


# The Dynamics of Relationship between Religious Identity and Fundamentalism in Predicting Muslim Prejudice against Christian in Indonesia

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## Abstract

Many empirical studies have explored the relationship between religious identity, fundamentalism, and prejudice. However, very few investigations have been conducted into whether the relationship between fundamentalism and religious identity generates prejudice; this is because fundamentalism is often seen as a particular form of religious identity. This research positions religious identity and fundamentalism as two separate things, stemming from an awareness of contemporary developments that a fundamentalist does not always display “hard” or “extreme” expressions of religious identity. This study also analyzes the two within the context of a mutually explanative relationship (Religious identity → Fundamentalism, and Fundamentalism → Religious identity). 639 Islamic college students (372 males, 267 females) recruited with convenience sampling method participated in this study. Using a correlational design, the data were analyzed using hierarchical regression analysis to determine the role of gender, age, and religious fundamentalism in predicting prejudice. Furthermore, mediation analysis was carried out twice, by placing fundamentalism and religious identity, exchangeably, as mediating variables to predict prejudice. Results showed that (1) Age and gender did not significantly contribute to the prejudice. However, the prejudice can be predicted by religious identity and fundamentalism, (2) Fundamentalism is a mediator between religious identity and prejudice, (3) Religious identity is a mediator between fundamentalism and prejudice. This finding indicates that inter-religious prejudice can emerge as a reflection of both (1) fundamentalism through religious identity, as well as (2) religious identity through fundamentalism. The use of mediation analysis in this research sheds light on the complex interplay between religious identity, fundamentalism, and prejudice. It reveals that both fundamentalism and religious identity can mediate the relationship between each other and prejudice. This insight into the mediation processes can help researchers and policymakers better understand the mechanisms behind inter-religious prejudice.

## INTRODUCTION

The cases of inter-religious intolerance in Indonesia indicate a relatively high level of religious prejudice among each of the religious groups. This study aims to examine the role of religious identity and fundamentalism in predicting religious prejudice (as in mediation

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analysis). Prejudice often arises when individuals engage in social categorization that distinguishes between in-groups and out-groups. Fundamentalism - a belief that the teachings and scriptures of one's religion contain the absolute truth about all existence or life - might contribute to prejudice.

The tension between two religious identities, Muslims and Christians, in Indonesia is a complex situation, which, although shrouded in political and economic issues, is still an issue involving religion - a social institution that dominates the psyche of Indonesian society. The tension might also contribute to prejudice and can be understood historically as a remnant of the Dutch colonial period. The Dutch colonialists prioritized Christians in terms of job opportunities. As a result, Muslims perceived that the Dutch colonialists wanted to force them to convert to Christianity, thus further straining the fragile relationship between Christians and Muslims (Husaini, 2005). Consequently, Christians were often accused of being pro-Dutch throughout the movement and at the beginning of independence (Aritonang & Steenbrink, 2008). Tensions between Muslims and Christians also arose as Indonesia prepared for independence. Muslims initially proposed "*Belief in God with the obligation to carry out Islamic sharia for its adherents*" as the first principle of the Indonesia State Ideology (*Pancasila*/Five Principles) (Kushidayati, 2009). However, Christians rejected this proposal. The founding fathers of the nation then agreed that to not prevent Christians from joining the Republic, a universal statement would be used, namely *Belief in One Supreme God*.

This tension continued, for example in the mid-1990s when the economic divide where Christians were perceived as people who were wealthy and reaped the benefits of Indonesia development (Sukanto & Pramono, 2020). Along with it, the counterpart, Indonesian Christians, felt themselves increasingly marginalized by Muslims and were unable to rely on the Indonesian government to defend them against conservative Muslims' plans to further restrict their religious freedoms and exclude them from political life (Arifianto, 2009).

Conflicts between Muslims and Christians have occurred in various regions of Indonesia (CNN Indonesia.com, 2019; Komnas HAM RI, 2015; Kompas.com, 2001; Yusuf, 2016; Sholihan, 2008). Interestingly, after an incident, two mass media in Indonesia, namely *Kompas* (which was marked by its founding by a Catholic Party figure, namely Frans Seda) (Kompas.com, 2022) and *Republika* (which was born by the Muslim community, namely the Association of Indonesian Muslim Intellectuals – ICMI) (Republika.co.id, n.d.) reported the incident differently - showing that there is an advocacy of religious identity and prejudice against each other; in which case *Kompas* does not really question the things that *Republika* is very concerned about, and vice versa, based on a framing analysis (Nurlaela, 2016).

*Religious prejudice* is the holding, by the followers of one religion, of a negative judgment of the followers of another religion based solely on religion, regardless of any personal characteristics (Hadjar, 2010). Allport (1954) explained that prejudice is a psychological construct that leads to generalized dislike and beliefs.

