

Agentic Regulation as a Function of Religious Prescriptive Principles
in the Hierarchical Moral Strivings

by

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Abstract

The Moral Foundations Theory (MFT) states that Sanctity/degradation has an evolutionary basis on the psychology of disgust, and is primarily intuitive. The Model of Moral Motives (MMM) posits that this Sanctity foundation is governed predominantly by proscriptive (avoidance-based) principles. Not much of research was done to examine the prescriptive (approach-based) aspect of moral sanctity/purity. The present research examines the role of agentic regulation, proposed as a central psychological process in religious goal strivings, in the construction of moral sanctity/purity. Two studies were conducted. A total of 469 participants from Myanmar communities were recruited. A quasi-experimental design, with three explicit primes randomly assigned to participants, was used to investigate the presence of this process in the first study. The second study explores three cultural domains (i.e., religiosity, sanctity/purity, and morality) using free-listing as a data collection technique. Some main effects of religious affiliation (i.e., Buddhism and Christianity) were observed. A similar pattern was observed in relation to religious internalization (i.e., identified and introjected religiosities). Results in the first study showed a few reliable effects with respect to the differences between Buddhists and Christians, and the relative differences between introjected and identified religiosities. A few reliable results from the first study, along with findings from the second study where some cultural items listed by respondents can be comprehensively explained by the integrative model proposed in the current research, contribute to the literature of the psychology of moral sanctity/purity and its relationship with religion from the approach-based agentic regulatory perspective.

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Agentic Regulation as a Function of Religious Prescriptive Principles in the Hierarchical Moral Strivings

Haidt (2007) argues that human morality has its basis on several innate and universally available psychological systems. Innateness, according to Haidt and Joseph (2008), refers to a bio-psychological phenomenon that is "...organised in advance of experience" (p. 374). Influenced by scholars such as David Hume, Robert Zajonc, and Richard Shweder, Haidt and colleagues (Haidt, 2001, 2012; Haidt & Graham, 2009; Haidt & Hersh, 2001; Haidt & Joseph, 2008; Iyer et al., 2012) conducted a number of studies that attempt to provide evidence to the moral puzzles that could not be arguably undertaken by the paradigm of moral rationalisms (Kohlberg, 1981; Piaget, 1932). Most of the studies supported their central hypothesis: participants' moral judgements were best predicted by affective reactions with respect to social and pragmatic primacy. This social intuitionist model, in line with the dual-process model of cognition (Zajonc, 1980), also argues that unique moralities as observed in different cultures are the products of the coevolution of genetic edifices and cultural innovations such as virtues and narratives. Derived from this theoretical position is the emergence of the Moral Foundations Theory with six unique moral modules (i.e., Care/harm, Sanctity/degradation, Authority/subversion, Fairness/cheating, Loyalty/betrayal, Liberty/oppression). Regardless, the role of agentic regulation as a function of religiously motivated hierarchical moral strivings, especially in the domain of sanctity/purity, is not systematically examined in this affect-laden moral pluralistic framework (Haidt, 2001). Building from prior different theoretical models (Brandt & Reyna, 2011; Carver, 1998; Deci & Ryan, 2000; Emmons & Schnitker, 2013; Janoff-Bulman et al., 2009; McCullough & Willoughby, 2009; Park et al., 2013; Trommsdorff, 2009), the current research will present a new integrative framework that allows for the testing of predictions in relation to moral sanctity/purity.

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The Moral Foundations Theory and the Sanctity Module

The Moral Foundations Theory (MFT) proposes that the sanctity module stems from an adaptive evolutionary function given that the disgust-purity causal link is domain-specific (Horberg et al., 2009; Rozin et al., 2008; Wheatley & Haidt, 2005). The function is theorised to relate to the omnivore's dilemma in which omnivores must learn to navigate between two competing motives: an attraction to new things and a fear of new things (Rozin & Haidt, 2013; Rozin et al., 1999). The emotion of disgust, functioning as an intuition-based protective system of the body against the infectious pathogens and parasites, is speculated to develop in humans during the transition to a heavily meat-based diet period, and this development was coincided with the rapid growth of their frontal cortex (Haidt & Graham, 2007). This modular foundation of morality, according to a number of previous studies (Haidt & Hersh, 2001; Inbar et al., 2009; Jones & Fitness, 2008), tends to be more salient in social groups that orient toward religious conservatism, lower in socio-economic status, and higher in disgust sensitivity. According to the MFT (Graham et al., 2013; Haidt, 2012), the sanctity module is mainly concerned with social binding as a moral function as the module-specific emotional responses such as outrage and disgust have been showed to be strongly elicited under the circumstances where the shared social norms, values and institutional symbols were violated (Atran & Axelrod, 2008; Bulbulia et al., 2013; Haidt & Graham, 2009).

Not only that the moral sanctity was generally treated as a central concept in the non-Western societies, but also that the concept stems from a theoretical position proposed by Shweder and colleagues from the cultural anthropology perspective where “ethics of divinity” is as authoritative as “ethnics of autonomy”, the position that challenged the paradigm of moral rationalists (Kohlberg, 1981; Piaget, 1932), and helped paved way for moral pluralism. In the hierarchically structured, conservative societies where religious sacred values, symbols and narratives have the main functions of binding communities as

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theorised by the Durkheim's theory of religion (Haidt & Graham, 2009), the ramification of the emotion of disgust extends beyond the contaminant-related issues: disgust is positively associated with the defilements of religiously valued virtues (Haidt et al., 1997). In these societies, individuals reigned by carnal desires are perceived as debased. Those who are in control of these desires tended to receive respects and be perceived as spiritually elevated. The MFT has showed, through evidence, the role of the manifest disgust as a function of values violations. The model does not, however, consider the underlying motives of individuals as a function of the internalization of the culturally shared sacred values in the conceptualisation and empirical testings of the moral sanctity. The evolved and transmitted values belief systems are, although culturally constructed, if not more, at least as significant as other factors in the modifications or amplification of human affects, cognitions and behaviours (Molden & Dweck, 2006; Pargament et al., 2005; Park, 2005).

Agentic Regulation and Limitations of the Sanctity Module

Several studies have highlighted that larger magnitude in outrage and disgust responses are elicited in the cases of values transgressions especially in the social groups who are extremely religious, conservatively oriented, and economically insecure. The question, however, emerges as to why these social groups are proactively quicker to identify and judge violators as polluted just because they are, for instance, more religiously internalised as part of their religious self-concept. With respect to this question, Rozin, Haidt, and McCauley (2008) notes that many cultures perceive the world in a vertical dimension expressing in the form of social cognition. Demons and animals are perceived to be at the bottom in the hierarchy whereas entities such as gods and angels are at the top. Disgust is felt when other social beings, as well as themselves, are perceived as moving downward on the vertical dimension, representing physical body and soul degradations. The MFT does not, however, elaborate on how this cultural conceptualisation of the vertical dimension of social cognition

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is specifically relevant to moral sanctity as understood in a specific cultural context.

Specifically, the MFT does not explain the emic nature (Harris, 1976; Pike, 1967) of moral sanctity, in line with the theoretical position of ethnic of divinity (Shweder et al., 1997), as a function of agentic regulation (McCullough & Willoughby, 2009; Trommsdorff, 2012) in a religiously conservative, hierarchically structured society.

Approach-avoidance System and the Sanctity Module

Although the MFT appears to be in the right direction in its assessment of the moral sanctity, for instance, by considering the role of the conceived vertical dimension of morality, there are two critical aspects that have not been clearly identified. Using approach-avoidance as a dual-system, regulatory framework (Carver, 1998, 2006; Gable et al., 2003; Gray, 1990; Higgins, 1997), the Model of Moral Motives (MMM) argues that the MFT primarily concerns itself with proscriptive morality (i.e., Self-restraint, Not harming, Social order), and less so with prescriptive morality (i.e., Industriousness, Helping/fairness, Social justice) (Janoff-Bulman & Carnes, 2013). Proscriptive morality, underpinned by the avoidance motivation, is sensitive to negative outcomes and perceived as concrete, mandatory and duty-based (Janoff-Bulman et al., 2009). In contrast, prescriptive morality is concerned with positive outcomes, and centre on what individuals should do to be a moral person. This approach-based morality is often abstract, discretionary, and based on duty or desire. Although both motivations are well-represented in individuals' moral repertoire, the two aspects can be distinguished by the moral asymmetry. In line with previous works on the field of motivations, the negativity bias is more evident in the avoidance-based dimension in that the proscriptive system pushes for harsher and greater demands compared to the prescriptive system. Unlike the MMM, the MFT does not elucidate whether moral sanctity is motivated by approach or avoidance system. According to Janoff-Bulman and Carnes (2013), the moral sanctity is regarded as a broad-based proscriptive form of morality. Moral sanctity,

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in their perspective, underlines multiple proscriptive moral motives, suggesting that the module can relate not only to the self but also relates to the interpersonal, and collective context.

Two Different Forms of Deliberate Strivings

The MFT subscribes to the notion that moral judgements, and actions are affect-laden. With this argument, the model discounts the role of deliberate strivings with respect to religious thinking required in the construction of moral judgements and behaviours, especially in the context of religious worldview. The MFT fails to distinguish purposeful strivings emerge from the autonomous self-system as a function of prescriptive principles manifest in the form of religious convictions from the function of abstract and complex rational thinking in the constructions and modifications of one's morality. In a highly contextualised environment where religious sacred values (see Table 1), for instance, are endorsed as the highest form of moral truths by an agent, and the highest form of being virtuous and worthy is measured by the degree to which this agent can deliberately and effortfully strive to solidify their internalised religious values into their mental states and implementing in the form of goal-directed behaviours, it would be incorrect to assume that these two types of strivings are not distinct in their processes and manifest outcomes. In this cultural context, what effectively matters is the deliberate strivings to maximise the matching between one's thoughts, speech and conducts with the religiously motivated hierarchically structured moral goals deeply embedded within the self-concept as prescribed by the religious system whether these goal constructs are founded on the belief in a moralizing God or a set of unfalsifiable metaphysical principles. In addition, the MFT mistakenly equates the uncommonness of a particular process of morality (e.g., deliberate regulation) with its magnitudes of importance in the regulations or modifications of culturally relevant moral mentality and behaviours. A number of scholars have argued that deliberate regulation, with

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incremental growth as it associated property, as a function of a belief or meaning system does have robust impacts on individuals in the domains of affect, cognition and behaviours (Cohen, 2015; Mahoney et al., 2005; Molden & Dweck, 2006; Pargament & Mahoney, 2005; Tsai, 2007; Tsai et al., 2007).

A Hierarchically Structured Proscriptive and Prescriptive System

Some ambiguities are observed in the 6-cell MMM with respect to how the model conceptualises moral sanctity. Although the model elucidates on the need to re-conceptualise Haidt's moral modules by taking into consideration the prescriptive-proscriptive systems, and able to provide some evidence that the MFT needs to add some more modules to its model, the MMM appears to also omit some critical aspects by limiting the domain of moral sanctity to proscriptive motivation. This narrow view on the moral sanctity does not explain why there are lots of religious cultures that not only sanctify but also purify mental states and conducts that are underpinned by approach-based prescriptive principles (Cohen & Rozin, 2001; Huxter, 2015; Pargament & Mahoney, 2005). For instance, in Theravada Buddhism, merit-making as a sanctified moral conduct is governed by prescriptive religious principles (Ariyabuddhiphongs, 2009; Ariyabuddhiphongs & Li, 2016; Holt, 2017; Rozenberg, 2004). Personal sexuality is, for instance, not only sanctified through initiatory or inhibitory regulations at the local levels as a function of proscriptive (avoidant) religious principles but also purified through inhibitory or initiatory regulations as a function of prescriptive (approach) principles (Collins, 2007; Hernandez et al., 2011; Mahoney et al., 2005). Not only that the MMM needs to provide a clear distinction between sanctity and purity (this also applies to MFT), but the model also needs to specify the presence of different levels of approach and avoidance within the self-concept of a religious person in the domain of moral sanctity (Carver & Scheier, 2000; Hoyle & Sherrill, 2006; Markus & Wurf, 1987). The MMM operationalises the approach and avoidant processes as a generic system that functions

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as global motives that regulate local moral behaviours – the model does not specify the functional nature of three potential levels of the generic system that require to be elaborated in term of hierarchical relationships among the levels. For instance, proactively avoid engaging in a sexual activity as a function of a momentary situational opportunity (local-level prescriptive/initiatory regulation) is not the same moral behaviour as allowing oneself to be religiously trained not to have a sexual relation (global-level prescriptive/approach principles). The former requires a meditative and deliberate impulse control as prescriptive regulation whereas the later develop as a function of the higher order religious prescriptive principles.

Table 1

Some Core Principles of Two Religious Systems

A. Buddhism: The Threefold Division and The Noble Eightfold Path

The Threefold Division	The Noble Eightfold Path
Moral virtue	Right speech
	Right action
	Right livelihood
Meditation	Right effort
	Right mindfulness
	Right concentration
Wisdom	Right view
	Right intention

B. Christianity: The Seven Deadly Sins and The Seven Holy Virtues

The Seven Deadly Sins		The Seven Holy Virtues	
Three Spiritual Sins	Pride	Three Spiritual Virtues	Faith
	Envy		Hope
	Wrath		Charity
Four Corporal Sins	Sloth	Four Cardinal Virtues	Prudence
	Greed		Temperance
	Gluttony		Fortitude
	Lust		Justice

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A New Theoretical Framework

As argued earlier, the MFT has a narrow view of moral sanctity because the model does not explain morality in terms of the underlying prescriptive and proscriptive system. The MMM underlines the role of these motives but does not emphasize the role of agentic regulation. Addition, the MMM does not elaborate on the approach and avoidant processes at different levels as a hierarchically structured system. A research question has, therefore, emerged from the analyses of these two models: does religious goal-striving play a central role in the construction of moral sanctity through agentic regulation as a function of highly internalized religious prescriptive principles? In our attempt to answer this research question, a new integrative framework is proposed where the concept of approach and avoidance, framed as a system of proscription and prescription (Janoff-Bulman, 2012; Janoff-Bulman & Carnes, 2013; Janoff-Bulman et al., 2009), is integrated into the Model of 4-levels goal hierarchies (Carver, 1998; Carver et al., 2014; Carver & Scheier, 2000), assuming that goals exist at multiple levels of abstraction, functioning within the domain of a malleable, dynamic self-system that orient toward ideals-directed possible selves (Hoyle & Sherrill, 2006; Markus & Wurf, 1987) where the socially transmitted religious prescriptive principles and values (King et al., 2020; Memmott-Elison & Padilla-Walker, 2020; Trommsdorff, 2014) are deeply embedded within the self through the processes of religious internalization (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Ryan & Deci, 2006; Ryan et al., 1993). Within this new framework is the emergence and centrality of agentic regulation (Trommsdorff, 2009, 2012, 2020) that is responsible for manifesting the goals-directed behaviours, through initiatory and inhibitory controls and regulations, at the concrete levels (Carver, 1998; Carver et al., 2014; Carver & Scheier, 2000).

In this framework, agentic regulation is defined as an intentional act to achieve self-regulation through the development of inner mental processes and behavioural organisations

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that are in line with culturally socialised, religiously motivated and personally internalised values or standards (Trommsdorff, 2009, 2012; Trommsdorff & Rothbaum, 2008). Agentic regulation, in this perspective, involves goal setting, attention focus, impulse control, behaviour inhibition as well as activation of resources, for instances, to regulate or modify any aspects of emotion, cognition and behaviour that will increase the likelihood of religious goal attainments such as elevating oneself upward on the hierarchical moral ladder. For example, in Theravada Buddhism, the ethic of divinity (and the related sanctity module) concerns more than just the social-cognitive emotions elicited in responses to the degradations of the inhibitory-based proscriptive principles that often encompass detrimental social, biological and economic consequences (Lehr, 2019; McKenzie, 2019; Rozin et al., 1999). The core objective of the system, motivated by the ultimate goal of other-worldly salvation from a life of suffering, also focuses strongly on how often and to what degree an individual can proactively purify their mind through initiatory regulation and modification of their carnal desires, and their sustained capacity to sanctify their ritualised behaviours while engaging in the process of purification (e.g. meditation) that extend beyond the boundary of avoidance-based proscriptive morality (Ames, 1964; Buddhaghosa, 1991; Ghose, 2007). Religious members are prescribed with a set of principles (see Table 1), along with numerous practical rituals (e.g., merit-making, meditation, prayer), to assist them in ceasing the cycles of rebirths that is interactively driven by the three poisons – greed, hatred and ignorance (Bodhi, 2010; Huxter, 2015; MacKenzie, 2018). The need to purify and sanctify one's mental states and behaviours in line with the religious system's core values, subsequently, becomes a central motive of the malleable, dynamic self-system (Friedlander, 2010; Harvey, 2019; Markus & Wurf, 1987). This is expected to be more salient in materialistically insecure environments, or during the time of facing highly stressful events that demand for a simplified and concrete pathway in dealing with the biological as well as psychological needs

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for survival and thriving, especially in the highly internalized religious individuals (Chaiwutikornwanich, 2015; Inzlicht et al., 2011; Karl & Fischer, 2018; McNamara et al., 2016; Park, 2005). Like in Theravada Buddhism, to be culturally trained in the cultivation of good deeds and intentionally defied sinful behaviours to foster one's religious self-concept (Bak, 2014) to move upward, and to avoid moving downward on the hierarchically structured moral ladder is also likewise relevant to Christianity, for instance, by examining the role of the Great Chain of Being in the Christians' moral worldview and the influences of the system's core prescriptive values on the religious members (Brandt & Reyna, 2011; Hernandez et al., 2011; Lovejoy, 2017; Tucker, 2015).

As evidence, the influences of religion on agentic regulations have been observed in several studies. McCullough and Willoughby (2009) assert not only that religiousness as a belief influences goal selection, pursuit, and management but also the behavioural aspects such as meditation and prayers as prescribed religious activities appear to promote self-regulation or implicate in the modulation of cognitive variables that relevant to self-regulation. Some studies also indicate that religious parents and families tend to have children with high self-control, for instance, by looking at the infrequency of substance uses (Bartkowski et al., 2008; Laurin et al., 2012). Although some further studies are needed, a number of scholars (Norenzayan et al., 2016; Purzycki et al., 2016; Reynolds & Baumeister, 2016) have argued that self-monitoring (keeping track of one's religious goal) may be facilitated by religiousness (the belief in punishing but also, meaning-giving gods) which, in turn, influences prosocial behaviours. These previous studies have highlighted the roles of prescriptive and proscriptive religious principles in relation to agentic regulation, but a question, however, emerges as to how exactly agentic regulation implicates in the process of religious goal strivings in the proposed integrative model.

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Carver and Scheier (1998)'s Model of four-level goal hierarchies is used as the new integrative framework (Figure 1), and entails goal hierarchy as a necessary internal structure. Evidence from past studies as highlighted earlier on the transmitting of prescriptive religious values (e.g., be mindful, love and praise God) among members or to-be members of a religious system, through socialization processes, can be mapped onto the *system concepts* as the point of connexion where transmitted religious information is processed, and then schematised as part of their self-system as a function of internalization (i.e., "be goals"). Religious values (e.g., being calm and peaceful) and principles (e.g., be mindful of thoughts, speech, and conducts), as higher order goals (prescriptive principles) are abstract and functioning as *reference values* and become more concrete at the next lower level where it is concerned more with behavioural goals of the prescribed values and principles (e.g., practise mindfulness meditation). This is expressed as mid-level proscriptive and prescriptive motivational processes in the forms of intuition-based sanctification and deliberation-based purification in the integrative model. Below this mid-level *programs* of actions (i.e., "do goals") lies *sequences* where goals are highly concrete and often require the use of motor control as they are sequences of acts for a target program of action (e.g., meditate at 6 a.m. daily). In our model, this lowest level is referred to as proscriptive and prescriptive regulations, functioning in the form of a binary inhibitory and initiatory control pathways.

The idea of a Chain of Being, although has no academic merit in most secular societies, religious communities still use the idea to embody a vertical form of moral hierarchy to understand their moral realities. The Chain of Being represents an internal framework that enables them to perceive and judge themselves as well as others as moral or immoral with respects to mental states (e.g., greed) or behaviours (e.g., exploiting an employee for profits) that have been actuated. Embracing the virtue of patience, for instance, can be considered as elevating oneself, and refrain from being aggressive, for instance, can be

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considered as avoiding relegation of oneself through agentic regulations on the vertical dimension of social cognition at each morally relevant moments in time (Brandt & Reyna, 2011; de Ridder et al., 2011; Rozin et al., 2008; Trommsdorff, 2012). The elevation can manifest in the forms of thought and behavioural sanctification (e.g. merit-making as a sanctified act) (Hernandez et al., 2011; Rozenberg, 2004), and generally implicating the initiatory or inhibitory regulations through the intuitive mode as a function of either prescriptive or proscriptive principles that have been internalized (Carlson, 2005; Eisenberg et al., 1996; Rothbart et al., 2003). Purification as another form of elevation, governed either by prescriptive or proscriptive religious principles that have been internalized, is theorised to manifest through the deliberate mode of inhibitory or initiatory regulations when, for instance, one has the need to psychologically purify oneself of defiling thoughts by practising mindfulness meditation (Buddhaghosa, 1991).

Both sanctification and purification as mid-level prescriptive motivations governed by the approach-based prescriptive principles at the higher level (Higgins, 2011; Janoff-Bulman & Carnes, 2013; Janoff-Bulman et al., 2009) are often compelled by intrinsic values or the desire to experience meanings (Emmons, 2005, 2007; Krems et al., 2017). In this pathway, purification as a function of deliberate processing is the preferred pathway. The opposite is thought to be true for the proscriptive system where sanctification as a function of intuitive process is the preferred pathway. Purification, in this system, is assumed to function as a contingency mid-level elevation process. Purification and sanctification, within this proscriptive system, are driven by the need to secure external rewards or to avoid punishments either in divine or social in nature (Purzycki, Ross, et al., 2018), less effortful in their manifestations (Fitzsimons & Bargh, 2004), and strongly associate with emotions such as disgust and outrage as reported in numerous studies (Haidt, 2012; Wheatley & Haidt,

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2005). Our focus in this research is, to examine the nature of prescriptive morality, not proscriptive morality.

Regardless of the functional importance of prescriptive and proscriptive systems (Janoff-Bulman et al., 2009) at all three levels with respect to the underpinning distinctive processes when considering the systems within the new integrative framework, both sanctification and purification fundamentally functioning as the core prescriptive and proscriptive motivational processes that make up the ethnic of divinity, thus the moral sanctity, (Brandt & Reyna, 2011; Shweder et al., 1997) as both pathways implicate in proscriptive as well as prescriptive moralities. In line with this new theoretical framework, the functional boundary of moral sanctity as defined and operationalized by Haidt, and colleagues (Graham & Haidt, 2010; Haidt & Graham, 2009; Rozin & Haidt, 2013; Rozin et al., 1999) is deemed limited, and thus, requires extension to include the deliberate process, predominantly initiative aspect of the concept. The moral sanctity as conceptualised in the current research, when used to support our claims, does not only refer to the manifest moral outcomes at the concrete levels as a function of the hierarchically structured proscriptive, predominantly intuitive system but also as a function of the prescriptive, predominantly deliberate system – this domain of morality will, therefore, be referred to as moral sanctity/purity (see Figure 1).

