's happiness. Then, by seeing that their prosocial actions benefit other people, the perpetrator of the prosocial action will feel capable of doing something useful (competence). Apart from that, prosocial actions also involve interactions with other people, both known and unknown, and by carrying out actions that benefit other parties, positive interactions will be created that contribute to increasing the welfare of the prosocial actor (relatedness).

In line with self-determination theory, previous research shows that prosocial behavior can increase positive emotions and good social relations with others (21). The study also compared the happiness felt when individuals carry out prosocial actions and do good things to themselves. The results were that individuals who did good for themselves tended not to experience an increase in positive or a decrease in negative emotions. This is because hedonic happiness is temporary.

Prosocial behavior is divided into four parts: helping, sharing, caring, and empathizing (22). One form of prosocial behavior that can be found in everyday life is assisting children with special needs. Hanifah and Hamdan (2017) stated that prosocial behavior carried out by Islamic Inclusion Elementary School teachers in West Bandung Regency includes helping, sharing, collaborating, donating, and being honest in the work environment. The prosocial behavior carried out by teachers is also based on the religious values they believe in. This is caused by religious beliefs, which strengthen a person's motivation to do volunteer work related to human values (23).

Religiosity is a belief in a transcendent entity that determines the purpose of their lives and gives meaning to human life. Religiosity is believed to fulfill basic human needs such as purpose and meaning in human life, support and high levels of social capital, and more positive stress coping strategies when facing difficult situations (24). Previous studies state that individuals who believe in God have a higher level of happiness than those who do not think so (25). Belief in God is also positively related to intentions to perform prosocial actions and subjective happiness across cultures. In addition, a survey conducted by Gross National Happiness stated that religious people are happier and psychologically healthier than their secular counterparts (26).

Religiosity is a multidimensional construct of four dimensions: belonging, believing, behaving, and bonding (27). The first dimension that is related to happiness is belonging. Belonging is a dimension of religiosity related to social aspects of religion, providing cohesiveness and identity to individuals with the same beliefs. Research conducted on a sample of Muslim and Christian students in Jakarta shows that the dimension of belonging has a positive relationship with well-being through social ties and identity in a community with the same belief values (28). Togetherness in a community can fulfill the need for connectedness with other people, improving well-being (29).

The believing dimension is related to the belief in a transcendent existence that determines the purpose and meaning of life and its relationship with humans. According to Nezlek (2022), faith in God positively relates to life satisfaction, happiness, and health. This is in line with research conducted by Aditya et al (2020), which shows that the believing dimension has a positive relationship with the well-being of Christian students in Jakarta. This can be caused by the religious system providing a comprehensive framework for the meaning of life so that it can explain all events that satisfactorily occur in this world. Therefore, when religion is integrated with the global sense of life, an individual's belief in God is connected to understanding humans, themselves, current life, and perhaps the next life (30).

Belief in the existence of a transcendent entity can also increase positive emotions such as awe and gratitude through praise directed towards that entity and reduce emotions such as pride related to self-praise (31). In line with this, Cappelen et al (2014) stated that individuals who actively and regularly worship at church have self-transcendent positive emotions, which refer to feelings of awe, gratitude, love, and peace compared to positive emotions such as happiness and pride.

The believing dimension also relates to the bonding dimension, which is the emotional aspect of religiosity. Bonding is a bond or connection with a transcendent entity through worship rituals. Rituals of worship and prayer are humans' way of communicating with transcendent entities and can encourage someone to feel connected or get closer to these entities. Research states that closeness to God positively correlates with happiness, life satisfaction, and meaning (32).

The influence of rituals and prayer on happiness depends on how humans perceive God. According to Emmons, belief in God as the Most Merciful can impact emotional well-being, and belief in God as the Most Punishing and Rewarding will have the opposite effect (30). The perception of God as Most Forgiving can give people hope

that all their mistakes and shortcomings will be forgiven. Feeling forgiven will relieve the individual's guilt and reduce guilt-related stress (33).

Based on the explanation above, this research will test whether the religiosity variable can strengthen the relationship between prosocial behavior and happiness in assisting children with special needs in Malang. The results of a systematic review and meta-analysis state that doing good can improve well-being. Still, the effects vary from small to moderate compared to other positive psychology interventions (34). Previous research that used religiosity and prosocial behavior as independent variables showed that prosocial behavior and religiosity influenced happiness (35).

2. METHODS

This research is a non-experimental quantitative research that aims to test whether the religiosity variable can be a moderator variable in the relationship between prosocial behavior and happiness in assisting children with special needs in Malang.

2.1. Participants

The subjects in this research were volunteers assisting children with special needs in the city of Malang. Research sampling uses an accidental sampling technique, in which anyone who meets the researcher can be used as a sample (36). The sample size in this study was determined using the Leme show formula because the population size was unknown. The following is a demographic table of research subjects.