The people in Indonesia were divided into two major groups based on their religious identity: an Islamic group and a Christian group (Malik, 2003). *Religious identity* - a part of social identity - is "an individual's views about themselves as a religious person [subsuming] the individual and institutional practices that cover both religiosity and spiritual aspects of a faith community [that giving] meaning to individual sense of 'self', roles and surroundings in the religious community" (Kapoor & Misra, 2017). According to social identity theory, individuals in the rigid in-group identity tend to hold a negative view of individuals in the out-group (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). This type of negative assessment may emerge when the Muslim in-group perceives that the existence of Christians, as the out-group, poses a threat to their values or views. Previous research has found that threat to social identity is related to prejudice (Bauer & Hannover, 2020; Bukhori, 2011; Fauzi & Rahmani, 2019; Spiegler et al., 2021;

Sulistio et al., 2020). Therefore, this present study assumes that there is positive correlation between religious identity and prejudice (Religious Identity → Prejudice).

The commitment to social identity is strongly driven by fundamentalism (Bartoszuk & Deal, 2016). *Fundamentalism* posits rejection of liberal ethics, science, or technological exploitation by embracing literalism and infallibility regarding specific scriptures; it actively uses media and technology, asserts universal truths, as well as presents a grand historical narrative in terms of paradise, fall, and redemption, or cosmic dualism (Altemeyer & Hunsberger, 1992). In addition, they tend to interpret religious texts literally to maintain doctrinal purity and execution. They reject the interpretation of scriptures by liberal Muslims who, in seeking to understand religious texts, consider the situation in different ways along with social change (Bukhori, 2012). Moreover, some verses in the Qur'an can be interpreted radically outside the context of the narration of the verse and are often used as a reference by highly fundamentalist individuals to resist (Azra, 1996). Therefore, this present study assumes that there is positive correlation between fundamentalism and prejudice (Fundamentalism → Prejudice).

### Rationales of the study

The novelty of this research lies in its innovative approach to dissecting the intricate dynamics between religious identity, fundamentalism, and prejudice, particularly within the context of Islamic college students. By disentangling religious identity from fundamentalism and demonstrating their unique roles in predicting prejudice, the study challenges conventional assumptions and offers a more nuanced understanding of how these factors interact. Furthermore, the use of mediation analysis to reveal that both fundamentalism and religious identity can mediate the relationship between each other and prejudice adds a new layer of complexity to our comprehension of these phenomena. This nuanced perspective and empirical evidence provide a fresh lens through which scholars and practitioners can examine and address inter-religious prejudice, thereby advancing the field's theoretical frameworks and practical interventions.

This present research studies the dynamics of Muslim prejudice against Christians in the Indonesian context, especially regarding the relationship between age, gender, religious identity, fundamentalism, and prejudice. This study aims to, among others, examine the role of age in predicting religious prejudice. There are a number of studies that inspired this examination. Fiske's research (2017) showed that, as objects of prejudice, elders are perceived as warmer (which stems from their cooperative interdependence) and less competence (which stems from their lower status), but middle-aged adults are perceived as more competent and less warm.

That is, the older a person is usually agreed upon as the more *warm* (friendly, trustworthy, tender, moral, sensitive, sweet), and, as the implication, they might have lower prejudice. Warm people are likely to have less prejudice because their empathetic nature enables them to understand and empathize with others, their openness to experiences allows them to embrace diversity and challenge stereotypes, their positive interactions and relationships foster respect and fairness, their effective emotional regulation prevents impulsive biases, and their exposure to diverse perspectives broadens their understanding and promotes inclusivity.

Based on the literature review mentioned above, this study hypothesizes that age negatively predict prejudice, that is, the older a person is, the lower his/her inter-religious prejudice. This study also aims to examine the role of religious identity and fundamentalism (regressors) in predicting religious prejudice (as regressand) in mediation analysis. Although religious identity and fundamentalism can predict the emergence of prejudice, as predicted in the previous paragraph, the researcher assumes that there is mediation in two ways between religious identity, fundamentalism, and prejudice.

*First way* (Religious Identity → Fundamentalism → Prejudice), when individuals commit rigidly to their religious identity, fundamentalism will emerge, which is the basis by which individuals have a prejudice against other religions. As de Bruin-Wassinkmaat et al. (2019) stated, “Religious identity is self-perception of their religiosity ...; one of multiple identity domains that together form the whole identity ... [and] support the integration of various identity domains into a meaningful whole [comprising] beliefs, values, and doctrines as well as behaviors, rituals, and religious practices”.

In accordance with the social identity theory, individuals will especially tend to be prejudiced toward other groups in cases where they feel that their group is superior (or having strong social identity, such as religious identity) – noting that in Indonesia, Muslims are the majority population – and there are feelings of distrust and fear (Van Cappellen & LaBouff, 2020). In fact, if individuals feel that their group has dominance in society, they can do anything even if they break the rules (Mesler et al., 2022). This possibility can occur because people with an unhealthy or rigidly strong religious identity are prone to being trapped in fundamentalism. Balkin et al. (2009) found a negative correlation between strong and rigid religious identity and multicultural competence. With low multicultural competence, people are more receptive to fundamentalism which offers a narrower lens in viewing culturally diverse populations such as Indonesia.