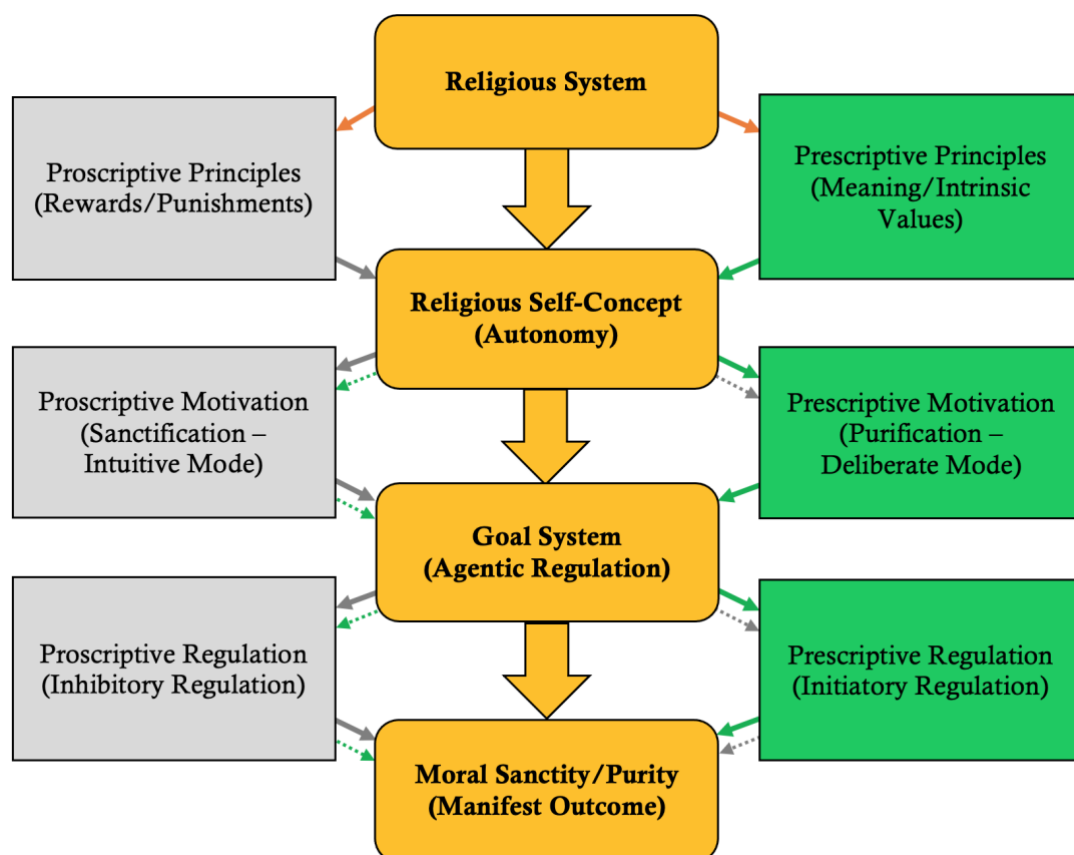
Three core questions emerge from the current theoretical framework. Firstly, does religious goal-striving play a role in the construction of moral sanctity/purity through agentic goal-regulatory processes within a hierarchically structured prescriptive system in Myanmar religious communities? Secondly, does agentic self-regulation differ in magnitude as a function of introjected (controlled) and identified (autonomous) religiosities. The final question is exploratory and concerns with the examination of three cultural domains (i.e., religiosity, sanctity/purity, morality) as conceptualised in the context of Myanmar societies.

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Three sets of hypotheses will be tested using explicit religious priming method (Shariff et al., 2016) to examine the first two research questions in the first study, and the free-listing method (Bernard, 2017) will be used to examine the third research question in the second study. In addition, based on the argument that existential concerns such as material insecurities may have direct or indirect impacts on how religious individuals behave as an affiliated member of their religiously conservative societies (McNamara et al., 2016), we aim to assess these research questions by recruiting participants from multiple Myanmar communities whose majority of them have experienced intergenerational wars and poverty (Kivimäki & Pasch, 2009; Stokke et al., 2018).

Figure 1

A New Integrative Framework: The Role of Agentic Regulation as a Function of Prescriptive (and Proscriptive) Principles in the Construction of Moral Sanctity/Purity



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Study 1 - Quasi-experimental Study

Aim of the Current Study

Haidt and colleagues (Haidt, 2012; Haidt & Graham, 2009; Haidt et al., 1997; Wheatley & Haidt, 2005)'s MFT provides a theoretical framework for moral sanctity within the context of a vertically structured moral hierarchy but does not clearly consider the underpinning role of approach-avoidance regulatory systems as part of the hierarchy. Janoff-Bulman and colleagues (Janoff-Bulman, 2012; Janoff-Bulman & Carnes, 2013; Janoff-Bulman et al., 2009) underlines the role of a generic regulatory system as elucidated by the MMM but their model does not clearly differentiate between the functional processes at three distinctive levels. In addition, prescriptive principles are not considered as one of the fundamental motives in the conceptualisation of moral sanctity/purity in their model. Importantly, both models do not systematically identify the role of agentic regulation as an integral component of the religious self-concept within the moral hierarchy (Hofmann et al., 2009; McCullough & Willoughby, 2009; Trommsdorff, 2012). The current study, therefore, aim to investigate the role of agentic self-regulation, specifically in the forms of delayed gratification, prosocial tendency, and religious goal pursuit, motivated by a set of religious prescriptive principles through the mid-level processes of sanctification and purification, in the construction of the moral sanctity/purity as manifest outcomes at the concrete levels in some existentially insecure environments.

In the first set of primary hypotheses, using a simple model of temporal discounting task intending to reflect ordinary choices being made daily by religious individuals in the real-world situations, an immediate reward (lesser in quantity) in the form of a stationery is be presented against a delayed reward (larger in quantity) in the form of two stationeries to instigate delayed gratification in assessing less impulsive, future-oriented behaviour. In this simple model, we assume that delayed discounting is related to and largely represented by

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delay of gratification given that both concepts deal with behaviour inhibition and choice within a temporal space when considering these concepts at the broader levels despite some dissimilarities in the processing mechanisms at the specific level of analysis, and that both illuminate the nature of goal-directed, self-regulated behaviours governed by future-oriented mindset (Göllner et al., 2018; Köpetz et al., 2021; Reynolds & Schiffbauer, 2004; Steinberg et al., 2009). The instigation of delay of gratification allows us to examine the degree to which participants resist their temptation after being reminded of their affiliated religious core symbol (Rounding et al., 2012). If participants have often been engaging in initiatory and inhibitory regulations on a regular basis as a function of religiously motivated prescriptive principles, then the odds that they select the delayed but larger reward option should be higher than the control group due to habitual impulse regulation and greater future-oriented thinking (Carter et al., 2012b; Cheng et al., 2012; Köpetz et al., 2021; Łowicki et al., 2018). This argument is based on the evidence that an effortful control becomes largely unconscious, efficient and flexible (Koole et al., 2010) as a function of incremental mental training actuated by the autonomous self by mechanism of religious internalization (Molden & Dweck, 2006; Ryan et al., 1997; Ryan et al., 1993), the socialising parents (Kim-Spoon et al., 2014; Memmott-Elison & Padilla-Walker, 2020) and the teaching of religious systems (King et al., 2020; Watterson & Giesler, 2012). This examined aspect is relevant to prescriptive morality given that no condemnatory cues are provided for selecting either option.

- If Buddhists are primed with the Buddhism prime, then the odds that they select the delayed, but a larger reward is greater than the Buddhists who are primed with the neutral prime.

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- If Christians are primed with the Christianity prime, then the odds that they select the delayed, but a larger reward is greater than the Christians who are primed with the neutral prime.

In this second set of primary hypotheses, we derive the argument from the studies that indicate that believing in a moralising God influences the degree to which the religious members engage in reciprocal altruisms potentially via the facilitation of self-monitoring (Gervais & Norenzayan, 2012; Shariff et al., 2016). We, regardless, assume that the belief in moralizing God, despite its punishment-reward as a divine characteristic, will elicit greater prosocial tendency in some participants due to greater levels of religious internalization as this God is also a loving, meaning-giving supernatural being (Cheung & Kuah, 2019; Emmons, 2005). On top of this evolutionarily rooted propensity, we also argue that sacred duties motivated by a belief system manifest in the form of, for instance, merit-making whether this making of merit is aimed at the living, the deceased, the saints or the poor, especially in the Buddhist communities is highly valued (Ames, 1964; Ariyabuddhiphongs & Li, 2016; Holt, 2017). Like in the first set of hypotheses, participants can freely choose one of two hypothetical options: reward donation or keeping the reward for self. This set of hypotheses allow us to examine levels of prosocial tendency of the participants after being reminded of their affiliated religious symbol. If their religious systems prescribe them to engage in behaviours that require sacrificing resources, and if they have been engaging in behaviours relevant to this aspect on a regular basis, then the odds that the reminded religious participants select the reward donation option should be greater than the control group.

- If Buddhists are primed with the Buddhism prime, then the odds that they select the reward donation option is greater than the Buddhists who are primed with the neutral prime.

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- If Christians are primed with the Christianity prime, then the odds that they select the reward donation option is greater than the Christians who are primed with the neutral prime.

In the third set of primary hypotheses, participants will be asked to rate on ten pre-selected tasks (5 religious activities and 5 non-religious activities) with respect to the degree of importance to their personal life. Along with this, they will be instructed to freely select one task (e.g., meditation, sudoku) that they would like to engage in for a maximum of 15 minutes. Because participants were reminded of their affiliated religious belief, the tendency to engage in at least one of the religious activities is expected to be higher compared to those who were not reminded. This assumption stems from the evidence that involvement in religious activities promote social ties through, for instance, the development of emotion regulation (Semplonius et al., 2015), having religious parents is associated with higher in self-monitoring in relation to deviant behaviours (Kim-Spoon et al., 2014), and ascribe greater weight to religious activities as a form of sacred and meaningful goal strivings (Emmons, 2005, 2007). We, therefore, predict that participants who are reminded of their affiliated religious symbol should indicate a greater preference for the religious activities compared to the control group.

- If Buddhists are primed with the Buddhism prime, then the odds that they choose to engage in a religious task is greater than the Buddhists who are primed with the neutral prime.
- If Christians are primed with the Christianity prime, then the odds that they choose to engage in a religious task is greater than the Christians who are primed with the neutral prime.

For the secondary hypothesis, we investigate the role of individual difference in religiosity as measured by the degree to which they are intrinsically oriented (Gorsuch &

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Venable, 1983; Maltby, 1999, 2002; Ryan et al., 1993), and religiously motivated to sanctity and internalise their personal goal-strivings (Emmons, 2005; Mahoney et al., 2005; Martos et al., 2011; Schnitker & Emmons, 2013) in predicting the outcome variables. As a measure of why individuals engage in religious behaviours, Ryan and colleagues' self-determination framework is used (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Ryan et al., 1993). Introjected and identified regulations are two types of religious internalisation. Introjected regulation entails religious behaviours that are helpful in the avoidance of guilty feeling but are not fully integrated into one's personal values whereas identified regulation entails religious behaviours that are fully integrated into one's personal values. Participants who experience religious behaviours as mostly volitional, conceptualised as identified religiosity, are expected to show a greater tendency to wait for a larger reward, to donate their reward to an orphan, and to 'actually' engage in a religious task compared to participants with lesser experience of volitional in their religious behaviours. In contrast, participants with a propensity to adopt introjected religiosity, driven by approval-based internal pressures and conflicts as a form of their religious behavioural motivation, are expected to show a greater tendency to choose the immediate reward, keep the reward for themselves and less 'actually' likely to engage in the religious task they have previously selected compared to the participants with a lesser propensity to adopt introjected religiosity.

- The effect size for the odd ratios is predicted to be larger for participants high in identified religiosity with respect to the selection of delayed reward, donating the reward to an orphan and engaging the religious activities they have previously selected.
- The effect size for the odd ratios is predicted to be larger for participants high in introjected religiosity with respect to the selection of immediate

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reward, keeping the reward for themselves and skipping the religious activities they have previously selected.

Currently, we are not aware of any relevant study that has showed the contrasting effects related to the psychological domains of delay of gratification, prosocial tendency or actual task-engagement as tested in the current research when Christians are primed with a Buddhism prime, and/or when Buddhists are primed with a Christianity prime. We, regardless, propose this set of tertiary hypotheses as an exploratory inquiry. This set of exploratory hypotheses partially assume, based on some recent evidence of the rise of violent Buddhist nationalism in Myanmar (e.g., Rohingya Crisis) (Frydenlund, 2018; Kyaw, 2016), that compared to Myanmar Muslims, Myanmar Buddhists perceive Myanmar Christians as less threatening and vice versa, although the ideological conflict between the two religious groups has always been present as Christianity, associated with majority of ethnic minority groups, is often perceived as an intrusive foreign religion by the Buddhist nationalists (Mang, 2016, 2019). Minor conflicts among different religious groups might have always present in Myanmar although the abuses of power by strategically promoting Theravada Buddhism, and committing unlawful persecutions on other religious minorities were often reported to be the authorities who affiliated with Theravada Buddhism (Mang, 2016; Matthews, 1995).

- If Buddhists are primed with the Christianity prime, then the odds that they choose the delayed reward, reward donation, and religious task engagement is predicted to be greater than the Buddhists who are primed with the neutral prime.
- If Christians are primed with the Buddhism prime, then the odds that they will choose the delayed reward, reward donation, and religious task engagement is predicted to be greater than the Christians who are primed with the neutral prime.

Study 1 – Method

Participants

Sample size rationale

As we approach this experimental study from an integrative and contextually dependent perspective, none of the studies we came across can be modelled for an appropriate expected unstandardized effect size (odd ratios) that we could use to calculate a priori to estimate the required sample size. But derived from the most relevant literature findings for the current study, the effect sizes were found to range from small to medium. Using the most appropriate values, converted them to a potential odds ratio as an expected medium effect size, along with the target power of .99 in a 2-tailed test and analysed them using the G*Power software (Faul et al., 2009), 422 participants were recommended as an optimal sample size. This allowed us to have at least 140 participants per priming condition.

Recruitment criteria

Participants were recruited from multiple Myanmar communities (i.e., Bamar, Rakhine, Karen, Shan, Mon, Kachin, Karenni, Chin) across the globe within three consecutive weeks through personal and professional contacts. This included Myanmar communities in the United States (US), European countries (e.g., Finland), South-east Asia countries (e.g., Myanmar, Thailand), Australia, as well as New Zealand. As a key criterion, the participants needed to originate either from Myanmar or Thailand. There were millions of Myanmar people who were born or have been living either as refugees or migrants in Thailand (Gruß, 2017; Moretti, 2015). Only those who were 18 years and older could participate. Majority of these participants were assumed to have experience existential insecurities such as job insecurities, displacements, and poor health mainly due to decades-long conflicts between ethnic armed groups and the Burmese military junta. Like the rest of global citizens, all Myanmar participants were expected to have experienced psychological

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stresses due to COVID-19, the newly discovered disease that triggered the global pandemic in 2019. Although a few participants were predicted to affiliate with Animism as a peripheral religion, almost all of the participants were anticipated to affiliate either with Christianity (e.g. Roman Catholic, Baptist) or Theravada Buddhism as these two religions are the dominant ones in the targeted communities (Mang, 2016, 2019; Stokke et al., 2018).

Data exclusion

The study of human mind and behaviours as a scientific field was unfamiliar to majority of participants in the targeted ethnic communities due to the fact that most of these participants were raised in a traditionally conservative and impoverished society with low rate in having the opportunities to access former or high quality education (Hayden & Martin, 2013). Attrition rate is, therefore, expected to be high in the raw dataset. We, firstly, assume that any participants who were merely curious about a new psychology survey because they had never completed one previously would not be interested in completing the whole survey. Likewise, we do not think that participants would finish completing the whole survey if the survey was too difficult to comprehend. A value is missing because of these types of issues is categorised as sham attrition. In contrast, we also assume that there were some participants who decided to participate and had already given a full consent but did not have the opportunities or motivations to continue for unknown reasons. A value is missing because of this type of issue is categorised as genuine attrition. We, therefore, exclude any participants that appear to be motivated by curiosity, or hindered by survey difficulty by removing the cases that are less than 50% in completion rate in the raw dataset. Only the cases that appear to be reflective of genuine attrition are kept for analyses.

Actual sample size

Participants who have completed the whole survey were 405 although there were 596 recorded responses through an anonymous Qualtrics link. We prioritise the primary dataset

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($N = 405$) with 100% completion rate in addition to the secondary dataset ($N = 469$) for the analysis of the primary set of hypotheses. Any case with a completion rate of 50% and more from the 596 recorded responses were included in the secondary dataset. For the analyses of the secondary and tertiary hypotheses, we only use the primary dataset.

Demographic characteristics

Descriptive statistics, in the form of frequency distributions, presented here derive from the primary dataset with a total of 405 participants. Myanmar and English were used as survey languages¹, with 62.2% of participants chose to complete the survey in English. Majority of these participants (95.6%) have, at a minimum, completed high school. Half of the sample (51.9%) indicated they were employed full-time or part-time. The age range of majority of participants participated in the current study was between 18 to 34 (87.4%). About 42% were male and 55.3% were female. Only a few (2.7%) selected ‘Other’ and ‘Prefer not to answer’ as indications of their gender orientation. For the inferential statistical analyses, only three age groups (18-24, 25-34, 35-44) and only two gender groups (female, male) were analysed to avoid psychometrical issues deriving from the substantially unequal sample size among groups.

About 94.1% of all participants stated they were born in Myanmar, and only 5.2% were born in Thailand. Only 3% of these participants were born in USA. About 32% of Bamar participants said they were born in Myanmar compared to other ethnic groups. Only a few participants who identified as Karenni, Karen and Chin were born in Thailand and USA. Majority of participants (82.2%) who were born in Myanmar also lived in Myanmar at the time of completing this survey, with majority of them (74%) stated they have been living in the country for at least 11 years. The rest of participants have been living in countries such as

¹ Two translators were tasked to translate survey materials from English to Myanmar and vice versa. Survey materials in Myanmar version can be found on the project OSF page: <https://osf.io/qfp4w/>

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Thailand, New Zealand and the USA. Bamar was found to be the most common ethnic group (30.4%), followed by Karenni (23%) and Karen (15.3%).

Almost all of participants recruited originate from Myanmar (including refugee camps along Thai-Myanmar border) where violent wars between the military junta and ethnic armed organizations have been waged for multiple decades, and intergenerational poverties have been experienced (Dudley, 2010; Grundy-Warr, 2002; Hudson-Rodd, 2016). As anticipated, majority of participants affiliated with Theravada Buddhism whereas minority groups living in ethnic regions affiliated with Christianity (e.g., Roman Catholics, Baptists) (Mang, 2016, 2019; Stokke et al., 2018). A few participants identified themselves as belonging to other categories of beliefs such as Animism and Non-religion.

Experimental Procedure

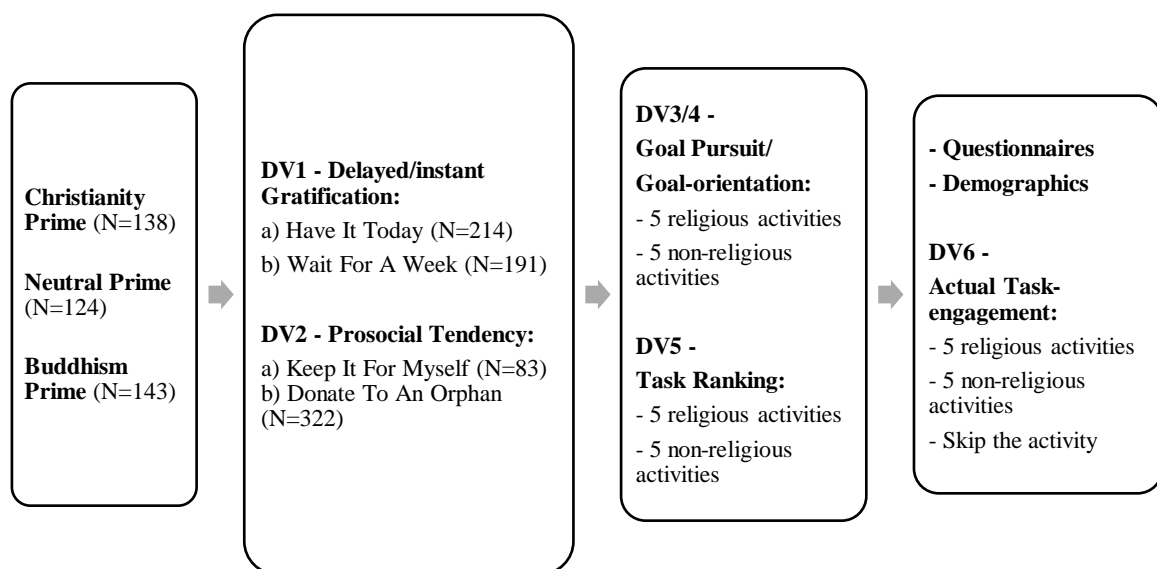
Participants were first randomly assigned to one of three priming conditions. They completed their assigned priming task by writing down some relevant information within three minutes. Once participants were primed, they were then sequentially presented with multiple set of choices that represent multiple dependant variables. To measure dependent variables, participants were primarily presented with two distinct sets of binary choices in both written and visual forms, and these two binary choices were delayed gratification, and prosocial tendency (see Figure 2). Goal pursuit and goal-orientation as three further dependent variables were then measured through the presentation of ten actual activities (i.e., religious activities vs. non-religious activities). Participants were asked to rank these ten activities individually based on the activities' levels of personal importance. They then completed a 12-items religious self-regulation questionnaire (SRQ-R). Demographic information was then collected. We then measured actual task-engagement, another dependent variable, by adding a third option 'skip this task' to the goal pursuit/goal-orientation measure – participants could skip the activity they had previously selected, or

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they could continue with the activity as intended earlier. Participants, then, completed a funnelled debriefing survey to probe for awareness of the priming effect before they were debriefed.

Figure 2

Flowchart of the Study Design and Procedure along with the Frequency Distribution of Participants using the Primary Dataset



Experimental Manipulation

Religious cognition manipulation

The current study used three controlled images (i.e., Buddha, Jesus, unknown agent) as explicit primes to stimulate a particular belief (McNamara & Henrich, 2018; Shariff et al., 2016). They were randomly assigned to participants regardless of their affiliated religions. Explicit priming method is subjected to scepticism for its vulnerability to demand characteristics (Cesario, 2014). We, therefore, rigidly controlled our study by incorporating a cover story, a funnelled debriefing procedure, and following other practical suggestions made by Bargh and Chartrand (2014). Exposure to a target symbol was manipulated by randomly

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presenting religious participants with one of the three systematically controlled images (see Appendix A). Previous researchers have questioned the validity of some experimental studies due to the absence of effective manipulation checks, and suggested that manipulation checks should be incorporated to minimise the risks of internal validity and the unintended effects the independent variables produce (Hauser et al., 2018). To ensure manipulation in the current study produces its intended effect, participants were prompted to freely write a short paragraph within three minutes regarding an image they had just been randomly primed with. For instance, participants could write anything about Jesus if they were primed with his image. For the control condition, participants were asked to examine the image and provide information on how to artistically draw the physical features of the unknown person presented to them. Analysis of the participants' responses showed that the two religious' images elicited the cognitive representation of Buddha or Jesus as intended. As for the control condition, the image elicited responses related to the appearance or facial expression of the unknown person, suggesting they paid attention to the target prime.

Manipulation checks

Participants who failed to follow given instructions and/or failed the suspicion probes were excluded from the data analysis. Participants were asked to examine the priming images and provide a short paragraph in relation to the image they were assigned to within three minutes. Majority of the participants provided responses in some ways align with what were asked in accordance with each randomly assigned prime. A very limited numbers of participants were found to provide irrelevant answers, suggesting that they did not pay attention to or understood the instructions. All cases associated with these obvious deviant responses were removed from the dataset. The four questions incorporated at the end of the survey to probe for suspensions of the hypotheses were analysed. Analyses of the responses indicate participants were not aware of any of the hypotheses. All of the written responses to

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questions mentioned the general focal points of the study (i.e., morality and religion, personal belief and introspection). A few participants answered the survey twice and one of these duplicated cases were excluded.