2.2. Research Instruments

The prosocial behavior variable in this study was measured using the Prosocialness Scale for Adults (PSA) developed by Caprara et al (2005), which has been adopted. PSA consists of 16 statements with 5 answer ranges from never to always. Respondents were asked to write a check (✓) on one of the columns which categorized as 'tidak pernah' (score=1), 'jarang' (score=2), 'kadang-kadang' (score=3), 'sering' (score=4), 'selalu' (score=5) based on the statement given. PSA describes individual prosocial behavior and feelings in four aspects: sharing, helping, caring, and empathy. The PSA reliability level is 0.879 (37).

TABLE 1: Demographics of Research Subjects.

Characteristic	N	Percentage (%)
Age:		
21-30	45	45
31-40	23	23
41-50	17	17
51-60	15	15
Total	100	100
Gender:		
a. Women	90	90
b. Men	10	10
Total	100	100
Occupation:		
a. Shadow teacher	5	5
b. Therapist	17	17
c. Special needs teacher	78	78
Total	100	100

The happiness variable is measured using the PERMA Profiler. The reliability coefficient value of The PERMA Profiler, which has been adapted, is 0.9, and the validity value is 0.87 (38). The response format consists of 11 answer ranges that range from 0 to 11. Respondents were asked to rate themselves on a scale of 0-11 based on the questions given, then circle one of the numbers. 0 is interpreted as 'tidak pernah' or by the category listed, and 11 is interpreted as 'selalu' or by the category listed. The PERMA Profiler includes five dimensions: positive affect, engagement, relationship, meaning, and accomplishment.

The religiosity variable was measured using the 4 Basic Dimensions of Religiousness Scale (4 BDRS), which was developed by Saraglou (2011) and has been adapted in Indonesia. 4 The BDRS is a multidimensional scale consisting of 12 items with a response range that ranges from 1 (agree) to 7 (disagree). This scale includes four dimensions of religiosity: believing, behaving, bonding, and belonging. The reliability value of the 4 adapted DBRS is 0.89 in Muslim samples and 0.91 in Christian samples (28).

2.3. Data Analysis Techniques

The data obtained in this study was analyzed using moderated regression analysis. MRA is a special application of linear multiple regression where the regression equation contains elements of interaction (multiplication of two or more independent variables) (39).

3. RESULTS

The categorization of respondents’ scores is presented in Table 2. The score is divided into 3 categories, namely High (H), Medium (M), and Low (L).

TABLE 2: Respondents’ Categorization on All Variables.

Variable	Low (L)		Medium (M)		High (H)		Interval
	F	%	F	%	F	%	
Prosocial behavior	0	0%	15	15%	85	85%	L : > 55
							A: 41-55
							H: < 41
Happiness	0	0%	15	15%	85	85%	L: > 133
							A: 97-133
							H: < 97
Religiosity	0	0%	4	4%	96	96%	L: > 57
							A: 39-57
							H: < 39

Table 2 shows that 85 research respondents obtained scores in the high category and 15 people in the medium category on the variables of prosocial behavior and happiness. Meanwhile, in the religiosity variable, 96 people, or 96% of research respondents, scored in the high category.

3.1. Relationship between Variables

Before testing the hypothesis, the first step is to test the classical assumptions first using the SPSS program. Based on the normality test, the results showed that the data distribution was normally distributed with an Asymp value. A sign that is greater than 0.05 is 0.183. Furthermore, after testing multicollinearity, autocorrelation, and heteroscedasticity, the results showed no symptoms of multicollinearity, autocorrelation,

and heteroscedasticity. So, the data in this research passed the classical assumption test as a prerequisite for hypothesis testing.

The next step is to conduct a correlation test to determine the correlation between prosocial behavior, happiness, and religiosity. The correlation test was carried out using Pearson Product Moment in the SPSS program. The results of the correlation test are presented in Table 3.

TABLE 3: Correlation between Variables.

	Happiness	Prosocial Behavior	Religiosity
Happiness (Y)	1	0,461**	0,257**
Prosocial Behavior (X)		1	0,266**
Religiosity (Mod)			1

Note : **p<0,01

The results of the correlation analysis between variables show that the prosocial behavior variable has a significant positive relationship with the happiness variable, with a r of 0.461 (p<0.01). The happiness variable with the religiosity variable has a significant positive relationship with r of 0.257 (p<0.01), and the prosocial behavior variable has a significant positive relationship with religiosity with r of 0.266 (p<0.01)

3.2. Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis testing was carried out using the Moderated Regression Analysis (MRA) test using SPSS version 25. The results of the hypothesis test can be seen in Table 4.