Meanwhile, fundamentalism includes an opposition or resistance to the enemy, a rejection of evolution or development, a rejection of pluralism and relativism, and a rejection of hermeneutics (Marty, 1988). Individuals who adhere to fundamentalism will act in the name of God by citing scriptures to justify the adverse treatment of other groups (Dahlan, 2012; Rouse, 2021). Misrawi (2007) also explained that fundamentalism has produced religious interpretations that should have nuances of tolerance but instead highlight intolerance. This assertion is also supported by previous research that found that individuals who are committed to their religion tend to show intolerance and prejudice toward other religious groups (Makashvili et al., 2018; Shaver et al., 2016).

*Second way* (Fundamentalism → Religious Identity → Prejudice), fundamentalism can drive their religious identity, which can eventually lead to prejudice against other religions. A religious fundamentalist believes that there is only one religion holds the absolute literal truth about life, and they actively engage in worship and obey the teachings of the religion; however, they are less open and flexible in their thinking, so they are more dogmatic in holding their religious beliefs (Bartoszuk & Deal, 2016; Ellis, 2017; Mora et al., 2014; Pyszczynski et al., 2003; Zhong et al., 2017). Mahendra (1999) maintained that people who are high in fundamentalism seek to resolve all problems of the present time by referring to the ideal early days of Islam. They also seek to apply the doctrine in its entirety, which is regarded as the only way to save humankind from destruction.

To the degree that Indonesia is perceived as preventing Muslims from fulfilling their religious commitment to be controlled by an Islamic political system, fundamentalists see Indonesia's current political system as a grave injustice toward Muslims (Wibisono et al., 2019). This situation causes them to turn away from national identification to an identity that is more based on primordialism, namely religious identity. It is not surprising that Kanas and Martinovic (2017) found that among Indonesian Muslims, religious identity was stronger than national identity. When an individual's social identity, such as religious identity, is threatened, they respond by attempting to make their in-group appear positively different from other groups (Brown, 1995). A threat to social identity, such as religious identity, also affects the process of identity strengthening. This process aligns with the intergroup threat theory (Stephan et al., 2009), which explains that individuals tend to anticipate threats from out-groups. The response to the threat can lead to different forms of expression, ranging from a mild bias to a strong one, which leads to prejudice and intolerance. In other words, prejudice toward out-groups is a

manifestation of the threat anticipation (Ekerim-Akbulut et al., 2020; Kanas et al., 2015; Makashvili et al., 2018; Vallejo-Martín et al., 2020).

### Hypotheses and Aims

This study hypothesizes that (1) fundamentalism can positively mediate the relationship between religious identity and inter-religious prejudice, and (2) religious identity can positively mediate the relationship between fundamentalism and inter-religious prejudice. This study aims to examine (1) the role of age in predicting prejudice, (2) the role of fundamentalism as a mediator between religious identity and prejudice and (3) the role of religious identity as a mediator between fundamentalism and prejudice.

### METHODS

The Declaration of Helsinki's guidelines were followed when conducting the study. Due to the study's low and negligible risk profile—i.e., no more than minimum burden and inconvenience—as well as the fact that it is a noninvasive, nonclinical, and nonexperimental study—specific ethical review and approval have been omitted for this investigation.

### Research participants

The research participants were 639 Islamic college students in the city of Semarang, Central Java, Indonesia comprising 372 males (58.2%) and 267 females (41.8%). The majority of the participants were aged 21 years and over (56.8%), and the remainder were aged 19 years (26.3%) and 18 years (16.9%). Sampling was carried out using convenience sampling, namely by taking participants from nine study programs at Walisongo State Islamic University (61.5%) and each of three study programs at Sultan Agung Islamic University (15.8%), Wahid Hasyim University (14.6%), and Wali Sembilan Islamic High School (8.1%) conveniently. The participants took part in the research voluntarily, which was stated in the informed research consent, and fill in a questionnaire consisting of demographic data (such as age and gender) and research instrument.

### Instrumentation

#### Prejudice

The scale of prejudice against Christians was compiled using the concept of prejudice put forward by Pettigrew and Meertens (1995). The first researcher developed a scale of prejudice by arranging 24 items. Before being used in this study, the scale of prejudice was first tested on 169 cases - in addition to (and different from) the 639 cases mentioned above, and it was found that only 17 items had a corrected item-total correlation (CITC) greater than .25. Thus, this study uses a scale of prejudice consisting of 17 items covering three aspects of prejudice. First, maintaining traditional individualistic values (4 items, for example, "The government should not make any special efforts to help Christians"). Second, an attitude of exaggerating cultural differences (6 items, for example, "Muslims are more polite in dressing (not stimulating) than Christians"). Third, denial of positive emotional responses (7 items, e.g., "I believe in the sincerity of Christians in helping Muslims (unfavorable)"). The *prejudice against Christian's* scale contained four response options ranging from 1 ("Very Unsuitable") to 4 ("Very Suitable"). In this study, the reliability coefficient (Cronbach's Alpha) of the prejudice scale against Christians was .71 with a CITC range between .312 to .473 (see Table 2).