Three Different Measures of Agentic Regulation

Delayed gratification, prosocial tendency, and religious goal pursuit were measured as three categories of dependent variables to investigate the nature of agentic regulation as a function of religious prescriptive principles². Unlike the first two dependent variables, religious goal pursuit were measured in the forms of goal pursuit (i.e., religious vs. non-religious activities), goal-orientation (i.e., ten activities), actual task-engagement (religious vs. non-religious activities vs. skip), and individual task-rankings.

Delay of gratification. To measure delayed gratification, participants were asked if they want to be compensated with a hypothetical reward for their research participation *today* or *wait for a week*. Two choices were provided: they could have a set of stationery today or two sets of stationeries after a week of waiting. They were informed that they were free to choose the option they preferred. To control for difference in decision time, all participants were given a minute to decide.

Prosocial tendency. To measure prosocial tendency, participants were firstly informed that they had now been compensated with either a set of stationery or two sets of stationeries depending on the choice they had made earlier. They, now, were asked to make two further hypothetical choices: whether they would like to keep the compensation for themselves or donate to an orphan. Just like before, they were given a minute to decide, and they were instructed to choose the option they preferred.

Religious goal pursuit. To further examine if participants were different in how motivated they were in following their religious goals, they were presented with two different

² See OSF pre-registration here: <https://osf.io/b6mu3/?show=view>

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types of ten activities (e.g., engage in prayer, listening to relaxing music). Although goal pursuit and goal-orientation derived from the same measure, goal pursuit will be analysed as a binary dependent variable whereas goal-orientation will be analysed as a multinomial dependent variable. At this stage, participants were informed that they could take 15 minutes later to engage in the activity that they have selected here.

To measure actual task-engagement, participants were re-informed of the specific activity they have previously selected just before they were debriefed. They were given an opportunity to proceed with the activity, or to skip the activity. The study also examines the relative importance of each of the ten activities as determined by participants. Ranking of importance was proceeded by dragging and dropping the ten activities in order of preference from 1 (= most appealing) to 10 (= least appealing) depending on how participants thought and felt about each activity.

Religious Self-regulation Questionnaire (SRQ-R)

We also analyse whether the manifestations of agentic regulation motivated by religious prescriptive principles differ as a function of religious internalisation. The religious self-regulation questionnaire (SRQ-R) was used to measure two types of religious internalisation: introjected regulation (IJR) and identified regulation (IDR) (Ryan et al., 1993). Introjected regulation involves religious behaviours that are helpful in the avoidance of guilty feeling but are not fully integrated into one's personal values. In contrast, identified regulation involves religious behaviours that are fully integrated into one's personal values. Both types originated from self-determination theory that conceptualises internalisation as an underlying continuum of autonomy. The 12-items SRQ-R (see Appendix A) measures the reasons why an individual engages in four religious behaviours: sharing faith with others (e.g., Because I want other Christians to approve of me), reason turning to God/Buddha (e.g., I find it satisfying to me), reason praying by themselves (e.g., Because if I don't, God will

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disapprove of me), and reason for going to church/temple (e.g., By going to church/temple I learn new things).

A 7-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (*Strongly agree*) to 7 (*Strongly disagree*), was used. All relevant items from each sub-scale were averaged by adding all six relevant items that represent each sub-scale and divide the total by six to calculate scores for each sub-scale. Internal consistency reliability for both subscales, the condition where all of the items in a scale to some extent measure the same attribute, was reported by Ryan and colleagues to fall within an acceptable range with alpha coefficients of .82 for a sample of Christian students (Ryan et al., 1993).

Given that SRQ-R was originally designed for Christian populations, some key religious concepts were changed to fit with the Buddhist's religious worldview when Buddhist participants were administered with the scale (see Appendix A). Participants were first asked to indicate their personal religion and the affiliated religion of their parents. Only Buddhists and Christians were, then, presented with the relevant SRQ-R.

Psychometric analyses of the SRQ-R

We conducted scale analysis (SA) to assess if the SRQ-R was psychometrically fit for both Buddhist and Christian samples of Myanmar origins. SA, along with other descriptive and inferential statistics were conducted using R and jamovi³ (R Core Team, 2021; The jamovi project, 2021). The full scale for each group was separately analysed for reliability. The Cronbach's alpha for the Christian Religious Internalisation Scale (CRIS) is .71 whereas the alpha for the Buddhist Religious Internalization Scale (BRIS) is .73 suggesting that reliability of the full scale for both groups fall within a traditionally acceptable level. A further analysis was conducted for two subscales of the SRQ-R (see Appendix B). The

³ Full R scripts, datasets and additional statistical results can be found on the project OSF page: <https://osf.io/fsbdn/>

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coefficient alpha for the identification for CRIS is a little lower than the full scale although the introjection was found to be acceptable. Likewise, the introjection was found to be higher than the identification for BRIS.

Pearson correlation coefficients were also calculated to determine the intercorrelation of the subscales of both CRIS and BRIS. A significantly positive relationship was observed between the identification and introjection with a moderate strength, $r(148) = .27, p < .001$, for the Christian scale. When conducted Pearson correlation analysis on the BRIS, a significant positive relationship with a moderate strength, $r(210) = .27, p < .001$, was also observed. Overall, both CRIS and BRIS appear to indicate some levels of internal consistency although future studies should use more powerful statistical frameworks such as confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to analyse the scales.

Material Insecurity Scale (MIS)

Four of the eight self-reported items from the original material security scale (Hruschka et al., 2014; McNamara et al., 2016) was used to measure the degree to which participants felt insecure about their future with respect to food affordability. Participants provided a dichotomous response (Yes, I worry = 1; No, I do not worry = 0) to each of the four self-reported items, representing over four periods (1 month, 6 months, 1 year, 6 years), to indicate their food security status. For instance, one of the items is: ‘Do you worry that in the next one month, your household will have a time when it is not able to buy or produce enough food to eat?’. Levels of food insecurity as a function of four different periods were then added to calculate the relative difference among five groups of participants. We model the material (food) insecurity as a covariate in this study.

Frequencies of food insecurity

A total of 22% of the sample indicated they worried about food affordability all the time or most of the time whereas 29.1% indicated they were a little or sometime worried

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about food affordability in their household in the next one month, in the next six months, in the next one year and in the next six years. A total of 47.9% indicated they felt secure about food affordability. When food insecurity was split by employment status, majority of participants with full-time employment indicated they had no worry about food at all whereas majority of participants who worried about food most of all the time or all the time belonged to the group who were unemployed but looking for work. Almost all participants who worried about food affordability sometime, most of the time and all the time said to have been living in Myanmar. For the inferential analysis, food insecurities will be grouped into three main categories: None, Moderate (A Little, Sometime) and Severe (Most Of The Time, All The Time).

Study 1 - Results

Frequency Distribution of the Core Variables

Understanding of frequency distribution patterns of the core variables (i.e., prime types, personal religion, delayed gratification, prosocial tendency, goal pursuit, goal-orientation, and actual task-engagement) are important in the process of statistically examining the three set of hypotheses⁴. Prime types were randomly and equally allocated to participants: Neutral Prime (30.6%), Buddhism Prime (35.3%) and Christianity Prime (34.1%). With respect to religious groups, there were 155 (38.3%) Christians and 214 (52.8%) Buddhists in the current study. Only 36 (8.9%) participants identified with different beliefs – falling into the category of Others (e.g., Animism, No Religion)⁵. No dramatic difference was observed between participants' personal religion and their parents' religion, indicating that participants tended to share the same belief as their parents.

⁴ See Supplemental Material: Descriptive Statistics available on the project OSF page: <https://osf.io/fsbdn/>

⁵ Only Buddhists and Christians, but not "Others", were analysed using primary and secondary datasets.

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Although there was no large difference found within the delayed gratification with respect to the selection of binary options by participants (Have It Today = 52.8%, Wait For A Week = 47.2%), a clear difference could be seen in the prosocial tendency. About 79.5% of participants from the sample pool selected ‘Donate To An Orphan’ and 20.5% selected ‘Keep It For Myself’. When examining the frequency distribution of goal pursuit, most participants chose the non-religious activities (62%) than the religious activities (38%). When goal pursuit was analysed descriptively as goal-orientation, listening to ‘Relaxing Music’ (18.3%) and learning ‘English Language’ (20.5%), both of which are non-religious activities, were preferred the most by participants compared to other activities. Studying ‘Religious Text’ (4%), answering a general ‘Science Quiz’ (4.2%) and listening to ‘Religious Music’ (4.2%) were the least preferred activities. When participants were asked if they were willing to actually spend time engaging with the specific activity they have previously selected during the goal pursuit assessment, 24.4% of them preferred to skip the activities. About 46.7% of participants who have selected one of the five non-religious activities indicated they would like to proceed with the activities, and about 28.9% of participants who have selected one of the five religious activities indicated they would like to proceed with the activities they have selected.

Primary Set of Hypotheses

Logistic regression was used as a statistical framework to test whether the first question derived from our proposed integrative model of moral sanctity/purity as a function of proactive goal-strivings governed by prescriptive religious principles hold true⁶. To empirically investigate the first research question, the current study attempted to assess all three core aspects (i.e., delay of gratification, prosocial tendency, and religious goal pursuit) of agentic regulation as characteristics of religious goal-strivings.

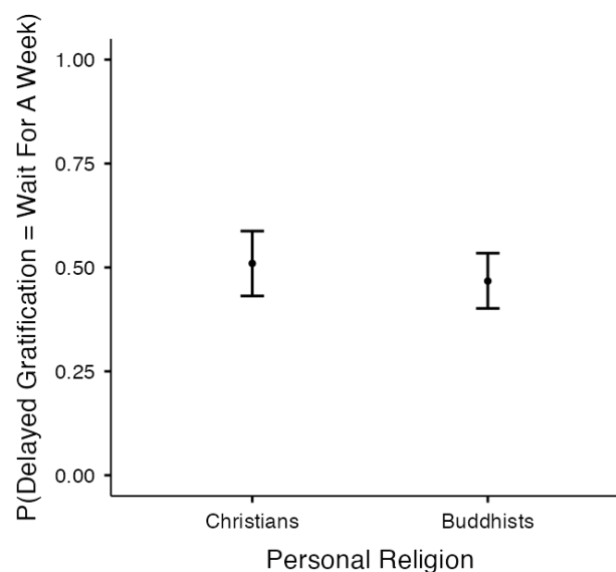
⁶ See Supplemental Material: Primary Set of Hypotheses available on the project OSF page: <https://osf.io/fsbdn/>

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Delayed gratification. As indicated in Table 2, an interaction model was constructed to test if there was any interaction effect of prime types at the two levels of personal religion in the predicting of delay of gratification. None of the interaction terms in the model supported this first set of hypotheses. Simple effect coefficients were regardless computed to probe the two interaction terms. For Buddhists who were primed with the Buddhism symbol, as shown in Table 3, a positive association with a slight increase in the odds of selecting delayed gratification than Buddhists who were primed with the neutral prime by 1.04 times was observed although the relation was not significant, (OR = 1.04, 95% CI = [0.53, 2.03], $p = .92$). In contrast, Christians who were primed with the Christianity prime were found to have a greater preference for the immediate reward in comparison to Christians who were primed with the neutral prime by 1.3 times although the relation was also non-significant, (OR = 0.82, 95% CI = [0.37, 1.81], $p = .62$). As shown in Table 2, there were no statistically significant main effects observed of prime types in the predicting of delayed gratification. Likewise, Figure 3 shows the lack of significant main effect of personal religion.

Figure 3

The Model-estimated Marginal Means and 95% CIs of Delayed Gratification by Personal Religion



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Table 2

Binomial Logistic Regression Results for Prime Types and Personal Religion in the Predicting of Delayed Gratification

Predictor	Model 1: Main Effects	Model 2: Interaction
	Odds Ratio [95% CI]	Odds Ratio [95% CI]
Buddhism Prime – Neutral Prime	0.91 [0.55, 1.50]	0.76 [0.35, 1.63]
Christianity Prime – Neutral Prime	1.00 [0.60, 1.66]	0.82 [0.37, 1.81]
Buddhists – Christians	0.84 [0.56, 1.28]	0.67 [0.32, 1.42]
(Buddhism Prime – Neutral Prime) x (Buddhists – Christians)		1.36 [0.49, 3.77]
(Christianity Prime – Neutral Prime) x (Buddhists – Christians)		1.41 [0.50, 4.02]
Constant	1.08 [0.70, 1.68]	1.23 [0.70, 2.15]
Mean VIF	1.00	1.73
AIC	518	522
Overall Model Test	$\chi^2 (3) = 0.85$	$\chi^2 (5) = 1.36$
Pseudo- R^2	0.003	0.005
<i>N</i>	369	369

Note. Pseudo- R^2 are Nagelkerke's R^2 .

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$.

Table 3

Simple Effects of Prime Types at Each of the Two Levels of Personal Religion in the Predicting of Delayed Gratification, Prosocial Tendency, and Goal Pursuit as Three Separate Models using the Primary Dataset (N = 369)

Dependent Variables	Personal Religion as Moderators	Prime Types	Odds Ratio [95% CI]
Delayed Gratification	Buddhists	Buddhism - Neutral	1.04 [0.53, 2.03]
	Christians	Christianity – Neutral	0.82 [0.37, 1.81]
Prosocial Tendency	Buddhists	Buddhism - Neutral	0.69 [0.28, 1.71]
	Christians	Christianity – Neutral	0.79 [0.32, 1.94]
Goal Pursuit	Buddhists	Buddhism - Neutral	1.35 [0.67, 2.70]
	Christians	Christianity – Neutral	1.71 [0.77, 3.83]

Note. * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$.

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The two models were again constructed using the secondary dataset ($N = 469$) that incorporated incomplete survey cases in addition to the 405 complete survey cases⁷. No interaction terms were observed to be statistically significant when prime types and personal religions were modelled to predict delayed gratification given that the first term, ((Buddhism Prime – Neutral Prime) x (Christians – Buddhists)), $b = -0.40$, $SE = 0.47$, $p = .39$, 95% CI [-1.32, 0.51], and the second term, ((Christianity Prime – Neutral Prime) x (Christians – Buddhists)), $b = -0.39$, $SE = 0.47$, $p = .41$, 95% CI [-1.30, 0.53], were obtained. Simple effect coefficients were also computed for these interaction terms but none of the odds ratios were found to be significant (see Table 4). Main effects of the individual predictors were also investigated, and no significant effects were found. As indicated in the Omnibus likelihood ratio test for the prime types, $\chi^2 (2, N=369) = 0.84$, $p = .66$, and personal religion, $\chi^2 (1, N=369) = 0.48$, $p = .49$, both predictors made no improvement to the main effect model in the prediction of the outcome variable compared to the baseline (null) model.

Table 4

Simple Effects of Prime Types at Each of the Two Levels of Personal Religion in the Predicting of Delayed Gratification, Prosocial Tendency, and Goal Pursuit as Three Separate Models using the Secondary Dataset (N = 469)

Dependent Variables	Personal Religion as Moderators	Prime Types	Odds Ratio [95% CI]
Delayed Gratification	Buddhists	Buddhism - Neutral	1.07 [0.58, 1.98]
	Christians	Christianity – Neutral	0.65 [0.33, 1.30]
Prosocial Tendency	Buddhists	Buddhism - Neutral	0.76 [0.33, 1.76]
	Christians	Christianity – Neutral	0.70 [0.32, 1.54]
Goal Pursuit	Buddhists	Buddhism - Neutral	1.60 [0.84, 3.04]
	Christians	Christianity – Neutral	1.35 [0.68, 2.68]

Note. * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$.

⁷ We tested key predictions using the primary ($N = 369$) and secondary datasets ($N = 469$) to ensure results are consistent. These predictions were also tested using a tertiary dataset ($N = 353$) as it allowed us to control for food insecurity, age and gender – results can be found on the project OSF page: <https://osf.io/fsbdn/>.

Table 5

Personal Religion as a Predictor in the Predicting of Delayed Gratification, Prosocial Tendency, and Goal Pursuit while Holding Prime Types Constant in Three Separate Models using the Secondary Dataset (N = 469)

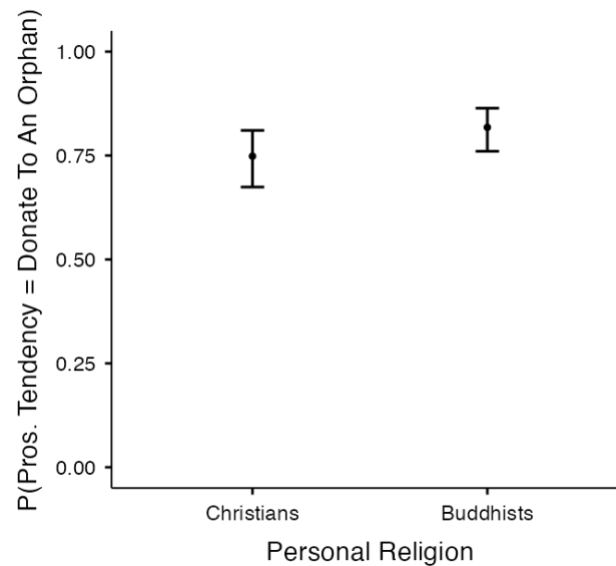
Dependent Variables	Personal Religion	Odds Ratio [95% CI]
Delayed Gratification	Buddhists – Christians	0.88 [0.61, 1.27]
Prosocial Tendency	Buddhists – Christians	1.69* [1.08, 2.64]
Goal Pursuit	Buddhists – Christians	0.51*** [0.35, 0.74]

Note. * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$.

Prosocial tendency. A binomial logistic regression was used to test if any of the interactions among levels of prime types and personal religion have significant effect on the prosocial tendency. There were no statistically significant effects deriving from these interactions. Simple effects were, however, computed to probe the interaction terms. The Table 3 shows that the odds of selecting the option to keep the reward for themselves by Buddhists who were primed with the Buddhism prime was greater than Buddhists who were primed with the neutral prime by 1.45 times although the relation was not statistically significant, (OR = 0.69, 95% CI = [0.28, 1.71], $p < .42$). A similar non-significant relation was observed for Christian participants. The odds of selecting the option to keep the reward for themselves by Christians who were primed with the Christianity prime was greater by 1.27 times than the Christians who were primed with the neutral prime, (OR = 0.79, 95% CI = [0.32, 1.94], $p = .60$). Main effects of the two predictors were also examined. As shown in Table 6, no significant effects of prime conditions on the predicting of prosocial tendency were observed while personal religion was held constant. Similarly, as shown in Figure 4, no significant main effect was observed for Christians and Buddhists.

Figure 4

The Model-estimated Marginal Means and 95% CIs of Prosocial Tendency by Personal Religion



These models were again tested using the secondary dataset. The two interaction terms observed in the interaction model showed no significant effects, with the terms for the first interaction, ((Buddhism Prime – Neutral Prime) x (Christians – Buddhists)), $b = 0.05$, $SE = 0.59$, $p = .94$, 95% CI [-1.11, 1.20] and the second interaction, ((Christianity Prime – Neutral Prime) x (Christians – Buddhists)), $b = -0.00$, $SE = 0.58$, $p = 1.00$, 95% CI [-1.13, 1.13], were obtained. Simple effect coefficients were computed to probe the two terms. As indicated in Table 4, no simple effects were observed to be significant. Regardless, personal religion was found to be an important factor in the predicting of prosocial tendency (see Table 5). In addition to the obtained effect (odds ratio) crossing 1 in its associated confidence interval, a significant Omnibus likelihood ratio test rejected the null hypothesis, $\chi^2 (1, N=369) = 5.28$, $p < .05$, suggesting that this new model with personal religion as a predictor was a significant improvement over the baseline model. While controlling for prime types, participants who identified with Buddhism showed an increasing in the odds of selecting the

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option to donate the reward than the participants who affiliated with Christianity by 1.69 times, (OR = 1.69, 95% CI = [1.08, 2.64], $p < .05$).

Table 6

Binomial Logistic Regression Results for Prime Types and Personal Religion in the Predicting of Prosocial Tendency

Predictor	Model 1: Main Effects Odds Ratio [95% CI]	Model 2: Interaction Odds Ratio [95% CI]
Buddhism Prime – Neutral Prime	0.88 [0.47, 1.66]	1.12 [0.46, 2.75]
Christianity Prime – Neutral Prime	0.75 [0.40, 1.41]	0.79 [0.32, 1.94]
Buddhists – Christians	1.53 [0.92, 2.53]	1.91 [0.73, 4.99]
(Buddhism Prime – Neutral Prime) x (Buddhists – Christians)		0.62 [0.172, 2.20]
(Christianity Prime – Neutral Prime) x (Buddhists – Christians)		0.88 [0.25, 3.14]
Constant	3.43*** [2.00, 5.87]	3.08*** [1.61, 5.91]
Mean VIF	1.00	1.72
AIC	385	389
Overall Model Test	$\chi^2 (3) = 3.42$	$\chi^2 (5) = 4.05$
Pseudo- R^2	0.01	0.02
N	369	369

Note. Pseudo- R^2 are Nagelkerke's R^2 .

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$.

Goal pursuit. A binomial logistic regression with prime types and personal religion as predictors was used to test the prediction with respect to goal pursuit. Although there were no interaction effects for different levels of the two predictors (i.e., prime types, personal religion) as observed in the interaction model (see Table 7), simple effect coefficients were regardless computed to probe the interaction terms. As shown in Table 3, no effects were found to be significant.

There was no main effect of prime types as a predictor on the goal pursuit as shown in the model 1 (see Table 7). The inclusion of personal religion as a predictor in the model was, however, found to be an improvement over the baseline (intercept only) model according to

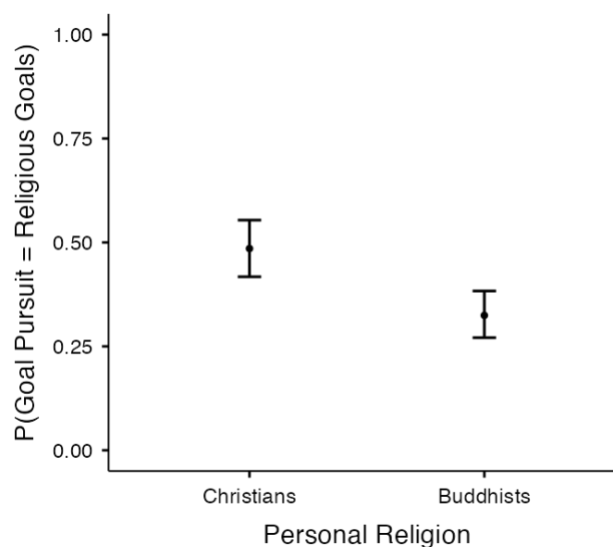
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the Omnibus likelihood ratio tests, $\chi^2 (1, N=369) = 6.73, p < .01$. The p -value, alongside the values of CIs, indicated that there was a statistically significant main effect of personal religion in the predicting of the outcome variable while holding levels of prime types constant (see Figure 5). The result shows that if a participant affiliated with Buddhism, the odds of this participant selecting ‘religious activities’ as their preferred tasks decreased, (OR = 0.57, 95% CI = [0.37, 0.87], $p < .05$). In other words, the odds of selecting religious activities over non-religious activities by a participant affiliated with Christianity were 1.75 times higher than those other participants who identified as Buddhists.

None of the simple effects derived from the interaction model using the secondary dataset were observed to be significant (see Table 4). A statistically significant and positive association was, as shown in Table 5, observed for personal religion in the predicting of goal pursuit, (OR = 0.51, 95% CI = [0.35, 0.74], $p < .001$). While holding levels of prime types constant, the odds of selecting religious activities than non-religious activities by participants affiliated with Christianity were 1.96 times higher than a participant who affiliated with Buddhism.

