



## The Effect of Social Support and Moral Identity on Meaning in Life of Hijrah Youth

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**Abstract.** The need for life's meaning remains important for most individuals, particularly for Hijrah youth who aspire to embark on a transformative journey. However, these individuals often face a lack of support from their environment during the Hijrah process. In this context, moral identity assumes a significant role as an individual factor, serving as a guiding reference. Therefore, it is necessary to examine how social support and moral identity shape the meaning of life for Hijrah youth. This research aims to investigate the impact of social support and moral identity on the meaning of life among Hijrah youth. The method used in this study is quantitative, and the sampling technique employed is purposive sampling with a sample size of 255 individuals who are young people currently in the process of Hijrah, involved in communities, and Hijrah study groups. The results of this study showed that both social support and moral identity had a significant influence on the meaning of life. The combined contribution of these factors was measured at 16%. Furthermore, young individuals who embarked on the Hijrah journey and had good social support and a well-formed moral identity benefited in the formation of a better meaning of life during their Hijrah, unlike individuals with unstable moral identities. Additionally, it was expected that the environment provided support throughout the Hijrah process as a positive influence.

**Keywords:** Hijrah, meaning in life, moral identity, social support

## Pengaruh Dukungan Sosial dan Identitas Moral terhadap Makna Kehidupan Pemuda-Pemudi Hijrah

**Abstrak.** Kebutuhan akan makna adalah hal yang penting bagi sebagian besar individu tak terkecuali bagi pemuda-pemudi yang ingin berhijrah. Individu yang sedang berhijrah seringkali tidak mendapat dukungan dari proses hijrah yang ia jalani dari lingkungannya. Sementara itu identitas moral (*moral identity*) menjadi hal penting dari diri seseorang sebagai acuan hidupnya. Maka dari itu perlu diteliti bagaimana makna hidup pemuda yang berhijrah yang terbentuk oleh dukungan sosial (*social support*) dan identitas moral pada dirinya. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui pengaruh dukungan sosial dan identitas moral terhadap makna kehidupan (*meaning in life*) dari pemuda-pemudi yang berhijrah. Pendekatan yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini ialah pendekatan kuantitatif. Teknik sampling yang digunakan adalah *purposive sampling* dengan sampel sebanyak 255 orang pada pemuda yang sedang dalam proses hijrah yang tergabung pada komunitas serta program kajian hijrah. Adapun teknik analisis data yang digunakan adalah teknik analisis regresi linier berganda. Hasil dari penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa dukungan sosial dan identitas moral memiliki pengaruh terhadap makna kehidupan, adapun besarnya sumbangan efektif dukungan sosial dan identitas moral terhadap makna kehidupan pada pemuda-pemudi yang berhijrah yaitu sebesar 16%. Pemuda-pemudi yang berhijrah yang memiliki dukungan sosial yang baik dan identitas moral yang terbentuk dengan kuat bermanfaat dalam pembentukan makna hidup yang lebih baik dalam hijrahnya, berbeda dengan individu dengan identitas moral yang masih labil. Selain itu lingkungan diharapkan dapat memberikan dukungan dalam proses hijrah sebagai suatu hal yang positif.

**Kata Kunci:** dukungan sosial, hijrah, identitas moral, pemaknaan hidup

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Many people who are dressed in *syar'i* clothes usually gather in various places to attend certain lectures. These lectures aim to bring individuals from Islamic and non-Islamic backgrounds together to change and improve themselves, striving to improve, and this process is often referred to as Hijrah. In Islam, the word Hijrah simply means abstaining from something negative or harmful and engaging only in good acts. This phenomenon has become a widely discussed topic among the public. Etymologically, Hijrah denotes the movement of a person from one place to another, intending to pursue goodness. Operationally, Hijrah entails trying to leave behind all forms of difficulties while embracing a life that aligns with the provisions stipulated by religious law, both outwardly and inwardly. Hijrah is also defined as an endeavour to distance oneself from various forms of deviation, consistently adhering to appropriate rules to remain on the path of goodness without straying (Fajriani, 2019). In this context, it served as a means to actively avoid and abstain from deviance, ensuring a steadfast commitment to the correct principles (Fajriani, 2019).