### **Religious identity**

The religious identity scale is based on the concept of religious identity proposed by Brown et al. (1986), which explains three aspects of religious identity: awareness of group membership, which contributes to self-definition; evaluation, which relates to self-esteem; and affect, which relates to feelings about identification. The first researcher developed a scale of religious identity consisting of 30 items and after being tested on 196 cases – in addition to (and different from) the 639 cases mentioned above – it was found 21 items that have a CITC greater than .25. Thus, the scale of religious identity used in this study consists of 21 items covering 3 aspects, namely membership awareness (7 items, for example, “For me, religion is an inseparable part of my life”). Second, evaluative (8 items, for example, “Being close to members of my religious group makes me feel meaningful”). Third, affective (6 items, for example, “I feel I have a strong bond with my religious group”). Again, there were four response options, ranging from 1 (“*Very Unsuitable*”) to 4 (“*Very Suitable*”). In this study, the reliability coefficient (Cronbach’s Alpha) of the religious identity scale was .76 with a CITC range between .348 to .573 (see Table 2).

### **Religious fundamentalism**

The scale of religious fundamentalism is developed by following the fundamentalism aspects of Azra (1996). The first researcher developed 32 items to measure fundamentalism but only 17 items had a CITC greater than .25 after being tested on 196 cases – in addition to (and different from) the 639 cases mentioned above. The authors retained 7 items of Fundamentalism (item no. 4, 10, 11, 13, 19, 21, and 23) with CITC less than .25 to cover all aspects of fundamentalism. If they are omitted then one aspect of fundamentalism, i.e. evaluative, will have very few items. The authors recognize that this is a limitation of this study and call for future researchers to address this issue. The 24 items used in this study measure 4 aspects of fundamentalism which consist of the notion of resistance (6 items, for example, “Whatever happens, Muslims must support the Palestinian struggle against Israel”), rejection of hermeneutics (5 items, for example, “In my opinion, Muslims do not need Western thought to help understand the Koran”), rejection of pluralism and relativism (6 items, for example, “For me, secularism is an incorrect understanding”), and rejection of historical and sociological developments (7 items, for example, “I believe that a nation will prosper if it follows an Islamic economic system”). As per the other scales, the religious fundamentalism scale also contains four response options ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (very appropriate). In this study, the reliability coefficient (Cronbach’s Alpha) of the religious fundamentalism scale was .77 with a CITC range between .294 to .423 (see Table 2).

### **Data analysis**

The data analysis was carried out using JASP software. Prior to conducting analyses to test the research hypotheses, the factor structures of the three research instruments were assessed using confirmatory factor analysis with maximum likelihood estimation. The measurement models evaluated included a three-factor model for the prejudice scale, a three-factor model for the religious identity scale, and a four-factor model for religious fundamentalism. The measurement models were assessed using several model fit indices, namely the Comparative Fit Index (CFI), the Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI), the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) and the Standardised Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR). Some researchers suggest using CFI and TLI coefficients  $\geq .9$  and RMSEA and SRMR coefficients  $\leq .08$  to indicate satisfactory model fit (Kline, 2014; van de Schoot et al., 2012). Furthermore, the internal consistency of the three research instruments was analyzed using alpha reliability, with the recommended minimum coefficient being .70. On the other hand, with regard to the testing of the research hypotheses, a three-stage analysis was carried out.

The first step involved correlating the research variables using Pearson correlation analysis. Second, a hierarchical regression analysis of gender, age, religious identity, and fundamentalism on prejudice was carried out. Third, some research hypotheses were tested using mediation analysis to examine 1) the role of fundamentalism as a mediator between religious identity and prejudice and 2) the role of religious identity as a mediator between fundamentalism and prejudice.

Table 1. Model fit index of the research instrument

	$\chi^2$	df	$\chi^2/df$	CFI	TLI	RMSEA	SRMR
Prejudice <sup>a</sup>	757.013	119	6.361	.531	.465	.092	.125
Prejudice <sup>b</sup>	48.974	24	2.041	.961	.942	.040	.029
Religious identity <sup>a</sup>	1703.099	189	9.011	.444	.383	.112	.175
Religious identity <sup>b</sup>	119.853	22	5.448	.907	.848	.083	.046
Fundamentalism <sup>a</sup>	680.706	246	2.767	.755	.725	.053	.056
Fundamentalism <sup>b</sup>	199.481	98	2.036	.917	.899	.040	.038

*Note.* a = initial model; b = final model. The final model was obtained after dropping items that had factor loadings less than .3 and after conducting measurement error correlation