TABLE 4: Data Analysis Results.

Variable	B	t	p-value	R ² (%)
Model 1				
Prosocial behavior (X)	1,224	5,14	0,000	21,20
Model 2				
Religiosity (M)	-0,585	-1,892	0,061	
Pro M (X*M)	0,015	4,521	0,000	22,9
Believe (X*M1)	0,029	2,605	0,011	12,70
Bonding (X*M2)	0,035	3,842	0,000	19
Behaving (X*M3)	0,04	3,368	0,001	16,40
Belonging (X*M4)	0,03	3,086	0,003	15

In Table 4, it is known that after testing the hypothesis using Moderated Regression Analysis (MRA), the values obtained were $\beta = 0.015$ and $p = 0.000$, meaning that religiosity was able to act as a moderator variable in the relationship between prosocial behavior and happiness. Therefore, it can be concluded that the hypothesis in this study is accepted. The coefficient of determination (R^2) in model 1 shows 21.20%, which means that the prosocial behavior variable (independent variable) has an influence of 21.20% on the happiness variable (dependent variable), while other factors influence 78.80%.

In model 2, the moderating variable is measured unidimensionally and then multidimensionally to determine the influence of each dimension on the prosocial behavior and happiness variables. Unidimensional calculations show that the religiosity variable significantly influences the relationship between the prosocial behavior variable and the happiness variable ($\beta=0.015$; $p=0.000$). Multidimensional calculations also show that the four dimensions of religiosity significantly affect the relationship between prosocial behavior and happiness.

The believe dimension has a significant relationship with the happiness variable ($\beta=0.029$; $p=0.011$), and R is 12.7%, which means the believe dimension has an influence of 12.7% on the relationship between prosocial behavior and happiness. The bonding dimension shows a significant relationship with the happiness variable ($\beta=0.035$; $p=0.000$), and R^2 is 19%, which means the bonding dimension influences 19%. The behaving dimension shows a significant relationship with the happiness variable ($\beta=0.04$; $p=0.001$), and R^2 is 16.4%, which means the behaving dimension influences 16.4%. The belonging dimension significantly influences the happiness variable ($\beta=0.03$; $p=0.003$), and R^2 is 15%, which means the belonging dimension influences 15%.

4. Discussion

This research aims to determine whether religiosity can be a moderator variable in the relationship between prosocial behavior and happiness in assisting children with special needs in Malang. The research hypothesis is accepted, which states that religiosity can moderate the relationship between prosocial behavior and happiness in helping children with special needs (ABK) in Malang City. This means that religiosity can strengthen the relationship between prosocial behavior and happiness in assisting children with special needs.

Supporters of children with special needs have the responsibility to educate and teach children with special needs so that they can adapt and develop their potential according to their type of disability. An assistant needs to have special knowledge and skills regarding how to handle children with special needs. This condition differentiates the responsibilities of assisting children with special needs, especially teachers, from those who do not accompany children with special needs.

The respondents in this research were 100 people assisting children with special needs in Malang City, consisting of 78 special teacher assistants (GPK), 17 therapists for special needs children, and 5 shadow teachers. Based on the results of the scores on the three variables, it is known that the prosocial behavior scores of 100 respondents assisting children with special needs in Malang City are in the medium category (15%) and the high category (85%). Likewise, the happiness variable is in the medium category (15%) and high category (85%). Then, the religiosity variable is in the medium category (4%) and high category (96%).

The regression test results carried out on model 1 show that prosocial behavior has a significant positive relationship with the happiness of assisting children with special needs in Malang City ($\beta=1.224$; $p=0.000$). This means that when prosocial behavior increases, happiness also increases. In line with these results, previous research states that teachers with a high prosocial behavior tendency in the workplace also show good well-being (40).

Then, in model 2, the regression test was carried out twice. First, the religiosity variable is tested as a unidimensional construct and then as a multidimensional construct to determine whether each dimension can influence the relationship between prosocial behavior and happiness. In testing the religiosity variable as a unidimensional construct, the results showed that religiosity became a moderating variable in the relationship between prosocial behavior and happiness in assisting children with special needs ($\beta=0.015$ and $p=0.000$). Thus, it can be said that religiosity can strengthen the relationship between prosocial behavior and happiness in assisting children with special needs in Malang City. This shows that happiness will also increase when prosocial behavior is high with a high level of religiosity.