Historically, Hijrah is considered as a monumentalist pragmatic action that embodies normative values (Fajriani, 2019). It emphasized the importance of individuals embracing normative values to guide their journey through life while fostering steadfastness (*istiqomah*). The study by (Budiarti & Halimah, 2018) on Hijrah youth,

specifically motorcycle gang members, reported the significant role of internal locus of control in this context. In essence, the decision to embark on Hijrah stems from individual volition. According to Noormega (2019), a survey conducted by IDN Times in September 2019 stated that 75.4% of individuals who underwent Hijrah were aged between 20 to 35 years. These individuals perceive Hijrah as a transformative journey towards self-improvement, seeking positive changes and a closer connection with God. This indicated that an inner quest for personal meaning drives the Hijrah phenomenon and to attain inner peace. It served as a means for individuals to explore and comprehend themselves, often called Meaning in Life.

Steger et al. (2006) defined meaning in life as the subjective understanding and impact that individuals experience in relation to their existence. In other words, meaning in life is shaped by how individuals understand the significance of their existence and its effect on their well-being. Religion significantly offers humans a profound sense of meaning by promoting virtuous behavior as social beings. Therefore, Allah commands humans to strive and compete in performing good deeds. Through interviews conducted with Hijrah youth, it was discovered that some individuals felt an inner conflict and a sense of misalignment with their true selves. This conflict compelled them to embark on a journey in search of answers, starting with improving their dress

sense, engaging in Qur'anic studies under the guidance of a knowledgeable teacher, and actively participating in Islamic studies. These actions were driven by the quest to find meaningful lives.

Another preliminary study stated that people who found meaning in life could be assessed based on several criteria. Firstly, they possess a deep understanding of themselves and acknowledge their current challenging circumstances, instilling a desire for improvement. Secondly, these individuals have a well-defined life goal as a guiding principle, providing direction and purpose. Moreover, they can positively change their attitude when faced with difficulties. Individuals who have discovered meaning in life also displayed a firm commitment to actualizing their purpose in life. They proactively engaged in various efforts to fulfil their meaning in life by developing and cultivating their interests, talents, and other positive attributes. Finally, these individuals show trustworthiness and willingness to provide support when needed (Batubara, 2018).

Meaning in life is a multifaceted concept encompassing cognitive, motivational, and affective components. According to Dezutter et al. (2013), the cognitive component involves understanding the identity of an individual. The motivational component focused on identifying and pursuing goals, while the affective entailed experiencing a sense of coherence in life. Steger (2012) stated that meaning in life stems from a

sense of self-worth, efficacy, self-justification, and purpose. Fitriana and Hadjam (2016) reported that three factors influenced meaning in life. First, personal understanding refers to how individuals realistically realize their desires. Second, acting positively pertains to individual efforts to embrace positive behavior. Lastly, relationship intimacy involves individual attempts to cultivate close relationships with others. These are influenced by internal and external factors such as moral identity and social support. Han et al. (2018) conducted a study on young adult subjects in California city high schools and reported that moral identity significantly contributed to the formation of meaning in life. Additionally, social support from family and friends has been proven to significantly predict the psychological quality of life, indicating a relationship between social support and meaning in life (Alsubaie et al., 2019).

Social support encompassed the belief in receiving assistance from important individuals in the life of a person, such as family, friends, and closest people commonly referred to as significant others (Al-Abeiat et al., 2014). As humans are inherently social beings, social support is an integral aspect of life (Al-Abeiat et al., 2014). Furthermore, it could be understood through various dimensions. First, it could be perceived as the feeling of being supported and accepted by others. Second, support could take on instrumental, informative or emotional forms. Instrumental support

involves practical aid or assistance with tasks and problems. Informational support provides advice, guidance or information to help address difficulties. Emotional support encompassed expressions of sympathy, concern, esteem, and encouragement. Third, social support could originate from different sources, including family members, friends and secondary groups, such as schools and religious communities (Pidgeon et al., 2014).