Table 2. Descriptive statistics of research instrument and its item validities

Item	M	SD	$\lambda^a$	$\lambda^b$	CITC	Item	M	SD	$\lambda^a$	$\lambda^b$	CITC
Prejudice_07	2.209	.686	.091	-	-	Religious_21	3.308	.641	.286	-	-
Prejudice_11	2.739	.825	.350	.465	.402	Religious_03	3.119	.644	.349	-	-
Prejudice_13	2.704	.768	.174	-	-	Religious_05	3.049	.699	.336	.395	.466
Prejudice_15	2.750	.691	.407	.322	.312	Religious_06	3.250	.626	.470	.412	.573
Prejudice_01	2.972	.748	.315	-	-	Religious_09	3.174	.672	.266	-	-
Prejudice_03	2.561	.756	.334	.452	.381	Religious_12	3.296	.572	.273	-	-
Prejudice_04	3.038	.828	.312	-	-	Religious_14	3.080	.620	.332	.393	.518
Prejudice_05	2.939	.822	.346	.379	.317	Fundamentalism_18	3.127	.716	.292	.317	.317
Prejudice_12	3.157	.808	.315	-	-	Fundamentalism_19	3.345	.675	.316	.340	.305
Prejudice_17	3.173	.828	.296	-	-	Fundamentalism_20	2.853	.787	.448	.470	.404
Prejudice_02	3.121	.705	.295	.328	.379	Fundamentalism_22	2.594	.864	.492	.475	.386
Prejudice_06	2.643	.767	.428	.432	.473	Fundamentalism_23	2.950	.859	.173	-	-
Prejudice_08	2.020	.611	.357	-	-	Fundamentalism_24	2.414	.839	.149	-	-
Prejudice_09	2.217	.664	.371	-	-	Fundamentalism_01	3.179	.728	.365	.373	.332
Prejudice_10	2.601	.881	.341	.370	.350	Fundamentalism_03	2.489	.836	.355	.359	.351
Prejudice_14	3.315	.724	.297	.343	.394	Fundamentalism_11	2.505	.936	.185	-	-
Prejudice_16	2.914	.660	.321	.337	.415	Fundamentalism_15	2.633	.844	.406	.397	.380
Religious_01	3.834	.416	.131	-	-	Fundamentalism_16	3.096	.747	.457	.458	.420
Religious_07	2.787	.805	.417	.427	.474	Fundamentalism_02	2.741	.831	.340	.368	.365
Religious_10	2.729	.762	.364	.448	.468	Fundamentalism_05	2.951	.853	.390	.405	.366
Religious_13	2.972	.755	.371	.413	.442	Fundamentalism_07	2.580	.920	.455	.435	.366
Religious_15	3.121	.792	.276	-	-	Fundamentalism_09	2.458	.754	.446	.428	.423
Religious_19	3.261	.687	.260	-	-	Fundamentalism_13	2.039	.837	.268	-	-
Religious_20	3.538	.622	.256	-	-	Fundamentalism_21	2.851	.821	.102	-	-
Religious_02	3.304	.635	.199	-	-	Fundamentalism_04	2.248	.725	.216	-	-
Religious_04	3.067	.672	.308	.381	.378	Fundamentalism_06	3.279	.687	.330	.351	.372
Religious_08	3.150	.638	.329	.303	.355	Fundamentalism_08	2.679	.869	.319	-	-
Religious_11	2.850	.793	.314	.369	.348	Fundamentalism_10	2.262	.794	.271	-	-
Religious_16	3.409	.695	.310	-	-	Fundamentalism_12	2.666	.752	.367	.356	.329
Religious_17	2.732	.828	.268	-	-	Fundamentalism_14	2.610	.900	.412	.401	.326
Religious_18	3.155	.603	.302	-	-	Fundamentalism_17	2.230	.867	.331	.339	.294

*Note.*  $\lambda^a$  = Initial measurement model;  $\lambda^b$  = Final measurement model; CITC = Corrected Item-total Correlation.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Results

The validity of the internal structure of the research instruments was tested and the results are presented in Table 1. The initial models of the three research instruments did not show satisfactory model fit. However, after removing several items with factor loadings less than .30

and applying error measurement correlations, all three instruments showed a reasonable model fit to the data. This was evidenced by CFI and TLI coefficients greater than .90 and RMSEA and SRMR coefficients less than .080. Furthermore, the three research instruments also showed alpha reliability coefficients of .71 for the prejudice scale, .76 for the religious identity scale and .77 for the religious fundamentalism scale (CITC reported in Table 2).

The results of the correlation analysis (Table 3) show that there are positive correlations between religious identity, fundamentalism, and prejudice. More specifically, prejudice was found to be positively correlated with religious identity ( $r = .22, p < .001$ ) and fundamentalism ( $r = .31, p < .001$ ). In addition, religious identity also showed a positive correlation with fundamentalism ( $r = .19, p < .001$ ).

The research instruments showed alpha reliability coefficients of .71 for the prejudice scale, .76 for the religious identity scale and .77 for the religious fundamentalism scale. The internal consistency of the three research instruments satisfied the recommended minimum coefficient being .70.

The results of the regression analysis (Table 4) showed that gender and age did not significantly predict prejudice. However, religious identity and fundamentalism can predict prejudice. All predictor variables gave an effective contribution of 12.6% towards prejudice.