Figure 5

The Model-estimated Marginal Means and 95% CIs of Goal Pursuit by Personal Religion



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Table 7

Binomial Logistic Regression Results for Prime Types and Personal Religion in the Predicting of Goal Pursuit

Predictor	Model 1: Main Effects	Model 2: Interaction
	Odds Ratio [95% CI]	Odds Ratio [95% CI]
Buddhism Prime – Neutral Prime	1.32 [0.78, 2.21]	1.26 [0.59, 2.72]
Christianity Prime – Neutral Prime	1.04 [0.61, 1.78]	1.71 [0.77, 3.83]
Buddhists – Christians	0.57* [0.37, 0.87]	0.74 [0.34, 1.61]
(Buddhism Prime – Neutral Prime) x (Buddhists – Christians)		1.07 [0.38, 3.01]
(Christianity Prime – Neutral Prime) x (Buddhists – Christians)		0.41 [0.14, 1.21]
Constant	0.79 [0.51, 1.24]	0.69 [0.39, 1.22]
Mean VIF	1.00	1.70
AIC	494	494
Overall Model Test	$\chi^2 (3) = 8.12^*$	$\chi^2 (5) = 12.15^*$
Pseudo- R^2	0.03	0.04
Omnibus Likelihood Ratio Tests	Prime Types $\chi^2 (2) = 1.32$	$\chi^2 (2) = 1.75$
	Personal $\chi^2 (1) = 6.73^{**}$	$\chi^2 (1) = 0.57$
	Religion	
	Prime Types x Personal Religion	$\chi^2 (2) = 4.02$
<i>N</i>	369	369

Note. Pseudo- R^2 are Nagelkerke's R^2 .

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$.

Actual task-engagement. To further analyse if participants were willing to proceed with the activities they have previously selected as their most preferred options, personal religion and prime types were modelled into a multinomial logistic regression equation to predict the actual task-engagement. No significant main effect for prime types was observed. The Omnibus likelihood ratio tests, however, was found to reject the null hypothesis, signifying the importance of modelling personal religion as a predictor in the alternative model, $\chi^2 (2, N=369) = 13.38, p < .01$. As shown in the Table 8, there was a significant difference of effect found for the non-religious activities category compared to the skipping

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activities category for the two religious groups with the effect crossing 1 in the associated confidence interval, (OR = 2.37, 95% CI = [1.40, 4.01], $p < .01$). The odds of a participant who identified Buddhism as their personal religion selecting non-religious activities over skipping activities were 2.37 times higher than those of other participants who affiliated with Christianity. As can be seen in Table 9, when non-religious activities category was treated a reference level, a participant affiliated with Christianity was 2.04 times more likely than a participant affiliated with Buddhism to continue with the religious activities they have previously selected over the non-religious activities, (OR = 0.49, 95% CI = [0.30, 0.81], $p < .01$).

Table 8

Multinomial Logistic Regression Results for Prime Types and Personal Religion in the Predicting of Actual Task-engagement

Actual Task-engagement	Predictor	Odds Ratio [95% CI]
Non-religious Activities - Skip	Constant	0.98 [0.58, 1.67]
	Prime Types:	
	Buddhism – Neutral	1.00 [0.54, 1.87]
	Christianity – Neutral	1.47 [0.77, 2.82]
	Personal Religion:	
	Buddhists – Christians	2.37** [1.40, 4.01]
Religious Activities - Skip	Constant	0.82 [0.46, 1.44]
	Prime Types:	
	Buddhism – Neutral	1.51 [0.77, 2.96]
	Christianity – Neutral	1.73 [0.84, 3.53]
	Personal Religion:	
	Buddhists – Christians	1.16 [0.67, 2.03]
AIC		785
Pseudo- R^2		0.03
Omnibus Likelihood	Prime Types	$\chi^2 (4) = 3.97$
Ratio Tests	Personal Religion	$\chi^2 (2) = 13.38^{**}$
N		369

Note. Pseudo- R^2 are Nagelkerke's R^2 .

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$.

Table 9

Multinomial Logistic Regression Results for Prime Types and Personal Religion in the Predicting of Actual Task-engagement

Actual Task-engagement	Predictor	Odds Ratio [95% CI]
Skip – Non-religious Activities	Constant	1.02 [0.60, 1.73]
	Prime Types:	
	Buddhism – Neutral	1.00 [0.54, 1.87]
	Christianity – Neutral	0.68 [0.36, 1.31]
	Personal Religion:	
Religious Tasks – Non-religious Activities	Buddhists – Christians	0.42** [0.25, 0.72]
	Constant	0.83 [0.48, 1.43]
	Prime Types:	
	Buddhism – Neutral	1.51 [0.82, 2.78]
	Christianity – Neutral	1.17 [0.63, 2.18]
	Personal Religion:	
	Buddhists – Christians	0.49** [0.30, 0.81]
AIC		785
Pseudo- R^2		0.03
Omnibus Likelihood	Prime Types	$\chi^2 (4) = 3.97$
Ratio Tests	Personal Religion	$\chi^2 (2) = 13.38^{**}$
N		369

Note. Pseudo- R^2 are Nagelkerke's R^2 .

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$.

Goal-orientation. Multinomial logistic regression was, again, used to test whether Buddhists and Christians differed in how they specifically perceived each of the ten activities provided. The Omnibus likelihood ratio test rejected the null hypothesis, $\chi^2 (9, N=369) = 39.1, p < .001$, signifying that the alternative model with personal religion as a predictor was a better model. Relaxing music was treated a reference level in all nine pairs of comparison. Multiple statistically significant effects were observed in this model, with the results for Meditation/Hymn (OR = 3.60, 95% CI = [1.38, 9.44], $p < .01$), Prayer (OR = 0.41, 95% CI = [0.18, 0.91], $p < .05$), Non-religious Article (OR = 2.18, 95% CI = [1.02, 4.67], $p < .05$), and

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English Language Lesson (OR = 2.57, 95% CI = [1.27, 5.20], $p < .01$). Interpretations of these statistically significant results require caution due to sample size for each specific comparison condition of analysis (e.g., Meditation/Hymn - Relaxing Music). These statistical findings, regardless, illustrate a set of relevant patterns concerning goal-orientation as each significant effect stated earlier reliably crossing 1 in their associated confidence intervals. The odds of a participant who affiliated with Buddhism as their personal religion selecting meditation/hymn than relaxing music were 3.61 times higher than a participant with Christianity as their affiliated religion. Likewise, the odds of a Buddhist selecting non-religious article than relaxing music were 2.18 times higher than participants with Christianity as their religious identity. This different pattern of preference can also be observed with respect to learning an English language: the odds that a Buddhist preferred to take English language lesson over listening to relaxing music were 2.57 times higher compared to a Christian. This same group of Buddhists, however, appeared to have less preference for a brief prayer over listening to relaxing music. The odds of a Christian selecting prayer as a preferred activity compared to relaxing music were 2.46 times higher than a participant who affiliated with Buddhism.

Individual task-rankings. All ten activities were also analysed individually using ordinal logistic regression⁸. Personal religion, while holding prime types constant, was a significant predictor of mindfulness meditation/hymn, prayer, puzzle, religious text, non-religious article, religious music, English language lesson, and science quiz. For participants who affiliated with Buddhism, the odds of ranking meditation/hymn as appealing (i.e., very appealing, fairly appealing, appealing, slightly appealing versus not at all appealing) is 1.91 times that of participants who affiliated with Christianity. In contrast, the odds of ranking prayer by Christian participants as appealing is 3.16 times that of participants who affiliated

⁸ Supplemental Tables can be found on the project OSF page: <https://osf.io/wb6v8/>

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with Buddhism. Although no difference was observed for puzzle in the analysis of goal-orientation, here, it was observed that Buddhist participants ranked puzzle as an appealing activity (versus not at all appealing), with the odds of ranking this task is 1.69 times that of the Christian participants. For the Christian participants, the odds of ranking studying religious text as an appealing activity is 1.65 times that of the Buddhists. Buddhist participants, again, ranked another non-religious activity – reading a non-religious article, as appealing. The odds of ranking this activity as appealing is 1.88 times that of the Christians. Again, Christian participants ranked another religious activity – listening to religious music, as appealing, with the odds of ranking this activity as appealing is 3.57 times that of the Buddhists. Buddhist participants again indicated that the last two non-religious activities - learning English language lesson and answering a science quiz, were appealing, with the odds of ranking in the first activity is 2.16 times and the odds of ranking in the second activity is 1.77 times higher than that of the participants affiliated with Christianity.

Secondary Set of Hypotheses

The secondary set of hypotheses were also investigated, using binomial and multinomial logistic regressions, to assess if individual difference with respect to religious internalization plays a role in predicting the three categories of dependent variables⁹.

Identified religiosity and introjected religiosity were modelled as predictors to test the role of religious internalization. In the current analyses, both identified and introjected religiosities were centred around the mean, with -1SD and +1SD from the mean, before interaction terms were calculated to reduce the multicollinearity among the predictors in all interaction models (Aiken et al., 1991). The analyses were conducted separately for Christian ($N = 148$) and Buddhist ($N = 212$) participants using the primary dataset.

⁹ See Supplemental Material: Secondary Set of Hypotheses available on the project OSF page: <https://osf.io/fsbdn/>

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Buddhist Religious Internalization Scale (BRIS)

Delayed gratification. To examine if delay of gratification differed as a function of religious internalization, BRIS scores for Buddhist participants were first statistically analysed using binomial logistic regression. Although there was a marginally significant effect of identified religiosity when it was modelled to interact with prime types, $b = -0.93$, $SE = .52$, $p = .07$, 95% CI [-2.00, 0.06], further probing of simple effects of mean-centred identified religiosities indicated the lack of significant odds ratios at each of the three moderator levels of prime types. Greater identified religiosity was found to positively associate with the increasing odds of selecting the option of 'Waiting For A Week' by 1.84 times in the neutral prime condition, (OR = 1.84, 95% CI = [0.91, 3.71], $p = .09$), although, as stated earlier, the relation was not statistically significant at the .05 alpha levels. In line with this, the Omnibus tests for the simple effects model of identified religiosity indicated that the inclusion of neutral prime as one of three moderator levels did not fit the current data better than the baseline model - the chi-square was not robustly significant, $\chi^2 (1, N=212) = 2.90$, $p = .09$. No other interactions among the identified religiosity, introjected religiosity and prime types were found. Main effects model was constructed to assess if there were main effects but none of the three predictors were found to be statistically significant. The Omnibus likelihood ratio tests also indicated that the null hypotheses were not rejected. The baseline model provided as good a fit to the current data as the main effect model with identified religiosity, $\chi^2 (1, N=212) = 1.08$, $p = .30$, introjected religiosity, $\chi^2 (1, N=212) = 1.24$, $p = .27$, or prime types, $\chi^2 (2, N=212) = 0.11$, $p = .95$, as additional variables.

Prosocial tendency. Using binomial logistic regression analysis, the mean-centred identified religiosities were not found to be significant at any moderator levels of the prime types. The Omnibus likelihood ratio test, regardless, rejected the null hypothesis in the main effects model, $\chi^2 (1, N=212) = 9.06$, $p < .01$, suggesting that the inclusion of identified

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religiosity as a predictor in the alternative model was a better fit to the current data. The odds ratio obtained indicated that every one unit increased in identified religiosity in a Buddhist, the likelihood that they chose to donate to an orphan was increased by 2.07 times, (OR = 2.07, 95% CI = [1.26, 3.40], $p < .01$). The effect of identified religiosity was still statistically significant even when holding introjected religiosity at a fixed value, (OR = 1.86, 95% CI = [1.12, 3.07], $p < .05$), or when holding prime types constant, (OR = 2.16, 95% CI = [1.31, 3.56], $p < .01$). The main effect model showed a significant effect of identified religiosity, (OR = 1.95, 95% CI = [1.17, 3.25], $p < .05$), even when both introjected religiosity and prime types were controlled for altogether at some fixed values.

No interaction effect was found when interactions between introjected religiosity and identified religiosity were allowed for in a new model in the predicting of prosocial tendency. Simple effects coefficients were computed for the introjected religiosity on the three values of identified religiosity, but no statistically significant effects were observed. Introjected religiosity was, regardless, observed to have a significant effect in a main effects model, (OR = 1.50, 95% CI = [1.06, 2.11], $p < .05$). In line with this, the Omnibus likelihood ratio tests was found to reject the null hypothesis at the .05 alpha levels of significance, $\chi^2 (1, N=212) = 6.09$, $p < .05$. The model with introjected religiosity as a variable in addition to the intercept appear to be an improvement over the intercept-only model. The significant effect of introjected religiosity, however, became marginally significant when identified religiosity was held constant at a fixed value, (OR = 1.37, 95% CI = [0.96, 1.95], $p = .09$).

Another interaction model was tested to examine if the prime types moderated the effects the introjected religiosity had on the prosocial tendency. The result, when introjected religiosity and Buddhism prime were allowed for interaction, indicated a significant interaction effect, $b = -1.46$, $SE = .58$, $p < .05$, 95% CI [-2.76, -.43]. In line with this, the alternative model with the interaction term (introjected religiosity x prime types) provided a

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significant improvement over the baseline model according to the result obtained from the likelihood ratio tests, $\chi^2 (2, N=212) = 9.04, p < .05$. Simple effects coefficients (i.e., conditional effects of the focal predictor at values of the moderators) were calculated to probe the interaction term. At the level of neutral prime, greater introjected religiosity was significantly associated with an increase in the odds of donating reward to an orphan, (OR = 3.47, 95% CI = [1.25, 9.61], $p < .05$). Likewise, a significant association was observed at the level of Christianity prime - greater introjected religiosity was found to associate with an increase in the odds of donating reward to an orphan, (OR = 1.82, 95% CI = [1.03, 3.22], $p < .05$). However, at the level of Buddhism prime, a reverse pattern was found - greater introjected religiosity was observed to associate with a decrease in the odds of donating reward to an orphan although the association was not statistically significant, (OR = 0.80, 95% CI = [0.48, 1.35], $p = .41$). In line with these, the Omnibus tests for the simple effects of introjected religiosity on the level of neutral prime, $\chi^2 (1, N=212) = 5.74, p < .05$, and on the level of Christianity prime, $\chi^2 (1, N=212) = 4.28, p < .05$, were observed to be statistically significant, suggesting that the null hypotheses were rejected and in favour of the alternative model with the inclusion of neutral and Christianity primes as moderator levels in the fitting of the current data. A lack of improvement of the alternative model with Buddhism prime as a moderator level and introjected religiosity as a predictor over the baseline model was observed as the chi-square value of the likelihood ratio test was not statistically significant, $\chi^2 (1, N=212) = 0.69, p = .41$.

Actual task-engagement. Actual task-engagement was analysed by modelling identified religiosity and introjected religiosity as covariates and prime types as a factor using multinomial logistic regression. Both introjected religiosity and prime types were not significant predictors. An improvement over the null model in the fitting of the data was only observed for the identified religiosity according to the significant chi-square value of the

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likelihood ratio tests, $\chi^2(2, N=212) = 10.89, p < .05$. Greater identified religiosity, although not significant, associated with a slight decrease in the odds of proceeding with the non-religious activities participants have previously selected over skipping these activities, (OR = 0.85, 95% CI = [0.52, 1.40], $p = .53$). In contrast, a statistically significant association was observed, with 2.13 times increased in the odds of proceeding the religious activities over skipping these activities by every one unit increased in the identified religiosity, (OR = 2.13, 95% CI = [1.13, 4.00], $p < .05$). Greater identified religiosity was also associated with an increase in proceeding with the religious activities over the non-religious activities, (OR = 2.49, 95% CI = [1.45, 4.28], $p < .01$). This effect of identified religiosity was still statistically significant even when introjected religiosity and prime types were held constant in the model, (OR = 2.14, 95% CI = [1.11, 4.12], $p < .05$). It must be, however, noted that this was a between-groups comparison: Buddhists who either chose to continue or skip the religious activities they have previously selected was not the same group of Buddhists who chose to continue or skip the non-religious activities.

Christian Religious Internalization Scale (CRIS)

Delayed gratification. We, now, analyse if delay of gratification differed as a function of religious internalization in the Christian sample using CRIS scores. A higher-level interaction effect, $b = -1.43, SE = 0.72, p < .05, 95\% CI [-2.96, -0.08]$, for the interaction term, (i.e., Identified Religiosity x Introjected Religiosity x Christianity Prime – Neutral Prime), was found when a three-way interaction was modelled using binomial logistic regression in the predicting of delayed gratification. Simple effect coefficients were computed for identified religiosity on three values of introjected religiosity at each of the three conditions of prime types to probe the 3-way interaction. At 1SD below the mean of introjected religiosity at the level neutral prime, greater identified religiosity was found to negatively but non-significantly associate with the odds of selecting the delayed reward over

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the immediate reward, (OR = 0.49, 95% CI = [0.14, 1.66], $p = .25$). Greater identified religiosity was, however, observed to positively associate with the odds of selecting the delayed reward at the mean introjected religiosity level although the relation was non-significant, (OR = 2.01, 95% CI = [0.66, 6.12], $p = 0.22$). At the level of 1SD above the mean, a significant relationship was observed: greater identified religiosity was positively associate with an increase in the odds of selecting delayed reward, (OR = 8.25, 95% CI = [1.03, 65.99], $p < .05$), compared to the immediate reward. Simple effect coefficients of identified religiosity on three values of introjected religiosity at the level of Buddhism prime was also assessed. The result indicates no significant effect at the .05 alpha level. None of the simple effect coefficients were significant at the level of Christianity prime for the identified religiosity, centring on the three values of introjected religiosity (see Table 10).

The Omnibus tests also indicated that only the chi-square value for simple effects of identified religiosity, modelled on the value of 1SD above the mean at the neutral prime condition, was found to be significant, $\chi^2 (1, N=148) = 3.96, p < .05$. The null hypothesis that the baseline model provided as good a fit to the data as the alternative model with the above significant simple effect term was statistically rejected. A caution in interpretation for the significant odds ratio is needed given that the associated CI was wide due to the number of sample size required. In addition, the obtaining of variance inflation factors (VIF) greater than five for the 3-way interaction model suggested the presence of highly correlated variables, and thus, a cause for concern. A main effect model was also constructed but none of the three predictors were found to be significant although the VIFs were below 1.5.

Table 10

Simple Effects of Identified Religiosity on Three Values of Introjected Religiosity at Each of the Three Levels of Prime Types in the Predicting of Delayed Gratification

Moderator Levels		Odds Ratio [95% CI]
Prime Types	Introjected Religiosity	
Neutral Prime	Mean-1·SD	0.49 [0.14, 1.66]
	Mean	2.01 [0.66, 6.12]
	Mean+1·SD	8.25* [1.03, 65.99]
Buddhism Prime	Mean-1·SD	0.78 [0.31, 1.95]
	Mean	1.18 [0.57, 2.41]
	Mean+1·SD	1.77 [0.52, 6.06]
Christianity Prime	Mean-1·SD	2.15 [0.67, 6.91]
	Mean	1.67 [0.60, 4.67]
	Mean+1·SD	1.30 [0.24, 7.00]

Note. * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$.

Prosocial tendency. Using CRIS scores, identified religiosity, introjected religiosity and prime types were modelled together to predict prosocial tendency using binomial logistic regression. A three-way interaction model indicated a lack of significant interaction terms (including two-way and three-way interactions). The obtained VIF values were above five, suggesting that the model contained predictors that were highly correlated. Although the VIF values were below 1.5 in the main effect model, none of the three predictors were found to be statistically significant.

Actual task-engagement. A multinomial logistic regression was used to examine actual task-engagement. The main effect of identified religiosity was observed after the removal of prime types, (OR = 1.74, 95% CI = [1.00, 3.01], $p = .05$), when introjected religiosity was held at some fixed values in the ‘Religious Activities – Skip’ condition. The result indicated that greater identified religiosity was associated with an increase in the proceeding of a previously selected religious activity over skipping the activity in this Christian sample. In this same model, introjected religiosity was found to be marginally

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significant, (OR = 0.70, 95% CI = [0.48, 1.02], $p = .06$), indicating that when identified religiosity was held constant, greater introjected religiosity was found to associate with an increase in the tendency to skip the religious activities they have selected over continuing with these activities by 1.43 times.

No significant effect was observed for identified religiosity in the condition where religious activities and non-religious activities were compared. A negatively associated but statistically significant effect was, however, found for the introjected religiosity in the same condition where identified religiosity was held constant, (OR = 0.64, 95% CI = [0.44, 0.92], $p < .05$). This indicates that greater introjected religiosity was associated with an increase in the odds of participants proceeding with the previously selected non-religious activities over the previously selected religious activities by 1.57 times. Only the chi-square value of the Omnibus likelihood ratio tests for the introjected religiosity, $\chi^2 (2, N=148) = 6.65$, $p < .05$, was found to reject the null hypothesis, and thus, in supportive of the alternative hypothesis that the modelling of introjected religiosity was an improvement over the baseline model with respect to the fitting of the current data.

Tertiary Set of Hypotheses

The current study also investigates predictions derived from a set of tertiary hypotheses to explore the role of mismatched explicit primes on Buddhist and Christian participants. Neither interaction nor main effects were observed for prime types and personal religion in the predicting of delayed gratification, prosocial tendency, and goal pursuit using logistic regression analyses. Simple effects coefficients were computed for the interaction models but none of the terms were found to be statistically significant (see Table 11).

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Table 11

Simple Effects of Prime Types at Each of the Two Levels of Personal Religion in the Predicting of Delayed Gratification, Prosocial Tendency, and Goal Pursuit as Three Separate Models using the Primary Dataset (N = 369)

Dependent Variables	Personal Religion as Moderators	Prime Types	Odds Ratio [95% CI]
Delayed Gratification	Buddhists	Christianity – Neutral	1.52 [0.59, 2.26]
	Christians	Buddhism - Neutral	0.76 [0.36, 1.63]
Prosocial Tendency	Buddhists	Christianity – Neutral	0.69 [0.28, 1.71]
	Christians	Buddhism - Neutral	1.12 [0.46, 2.75]
Goal Pursuit	Buddhists	Christianity – Neutral	0.70 [0.34, 1.45]
	Christians	Buddhism - Neutral	1.26 [0.59, 2.72]

Note. * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$.

Study 1 - Discussion

The affect-laden Sanctity foundation, derived from the cultural-anthropological notion of the ethic of divinity (Rozin et al., 1999; Shweder et al., 1997), was hypothesized to evolutionarily originate from the psychology of disgust and contamination (Haidt et al., 1997; Rozin & Haidt, 2013). This line of research also argues that the moral sanctity is heavily motivated by avoidance-based principles (Janoff-Bulman & Carnes, 2013). Moral sanctity is said to be more sensitive to negative outcomes and concern more with extrinsic punishments (e.g., disease contraction) (Higgins, 1997; Janoff-Bulman & Carnes, 2013; Janoff-Bulman et al., 2009). Despite the acceptance of this theoretical position, we regardless argue here that religious individuals tend to also internalise the approach-based principles and manifest through a set of agentic regulation at the local contexts, via the mid-level sanctification and purification system, in order to elevate their religious self-concept on the moral hierarchy to strive for the ideal of divinity (Brandt & Reyna, 2011; Buddhaghosa, 1991; Carter et al., 2012a; Carter et al., 2012b; Carver, 1998; Deci & Ryan, 2000; Emmons, 2005, 2007;

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Higgins, 1997; Janoff-Bulman, 2012; Kim-Spoon et al., 2014; McCullough & Willoughby, 2009; McNamara & Henrich, 2018; Park et al., 2013; Rounding et al., 2012; Trommsdorff, 2012). This proposed pattern was expected to be more salient in an existentially insecure environments such as Myanmar (McNamara et al., 2016).