Social support significantly impacts meaning in life for individuals experiencing social challenges, such as physical limitations or other destabilizing factors (Mony et al., 2021). This is in line with the study conducted by Mahmuda and Jalal (2022) that there is a positive relationship between social support and a sense of meaning in life. Although this was particularly for individuals who found themselves uncertain and vulnerable, social support plays a vital role in enhancing their overall well-being and a sense of purpose.

Han et al. (2018) stated that moral identity could drive moral behavior, guiding individuals to adhere to what they believe is right. As cited by Rahman (2023), Blasi further stated that moral identity involves the ability of individuals to construct their sense of self around specific values. This is driven by the desire for a life governed by consistent rules aligned with their beliefs. Three key points should be noted when considering individual differences in moral identity. First, some individuals might prioritize moral concerns and weave them into the fabric

of their life stories, making moral identity a central focus. However, it is important to note that individuals who do not prominently feature moral concerns in their life stories could still possess moral identity. Second, the dominance of moral concerns in the life story of an individual does not depict the sole developmental outcome, rather, it is one of the various ways people construct and narrate their experiences. Third, in view of this study, it is problematic to prioritize life stories filled with moral concerns over other types of narratives, as all are valuable (Wainryb & Pasupathi, 2015).

According to Kaur (2020), identity is formed concerning things with personal significance. It represents a strong evaluation of what is considered worthy or unworthy, with this assessment taking place within the horizon of significance that shapes people. Building on this notion, Blasi (Lapsley, 2015) stated that a moral individual holds a principled stance and exhibits a wholehearted commitment to morality. Notably, not everyone prioritizes morality to the same extent, highlighting individual differences in this domain. While studies exploring the relationship between moral identity and meaning in life are limited, moral identity can be viewed as an internal factor contributing to developing a meaningful life. This is in line with the findings of Kingsford et al. (2018), which stated that moral identity tends to affect meaning in life by recognizing and affirming the existence of an individual.

Previous studies reported that moral identity plays a significant role in shaping meaning in life (Han et al, 2018), while social support has been found to be closely linked to meaning in life (Arista, 2017). This implies that social support and moral identity are intertwined factors that contribute to the sense of meaning. According to Alsubaie et al. (2019), quality of life could enhance the overall sense of meaning. Therefore, this study aims to explore the relationship between social support, moral identity, and meaning in life, particularly focusing on Hijrah youth who often grapple with doubts and the sincere pursuit of their spiritual journey—a topic that has received limited attention in previous investigations.

### **Method**

This study employed a quantitative design due to its suitability for examining the phenomena under investigation, as well as its ability to provide more certainty in the findings. In addition, this correlational study aimed to explore the associations between social support, moral identity, and the search for meaning in life. This study used purposive sampling to select a sample based on specific considerations. The sample size consisted of 255 individuals, with 25.88% being male and 74.12% female, and the age range for the respondents was set between 18 and 35 years. The respondents were exclusively Hijrah youth members of the Hijrah community in Bandung

City, actively participating in study programs as part of their Hijrah activities.

Data collection involved using a questionnaire adapted from previous studies, incorporating three measuring instruments. The first instrument was a social support scale based on Zimet's theory (Alsubaie et al., 2019), encompassing family, friends, and significant others as aspects of social support. This scale consisted of 12 items, each with a total correlation coefficient ranging from .435 to .654 ( $r > .30$ ), with no items being discarded. An example statement from this scale is: "I can rely on my friends when in trouble." The second instrument used was a moral identity scale based on Blasi's theory developed by (Black & Reynolds, 2016). This scale focused on moral integrity and moral self as aspects of moral identity and consisted of 20 items. The total item correlation coefficient for these items ranged from .305 - .657 ( $r > .30$ ). Therefore, all the items were deemed satisfactory, surpassing the item correlation index. An example statement from this scale is: "Not hurting others is one of the principles I live by". The third instrument employed was a meaning in life scale based on Frankl's theory, developed by (Steger et al., 2006). This scale measured the search for meaning and the presence of meaning in life, encompassing ten items. The total item correlation coefficient for these items ranged from .435 - .776 ( $r > .30$ ). All the items met the item correlation index, and none were discarded. An example statement from this scale is: "I am