Then, when measuring religiosity as a multidimensional construct, the results showed that each dimension, namely believing, bonding, behaving, and belonging, had a significant positive influence on the relationship between prosocial behavior and the happiness of assisting children with special needs. This means that each dimension

of religiosity can also strengthen the relationship between prosocial behavior and happiness. Religiosity is one of the strongest factors that encourages teachers accompanying children with special needs to take prosocial actions (41). Prosocial behavior demonstrated by inclusive school teachers includes establishing good relationships with others and working as a form of worship to Allah. Apart from that, prosocial behavior is also based on the belief that Allah, who knows everything, considers humans' good and bad deeds. Belief in transcendent things, such as rewards and rewards for goodness in the afterlife, is one of the motives for someone to carry out prosocial actions.

In most religions, teachings regarding moral values, ethical principles, and behavior rules are central to believing in a transcendent entity. These moral values, rules, and ethical principles can increase eudaimonic happiness through relationships with other people (29). As previously explained, one form of achieving eudaimonic happiness is by carrying out prosocial actions. Adherence to religious teachings increases prosocial behavior by strengthening motivation based on concern for others (23). Religiosity is related to good qualities such as honesty, discipline, helping others, forgiveness, manners, and loyalty (42). Several factors can influence how religiosity can encourage someone to take prosocial actions: positive emotions (such as gratitude and admiration), empathy, social relationships, a feeling of being watched by supernatural forces, and the belief that there will be retribution for actions. Good and bad, and traits such as obedience (43).

Prosocial behavior based on strong religiosity in the workplace can increase the happiness of assisting children with special needs. This is supported by research conducted by Cahyanigntyas et al (2020), which states that religiosity is also a factor that can increase the happiness of special school teachers. When facing problems and looking for solutions related to students, the way to do this is to pray, surrender, and draw closer to God. This could be because belief in God has been ingrained in Indonesian society, so religious coping is often one of the methods used to overcome difficult conditions (28). Religiosity creates a sense of security and gives meaning to life in a world full of uncertainty, so religious coping becomes a strategy used to deal with conditions of uncertainty (44).

Religiosity also encourages individuals to establish a positive relationship with God and harmonious relationships with fellow humans. So, individuals with good religiosity and the urge to carry out prosocial actions can develop positive social relations. In line with this, previous studies state that positive relationships with students, parents, colleagues, and the community are factors that can increase the happiness of teachers

assisting children with special needs (3,45). Positive interactions between assistants of children with special needs and the social environment can be established through good interpersonal skills and are characterized by having good empathy, affection, strong intimacy, and understanding of giving and receiving in a relationship (4).

Prosocial behavior also has an impact on increasing the assistant's positive emotions. The limited conditions of children with special needs encourage a sense of compassion in educating and guiding children with disabilities and a sense of satisfaction when seeing their students succeed (45). A study of teachers assisting autistic students in Jambi shows that positive emotions include joy, interest, self-satisfaction, fighting spirit, gratitude, and sympathy (2). Gratitude also makes a person feel satisfied with what they have and minimizes the behavior of comparing themselves with others. By being grateful a person will feel calm and reduce anxiety (29).

The limitation of this research is that the measuring tool used to measure prosocial behavior is not a tool for measuring prosocial behavior related to assisting children with special needs but prosocial behavior in general. So, the results of measuring prosocial behavior describe general conditions. The next limitation is that in the research, the assistants of children with special needs were not classified according to the type of child's disability. The kind of child's disability influences the workload of each assistant, which may affect their happiness.

5. Conclusion

Based on the results of the analysis, it was found that prosocial behavior had a positive relationship with happiness, and religiosity became a moderator variable and strengthened the relationship between the two.

This research implies that strengthening the religiosity of children with special needs can increase happiness and help them manage stress in their responsibilities. Religiosity can increase positive emotions through gratitude, sincerity, and surrender to God. Besides that, religiosity also encourages a person to establish harmonious relationships with fellow humans, which can be done by carrying out prosocial actions. Positive relationships are also one of the factors that influence increased happiness in assistants of children with special needs.

Therefore, the first recommendation that researchers can give for future research is related to using a prosocial behavior scale specific to helping children with special

needs. In this way, the prosocial behavior of assisting children with special needs can increase happiness. Then the second suggestion is related to the selection of respondent subjects, where it would be better if assistants for children with special needs were classified based on one type of child's disability, such as assistants for children with intellectual disabilities or assistants for children with physical disabilities. The third suggestion that researchers can convey is that further research tests the effectiveness of religiosity-based therapy or training to increase the happiness of assisting children with special needs.

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Authors' contributions

Ni'matuzahroh (First Author contribution in concept, analysis data, discussion, and writing the article), Diah Karmiyati (Second Author contribution in concept, analysis data, discussion, Fidari Fitrianingtyas (Third Author contribution in concept, analysis data, discussion and publication).

Competing Interest

Ni'matuzahroh (Educational Psychology and Development Psychology), Diah Karmiyati (Clinical Psychology), and Fidari Fitrianingtyas (Educational Psychology).

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