Taking contextually-dependent, integrative viewpoint as a frame of reference, the current study addressed the research questions by using a quasi-experimental method with three explicit priming conditions (Bargh & Chartrand, 2014; Shariff et al., 2016). It was observed that when both Buddhist and Christian participants were reminded of their affiliated religious belief through the exposure of a core religious symbol, these participants did not select the delayed but larger hypothetical reward compared to the immediate but smaller reward as predicted. With respect to prosocial tendency, no observation of an increase in odds in the selection of the option to donate to an orphan than to keep the reward for themselves by both Christians and Buddhists who were primed with their affiliated religious primes compared to the neutral prime. However, when this prediction was analysed using the secondary (larger) dataset, a significant main effect was observed for the two religious groups. When statistical models were constructed to test if both Buddhists and Christians preferred to select and engage in an activity relevant to their affiliated religion as manifestation of their long-term goal strivings, no priming effects were found although personal religion appeared to be an important factor. The main effects of personal religion were observed in both primary and secondary datasets, and in all models where goal pursuit, actual task-engagement and goal-orientation were treated as predicted variables. As shown in the result section regarding the tertiary set of exploratory hypotheses, none of the predictions were supported. Buddhist participants did not tend to select the delayed reward, donate the reward to an orphan, or be more religiously goal-oriented in their decisions as predicted when they were primed with a Christian symbol. Likewise, Christian participants did not tend to

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select the delayed reward, donate the reward to an orphan or be more religious goal-oriented when they were primed with a Buddhist symbol.

It was also hypothesized that the associations between the three primes and the predicted variables would be more salient in religious individuals whose religious behaviours were more autonomously regulated as a function of greater internalization of approach-based principles (Ryan et al., 1997; Ryan et al., 1993). As indicated in the results for the secondary set of hypotheses, there was a combined effect of identified religiosity and prime types in the predicting of delayed gratification in both religious groups although variance might be inflated due to the sample size issue in the Christian sample. No effects were observed in the Christian sample in the predicting of prosocial tendency by identified or introjected religiosities moderated by prime types, but a significant relation was observed for the identified religiosity in the Buddhist sample. Only main effects models were constructed in the analyses of actual task-engagement for both religious groups. Although only identified religiosity was observed to be a significant covariate in the predicting of actual task-engagement for the Buddhist sample, both identified and introjected religiosities were found to associate with actual task-engagement in the Christian sample.

Primary Hypotheses Findings

Delay of gratification. Prime types and personal religion were modelled to predict delayed gratification in the form of selecting delayed over immediate rewards as part of investigating the role of agentic self-regulation in the domain of moral sanctity/purity in Myanmar religious communities. This was tested based on the assumption that religious individuals were prescribed and conditioned to practise self-control as a form of agentic self-regulation that functions as an essential mechanism in moving upward on their moral hierarchy. No significant difference with respect to delayed gratification was observed between the control and the religious conditions. This result is in line with findings emerged

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from a review of experiments and longitudinal studies on the causal relationships between religion and self-control (Marcus & McCullough, 2021). The review highlighted that almost no laboratory studies were found to show the robust influence of implicit or explicit manipulation of religious cognition on self-control. For instance, no relationship found between heightened religious salience and reduction in the discounting of future rewards after participants from an online platform were primed by asking them to recall explicit religious topics (Thornton et al., 2017). Benjamin and colleagues also found no evidence of religious priming effects on discount rates in a sample of Catholics and Protestants (Benjamin et al., 2016). In support of these studies, being primed with religious primes did not induce religious participants to select the delayed reward over the immediate reward compared to the religious participants who were primed with neutral prime in the current study.

Other research findings, however, indicate that common characteristics of religiosity such as effortful ritual engagements (Rybanska et al., 2018; Tian et al., 2018) and personal prayer (Frieze & Wänke, 2014) were reliable predictors of delayed gratification although these studies did not utilise the manipulation of religious cognition through implicit and explicit activations to prompt self-control as research methods. A study conducted by Hardy and colleagues on young people from the age of 11 to 22, for instance, showed that changes in self-regulation during the successive years were significantly and positively predicted by the participants' religiosity in any year, using a repeated-measures cross-lagged longitudinal analysis (Hardy, Baldwin, et al., 2020). Although cross-sectional in nature, another study conducted by Carter and colleagues reported that religious commitment predicts greater preference for larger-later rewards in religious participants compared to less religious participants (Carter et al., 2012a). The association was, however, mediated by future time orientation, the tendency to view future as more salient. In contrast, there was no association between religious affiliation and delayed gratification in the current study even when

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experimental primes were controlled for in the model: merely affiliated with Buddhism or Christianity did not predict a preference for the delayed reward.

The lack of evidence for the current hypothesis may not necessarily indicate the lack of relationship between religion and delayed discounting given that intertemporal decision making involve complex set of factors (Berns et al., 2007) and that different aspects of religiosity might have been measured in the previous studies with insignificant findings (Thornton et al., 2017). With respect to cognitive complexity, Berns and colleagues emphasized that representation of reward as well as anticipation of the reward in addition to self-control, as indicated by preliminary neuronal evidences, may play important roles in determining participants' decision outcome (Berns et al., 2007). Although it was based on some weak effects, Thornton and colleagues asserted that religious importance and greater frequency of religious service attendance might function as practical factors in the reduction of temporal discounting. Because discount rates might be applied differently for different domains of choices in different contexts, and some priming methods might be more reliable than others, a deeper look into religiosity, beyond the identification of religious affiliation and the use of a more reliable in-person experimental method such as contextual priming, may be required to detect a potentially small but significant effect in support of some of these previous findings.

Prosocial tendency. The current study also examines whether religious prescriptive principles promote prosocial tendency through agentic regulation. The predictions were made under the assumption that the proscriptive aspects (risk aversions) of the targeted religious belief systems were not cognitively activated. The statistical results derived from both primary and secondary datasets did not show any significant priming effects. The overall result rejected the prediction that experimentally probing the saliency of religious concept induce prosocial tendency in religious individuals. As postulated by Tsang and colleagues in

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their review paper, the inconsistent findings across experimental studies in the past literature can be attributed to the role of key moderators such as self-image threat, group membership, neediness of recipients and economic development of the nation (Sabato & Kogut, 2018; Tsang et al., 2021; Ward & King, 2018). An example of constrained prosociality, in the form of co-religionist favouritism or reciprocal altruism, as a function of moralizing agent belief affected by levels of material insecurity as a moderator was demonstrated in an experimental study conducted by McNamara and Henrich (2018), using Random Allocation Game (RAG), and religious individuals from Yasawa, Fiji as participants. RAG is an economic game that allows for the measurement of local (vs. distant) favouritism through coins allocation. Players primed with Christian imagery were found to equally distribute between local and distant co-religionists, in line with the prosocial values of Christian religion, but only if they felt secure about their future material resources, indicating that prosocial decisions were much more parochial than egalitarian as the uncertainty about local resources availability increased. Likewise, local favouritism, moderated by material insecurity and education, was observed in Buddhist communities of Tyva Republic in that participants tended to allocate more coins toward co-religionists from their local community than being fair toward co-religionists from distant towns if there was an increase in the perception of spirit masters and Buddha to be knowledgeable and punishing (Purzycki & Kulundary, 2018). The lack of evidence in support of the current prediction may, therefore, be due to the lack of specification of the hypothetical recipient (i.e., orphan) as a group member given that the religious identity of the recipient was not revealed to participants in the current study.

In addition to these moderators, the inconsistency of the current study's finding with previous studies that have observed the significant effects of religious belief on prosociality can also be attributed to differences in the focus of religious principles. Past studies focused on the proscriptive principles derived from the punitive aspects of a belief system whereas

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the current study focused on prescriptive principles derived from the intrinsically fulfilling aspects of the targeted belief systems as the priming stimuli did not evoke the punitive concepts of the moralizing agents. This was evident in the analyses of the three-minutes written contents of survey participants as they were asked to write about the agent they were primed with – the fulfilling and positive (e.g., loving, kindness) but not the punitive (e.g., sanctioning, punishing) characteristics of the agents were largely observed. Multiple previous findings consistently indicate that belief in punitively powerful supernatural agents was robustly associated with parochial altruistic behaviours (Galen et al., 2015; Isler et al., 2021; Lang et al., 2019; Purzycki & Kulundary, 2018; Willard, 2018). Decreased in favouritism of self- or local communities when played with anonymous other geographically distant co-religionists were observed in participants recruited from eight diverse societies (e.g., iTaukei (indigenous) Fijians, animist Hadza of Tanzania, Hindu Mauritians, shamanist-Buddhist Tyvans of southern Siberia), tested using RAG (Purzycki, Henrich, et al., 2018). The results were more salient if participants perceived the supernatural agents to be punitively powerful and impose divine punishments on individuals for violating supernaturally sanctioned norms. This intra-religious impartiality hypothesis was also supported in another study conducted across 15 socio-ecologically and religiously diverse societies (Lang et al., 2019). Lack of effects in the current study, therefore, may indicate that future studies need to incorporate two distinct features to effectively probe prosocial tendency: identity of the hypothetical recipients (e.g., local religious orphan, distant religious orphan, orphan of a non-religious community), and the saliency of the characteristics of the supernatural agents (i.e., fulfilling vs. punitive nature).

Interestingly, in the secondary dataset, the odds of selecting reward donation option were higher among Buddhist participants compared to Christians independent of the priming manipulation. A similar trend with a marginally significant effect size was observed in results

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from the analysis of the primary dataset, with a smaller sample size. Although some further studies are needed, the intention to donate was greater among Buddhists can be conjecturally attributed to the tradition of merit-making in Myanmar. Individual-level merit-making is one of the core principles in Theravada Buddhism, and more likely than not, Myanmar Buddhists perceive charitable deeds as a way to accumulate good karma, a way to prepare for a good rebirth, or as an initial act on the path upward to nirvana (Ames, 1964; Holt, 2017; Malalasekera, 1967). A study conducted by Berniunas and colleagues, for instance, found that priming of the concept of karma (vs. neutral prime) or the belief in Buddha with God-like attributes had no noticeable effect on prosociality among Mongolian participants using a dictator game due to the overall high generosity (ceiling effect) that might have masked the priming effect as a potential consequence of everyday discourse that normalises a culture of high generosity (Berniūnas et al., 2020). Likewise, Myanmar is also a culture of high generosity. Prosociality in the form of merit-making can be observed to be engaged not only by the few elites but also all other socio-economic classes despite Myanmar was ranked at 145 out of 188 countries in the human development index administered by the UNDP in 2016 (Cavelle, 2017; Holt, 2017; Jordt, 2014). This counterintuitive pattern of giving was backed by a report by the Charities Aid Foundation: despite majority of the population living under the poverty line, Myanmar was given a title of the number one giving nation in the world for three consecutive years (i.e., 2014 – 2016) (Cavelle, 2017). Religious motivation, through the prescribed principle of merit-making, therefore, is one of multiple potential contributors (e.g., self-reliance as a function of the absence of a functional welfare system, Cavelle, 2017) to the altruistic act of giving in Myanmar society.

Religious goal pursuit. The study also investigates whether Buddhists and Christians were highly goal-oriented as a function of prescriptive principles to pursuit religious goals that relevant to their hierarchically structured moral worldview. No priming effects were

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observed in both the interaction and main effects models. Personal religion was, however, found to be a significant predictor in all four models: goal pursuit, goal-orientation, actual task-engagement, and individual task-rankings. Christian participants were more likely to select religious activities over the non-religious activities compared to Buddhists, and this effect was observed even when prime types, food insecurity, age and gender were controlled for at some fixed values. Although caution must be taken due to small sample size, goal-orientation analysis indicated that Buddhists and Christians also differed significantly in the selection of meditation/hymn, prayer, non-religious article, and English language learning when relaxing music was treated as a reference category. Christian participants tended to prefer religious activities over the non-religious activities, but the analysis of goal-orientation also indicated that the difference between the two religious groups was also mainly due to Buddhists' greater preference of non-religious activities over the religious activities. In line with this, Christian participants ranked most of the religious activities as appealing (versus not at all appealing) compared to Buddhists whereas Buddhist participants ranked most of the non-religious activities as appealing compared to Christians. With respect to actual task-engagement, not only that Christians preferred to skip non-religious activities, but they also tended to continue with religious activities than the non-religious activities compared to Buddhists. Buddhists, on the other hand, were willing to continue with the non-religious activities they have previously selected than skipping these non-religious activities.

Christian participants were more religiously motivated to pray, study religious text and listening to religious music. The desire to be religiously goal-oriented among Christians is in line with multiple previous findings from the literature of personal and spiritual strivings (Emmons, 1999, 2005; Schnitker & Emmons, 2013). Personal strivings are, according to Emmons and Schnitker (2013), "consciously accessible and personally meaningful objectives that people pursue in their daily lives" (p. 258). Spiritual strivings as a form of personal

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strivings, therefore, treated as a goal-directed process that involves a person, with personally meaningful and religiously motivated objectives in mind, consciously (or even unconsciously) engage in mental or physical activities that aim at accomplishing these objectives. In addition, the strivings entail both the committed goals of “being” and “doing” that manifest through the aims of realizing cognitively represented envisaged objectives or potentialities that of ultimate concern in nature, deeply embedded within the dynamic self-system, that inspire future-oriented thinking and behaviours. One instance of such thinking and behaviours can often be observed in the form of developing and committing a spiritual relationship with a deity through engagements of different prescribed rituals. Christian participants were found to exhibit the psychological characteristics of religious goal pursuits as evident in the analyses of goal pursuit, goal-orientation, and actual task-engagement, along with the individual task-ranking. This religious group, compared to Buddhist participants, were more oriented toward activities that were religious in nature, willing to engage with these religious activities for 15 minutes, and perceived religious activities as appealing compared other mundane tasks.

Religious goal pursuit and its link to prescribed moral principles, as an evident form of personal/spiritual strivings among Christian participants, can be understood through the examination of their affiliated religious system as a meaning-making framework. Under this framework, goal integration and sanctification are highlighted as key processes (Emmons & Schnitker, 2013; King et al., 2020; Mahoney et al., 2021; Schnitker & Emmons, 2013). Emmons and Schnitker (2013), for instance, argued that goal acquisitions play a crucial role in the generation of meaning in a religious system, with the assumption that religious behaviours are organized around the pursuit of highly personal goals that can exist in psychological, social, and spiritual forms. These goals are thought to be hierarchically structured, with the goals having the potential to influence the ongoing cognitive, affective

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and behavioural systems given that these goals tended to be subjectively sanctified, valued and committed to by the religious adherents (Emmons & Schnitker, 2013; Schnitker & Emmons, 2013). The centre of this goals approach to religious motivation is, therefore, the notion that individuals seek life meaning through religious purpose by consciously setting and intentionally striving for religious goals, as a mode of implementing the desire to transcend the self and integrate the self with the larger, more complex units such as God or cosmos, even though these sacred goals represent potentialities rather than actualities. This allows for goals integration to occur, with goals from other life domains (e.g., relationship, employment) becoming more cohesive (less inter-goal conflicts) under the sacred strivings for the ultimate goal (Emmons et al., 1998; Pargament & Mahoney, 2005).

In line with this argument is the view held by Pargament and Park who stated that a religious system not only provides their adherents with an ultimate vision of what they should be striving for in their lives but the system also prescribes strategies that help their adherents to implement and reach the ultimate vision (Pargament & Park, 1995). In Christianity, the meaning of life depends on strivings for the ultimate goals in the form of having initiated, established, and maintained an intimate relationship with the divine being. Spiritual growth and maturity are the manifestations of this form of sacred strivings as a function of the acceptance, convictions, and implementations of the ultimate vision through ‘doing’ and ‘being’ goals. Although the levels of growth and maturity in spirituality are often judged subjectively by adherents themselves through introspective assessments of their past “doing” and “being” goals, external standards imposed by their religious system such as repeated involvements of ritual engagements (i.e., reading the Bible, praising/worshipping God) and observance of interpersonal rules (i.e., polite, honest) are also used as evidence to verify and if necessary, correct the direction of growth and maturity of the adherents by other members (e.g., parents) of the same religious system (Hardy et al., 2019; Kim-Spoon et al., 2014;

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Semplonius et al., 2015; Tsai et al., 2014). These internal and external evaluative processes are central to moral development given that values prescribed by the religious system are merged with personal goals of the adherents, if possible at early developmental periods through the process of cultural transmission, and integrate into the core of their self-system that is important in sustaining moral action over time (King et al., 2020; Recchia et al., 2014; Thompson, 2020). In this perspective, life meaning is acquired through sacred strivings, and levels of devotion are subjectively measured by the duration, frequency, and intensity of effortful or habitual cognitive, affective, and behavioural regulations associated with moral actions, and virtue cultivations.

The question, however, remains as to why Buddhist participants were more oriented toward non-religious activities over the religious activities compared to the Christians and whether this difference in orientation/pursuit reflects levels of religiosity. One plausible explanation to this difference can be attributed to the difference in the approach attitude toward traditionally prescribed religious activities as a form of righteous religious devotion as determined by institutional authorities and the associated doctrines. In Christianity, the strength of religious devotion, as measured by the frequency of religious service attendance and prayer engagements along with other traditional forms of religious participations, is an indicative of the strength of religious faith, which in turn, an indicative of the strength of relationship the adherents have with the divine being (Ginges et al., 2009; Mockabee et al., 2001). No reliable data on levels of threshold in approach attitude toward religious activities is found for the Myanmar religious communities. Regardless, something of this nature can be found in a report released by the Pew Research Center (2015) that allows for an indirect comparison (Cheah, 2017; Coleman, 2002; Martin, 2002; Schendel, 1999). Although there might be a minor difference between self-reported religious activities and actual religious activities, the 2014 Religious Landscape Study reporting on the belief and practice of

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religious American adults indicates that compared to Buddhists, higher proportions of evangelical and mainline Protestants, along with Catholics, reported to attend religious services at least once a week, participated more in prayer groups, scripture study groups or other types of religious education programs at least once a week and engaged more in prayer as a form of private devotions on a daily basis. Like the American Christians, Christians in the current study, mostly identified as Karen, Kachin and Chin and made up of Roman Catholics and Baptists (Hayami, 2018; Mang, 2019; Matthews, 1995; Roxborough, 2006), also showed greater commitments toward different types of religious activities, reflecting a higher threshold of ritual participations as an emergent characteristic of religious devotion, compared to Buddhists.

Christians may be motivated to pursue multiple religious rituals as a function of religious devotion, but this does not necessarily indicate that this same norm applies to Buddhists. Leege and colleagues argued that greater frequencies of scripture-reading and attendance of a place of worship for instances, are not necessarily an unbiased measure of religious commitment as these prescribed religious activities maybe the artifact of some highly endorsed religious norms within some traditions rather than an objective reflection of deep religious commitment that apply to all known religions (Leege et al., 1993). Two key features can be attributed to the possible motivational factors of the observed choices of these Buddhists: meditation as a highly normalized religious ritual, and the scepticism of scriptural authority. As indicated in the result section, greater proportions of Buddhists perceived meditation as appealing and greater numbers of them selected this activity as their most preferred option to engage for 15 minutes. Greater endorsement of meditation as a prioritised ritual in the Buddhism tradition was also reported in the 2014 Religious Landscape Study (Pew Research Center, 2015). In other word, the difference in approach attitude toward religious activities observed between Buddhists and Christians in the current study may

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predicate on what each of these systems prioritise as the imperative mean to symbolically or psychologically implement their unique religious end goals – Christians strive for this transcendental goal mainly through the theistic sanctification of external events, objects or different domains of life (e.g., marriage) through faith and its manifested daily prayers among other rituals (Ladd & Spilka, 2013; Mahoney et al., 2021), whereas Buddhists strive for the end goal through the path of purification by developing morality, concentration and wisdom mainly through different meditation practices (Buddhaghosa, 1991; Huxter, 2015; Ñāṇārāma, 1993; Sayadaw, 1991).

Less aversive attitude toward secular goals, framed as non-religious activities, among the Buddhist participants compared to Christians may be due to greater acceptance and promotion of critical self-reflection as well as the scepticism of scriptural authority historically within the Buddhism traditions (Bernhardt, 2010; Ng, 2010). Scripture here broadly refers to the accepted authoritative body of sacred texts in a given tradition (Ng, 2010). The prescription of free inquiry, and the prioritization of experiential authority over the scriptural authority in the seeking and attainments of truth, knowledge, and wisdom can be traced to the Kālāma Sutta, a discourse of the Buddha that is found in the Anguttara Nikaya of the Pali Tipitaka of the Theravada Buddhism tradition (Thera et al., 1961).

Although it is paradoxical in nature given that the Kālāma Sutta is itself a historical product of the transmitted oral and written tradition, and subjected to a controversy with respect to the authenticity of its origin, the philosophical position of this scriptural passage, however, explicitly rejects the transmitted oral or textual tradition by opposing the passive acceptance of blind faith from authorities, philosophical dogmatism, and beliefs derived from superficially constructed reasonings, and instead, encourage personal testings through critical inquiries for the development of right vision (Giraldi, 2019; Ng, 2010; Sujato & Brahmali, 2015).

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The naturalization of Buddhist concepts became much more prominent as a historical consequence of the urban, Western-educated Burmans' attempt, alongside reformist monks, to defend Myanmar culture, with the Buddha's *sasana* at its core, from the total influence of the British's colonial modernity projects, and as a movement against the influences of Christian missionaries from the West by establishing Buddhist lay associations in the contemporary Myanmar (Foxeus, 2017a; Schober, 2011a, 2011c). The Buddha's *sasana*, as defined by Foxeus, refers to scriptural materials, meditational practices, social-moral observances, and embodiments of the Buddhism by the monastic as well as laity communities (Foxeus, 2017a). Two forms of lay-oriented Buddhism emerged during the post-independence period (after 1948): the insight (*vipassana*) meditation movement and esoteric congregations (*weizza-gain*) (Foxeus, 2013; Jordt, 2007; Patton, 2018). The esoteric congregations were suppressed by the Ne Win's government in the early 1980s through his attempt of religious campaign to purify the doctrinal Theravada Buddhism (Foxeus, 2017a; Schober, 2011d) although cult-like, devotional kinds of esoteric Buddhism still remains popular among laypeople in the Buddhist communities (Foxeus, 2017b). Unlike the esoteric congregations, the vipassana movement grounded itself in the so-called rational and scientific version of Buddhism that claimed to be aligned with the emerging bodies of secular knowledge brought to by the Western education (Foxeus, 2017a; Schober, 2011b). This modernized, intellectualized, doctrinal version of Buddhism, according to Foxeus (2017a), became highly favoured in the 1970s by all social classes, with increasing numbers of lay practitioners joining the mass meditation movement. Through the decades-long promotion of doctrinal Buddhism as a source of authority and legitimacy, and thus, the dissemination of orthodoxy Buddhism through multiple state-controlled propaganda channels and material culture, this modernized version of Buddhism with rational discourse of the Dhamma knowledge system as a way of life for both the monastic communities and lay people became

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highly accepted (Foxeus, 2017a). Based on this historical circumstance, it can therefore be argued that the pursuit of secular goals was more acceptable among Buddhist participants compared to the Christians as reflected in the current study.

Secondary Hypotheses Findings

Delayed/instant gratification. The secondary set of hypotheses was tested, using two different Buddha and Christian datasets, to examine the role of religious internalisation, derived from self-determination theory (Ryan et al., 1993), distinctively conceptualised as identification and introjection reflecting the difference in relative autonomy as a function of religious beliefs, in the predicting of delayed gratification. No reliable interaction or significant main effects of the proposed variables were observed. The prediction that Christian or Buddhist participants with greater magnitude of the identified religiosity and lesser magnitude of introjected religiosity would be more future-oriented in their decision-making was not supported. The odds of selecting the delayed reward over the immediate reward was not influenced by the extent to which these Buddhist or Christian participants were predominantly motivated by their partially internalized beliefs as a function of approval-based pressures, or whether they were primarily motivated by their highly internalized beliefs as a function of volitional-based personal values that allow for greater self-determination in their religious participations. In line with the testing of delayed gratification in the primary set of hypotheses, finding for this prediction indicates that no substantial interacting effects of religious primes on the delayed gratification were observed even when personal religion was assessed here in the forms of identified and introjected religiosities.