looking for something that can make my life feel meaningful". For data analysis, the study used multiple linear regression analysis techniques to examine the relationships between the variables of interest.

## Results

The analysis results show a significant effect of social support and moral identity on meaning in life ( $p < .05$ ,  $F = 24.29$ ). This relationship is illustrated in Table 1.

**Table 1**

*Anova Table*

Model	Sum of Squares	df	<i>M</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
1 Regression	1859.309	2	929.655	24.295	.000 <sup>b</sup>
Residual	9642.926	252	38.266		
Total	11502.235	254			

Note. a. Dependent Variable: Meaning in Life

b. Predictors: (Constant), Moral Identity, Social Support

**Table 2**

*Pearson Correlation Test Results*

Model	<i>R</i>	<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	Adjusted <i>R</i> Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.402 <sup>a</sup>	.162	.155	6.186

Note. a. Dependent Variable: Meaning in Life

Based on the data shown in Table 2, it is observed that the correlation coefficient value is  $R = .402$ , and the coefficient of determination is  $R^2 = .162$ . These findings suggest that social support and moral identity collectively account for 16.2% of the variation in meaning in life among Hijrah youth.

**Table 3**

*Regression Analysis Results*

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients Beta	<i>p</i>
	<i>B</i>	Std. Error	$\beta$	
1				
(Constant)	20.222	5.260		.000
Social Support	.103	.054	.313	.000
Moral Identity	.439	.074	.357	.000

The findings in Table 3 show that the null hypothesis of this study is rejected ( $p < .05$ ), indicating the acceptance of the study hypothesis. It can be concluded that social support and moral identity have a significant

impact on meaning in life of Hijrah youth. The regression equation derived from Table 3 is  $Y = 20.22 + .103 X_1 + .439 X_2$ , where  $Y$  represents meaning in life variable,  $X_1$  represents the social support score, and  $X_2$  represents the moral

identity score. The constant value of 20.22 signifies the baseline value in the regression equation. From this equation, it can be concluded that with other variables held constant, the value of Y can change by the constant value of 20.22. Moreover, for every unit increase in X1, the value of Y will change by .103, and for every unit increase in X2, the value of Y will change by .439.

Regarding the sample size, this study involved a total of 255 participants from Bandung, with a higher representation of female respondents ( $n = 189$ ) compared to male respondents ( $n = 66$ ). The aim of achieving gender equality drove this gender distribution, as females can be equally competent and capable as males. This notion is reflected in political participation, where 78% of females agreed that women can become leaders, while 22% disagreed (BPPD Jatim, 2014). Additionally, in economic terms, studies showed that female participation contributed positively to the economy, as evidenced by the significant income generated by female traders in Jantho City (Munawwarah, 2018). These factors contribute to the enthusiasm of female respondents in participating in this study, showcasing their willingness to contribute and show gender equality actively.

## Discussion

The findings from the multiple linear regression analyses conducted using SPSS software reveal a significant impact of the

social support and moral identity variables on meaning in life of Hijrah youth. This confirms the acceptance of the study hypothesis, positing that social support and moral identity have an influence on meaning in life of this group. The obtained correlation coefficient value ( $R^2 = .162$ ) shows that social support and moral identity account for a significant effect of 16.2%, while other variables influence the remaining 83.8%. The positive direction of the effect is supported by the R square value, suggesting that higher scores in social support and moral identity are associated with higher scores in meaning in life for Hijrah youth.