Table 3. Correlation and reliability of research variables

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3
1 Prejudice	2.85	.42	(.71)		
2 Religious Identity	2.99	.42	.22*	(.76)	
3 Fundamentalism	2.80	.38	.31*	.19*	(.77)

\* $p < .001$ . *Note.* Reliability coefficients are on the diagonal in parentheses.

Table 4. Regression of gender, age, religious Identity, and fundamentalism on prejudice

	<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Step 1							
Gender (Female)	.001	.231	.794	-.017	.034	-.500	.617
Age				.008	.014	.554	.580
Step 2							
Gender (Female)	.126	22.933	.001	-.025	.032	-.772	.440
Age				.017	.013	1.286	.199
Religious Identity				.163	.038	4.274	.001
Fundamentalism				.316	.042	7.526	.001

*Note.* Gender is a factor with female and male as the referent

Table 5. The direct, indirect, and total effects of the research variables

	Estimate	<i>SE</i>	<i>z</i>	<i>p</i>	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower	Upper
Direct effect						
Religious Identity => Prejudice	.16	.04	4.32	<.01	.09	.24
Fundamentalism => Prejudice	.31	.04	7.47	<.01	.23	.39
Indirect effect						
Religious Identity => Fundamentalism => Prejudice	.05	.01	4.13	<.01	.03	.08
Fundamentalism => Religious Identity => Prejudice	.04	.01	3.26	<.01	.01	.06
Total effect						
Religious Identity => Prejudice	.22	.04	5.63	<.01	.14	.29
Fundamentalism => Prejudice	.35	.04	8.34	<.01	.52	.65



Table 5 shows the results of the analysis of the direct, indirect, and total effects of the research variables. Both religious identity and religious fundamentalism can act as mediators. However, the indirect effect through fundamentalism (indirect effect = .15,  $p < .01$ ) is greater than the indirect effect through religious identity (indirect effect = .07,  $p < .01$ ). In addition, it was found that fundamentalism (direct effect = .52,  $p < .01$ ) had a greater direct effect than religious identity (direct effect = .21,  $p < .01$ ) in predicting prejudice.

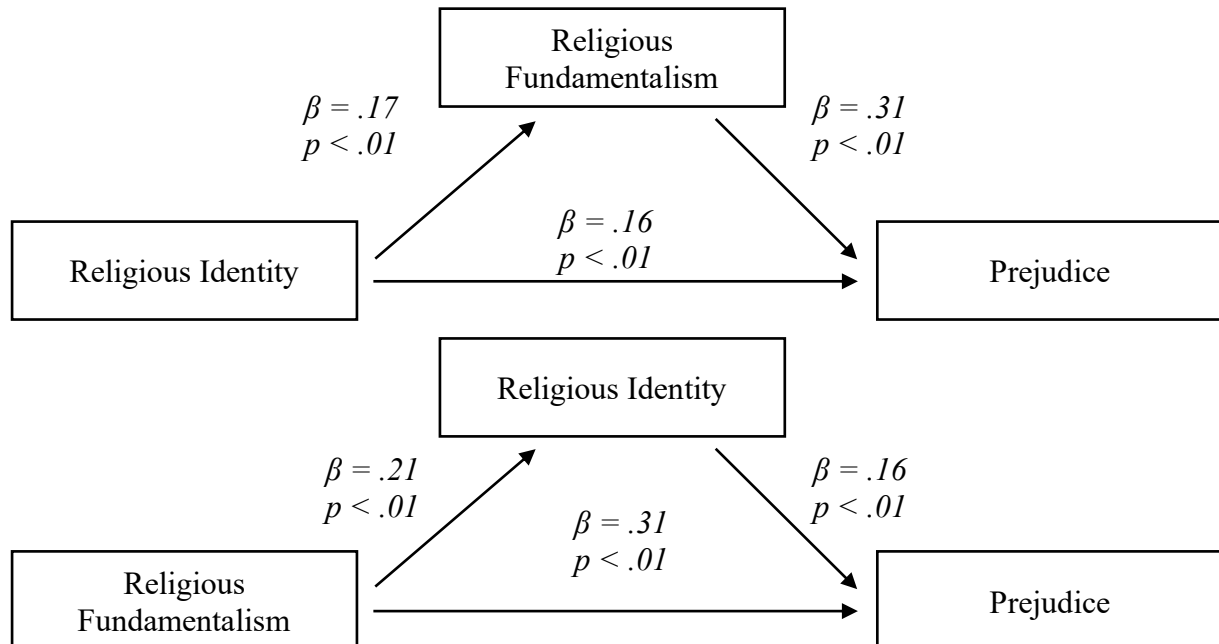


Figure 1. Regression results between Religious Identity, Religious Fundamentalism, and Prejudice

## Discussion

This study examines the relationship between age, religious identity, fundamentalism, and Muslims' prejudice against Christians in the Indonesian context.

### ***The predictive role of age and gender***

This study apparently found no correlation between age and gender as regressor and prejudice as regressand. The researcher examined the relevant literature more deeply and found that the lack of correlation may be due to the very context-dependent relationship between the two, depending on other personal characteristics of the participants.