Prosocial tendency. The tendency to donate to an orphan as a primary function of identified religiosity and the tendency to keep the reward as a primary function of introjected religiosity were also investigated. No statistical results were obtained in support of the

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predictions for the Christian sample although an interesting pattern emerged for the Buddhists. As Buddhist participants experienced greater volition in their religious behaviours, they were also more likely to choose the donation option even when prime types and introjected religiosity were controlled for. In line with this, a similar pattern of prosocial behaviours as a function of identified motivation was observed in a study conducted on a sample of late adolescents recruited across the United States (Hardy et al., 2015). Although no specific religious identities of the adolescents were reported, they found that the autonomous forms of motivation, which include intrinsic, integrated, and identified motivation, were more reliably predictive of prosocial behaviours (i.e., charity donation, community volunteering) compared to the controlled forms of motivation that include extrinsic and introjected motivation. Another study also demonstrates the role of religious motivation on religious youth outcomes based on five studies, with religious participants (i.e., Protestant, Catholic, Other, None) recruited across the United States (Hardy, Nelson, et al., 2020). Prosocial behaviours such as donating money to charity organizations or volunteering in the community, in addition to self-regulation and good character, were positively and reliably predicted by identified religious motivation whereas no unique contribution was made by the introjected motivation. This pattern was also observed in the Christian participants. It is, therefore, possible that the inclusion of all Christian denominations in the same category in the current study was masking the presence of some significant effects in the predicting of prosocial tendency in the Christian sample given that not all Christian groups internalise their religious beliefs and practices similarly. Ryan and colleagues, for instance, found that evangelical youths scored higher on introjection and identification compared to another Christian sample from a secular college (Ryan et al., 1993). Overall, these findings suggest that greater self-determination, in the form of identified religiosity,

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plays an important role in the predicting of prosocial tendency in Buddhists although no reliable effects were observed for the Christian sample.

Actual task-engagement. The current study also examines whether the tendency to proceed with religious activities or the non-religious activities than skipping these activities when given the opportunity to do so differed as a function of religious internalization. Identified religiosity, but not introjected religiosity, made a unique, reliable contribution to the predictive relationship in the predicting of actual task-engagement in the Buddhist sample. Not only did Buddhists high on identified religiosity tend to reject the offer to skip the religious activities, but they were also more likely to continue with their previously selected religious activities compared to the other Buddhists who have selected the non-religious activities, suggesting that Buddhists who considered their religious beliefs and behaviours to be largely self-determined also appeared to be more goal-oriented and be more motivated to strive for their religious goals. When this same analysis was conducted on the Christian sample, both identified and introjected religiosities appeared to function as significant predictors although the effect for introjected religiosity was marginal. Christians high in identified religiosity preferred to continue with their previously selected religious activities than skipping these activities although these same participants did not significantly differ from the other Christians high in identified religiosity who have selected the non-religious activities as their preferred tasks. Christian participants high in introjected religiosity, in contrast, tended to be less likely to pursue religious goals in that they were more likely to proceed with non-religious activities than religious activities.

These findings can be explained in term of relative internalization through the process of integrated self-regulation manifest in the forms of daily goal strivings governed by the institutional norms or the inner search for significance (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Martos et al., 2011). Under the condition where a religious behaviour is activated, the type of regulation

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that functions through the autonomous process, in contrast to the controlled process, allows for easier goal commitments, and therefore, greater goal integrations. As shown in a study conducted by Martos and colleagues on Christian participants (Martos et al., 2011), for instance, the identification of beliefs and rituals of a religious system that allows for greater integration of religious goals can be ascribed to the pathway where the initiations and maintaining of daily religious strivings through the highly internalized process of identified regulation is primarily motivated by the inner search for sacred conceptualised as the transcendental religious motivation (Pargament et al., 2005). With respect to Christians with high introjected religiosities whose religious values were not fully internalized and be integrated as part of their self-system given that their religious behaviours were primarily concerned with adhering to norms enforced by their religious traditions and institutions (Martos et al., 2011), they were not as committed in the pursuing of their religious goals as those high in identified religiosity, or at least, did not perceive religious goals to be important.

Study 2 – Free-listing Study

Aim of the Current Study

Cultural domain analysis (CDA), as often used in the field of cognitive anthropology and psychology, is an ethnographically grounded effort to uncover the cognitive processes of semantic categorization. As discussed in some past papers (Bernard, 2017; Purzycki & Jamieson-Lane, 2017), CDA allowed researchers to better understand members in different cultural groups and their cultural worldviews through the insights gained from the analyses of culturally shared knowledge that may largely underline the psychological experiences of these cultural members. Culturally shared concepts such as morality (Purzycki, Pisor, et al., 2018) or observable materials such as plants (McNamara & Wertz, 2021) were previously analysed through the open-ended listing of items within the target domains. Salient or culturally important items are theorised to occur more frequently when elicited through this method of free listing, signifying that these items are more familiar, better known and widely shared among members of a cultural group (Stausberg & Engler, 2011). In addition, culturally significant and widely shared items are also expected to commonly list first as they are assumed to be more easily accessible (Bernard, 2017). Given that it is critical to assess whether religiosity, agentic regulation, and moral sanctity/purity as we have operationalised in the first study reflect the relevant cultural concepts as understood by the Myanmar participants, free-listing as a data collection task was used to virtually elicit relevant items representing the domains of religiosity, morality and sanctity/purity. The focus of the current study is, therefore, to examine how early, on average, an item gets mentioned in each of the three cultural domains in addition to the saliency of items of these domains as a function of frequencies.

Study 2 – Method

Participants

Data exclusion

The study only retained participants' free-listing responses that were clearly written. This was because a few incomprehensible answers from participants, especially in Myanmar, were obtained probably due to participants' different levels of education, different opportunities in accessing reliable technologies that could be installed with a particular language code, or different levels of typing skills. In addition, a few respondents who did not follow the provided instruction were removed after examining levels of comprehension judged on the responses provided by these respondents.

Actual sample size

The current study has more than 300 of respondents from the primary dataset completed all three free-listing questions¹⁰. This is more than sufficient sample size to reach thematic saturation, a concept that refers to the point where no more unique items are observed in a set of qualitative interviews, as identified in some previous studies (Francis et al., 2010; Guest et al., 2006) despite the fact that this concept was criticized by Weller and colleagues in their study (Weller et al., 2018).

Materials

Free listing questions. Three open-ended questions were presented to participants alongside other survey materials of the first study (see Appendix A). Respondents were asked to freely list the things that a person often thinks, says or does that reflect the fact this person is truly religious, embodies high moral standards and has been living a sanctified life¹¹. An example of each of the three domains were provided to ensure that respondents understood of

¹⁰ The full dataset can be found on the project OSF page: <https://osf.io/fsbdn/>

¹¹ 'Living a sanctified life' as a manifest (holistic) outcome, by definition, entails both purity and sanctity.

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what was asked of them to list. Given that the study was conducted online, probing for exhaustive listing to increase the retrieval of salient items was not possible. The listing of item responses per person to each domain, regardless, was not limited.

Coding of responses. Written free-listing items were provided both in English and Myanmar. For high inter-rater reliability, a colleague of the principal investigator who could read and write Myanmar and English well agreed to assist with re-coding the raw data. Both this external coder, who was unaware of the hypothesis and predictions of the current study, and the principal investigator, then, discussed if and to what extent they agreed on each of the listing items from the three cultural domains.

Study 2 – Results

To explore the cultural meaning and conceptual boundary of religiosity, sanctity/purity and morality as understood by Myanmar people who tended to identify themselves as Buddhists or Christians, we probed respondents to freely list a range of characteristics that represent three aspects (sub-domains) of an archetypal person with respect to each of the three domains. These sub-domains are thought, speech, and conduct. Myanmar respondents tended to conceptualise concepts holistically, and to identify how they understand these target domains, probing them to list items relevant to the three sub-domains was considered theoretically important.

The free-listing data was analysed for cognitive salience of a listed item of a cultural domain by using Smith's index. The frequency of mention of the item across lists and the rank of citation of this item within lists were combined to calculate the average salience score (Smith's S) for this particular item where score for this item was measured on a scale ranging from 0 to 1 (Smith & Borgatti, 1997). With respect to individual item salience presented as Salience (S), the score was determined by considering the total number of items listed by an individual and the order in which an item was mentioned. Calculations of Smith's S values

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for all three cultural domains are performed with the Flares program developed under R environment using Shiny (Wencelius et al., 2017).

Religiosity

Respondents were first probed to list culturally salient items relevant to the religiosity domain. A total of 1076 items were listed by 341 respondents. One hundred and forty-six items were classified as unique items, with the average of 3.2 items per person provided by the respondents. The top five items are shown in Table 12, with a more complete list of religiosity items found in Appendix C where Smith's S ranged from 1 to 100%. According to this result, most respondents agreed that 'being calm and peaceful' is one of the most common characteristics of a highly religious person in Myanmar society. 'Being calm and peaceful' refers to not only how a religious person is motivated to think but also how they are motivated to speak and behave as the manifest outcomes of embodying a calm and peaceful mind. In support of this, another related concept, the 'practise of meditation' as a religiously motivated personal ritual, can be observed as one of the highly cited items. The importance of 'being compassionate', 'respectful', and 'obedient to religious teachings' appear to also be important characteristics for religious individuals to strive for. It must be noted that the most cited item (praying a lot) is not included in Table 12 due to its potential inflation. 'Praying a lot' was provided to respondents as an example in the free-listing question and thus, might lead to a biased result if it is listed here as one of the top cited items. We, regardless, consider this religious ritual to be an important characteristic, especially for the Christian respondents. A few self-identified Theravadins clearly expressed that although some Buddhists, especially lay people, pay homage to Buddha, engage in merit transference, and request divine helps in the form of prayer, prayer-liked activities such as these are not encouraged, and instead, all true Theravadins are encouraged to prioritise meditation and practising the Five Precepts

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unwaveringly. Therefore, ‘praying a lot’ was likely to be listed more by Christian participants, compared to Buddhists or other minor religious groups.

Table 12

*Cultural Saliency of the Five Most Cited Items Representing the Religiosity Domain,
Mapping onto the Moral Foundations and the Model of Moral Motives*

Items	Moral Foundations	Moral Motives	Smith’s S (Sample)	Saliency (M) (Individuals)
Being calm and peaceful	Care/Harm*	Proscriptive Principle** - Personal (Self-Restraint)	0.13	0.18
Being humble and respectful	Authority/Subversion	Proscriptive Principle - Collective (Social Order)	0.11	0.17
Abide by religion’s teachings	Authority/Subversion	Proscriptive Principle** - Collective (Social Order)	0.11	0.16
Being compassionate	Care/Harm	Prescriptive Principle - Interpersonal (Helping/Fairness)	0.10	0.16
Practise meditation	Care/Harm*	Prescriptive Principle** - Personal (Industriousness)	0.09	0.13

Note. In the Moral Foundations column, “*” refers to the situation where a salient item cannot be clearly mapped on the target foundation, but that mapping is the closest alignment within the model.

In the Moral Motives column, “**” indicates that the referred religious characteristic, under some specific circumstances, can likely be governed by its counterpart: prescriptive or proscriptive principles.

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Sanctity/Purity

Respondents were also asked to list items that relevant to the sanctity/purity domain. With an average of 2.4 items per person, 321 respondents listed 755 items in total. After multiple similar items were re-coded, 154 items were categorised as unique. Like the religiosity domain, some respondents provided sanctity items that appear to be conceptually similar but implied different meanings (e.g., being honest and truthful, refrain from telling lies) when understanding the items within a specific context. Some respondents provided broadly structured answers (e.g., live a simple life) whereas other provided answers with specific meaning (e.g., refrain from greed). As indicated in Table 13, the items were not so different from the highly cited items from the domain of religiosity. The most common item (Refrain from taking or abusing drugs) was removed from this list as it was provided as an example. The item could still have been highly cited regardless since refraining from taking drugs or abusing drugs is often treated as a necessary condition to respect one's body as holy as in the Christian tradition or to refrain from defiling one's mind as in the Buddhist tradition. As understood by Myanmar respondents, it appears that living a sanctified life entails the persistent 'practising of the Five Precepts', 'being compassionate', 'refrain from all forms of wrongdoing', 'being obedient to religion's teachings' and 'being respectful'.

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Table 13

Cultural Saliency of the Five Most Cited Items Representing the Sanctity Domain, Mapping onto the Moral Foundations and the Model of Moral Motives

Items	Moral Foundations	Moral Motives	Smith's S (Sample)	Saliency (M) (Individuals)
Practise the Five Precepts	Sanctity/ Degradation*	Proscriptive Motivation** - Personal (Self-Restraint)	0.10	0.10
Be compassionate	Care/ Harm	Prescriptive Motivation - Interpersonal (Helping/Fairness)	0.07	0.10
Refrain from all forms of wrongdoing	Sanctity/ Degradation	Proscriptive Motivation - Personal (Self-Restraint)	0.07	0.08
Abide by religion's teachings	Authority/ Subversion	Proscriptive Motivation** - Collective (Social Order)	0.06	0.07
Being humble and respectful	Authority/ Subversion	Proscriptive Motivation - Collective (Social Order)	0.05	0.07

Note. In the Moral Foundations column, “*” refers to the situation where a salient item cannot be clearly mapped on the target foundation, but that mapping is the closest alignment within the model.

In the Moral Motives column, “**” indicates that the referred religious characteristic, under some specific circumstances, can likely be motivated by its counterpart: prescriptive or proscriptive motivations.

Morality

Respondents were finally asked to list items that relevant to the morality domain. Respondents listed a total of 922 cited items, with the mean of 2.7 items listed per person. A total of 115 different items emerged after re-coding of the total items from all respondents. As shown in Table 14, ‘be humble and respectful’, ‘being honest’, ‘refrain from taking life’, ‘be good and kind’ and ‘refrain from taking what is not given’ were the five most cited items.

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Like religiosity and sanctity/purity, the most cited item (be compassionate) was again removed from the top five cited items list as it was related to the provided example. In the free-listing question, ‘do not torture animals’ was provided. Although it is highly possible that ‘be compassionate’ was highly cited due to this provided example that might have biased the result, ‘be compassionate’ may still be an important characteristic for a highly moral person. A more complete list of items can be seen in Appendix C. Again, the most salient items for the morality domain appear to be similar to the highly cited items in the domains of religiosity and sanctity.

Table 14

Cultural Saliency of the Five Most Cited Items Representing the Morality Domain, Mapping onto the Moral Foundations and the Model of Moral Motives

Items	Moral Foundations	Moral Motives	Smith’s S (Sample)	Saliency (M) (Individuals)
Be humble and respectful	Authority/ Subversion	Proscriptive Regulation - Collective (Social Order)	0.13	0.18
Be honest and truthful	Fairness/ Cheating	Prescriptive Regulation - Interpersonal (Helping/Fairness)	0.08	0.12
Refrain from taking life	Sanctity/ Degradation	Proscriptive Regulation - Personal (Self-Restraint)	0.08	0.09
Be good and kind	Care/ Harm	Prescriptive Regulation - Interpersonal (Helping/Fairness)	0.08	0.11
Refrain from taking what is not given	Sanctity/ Degradation	Proscriptive Regulation - Personal (Self-Restraint)	0.07	0.09

Study 2 - Discussion

Both average rank and frequency of items were considered in the domain analyses of religiosity, sanctity/purity, and morality in this study. As shown in the result section, the most cited items were provided in the three tables (i.e., Table 12, 13, 14), with scores for the

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saliency of an individual item of the sample calculated using Smith's S and the saliency of the average individual item among respondents who cited a given item calculated using Salience (M) (Purzycki, Pisor, et al., 2018). Based on the five highly cited items (after the exclusion of the items provided as examples that happened to also be the most cited items for all three questions), all three cultural domains appear to prioritise Care/harm, Authority/subversion, Sanctity/degradation if all these top items are to be framed in the context of the Moral Foundations Theory (Haidt, 2012; Haidt & Graham, 2009; Haidt et al., 1997). When considering these top cited items within the framework of the Model of Moral Motives (Janoff-Bulman, 2012; Janoff-Bulman & Carnes, 2013; Janoff-Bulman et al., 2009), some items can be categorised as elements of proscriptive morality whereas others as prescriptive morality, leading to potential conceptual ambiguities.

As shown in the result section, some items, 'being calm and peaceful' for instance, cannot be clearly categorised as governed by proscriptive religious principles although the Moral Motives predicts that it should be based on the notion that the internalized state of being religiously calm and peaceful entails the self-restrictive activities manifest in the form of self-discipline through self-control and regulation. 'Being calm and peaceful' is a highly endorsed religious concept for Theravadins and it can be deliberately strived for through disciplined mind purification trainings (Buddhaghosa, 1991; Ñāṇārāma, 1993; Sayadaw, 1991). However, in this same theoretical framework, the need to strive toward an inner rewarding goal is implemented through prescriptive regulations. In other words, 'being calm and peaceful' is governed by proscriptive religious principles as it represents a form of self-restraints but implemented through prescriptive religious regulations as its metaphorical and incremental growth is processed through the mind purification trainings provided by a religious system. It is not straight forward to conceptualise the item without taking into consideration a specific context and therefore, an inclusive model, as proposed in the current

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study as a new integrative framework (see Figure 1), where different levels of prescriptive and proscriptive concepts need to be hierarchically conceptualised to consider these issues faced by the Moral Foundations Theory and the Model of Moral Motives.

The new integrative model, as proposed earlier, assert that all listed items provided by respondents in reflective of a highly moral person need to be understood in the context of the hierarchical model of *goal system* (i.e., prescriptive, and proscriptive regulations) (Elliot & Church, 1997; Emmons & Schnitker, 2013) whereas the sanctified characteristics (listed items) reflective of a highly sanctified person as understood by the respondents need to be understood in the context of *motivations* (i.e., prescriptive, and proscriptive motivations)(Deci et al., 1994; Deci & Ryan, 2000; Niemiec et al., 2010; Ryan et al., 1993) where different magnitude of internalized approach and avoidance as higher-level processes are governed by the psychological needs to survive (i.e., rewards vs. punishments) or thrive (i.e., meanings, intrinsic values). Within this stage, the tightness and looseness attitude of a religious system within a culture may partially define whether religious members orient themselves toward sanctification (Mahoney et al., 2021; Pargament & Mahoney, 2005; Schnitker & Emmons, 2013) or purification (Buddhaghosa, 1991; Huxter, 2015; Ñāṇārāma, 1993) as motivating factors that later influence the lower-level self-regulatory systems dealing with immediate stimuli at the local environments as goal-directed behaviours. Again, unlike the domains of morality and sanctity, the listed items provided that reflective of the domain of religiosity need to be considered in the context of *religious principles* (i.e., prescriptive, and proscriptive principles) (King et al., 2020).

Findings in Relation to Religiosity

The aim of probing the first free-listing domain was to identify the nature of prescriptive principles, alongside proscriptive principles (Janoff-Bulman et al., 2009), derived from a religious system, and whether the items are primarily linked to some moral

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foundations over others (Haidt, 2012). As indicated in the result section, findings appeared to be in line with what were found for Buddhism-affiliated participants in the first study. Some items such as ‘praying a lot’, ‘abide by God’s teachings’ appeared to be salient due to the frequent mentions across lists and earlier ranking of these items within lists predominantly by Christian participants, suggesting that result in the current study is in line with findings for Christian participants in the first study. In the analyses of goal strivings, and individual task-ranking using logistic regression statistical models, Christian participants tended to perceive and rank prayer engagements, a predominant form of sanctification, among other religious activities, as more important than non-religious activities. Likewise, we previously found that Buddhists tended to prioritise mindfulness meditation, the predominant form of mind purification, as the most important religious ritual although they also found non-religious activities to be interesting. In the Theravada worldview, purification of the mind can be strived for in the right way. From this perspective, a purified mind is a calm and peaceful mind, the primary condition that necessitates for an incremental growth of genuine compassion, that can be religiously trained and strived for through meditation. These three highly cited items, according to the Moral Foundations Theory (Haidt, 2012), can be mapped onto the Care/harm foundation but not the Sanctity/degradation given that all three items reflect the state of being, conditioning or behaving inward the vulnerable selves or toward others in a caring, protecting and thriving manner. Although ‘being compassion’ as a prescriptive principle, and ‘being respectful’ as well as ‘being obedient to religious teachings’ as proscriptive principles are more orient toward the Care and Authority foundations as the model proposed, the prescription of ‘meditation practises’ as a religious principle to purify the mind as the facilitating foundation for calmness and compassion has no basis on the intuitive process that predominantly responsible for the Sanctity foundation.

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When we examine these five highly cited items reflective of a highly religious person within the framework of the Model of Moral Motives (Janoff-Bulman et al., 2009), it can be seen that each cited item can relate to more than one concrete motive – ‘abide by religion’s teachings’ is, for instance, primarily functioning as religious proscriptive principle but without taking into consideration contextual information, it is hard to determine whether this cited item reflects a matter of interpersonal (Not harming) or collective (Social order). Importantly, however, the link between the salient items and the notions of prescriptive/proscriptive systems are less clear when examining ‘being calm and peaceful’ and ‘the practising of meditation’. According to the Moral Motives model, ‘being calm and peaceful’ is a religiously imposing form of self-restraint that requires self-discipline as a function of self-control and regulation and thus, should be classified as a religious characteristic functioning as a proscriptive (avoidant) principle of a religious system. In actuality, however, the religious ideal of ‘being calm and peaceful’ is a form of what Janoff-Bulman and colleagues (2008) called ‘Industriousness’ although the end goal of being calm and peaceful is to be achieved through self-restraint in the forms of self-control and regulation. The key issue with the model here is, as highlighted earlier, concerns the lack of clear conceptual differentiations on the notions of proscriptive and prescriptive as part of a hierarchical system. In addition to the religious principles, the model needs to consider sanctification (intuitive mode) and purification (deliberate mode) as two different processes that are responsible for the local levels initiatory and inhibitory regulations.

Findings in Relation to Sanctity/Purity

With the second free-listing question, we attempted to identify the nature of prescriptive motivation as a deliberate process-based purification pathway and proscriptive motivation as an intuitive process-based sanctification pathway governed predominantly by religious prescriptive principles. Unlike the Sanctity/degradation as conceptualised and

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operationalised by Haidt and colleagues (Haidt, 2012; Haidt & Graham, 2009; Haidt et al., 1997; Rozin & Haidt, 2013) as a foundation underlined by the desire to avoid being defiled by immoral activities and impurities given that one's body is a temple of some divine beings, the sanctification and purification as theorized in the current study are action-oriented through the autonomous self-construct as a function of religious principles. We, therefore, do not treat these processes as a single module, but rather, they are conceptualised as a binary form of religious motivations: prescriptive and proscriptive motivations. In the integrative model (see Figure 1), moral sanctity/purity is the manifest product of the hierarchical self-system that also entails these mid-level motivations.

The Sanctity/degradation as operationalised by Haidt, and colleagues is only concerned with one aspect of the avoidance-based morality concept. As indicated in Table 13, two highly listed items were somehow linked to the Sanctity foundation. 'Practise the Five Precepts' and 'refrain from all forms of wrongdoing' are primarily reflecting the need to avoid being contaminated by immoral conducts. This makes sense as the question posed did not prevent respondents from listing items that governed by proscriptive religious principles, processing mainly through an intuitive system in the form of sanctification and shaped primarily by rewards as well as punishments. Both items, when mapped onto the Model of Moral Motives, reflective of proscriptive motivations in the intrapersonal domains. Interestingly, items that can be mapped onto the Authority/subversion are also cited as important to the Sanctity foundation by the respondents. It appeared that not only 'disobedient to religion's teachings' but also 'being disrespectful to others', especially to the elders as in the Myanmar society, are deemed as degrading behaviours.