Hijrah youth with higher meaning in life scores likely receive support from their social environment, contributing to their overall well-being and a sense of purpose. This aligns with findings from another study that highlights the significant impact of family social support on meaning in life and mental health among prisoners in Class I Correctional Institution of Semarang (Arista, 2017). However, lower social support scores among some Hijrah youth in this study could be attributed to their transitional phase from adolescence to early adulthood. As they navigate this developmental period, they may still require substantial support from their social environment to aid their adjustment into early adulthood.

The high meaning in life scores observed among the respondents can be attributed to the influence of moral identity. Hijrah youth in this study hold deeply rooted moral values that guide

their lives. Moral identity development is particularly significant during adolescence, a stage where ethical and moral values become increasingly relevant to the identity formation of an individual. Therefore, in early adulthood, individuals are still in a transitional process known as the transition period from adolescence to adulthood, where ethical and moral values that were important during adolescence are now truly embraced and applied as guiding principles. The search for identity characterizes this transitional phase.

While exploring moral identity as a source of moral motivation, this study examined the role of religiosity as an antecedent of moral identity. Findings from a study conducted by Kaur (2020) revealed that highly religious individuals show higher levels of social responsibility, empathy, perspective-taking, prosocial abilities, altruism, and other-oriented empathy. The internalization of moral identity leads to socially responsible behavior, increased empathy, and a greater capacity to consider different perspectives. Individuals with a strong moral identity exhibit prosocial moral reasoning, showing an interconnectedness between the internalization of religiosity and moral identity that collectively influence moral reasoning (Kaur, 2020). Furthermore, a study by Basiński et al. (2013) conducted on patients with chronic pancreatitis (CP) divided participants into two groups, namely one comprising individuals who identified themselves as having faith and had a higher

level of church attendance and the other consisting of individuals with sporadic or no contact with religion. Both groups experienced a significant improvement in their quality of life following the neurolytic celiac plexus block (NCPB). Patients who reported being religious exhibited a significantly higher global quality of life score (79.88) than those with minimal or no religious engagement (44.21).

Based on the aforementioned studies, it can be concluded that individuals with strong moral values tend to exhibit higher levels of religiosity. This heightened religiosity, in turn, positively impacts their quality of life and imparts a sense of meaning. Additionally, individuals with a strong moral identity show a heightened concern for their social environment, and those with robust social support and moral identity experience a greater sense of meaning in their lives. Additional studies have also highlighted the significant impact of family social support on meaning in life of prisoners. Individuals who possess both strong social support and moral identity are more likely to experience a higher sense of meaning in life.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, this study investigated the influence of social support and moral identity on meaning in life of Hijrah youth. The results showed a significant correlation between the independent variables X1 (social support) and X2 (moral identity) with the dependent variable



Y (meaning in life) among Hijrah youth in Bandung.

This study further concluded that the social support received from the environment of respondents, including family, friends, and significant others, had an impact on their sense of meaning in life. The moral identity values of the respondents also played a role in shaping their perception of meaning in life. Therefore, possessing strong moral identity values contributes to the sense of purpose of an individual. It can be inferred from the data that individuals who have good social support and a strong moral identity tend to experience a higher level of meaning in their lives.

### Suggestion

This study used methods and sample characteristics that specifically targeted Hijrah groups and Islamic institutions or organizations to obtain more precise and targeted results while it ensured better control over data distribution. For individuals undergoing the Hijrah process, it was important to strengthen their friendships in order to increase social support from their environment. Furthermore, applying moral identity values enhances their commitment to the Hijrah process, facilitating personal growth and self-improvement. This, in turn, contributed to a meaningful and fulfilling life.

Hijrah groups and Islamic organizations are advised to intensify their efforts in reaching out to and engaging with youth, promoting the

path of Hijrah and fostering collective growth. By providing support and promoting strong moral values, these organizations can empower young individuals who are in the process of migrating, enabling them to find meaning and purpose in their lives.

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