To confirm this argument, the researcher found a study on Asian people (both fully and partially Asian) which showed the opposite correlation from the one hypothesized by the researcher in the *Introduction*. The research of Clobert et al. (2014) found that in East Asian society (Age range = 16-94 years old;  $M_{\text{age}} = 46.5$ ,  $SD_{\text{age}} = 17.3$ ), i.e. Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan, there was a *positive* regression correlation between age and interreligious prejudice ( $B = .14$ ,  $p = .000$ ) and between male gender and interreligious prejudice ( $B = .06$ ,  $p = .005$ ).

In addition, the research of Nikalje and Ciftçi (2021) found that in the group of Asian Indians in the US there was a *negative* correlation between the age of colonial mentality; while colonial mentality is a contributor to reverse prejudice (having positive attitudes towards outgroup characteristics, such as lighter skin color, but negative attitudes toward ingroups). Zheng's (2022) study of people in 37 countries found a *negative but very weak* regression correlation between age and interreligious prejudice ( $B = -.01$ ,  $p = .001$ ).

The positive and negative correlations found in various literatures show that the predictions of age and gender towards prejudice are indeed erratic; so that when averaged, the effects will cancel each other (zero-summed) so it is very logical to produce a lack of correlation in this study.

Based on these findings, this study recommends that in future research, age and gender are reviewed for their interaction effects with other relevant variables to predict the variation in prejudice more clearly. Tentatively, for now, it can also be interpreted that regardless of a person's gender and age, an Indonesian Muslim can experience prejudice against Christian. That is, whether the level of prejudice is high or low does not depend on age or gender.

### ***The role of religious identity and religious fundamentalism***

The results show that religious identity and religious fundamentalism can be functional as predictor variables of prejudice. It was also found that religious identity and fundamentalism can act as mediators. This finding indicates two dynamic processes concerning the emergence of Muslim prejudice against Christians in the Indonesian context.

*First*, an individual's religious identity leads to individual beliefs about his religious teachings, which are the basis for prejudice against other religions because religion can be a protective factor in overcoming adversity (Daulay et al., 2022).

*Second*, when individuals adhere to fundamentalism, religious identity is strengthened to the extent that they can develop a prejudice against other religions. This demonstrates the existence of a reciprocal cycle between religious identity and fundamentalism in the emergence of prejudice.

In general, the findings of this study support the majority of previous studies regarding the relationship between religious identity, fundamentalism, and prejudice (Ekerim-Akbulut et al., 2020; Makashvili et al., 2018; Pal & Wellman, 2020; Vallejo-Martín et al., 2020). However, previous research has tended to examine the direct role of religious identity and fundamentalism in prejudice. It is inseparable from the dual motivational process model regarding prejudice proposed by Duckitt and Sibley (2010), which explains that personality factors and group context influence the emergence of prejudice. In addition, previous research by Sulistio et al. (2020) tested religious identity and religious fundamentalism as mediators between intergroup contact and prejudice. In contrast to previous research, this study has found that both religious identity and fundamentalism can be mediators between fundamentalism or religious identity and prejudice.

Social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) and intergroup threat theory (Stephan et al., 2009) have long been used to explain the role of religious identity in prejudice. Recent research has also tended to support this position, finding that when individuals have a rigid social identity, they will tend to be prejudiced against individuals in different groups (Bukhori, 2021; Çakal et al., 2016; Kusumowardhani et al., 2013). This is especially the case if an individual feels that the presence of another group threatens the existence of his group (Inderasari et al., 2021; Visintin et al., 2017), while in the context of Muslims and Christians in Indonesia, the rise and fall of intergroup relations can also indicate prejudice between the two groups. Moreover, the existence of prejudice can trigger other negative sentiments and actions such as hatred and hostility, the making of accusations and denials, and carrying out acts of repression (Durrheim et al., 2016).

### ***The mediating role of religious identity***

Religious fundamentalist individuals also tend to hold prejudice against other groups. This reflects the fact that fundamentalism is linked to individual beliefs about the truth of their religious teachings and the desire to apply traditions in accordance with those religious teachings (Aleaz, 2016). Fundamentalists will thus be capable of holding a negative view and

attitude toward other groups that are at odds with their ideology (Makashvili et al., 2018; Pal & Wellman, 2020). Fundamentalist individuals justify the adverse treatment of other groups in the name of God (Dahlan, 2012; Rouse, 2021). Moreover, they dare to engage in terrorism through violence, murder, and the spreading of fear to achieve the goals of their religious ideology (Setyawan, 2021). Yet, on the other hand, Islamic fundamentalism can be considered an expression of self-defense, implementing sharia, and pursuing a certain lifestyle (Islamiyah & Salatiga, 2020). Unsurprisingly, fundamentalist individuals will support the use of corporal punishment in accordance with the teachings of their religion for individuals who violate the rules (Beller et al., 2021).