In line with the integrative model, 'being compassionate' is also found to be important to living a sanctified life. Although no action-oriented items such as meditation, prayer engagements are found to be highly cited in the top five (these items were moderately

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cited), we regardless found that ‘being compassionate’, governed not by proscriptive principles but by prescriptive principles, to be a salient item reflecting the prescriptive nature of sanctification and purification as understood by Myanmar people. Analysis of the five highly cited free-listing items for this cultural domain, overall, indicates that prescriptive and proscriptive motivations as a function of prescriptive principles (e.g., being compassionate) is still a valid concept to be considered. In other words, ‘being compassionate’, according to the new integrative model, can be strived for in the forms of purification and sanctification through the autonomous self-system.

Findings in Relation to Morality

The probing of morality domain through free-listing was also conducted. The top five cited items can be roughly mapped onto the Moral Foundations as well as the Moral Motives with no identified major conceptually conflicting issue (see Table 14). All listed items correspond well to four (i.e., Authority/subversion, Care/harm, Sanctity/degradation, Fairness/cheating) of the six proposed moral foundations (Haidt, 2001, 2012; Haidt & Graham, 2009; Iyer et al., 2012). Mapping of the items onto the Moral Motives model indicated that a highly moral person is characterised as those who regulate themselves, through the local-levels initiatory (prescriptive regulations) and inhibitory (proscriptive regulations) pathways, based on some personal goals derived from the religious self-system. A moral person is a kind and caring person but also a humble person with the strong will to refrain from multiple forms of wrongdoing. However, further analyses of the complete list of domain items (see Appendix C) indicate that both models do not correspond well with some moderately and rarely cited items. For instances, ‘being mindful of conducts’, ‘the practising of *mudita*’ are listed by respondents to be characteristics of a highly moral person but these domain items cannot be clearly positioned within domain spaces of the two models. ‘*Mudita*’ refers to the mind-state where pure joys are internally stimulated and felt from seeing the

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success of others. Given that these two items as characters of a person not governed by the desire to avoid disease-causing microbes or the need to avoid immoral activities, it cannot be categorised as elements of the Sanctity foundation nor any other foundations such as Care, Authority, Fairness, Loyalty, or Liberty (Haidt, 2012; Haidt & Graham, 2009).

These cited items, again, cannot be clearly mapped onto any of the two self-focused moral motives (i.e., Self-restraint, Industriousness) (Janoff-Bulman, 2012; Janoff-Bulman et al., 2009). According to this model, Self-restraint is the manifestation of proscriptive principles and mainly affecting the self-concept through the exercise of self-control in the face of temptation or the fostering of self-discipline as a chosen decent way of life. Cultivating '*mudita*' and 'mindfulness in the aspects of thoughts, speech and conducts' beyond the daily, ritualised meditation practises, as often observed in the Buddhism cultures, require the right levels of self-discipline or regulations. However, these cultural items, representative of some lowly prioritised moral characteristics, are not primarily governed by proscriptive religious principles and thus, not being internalized into the religious self-concept as a function of real or divine rewards and punishments. And again, these items appear to be closely aligned with Industriousness – another moral motive. Industriousness as a discrete, self-focused moral motive, however, explains mostly psychological qualities such as persistence, responsibility, or hard-working, that are important to the advancement of personal causes including well-being and financial success. Although 'the practising of *mudita*' and 'mindfulness', as would be predicted by their model, are in line with the conceptual functionality of Industriousness given that these religiously constructed moral practises are governed by prescriptive principles, the cultivating of these religious practises requires persistent training of the mind and behaviours through effortful and initiatory regulations at the local levels. As argued earlier, therefore, the Model of Moral Motives needs to consider all levels of approach and avoidance as a hierarchically structured system (see

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Figure 1) to resolve the issue highlighted here. Mindfulness, as a listed moral practise here, needs to be understood not only at the higher level as a mental product of approach-based religious principles but also at the mid and local levels that take into consideration the motivating processes of sanctification and purification as well as the initiatory and inhibitory regulations.

General Discussion

Although we partially agree with the concept of Sanctity/degradation theorised as an affect-laden moral foundation that has its evolutionary origin on the psychology of disgust as an organismic reaction to the needs to avoid pathogens, and entails the intuitive tendency to avoid immoral activities and contaminants, we have, however, argued that this moral concept cannot be fully understood without taking into consideration the role of agentic regulation as a function of approach-based principles of a target religious system. We tested the role of agentic regulation by priming Buddhist and Christian participants with religious primes. No reliable 3-way or 2-way interaction effects were observed for any of the predictions in support of the role of agentic regulation. We did, however, find personal religion to be a reliable predictor. Some theoretical discussion of the main findings, and implications for the moral sanctity/purity will also be provided.

We have observed the effect of personal religion, independent of religious primes, on prosocial tendency and religious goal pursuit. Buddhist participants, compared to Christians, tended to donate their hypothetical rewards to an orphan. Christian participants, on the other hand, tended to be more goal oriented in that they select and rank multiple religious activities as important, and this was also obvious among the Christians high in identified religiosity. Although the predicted involvements of agentic regulation were not observed in the domain of delayed gratification, prosocial tendency and religious goal pursuit as a function of the interactions among levels of the prime types and personal religion, and therefore, it cannot be

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concluded that agentic regulation was effectively manipulated to manifest through these interaction effects in these domains of interest, the overall findings, regardless, suggest that being Buddhist, especially those with high identified religiosity, was predictive of the prosocial tendency possibly due to the endorsed religious concept of merit-making, practised as a form of moral concept in the Theravada Buddhism tradition, and that being Christians, especially those high in identified religiosity, was predictive of religious goal pursuit as a possible function of the inner need to search for the transcendent and to establish relationships with the divine being. It is inconclusive whether religious participants were consistently and highly agentic in the regulations of their religious behaviours as a primary and causal function of prescriptive principles of their religious systems through the cognitive activation of experimentally controlled religious concepts (symbols) using priming stimuli, the importance of religious affiliation, function through the self-determined form of religious regulations, indicated that agentic regulations may still play a peripheral role in the strivings of everyday religious behaviours.

Moral intuitionist advocates such as Haidt and colleagues (Haidt, 2012; Haidt & Graham, 2009; Haidt et al., 1997) have argued for the primary role of affective and intuitive system in the influencing of religious attitudes and behaviours through the six moral foundations. Our second free-listing study utilising the model of cultural consensus analysis appeared to support this theoretical position although not without limitations. Results of the free-listing study indicate that respondents considered items (e.g., being compassionate, abide by religion's teachings) that can be mapped onto the Care/harm, Authority/subversion foundations as the most salient religious characteristics. They also cited items that can be mapped onto Sanctity/degradation (refrain from all forms of wrongdoing) in addition to Care/harm and Authority/subversion foundations when probed to list items relevant to sanctity, suggesting that these foundations are either highly related or overlapped in ways that

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can be explained by the hierarchically structured prescriptive and proscriptive systems (see Figure 1) where Sanctity/degradation as a moral concept is the mere product of the action-oriented sanctification and purification in combination with the higher order prescriptive principles and the local-levels initiatory and inhibitory system. In addition to these three moral foundations, Fairness/cheating also appear to be important given that ‘being honest and truthful’ was found to be a highly cited item when probing for the cultural concept of morality. Items reflecting the three cultural domains, when mapped onto the discrete moral motives as proposed by the Model of Moral Motives indicate the relevancy and importance of the concepts of prescription and proscription (Janoff-Bulman, 2012; Janoff-Bulman & Carnes, 2013; Janoff-Bulman et al., 2008). Some salient items (i.e., being calm and peaceful, practise meditation), regardless, cannot be clearly mapped onto any single moral motives. It is, therefore, argued that the concept of Sanctity/degradation as proposed by Haidt, and colleagues needs to be reconceptualised as a partial product of the action-oriented processes of sanctification and purification within the hierarchically structured model where prescription and proscriptions are considered at all three levels in order for the Foundation theory to be able to explain the moral outcomes of the prescriptive principles (e.g., being calm and peaceful) that are driven by the need to thrive through the seeking of meanings and intrinsic values in life (Park, 2010; Park et al., 2013).

Instead of attempting to directly examine the Sanctity foundation as if it was a self-contained module or entity, the current research regarded purification and sanctification as two related but opposing motivation pathways with incremental properties manifest through, for instances, self-regulation, self-control or self-monitoring (McCullough & Willoughby, 2009). Purification and sanctification as proscriptive and proscriptive motivating factors, derived from the active fostering of a malleable religious self-concept embedded within a religious system, was theorised to be driven by the autonomous need in the inner search for

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significances and meanings in life (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Emmons & Schnitker, 2013; Hoyle & Sherrill, 2006; Markus & Nurius, 1986; Markus & Wurf, 1987; Ñāṇārāma, 1993). The two mid-level processes, in line with the theoretical position of the integrative framework (see Figure 1), can be concretely observed in the devoted forms of ritualised social and personal religious activities as daily religious strivings that are often seen in Buddhist or Christian communities through the local-level regulatory (inhibitory or initiatory) systems.

The integrative framework was partially supported and reflected in the findings obtained from both studies. Buddhists, especially those who experienced greater integrated sense of self due to greater internalization of prescriptive principles in their religious self-system, appeared to be in favour of purification of the mind as the primary mode of religious goal strivings based on the finding that Buddhist participants, high in identified religiosity (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Ryan et al., 1993), preferred mindfulness meditation over other types of religious activities, ranked this ritual act as the most appealing, and were less likely to skip religious activities over non-religious activities when given the chance. Merit-making, underlined mainly by the right intention and right action as conceptualised in the Buddha's Noble Eightfold Path (Huxter, 2015), is another initiatory form of prescriptive regulations, processed through the intuitive mode, intend to serve the sanctified function of fulfilling the personal goals of liberating from the human sufferings (*dukkha*) was also observed to be an important characteristic. Christians were also found to utilise sanctification and purification governed by religious prescriptive principles in the form of religious goal strivings as a mean to form and maintain sacred relationships with the divine beings that give meaning to their lived experience. Unlike Buddhists however, Christians tended to be in favour of sanctification as the primary process where highly internalized religious goals, prescribed by the Christianity religious systems, are perceived as having sacred qualities. As shown in the first study, Christian participants tended to consider multiple religious activities (e.g.,

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studying religious text, engaging in a brief prayer, listening to religious music) as important, ranked them as appealing, and less likely to skip their chosen religious activities if given the chance. In line with this, the Christian participants reported to be high in identified religiosity with a sense of greater volition in the regulations of their religious practices, also showed greater commitment toward these prescribed goals as a manifest feature of the sanctification of highly internalised religious goals compared to the Christians lower in identified religiosity. This is in support of the theoretical position that has argued for the role of religion as a meaningful goal-directed behaviours in the form of religious strivings for the transcendence (Emmons & Schnitker, 2013; King et al., 2020; Schnitker & Emmons, 2013). The process of moving toward their prescriptive religious goals through the initiatory and inhibitory controls or regulations as a function of autonomous motivations, in the view of Buddhists and Christian participants, constitute incremental elevation of their religious self-concept on the path of their vertically structured moral hierarchy as conceptualised in their religious worldviews and deeply embedded within their religious contexts.

Theoretical Implications

Contribution of the primary (first) study lies on the argument that without taking religious beliefs as a meaning-making system due to the humans' fundamental need for thriving, varying dynamically as a function of different and diverse societal factors, into consideration, we will fail to realise the possibility that the Sanctity foundation as conceptualised in the Moral Foundations Theory, is not only underlined by the affective system that is responsible for emotional reactions and intuitive responses such as disgust and anger toward transgressors of some religiously proscribed or prescribed values and norms, as proposed by Haidt and other WEIRD psychologists (Gray & Graham, 2019; Haidt, 2012), but that this domain of morality, governed by prescriptive religious principles, can also be autonomously constructed through the action-oriented processes where agentic regulation is

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the central mechanism of a goal system shaped either intuitively by proscriptive (sanctification) motivation or deliberately by prescriptive (purification) motivation. With this philosophical approach in mind, the current study proposed and tested an integrative model that took the Great Chain of Being (Brandt & Reyna, 2011) as a broad metaphorical-affective framework to examine how Buddhists and Christians conceived a vertical system of morality especially in relation to sanctity/purity, and take approach and avoidance as an action-processing framework to consider how behaviours of religious individuals are regulated to pursue intrinsic values and meanings (Janoff-Bulman et al., 2009). Most importantly, the integrative model considers agentic regulation, motivated by the need for autonomy, as a central concept (Trommsdorff, 2012) within a hierarchically structured goal system that take all three prescriptive and proscriptive pathways into consideration to understand how these religious individuals strive to elevate their religious self-concept on the vertical dimension of moral hierarchy. Some previous scholars (Gray & Graham, 2019; Haidt et al., 1997; Janoff-Bulman & Carnes, 2013) limit their model of moral sanctity to the proscriptive principles as a primary force and thus, appears to have a narrow theoretical boundary of what it means to sanctify and purify one's mental states and behaviours in a religiously conservative society such as Myanmar. As indicated in the first study, despite the lack of priming effects, the sanctification and purification of thoughts, speeches and conducts through ritualised regulations at the local levels in the forms of religious daily or weekly practices such as meditation, prayer, and merit-making, appear to be consistently governed by prescriptive religious principles, especially among Buddhists and Christians high in identified religiosity.

Strengths and Limitations

Study 1: Quasi-experiment

Limitations of the current study, however, need to be highlighted. The first limitation is concerned with the study's inability to allow participants to engage in different set of realistic tasks that resemble or elicit real life decision-making and goal-directed behaviours that require the utilisations of agentic regulation (e.g., delay of gratification, religious goal pursuit) as a function of the experimental manipulation of explicit primes as initially planned. Adjustment from in-person experimental design to virtual quasi-experimental survey had to be made due to health and safety concerns as the study was conducted at the initial period of the COVID-19 pandemic. Priming effects might indicate different patterns of relationship as hypothetical reward types, the reward amounts associated with these hypothetical rewards and the duration associated with these hypothetical rewards might be responded differently by participants in the in-person experimental study if they were presented with real rewards, the amounts associated with these rewards and the duration associated with these rewards. Although the study used hypothetical scenarios to probe choice-based decision-making in the measuring of delayed gratification, and prosocial tendency, the experimental design used sets of simple binary choices highly suitable to the study context given that this was the first psychological experiment to be run in the target sample. And simply because it was the first experimental study to be done in religious Myanmar communities, results from the study provided us with a unique perspective that has been overlooked by the dominant literature, not only in the domain of agentic regulation with respect to morality, and religion but also in other aspects of the scientific study of psychology as a whole as well (Henrich et al., 2010; Nielsen et al., 2017).

In addition, the current study used different logistic regression methods (i.e., binomial, multiple, nominal and ordinal), with large sample size as a requirement, to examine

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all sets of predictions derived from the core hypothesis. In the analysis of goal-orientation using nominal logistic regression, for instance, might have generated sample size issues, potentially biasing the obtained results. This model selection-based sample issue was also encountered when 3-ways interaction terms were modelled to test a few secondary predictions. Another concern that might have biased the results is related to the religious identity of participants. Given that majority of Myanmar people affiliated with Theravada Buddhism, the numbers of participants we have recruited also reflect this demographic proportion, with more than half of the sample size identified with Buddhism and the rest identified with one of multiple Christian denominations. For this reason, multiple denominations of the Christian group, dominated by Baptists and Roman Catholics, were combined as a single group of Christian participants when personal religion as a predictor was modelled into the statistical equations. In addition, only Buddhists and Christians were tested for main effects and could not be tested against non-religious group as the sample only comprised a few non-religious participants. Therefore, no claims, based on the association effects observed for prosocial tendency and religious goal pursuits as predicted by religious affiliations and religious internalization, can be made outside the boundary of Christian and Buddhist religious systems. Regardless, the modelling of predictors on the outcome variables (i.e., delayed gratification, prosocial tendency, goal pursuits, individual task-rankings) for the primary predictions were, overall, producing reliable results as these models were all based on optimal sample size.

Study 2: Free-listing

A good free-listing study should not only obtain the most salient items (accessibility) but also the non-prevalent but relevant items (availability) that are often overlooked by majority of target respondents that may also define the boundary of a cultural concept that interests researchers. Identifying the less prevalent items is essential because the prevalence

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of an item, like some forms of qualitative analyses such as thematic analysis (Lowe et al., 2018), does not always reflect its significant position within a target domain or a theory. Therefore, one of the key strengths of the second study is related to the sample size. Due to the large sample size in the current study, not only that we were able to elicit culturally salient items for each domains as understood by Myanmar respondents as measured by the scores of the Smith's S and Saliency (M), but it also provided us with the opportunity to retrieve less prevalent but unique items that might have been difficult to be identified if conduct with a smaller sample size (Fugard & Potts, 2015; Galvin, 2015) despite the use of exhaustive probing as recommended by Weller and colleagues (2018).

We do not, however, argue for having a large sample size as an utter positive characteristic in the quantitative sense, and do not assume that larger sample, predicated on a priori determination of adequate sample size or some sampling criteria, is always better. Although we refrain from making generalization of its relevance to other studies, having a larger sample appears to be an advantage in the current study given that the notion of data saturation (Saunders et al., 2018) did not entirely or clearly apply to the target communities with a variety of life experiences and sub-cultures who were not provided the chance to be verbally probed extensively. Myanmar is a culturally, religiously, and linguistically diverse society, with decades of internal conflicts among multiple ethnic groups as its contemporary circumstance, and thus, obtaining agreed upon conceptual definitions based on cultural and ideological consensuses is a difficult task to imagine if only surveying or interviewing a very limited numbers of respondents. The current study administered free-listing questions to various Myanmar communities with diverse ethnic, linguistic, and religious backgrounds. In addition, the two coders in the current study were personally familiar with most Myanmar cultures and have extensive contextual knowledge. Despite the study not being the most ideal one, analysis of the freely listed items to apprehend the most salient cultural items in addition

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to the less prevalent items that were commonly shared among members of this societal group in their conceptual understandings of religion, morality and sanctity/purity considered to be a strength of the study.

There are a few limitations that need to be highlighted in the study. Firstly, the saliency of the most common item for each domain (i.e., praying a lot, do not torture animals, avoid taking illegal drugs) were discounted for their saliencies as top five cited items since these items were presented to respondents as an example for each domain in the free-listing questions. This was to ensure respondents were providing what was asked of them based on the assumption that majority of them were rarely exposed to psychology studies via online surveys before. Therefore, five highly cited items were presented and mapped onto the two morality models, but the first and most common items were omitted as the top five cited items.

In addition, some respondents were removed because their responded items were either copies of the examples provided without indicating a clear understanding of what was asked of them or that their answers were incomprehensible due to technicalities (e.g., Myanmar fonts) or insufficient writing capacities (e.g., spelling mistakes). This process of respondent removal might have biased the results given that these participants might belong to a particular religious groups or ethnicity who might conceive and understand the three cultural domains differently than those who could clearly provide written lists of items.

Finally, the study did not specifically analyse the item lists alongside other variables such as religious affiliation and ethnicity. The study assumes, in line with the first study, that most respondents affiliated with either Buddhism or Christianity, with a minority of them might belong to other religions such as Animism and Hinduism. Although the majority of respondents identified Myanmar and Thailand (living as migrants or refugees) as the main geographic regions they have been living or have resided for multiple years and that, majority

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of them were religiously conservative or at least, culturally affiliated with a specific religion and have somehow been influenced by it either implicitly or explicitly through cultural transmissions, due to difference in religious beliefs or ethnicity they belonged to, a number of respondents might have conceptualised religiosity, morality, and sanctity/purity differently to some extent.

Future Direction

The main concern we have with the quasi-experimental study is the use of virtual survey as a mode of collecting experimental data. Future research should focus on three aspects of the current study to improve the study design: recruiting larger sample size, use contextual priming method and present participants with real rewards (along with actual waiting time). With respect to sample size, an improvement can be made with larger samples of Baptists and Roman Catholics and then, treat these two denominations as two different groups rather than combining them into a single group. An increase in an overall sample size will also allow the study to reliably test predictions with complex logistic regression models.

Previous studies indicate that contextual priming method, with a higher degree of ecological validity, was the most consistent method of religious priming compared to other priming paradigms (Shariff et al., 2016; Watanabe & Laurent, 2020). With this method, the cognitive concepts of religious values individuals have internalized and embedded within their self-system can be more reliably activated through careful manipulation. Therefore, the role of agentic regulation on religiously motivated decision-making and actions as a function of the autonomous motivations to sanctity or purity can be made more salient if the priming effects are present as envisaged.

Hypothetical rewards as presented in the current study were convenient to be used but these rewards were virtually presented and less concrete, provoking effortful use of the cognitive resources in the participants. Virtual presentation of rewards and the associated

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selection tasks require the utilization of personal imagination mainly due to the unrealistic properties of the rewards (e.g., textual). This was truer for individuals who had never participated in systematic research prior to this experiment, and those who struggled to properly read and write in English and Myanmar. Presenting participants with real rewards, therefore, may prompt different relationship patterns or effect magnitudes concerning the target psychological processes the current study attempted to investigate.

Given that majority of Myanmar participants were subject to different types of life obstacles and insecurities, especially in the spheres of economics and education, as the primary consequence of intergenerational wars and conflicts and thus, lacking the necessary and equal opportunities to participate in the modern world through affordable technologies, internet access and quality education (Andrews & Htun, 2017; Lall, 2008; Min, 2008; Thang et al., 2014; Tin, 2008), participants in the current study might not represent majority of Myanmar people. These participants appeared, on average, to be more educated, and have access to costly or functional technologies that allowed them to respond to our online survey. Through this new ideal field experiment as a future study, participants with different sociodemographic characteristics can be targeted and recruited to elaborate on the current study.

Future studies need to explore the salient pattern or the subtle boundary conceptualisation of the three cultural domains by targeting specific religious groups at different ethnic states in Myanmar as an extending of the second free-listing study. Unlike the current online study, field interview allows for exhaustive probing of the cultural items without having to recruit for a large sample size (Weller et al., 2018), and instruction-related clarifications can be directly and immediately provided to respondents if they are not familiar with the procedure at any point in time. Therefore, in-person interview ethnographic studies based on free-listing as a research technique is recommended.

Conclusion

The present research examines the role of agentic regulation, manifesting through local-level initiatory and inhibitory regulations, in the construction of moral sanctity/purity. The manifestations of agentic regulation, in the first study, were measured in the forms of delayed gratification, prosocial tendency, goal-pursuit, goal-orientation, actual task-engagement and individual task-rankings. Although personal religion was a reliable predictor, no significant effects were observed for the religious primes. Buddhist participants, compared to Christians, tended to donate their hypothetical rewards to the orphan, and this was also obvious among the Buddhists high in identified religiosity. Christian participants, on the other hand, tended to be more goal oriented in that they selected and ranked multiple religious activities as important. As indicated in the free-listing study, the highly cited items for the religiosity, sanctity/purity and morality domains can be approximately mapped onto the Moral Foundations and the Model of Moral Motives, implying the theoretical significance of these two models. Regardless, without taking the new theoretical framework that entails three distinct levels of a proscriptive and prescriptive system into consideration, some highly cited free-listing items could not be clearly mapped onto the two models. The integrative model, based on the analyses of two studies, appear to carry some theoretical value to the literature of moral sanctity/purity as conceptualised in the current research.