Although previous studies have confirmed that religious identity and fundamentalism are explanatory variables of prejudice, the findings of this study demonstrate that both can also act as mediators. This indicates the existence of a relationship between religious identity and fundamentalism as a form of cyclical process in predicting prejudice. A recent study by Preston and Shin (2022) termed the cyclical psychological processes involved “dual pathways.” The cyclical process will thus develop if the individual has a solid commitment to the religion to which he adheres. Based on this commitment, individuals go on to display prejudice or even engage in discriminatory behavior against other religions on the grounds of defending and fighting for their religion.

### ***The mediating role of religious fundamentalism***

As individuals try to commit to their religious identity, they will obey their religious teachings dogmatically, which leads to fundamentalism (Ellis, 2017; Mora et al., 2014). Further, Moaddel and Karabenick (2013) explained how fundamentalism is seen in four aspects, namely an image of God as disciplinarian; the conferring of status on one's faith as superior to and closer to God than other religions; a zealous defense of interpreting the scriptures as literal, inerrant, and infallible; and intolerance of other religions. These four elements thus combine to create a religious identity that presents security, empowerment, meaning, and purpose (Moaddel & Karabenick, 2013). However, the high sense of security, stability, well-being, and life meaning that a religious identity confers can lead individuals to not want that “at-home” feeling to be disturbed by “others,” who tend to be considered as “monsters,” both potential and actual (Beal, 2014). Further, Beal (2014, p. 6) provides a figurative picture, as follows:

*“We humans respond to the monster as a personification of the unheimlich, of otherness within sameness, and our responses range from demonization to deification. Often, we demonize the monster as a threat not only to the order of the gods or God. In this way, the monstrous other who threatens ‘us’ and ‘our world’ is represented as an enemy of God .... ‘Our’ order is identified with the sacred order against a diabolically monstrous chaos.”*

### ***Implications***

Based on these dual pathways, the implication of the results of this research for daily life is that people need to be more thorough and careful when confronted with fundamentalism that presents with the face of religious identity, or vice versa, religious identity that has the face of fundamentalism. The former of these, fundamentalism, is more challenging to detect since it presents as religious identity. Yet the expression of religious identity can vary widely, from “closed” to “open,” and from “hard” to “friendly.” A report by a leading national daily in Indonesia, Kompas (2022), confirmed this, stating as follows: “JI [Jamaah Islamiyah, a banned organization in Indonesia] is good at showing the good side to the public .... they have two faces, namely (superficial religious) face to the public and (true rigid) face as a member of JI.”

The report is a somewhat analytical account of the arrest of Sunardi by Indonesian Counterterrorism Special Detachment 88. Sunardi was the founder of the Hilal Ahmar Society Indonesia (HASI), which is affiliated with Jamaah Islamiyah, the job of which is to recruit foreign terrorist fighters and fund their trips to Syria. However, everyday people saw Sunardi as a warm and friendly person who was known for his voluntary work with poor patients. In this regard, Ysseldyk et al. (2010) stated that religious identity does not live in a vacuum but is always related to the cultural context. Especially in a collective culture, it is easier for individuals to do social identification (Milanov, 2020). In the context of a collectivistic culture, people with a very high religious identity can adapt their behavior to make it appear favorable and acceptable in the eyes of the community in which they live. The danger of this is that it can conceal someone with a high religious identity who perceives a threat in an intergroup conflict. We refer to it as a “danger” because the perception of threat can generate negative attitudes and behaviors, such as the prejudice examined in this study.

### **Limitations and Suggestions for Further Research**

The prominent limitation of this study is the exclusion of cultural variables from the research model. Moreover, the potential for cultural factors to influence the manifestation of fundamentalism suggests that the dynamics of the relationship between fundamentalism and religious identity in predicting prejudice become more complex. In the context of Indonesia, collectivistic culture added an extra dimension to the discussion on why, in this study, fundamentalism is not positioned as a particular form of religious identity but rather as two separate variables. This additional prediction could be a starting point for future research due to the limitations of this study, in which culture was not considered as a moderating variable in the proposed research model. Culture (collectivistic vs. individualistic) is very likely to play a role in changing the face or display of fundamentalism. The religious identity displayed by a fundamentalist in society does not appear to be “hard,” although it still produces prejudice. This highlights the danger of prejudice today; that is, prejudice is hard to detect unless we measure the level of fundamentalism and religious identity. This measurement is the key contribution of this research.

### **CONCLUSION**

This study has demonstrated the complex relationship that exists between fundamentalism and religious identity when trying to predict a person’s prejudice. Based on the theoretical model produced by this research, fundamentalism and religious identity can switch between being predictor variables and mediators.

### **DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT**

The research instrument and data that support the findings of this study are available in Indonesian at <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.13119808>.

### **AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION STATEMENT**

BB, JA, DM contributed to the study conception and design. Material preparation and data collection were performed by BB. Data analysis was performed by BB, JA, DM. The first draft of the manuscript was written by BB, JA, DM. Writing-Reviewing and Editing by BB, JA, DM. All authors commented and provided critical feedback.

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