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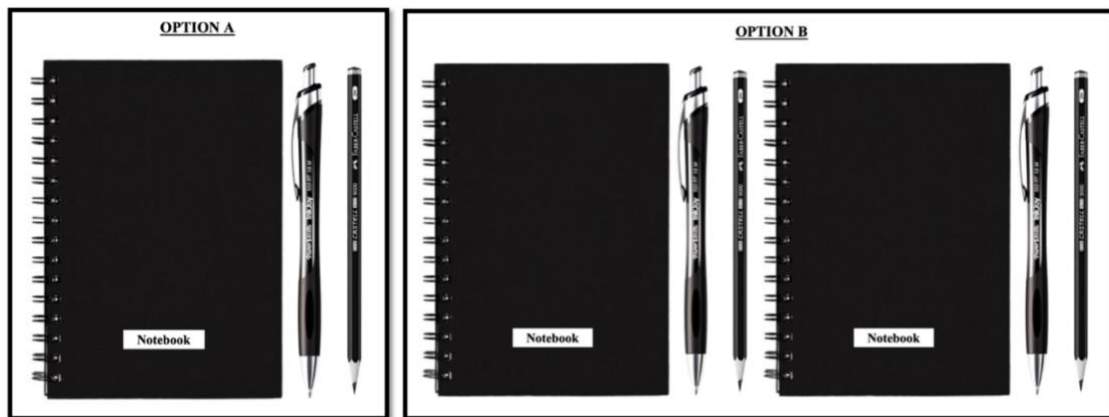
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Appendix A**Survey Materials****A1. Instruction for Experimental Explicit Priming****Please Read This Instruction Before You Begin**

Imagine that you will be compensated with a set of stationery (i.e., a notebook, a pen, a pencil as in OPTION A) or two sets of stationeries (i.e., two notebooks, two pens, two pencils as in OPTION B) for participating in this research.

Whether you will be compensated with a set of stationery, or two sets of stationeries depend on your preferred response to a set of choices.

Later, you will be presented with two sets of choices (SET I, SET II). Feel free to select an option from each set of choices presented to you as there is no right or wrong response.

Before you begin, we will present you with a picture because we want to know what you think about the person. Please click next (the green button) below to view the picture.

AGENTIC REGULATION AND MORAL SANCTITY/PURITY

A2. Three Explicit Primes

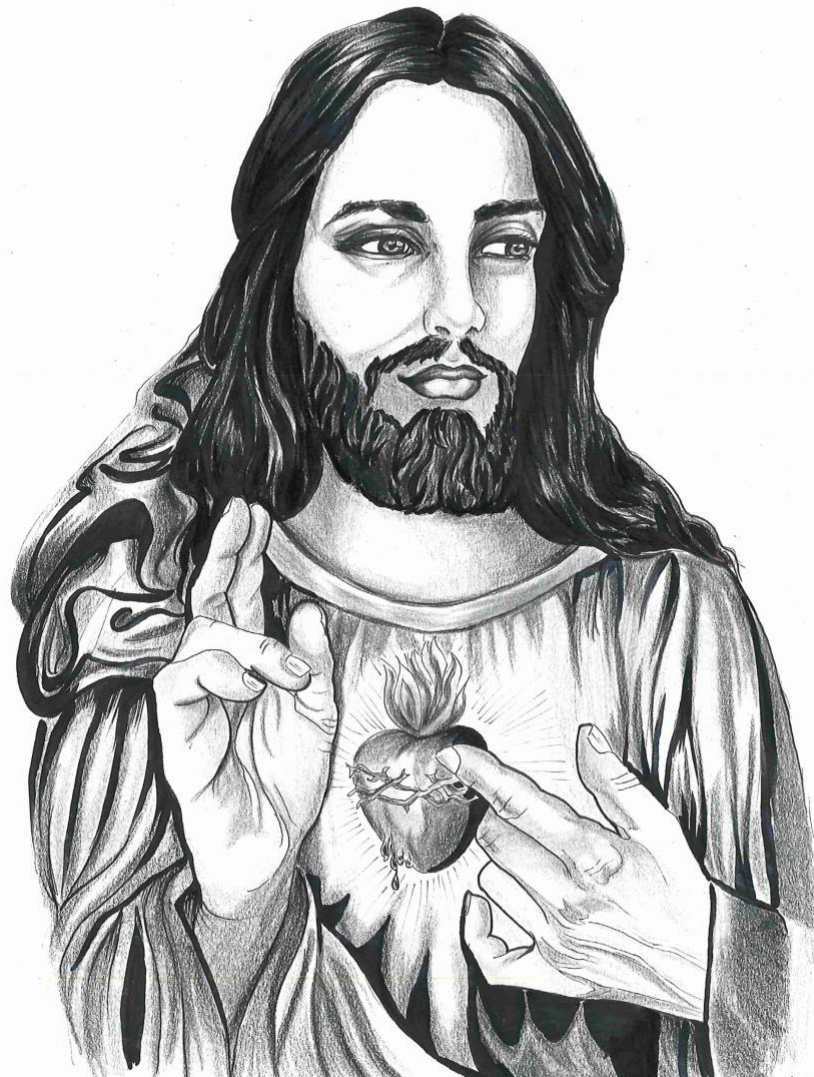
A2.1. Buddhism Prime



Please take three minutes to write down (or type out) as much as possible about the person in the picture presented to you in the text box. There is no right or wrong answer.

AGENTIC REGULATION AND MORAL SANCTITY/PURITY

A2.2. Christianity Prime



Please take three minutes to write down (or type out) as much as possible about the person in the picture presented to you in the text box. There is no right or wrong answer.

AGENTIC REGULATION AND MORAL SANCTITY/PURITY

A2.3. Neutral Prime

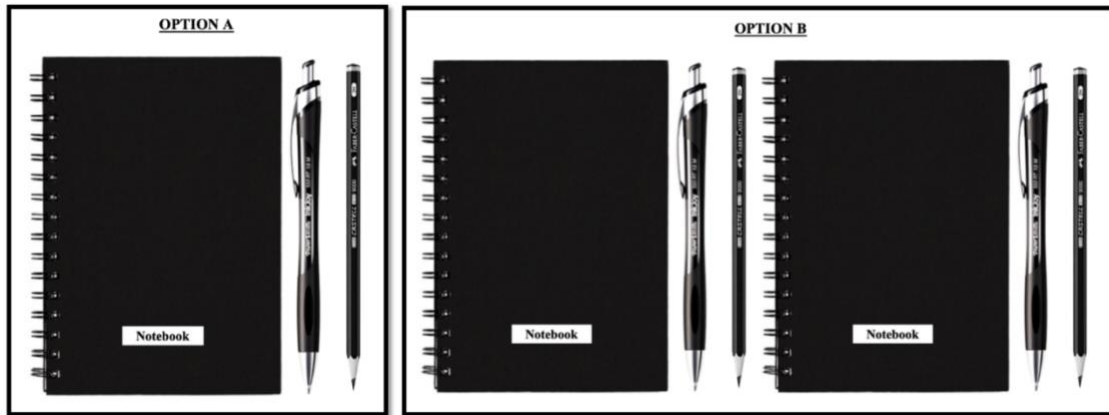


Please take three minutes to write down (or type out) as much as possible on how to best draw the person in the picture presented to you in the text box. There is no right or wrong answer.

AGENTIC REGULATION AND MORAL SANCTITY/PURITY

A3. Delayed/immediate Gratification

SET I



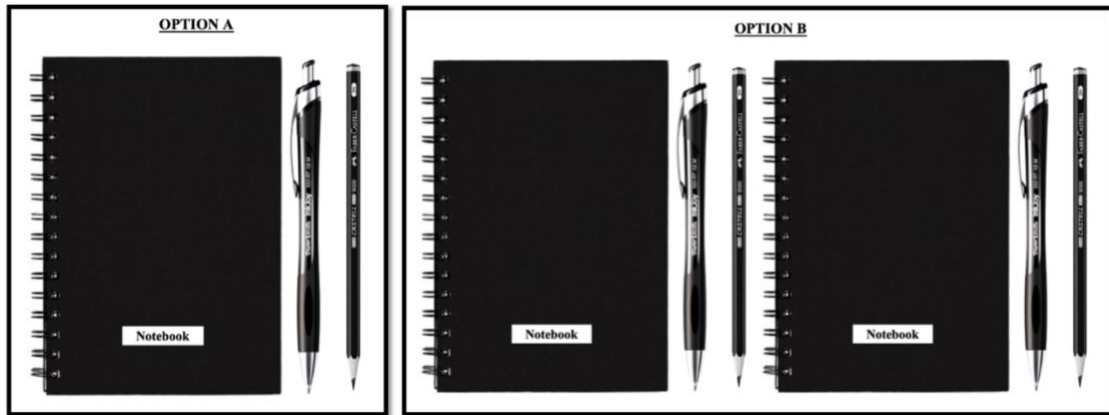
Do you want *a compensation* for your research participation today or wait for a week? Feel free to choose one of the two options. Take a minute to decide.

- ☐ HAVE IT TODAY | 1 SET OF STATIONERY
- ☐ WAIT FOR A WEEK | 2 SETS OF STATIONERIES

AGENTIC REGULATION AND MORAL SANCTITY/PURITY

A4. Prosocial Tendency

SET II



We have now compensated you with either a set of stationery or two sets of stationeries. Again, feel free to choose one of the two further options below. Take a minute to decide.

- ☐ **KEEP THE COMPENSATION FOR MYSELF**
- ☐ **DONATE MY COMPENSATION TO AN ORPHAN**

AGENTIC REGULATION AND MORAL SANCTITY/PURITY

A5. Goal Pursuit and Goal-orientation: Five Religious Activities and Five Non-religious Activities

Please feel free to choose a task you would like to engage for 15 minutes. Take a few minutes to decide.

- ☐ Engage in mindfulness meditation or listening to hymns
- ☐ Listen to relaxing music (acoustic | piano | rain sounds)
- ☐ Engage in prayer (for family | for country | for the whole world)
- ☐ Solve a puzzle (sudoku or crossword)
- ☐ Study a religious text (Bible or Dharma)
- ☐ Read an article (technology or politics or economy)
- ☐ Listen to religious music (Buddhist chants or Christian gospels)
- ☐ Listen to English language learning lessons (food | sport | clothing)
- ☐ Quiz my general religious knowledge (Christianity or Buddhism)
- ☐ Quiz my general scientific knowledge (physics or biology or chemistry)

AGENTIC REGULATION AND MORAL SANCTITY/PURITY

A6. Actual Task-engagement: Religious Activities, Non-religious Activities and Skip

You have chosen this task as your preferred option to engage for 15 minutes. Click next after selecting the task. If not, feel free to skip the task.

☐

Engage in mindfulness meditation or listening to hymns

☐

Skip this task

You have chosen this task as your preferred option to engage for 15 minutes. Click next after selecting the task. If not, feel free to skip the task.

☐

Listen to relaxing music (acoustic | piano | rain sounds)

☐

Skip this task

You have chosen this task as your preferred option to engage for 15 minutes. Click next after selecting the task. If not, feel free to skip the task.

☐

Engage in prayer (for family | for country | for the whole world)

☐

Skip this task

You have chosen this task as your preferred option to engage for 15 minutes. Click next after selecting the task. If not, feel free to skip the task.

☐

Solve a puzzle (sudoku or crossword)

☐

Skip this task

You have chosen this task as your preferred option to engage for 15 minutes. Click next after selecting the task. If not, feel free to skip the task.

☐

Study a religious text (Bible or Dharma)

☐

Skip this task

You have chosen this task as your preferred option to engage for 15 minutes. Click next after selecting the task. If not, feel free to skip the task.

☐

Read an article (technology or politics or economy)

☐

Skip this task

AGENTIC REGULATION AND MORAL SANCTITY/PURITY

You have chosen this task as your preferred option to engage for 15 minutes. Click next after selecting the task. If not, feel free to skip the task.

☐

Listen to religious music (Buddhist chants or Christian gospels)

☐

Skip this task

You have chosen this task as your preferred option to engage for 15 minutes. Click next after selecting the task. If not, feel free to skip the task.

☐

Listen to English language learning lessons (food | sport | clothing)

☐

Skip this task

You have chosen this task as your preferred option to engage for 15 minutes. Click next after selecting the task. If not, feel free to skip the task.

☐

Quiz my general religious knowledge (Christianity or Buddhism)

☐

Skip this task

You have chosen this task as your preferred option to engage for 15 minutes. Click next after selecting the task. If not, feel free to skip the task.

☐

Quiz my general scientific knowledge (physics or biology or chemistry)

☐

Skip this task

AGENTIC REGULATION AND MORAL SANCTITY/PURITY

A7. Individual Ranking of the Ten Tasks

Please rank by dragging and dropping the ten tasks in order of preference from 1 (1 = most appealing) to 10 (10 = least appealing) depending on how you think and feel about each task.

- _____ Engage in mindfulness meditation or listening to hymns
- _____ Listen to relaxing music (acoustic | piano | rain sounds)
- _____ Engage in prayer (for family | for country | for the whole world)
- _____ Solve a puzzle (sudoku or crossword)
- _____ Study a religious text (Bible or Dharma)
- _____ Read an article (technology or politics or economy)
- _____ Listen to religious music (Buddhist chants or Christian gospels)
- _____ Listen to English language learning lessons (food | sport | clothing)
- _____ Quiz my general religious knowledge (Christianity or Buddhism)
- _____ Quiz my general scientific knowledge (physics or biology or chemistry)

AGENTIC REGULATION AND MORAL SANCTITY/PURITY

A8. Material Insecurity Scale (MIS; McNamara et al., 2016)

Please indicate your response to each question by considering your current circumstance.

	Yes, I worry	No, I do not worry
Do you worry that in the next <i>one month</i> , your household will have a time when it is not able to buy or produce enough food to eat?	1	2
Do you worry that in the next <i>six months</i> , your household will have a time when it is not able to buy or produce enough food to eat?	1	2
Do you worry that in the next <i>one year</i> , your household will have a time when it is not able to buy or produce enough food to eat?	1	2
Do you worry that in the next <i>six years</i> , your household will have a time when it is not able to buy or produce enough food to eat?	1	2

AGENTIC REGULATION AND MORAL SANCTITY/PURITY

A9. Religious Self-regulation Questionnaire (SRQ-R; Ryan et al., 1993)

A9.1. Christian Religious Internalization Scale (CRIS)

Please indicate how true each of the following statements is for you, using the following scale.

	Strongly agree			Neutral			Strongly disagree
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Pray and worship because I enjoy it.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Turn to God because it is satisfying.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Turn to God because I enjoy spending time with Him.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Share my faith because God is important to me and I'd like others to know Him too.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Pray and worship because I find it satisfying.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Attend church because by going I learn new things.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Share my faith because I want other Christians to approve of me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

AGENTIC REGULATION AND MORAL SANCTITY/PURITY

Attend church because others would disapprove if I didn't.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Turn to God because I'd feel guilty if I didn't.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Pray and worship because God will disapprove if I don't.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Attend church because one is supposed to go.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Actively share my faith because I'd feel bad about myself if I didn't.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

AGENTIC REGULATION AND MORAL SANCTITY/PURITY

A9.2. Buddhist Religious Internalization Scale (BRIS)

Please indicate how true each of the following statements is for you, using the following scale.

	Strongly agree			Neutral			Strongly disagree
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Pray and meditate because I enjoy it.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Turn to Buddha and His Dharma teachings because it is satisfying.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Turn to Buddha because I enjoy spending time on His Dharma teachings.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Share my belief because Buddha and His Dharma teachings are important to me and I'd like others to know Buddha and His Dharma teachings too.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Pray and meditate because I find it satisfying.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Going to Buddhist temple because by going I learn new things.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Share my belief because I want other Buddhists to approve of me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Going to Buddhist temple because others would disapprove if I didn't.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

AGENTIC REGULATION AND MORAL SANCTITY/PURITY

Turn to Buddha and His Dharma teachings because I'd feel guilty if I didn't.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
--	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

Pray and meditate because Buddha will disapprove if I don't.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
--	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

Going to Buddhist temple because one is supposed to go.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

Actively share my belief because I'd feel bad about myself if I didn't.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

AGENTIC REGULATION AND MORAL SANCTITY/PURITY

A10. Religious Affiliation

Please indicate your religion.

- ☐ Theravada Buddhism
- ☐ Roman Catholic (Christianity)
- ☐ Baptist (Christianity)
- ☐ Methodist (Christianity)
- ☐ Anglican (Christianity)
- ☐ Animism
- ☐ Islam
- ☐ Hinduism
- ☐ No religion
- ☐ Other (Please specify): _____

A11. Other Demographic Information

A11.1. Please indicate your parents' religion.

A11.2. What is your age?

A11.3. What is your gender?

A11.4. Which ethnicity best describes you?

A11.5. What is the highest level of education you have completed?

A11.6. Please indicate your country of birth.

A11.7. Please indicate your current country of residence.

A11.8. Please indicate your length of stay (in years) at your current country of residence.

A11.9. What is your current employment status?

A12. Free Listing Questions: Religiosity, Morality and Sanctity/Purity

Please feel free to provide a list of characteristics that are typically reflective of the person of interest.

List the things (e.g., praying a lot) that a person often *thinks*, *says*, and *does* that reflect the fact that the person is *truly religious*.

List the things (e.g., do not torture animals) that a person often *thinks*, *says*, and *does* that reflect the fact that the person is *truly moral*.

List the things (e.g., avoid taking illegal drugs) that a person often *thinks*, *says*, and *does* that reflect the fact that the person *lives* or *has been living a sanctified life*.

AGENTIC REGULATION AND MORAL SANCTITY/PURITY

A13. Funnelled Debriefing

Please provide your answer in one or two sentences to each question. There is no right or wrong answer.

What do you think the purpose of this experiment was?

What do you think this experiment was trying to study?

Did you think that any of the tasks you did were related in any way? If you think they are related in some ways, in what way were they related?

Did anything you did on one task affect what you did on any other task? If you think a task that you did affect some other tasks that you did, how exactly did it affect you?

AGENTIC REGULATION AND MORAL SANCTITY/PURITY

A14. Information Sheet

INFORMATION SHEET FOR MYANMAR PARTICIPANTS

You are invited to take part in this research because you are assumed to identify as an ethnic member from Myanmar who either has been living, or has lived in Myanmar, and over the age of 18 years. Please read this information before deciding whether or not to take part. If you decide to participate, thank you. If you decide not to participate, thank you for considering this request.

Who are we?

My name is Nan Gjo (La Nan) and I am a Masters student in cross-cultural psychology at Victoria University of Wellington (VUW), Wellington City, New Zealand. This research project is work towards my thesis. Dr. Rita McNamara, a senior lecturer of the School of Psychology at the VUW, has been assisting me on this project.

What is the aim of the project?

The purpose of this research is to investigate moral sanctity and religious belief. Specifically, the study aims to understand how you engage in certain behavioural decisions under certain circumstances is influenced by how what you think about certain types of beliefs. This research has been approved by the Victoria University of Wellington School of Psychology Human Ethics Committee (Application number: 0000028129).

What will happen if you agree to participate?

There are no known risks associated with this research. The survey is expected to take most people between 10 to 25 minutes to complete. You will have a chance to be in the draw to win one of five gift cards, with each worth 50 NZD.

By participating, you may be asked:

1. To complete two tasks that involve you having to select one of two hypothetical options. For example, "Donate your stationery to an orphan or keeping the stationery for yourself."
2. To choose one of ten actual tasks. For example, "In a list of ten tasks, please specify one task that you would like to actually engage for a maximum of 15 minutes." You may also be asked to rank the ten tasks in accordance with your personal preference.
3. To complete a series of brief surveys.

What will happen to the information you give?

This research is confidential, meaning that your identity will never be revealed. Specifically, we will use de-identified data (coded by number) by unlinking any possible identifiable information in your responses to you personally. We will also aggregate research data in reports, presentations or public documentation. This means your answers will remain completely anonymous.

What will the project produce?

The de-identified information will be used in my Masters' thesis but may also be used in academic publications and conferences. The data may be shared with other researchers by request. If all parties involved agree with us on the sharing of the de-identified data, we will make the dataset available to researchers beyond the research team.

AGENTIC REGULATION AND MORAL SANCTITY/PURITY**If you have any questions or problems, who can you contact?**

If you have any questions, either now or in the future, please feel free to contact either:

Student: Nan Gjo

Email: gjonan@myvuw.ac.nz

Supervisor: Rita McNamara

Role: Senior lecturer

School: Psychology

Phone: +64 (04) 4635571

rita.mcnamara@vuw.ac.nz

Human Ethics Committee information

If you have any concerns about the ethical conduct of the research, you may contact the Victoria University HEC Convenor: Dr Judith Loveridge. Email hec@vuw.ac.nz or telephone +64-4-463 6028.

Statement of Consent

- I am an ethnic member from Myanmar, and over the age of 18. I agree to voluntarily participate in this study.
- I understand that I can ask further questions by contacting the researchers.
- I am informed that I can withdraw from the study, and have my data excluded by closing the browser window at any time while it is in progress.
- I am aware that the identifiable information I have provided will be destroyed on or before the 31/12/2021.
- I understand that the results will be used for a Masters thesis, academic publications and presentation at conferences.
- I have carefully read the Information Sheet. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction.

☐

Yes, I consent.

☐

No, I do not consent.

A15. Debriefing Statement

DEBRIEFING STATEMENT

Have you ever wondered about how people's religious faith affects how they see the world, and make choices? Have you also wondered what behaviours people are likely to engage according to the choices they make in line with their religious faith? If you have just been reminded about your faith, would you think about things a bit differently to how you think about them at other times? In our study, we are working on understanding these questions by looking at the pattern of people's self-restraints that are in line with their religious goals. We think that it is important to examine religiously oriented aspects of self-restraints in order to understand moral sanctity/purity. Moral sanctity/purity here refers to an aspect of morality that involves the sanctification/purification of one's body and soul.

Psychology is the scientific study of the human mind and behaviours. In moral psychology, we therefore study human thought and behaviours in moral contexts. Two popular theories in moral psychology state that moral sanctity/purity has an evolutionary basis on the psychology of disgust. These theories also say that moral sanctity/purity is primarily intuitive. Extending these theories is another theory of moral psychology. This additional theory says that moral sanctity/purity is motivated by avoidance-based principles. These principles can be observed in the form of prohibitions and restrictions (e.g., human flesh consumption). The function of these principles is to protect the body and soul from degradations. They are said to be more sensitive to negative outcomes and concern more with external (extrinsic) punishments (e.g., disease contraction).

In addition to the avoidance-based principles, we think that these previous moral psychology theories also need to think about the role of approach-based principles. Approach-based principles involve behaviours that often require effortful decision-making and goal-orientation (e.g., merit-making tendency, meditation). These principles are said to be more sensitive to positive outcomes and concern more with internal (intrinsic) rewards (e.g., spiritual growth, meaningful life). Religious individuals conceive their moral world hierarchically. We think that religious individuals tend to internalise the approach-based principles through a set of self-restraints in order to elevate their religious self-concept on the moral hierarchy.

Based on this understanding, we argue that it only makes sense to talk about moral sanctity/purity if we also talk about approach-based principles. To understand the link between moral sanctity/purity and these principles, we need to investigate the role of a set of religiously oriented self-restraints (agentic regulation). To experimentally test our hypothesis, we used an experimental priming method. This method involved reminding people of their religious belief. We did this by presenting the core religious symbols to people. These symbols were an image of Jesus Christ, an image of Guatama Buddha and an image of an unknown individual. We examine how much people were willing to restrain themselves in line with their religious belief by looking at how long they were willing to wait for a hypothetical reward, willing to donate their reward to an orphan, and willing to actually engage in a religious task.

The complete results of this study will be published through my Masters thesis and through publication in peer-reviewed academic outlets. If you would like to read more about the results of this study, please contact either me or my supervisor.

Appendix B**Study 1: Supplementary Tables**

B1. Full Scale Reliability Statistics for the Christian Religious Internalization Scale (CRIS) and Buddhist Religious Internalization Scale (BRIS)

SRQ-R	Mean	SD	Cronbach's α	McDonald's ω
CRIS	4.82	.78	.71	.71
BRIS	4.37	.78	.73	.73

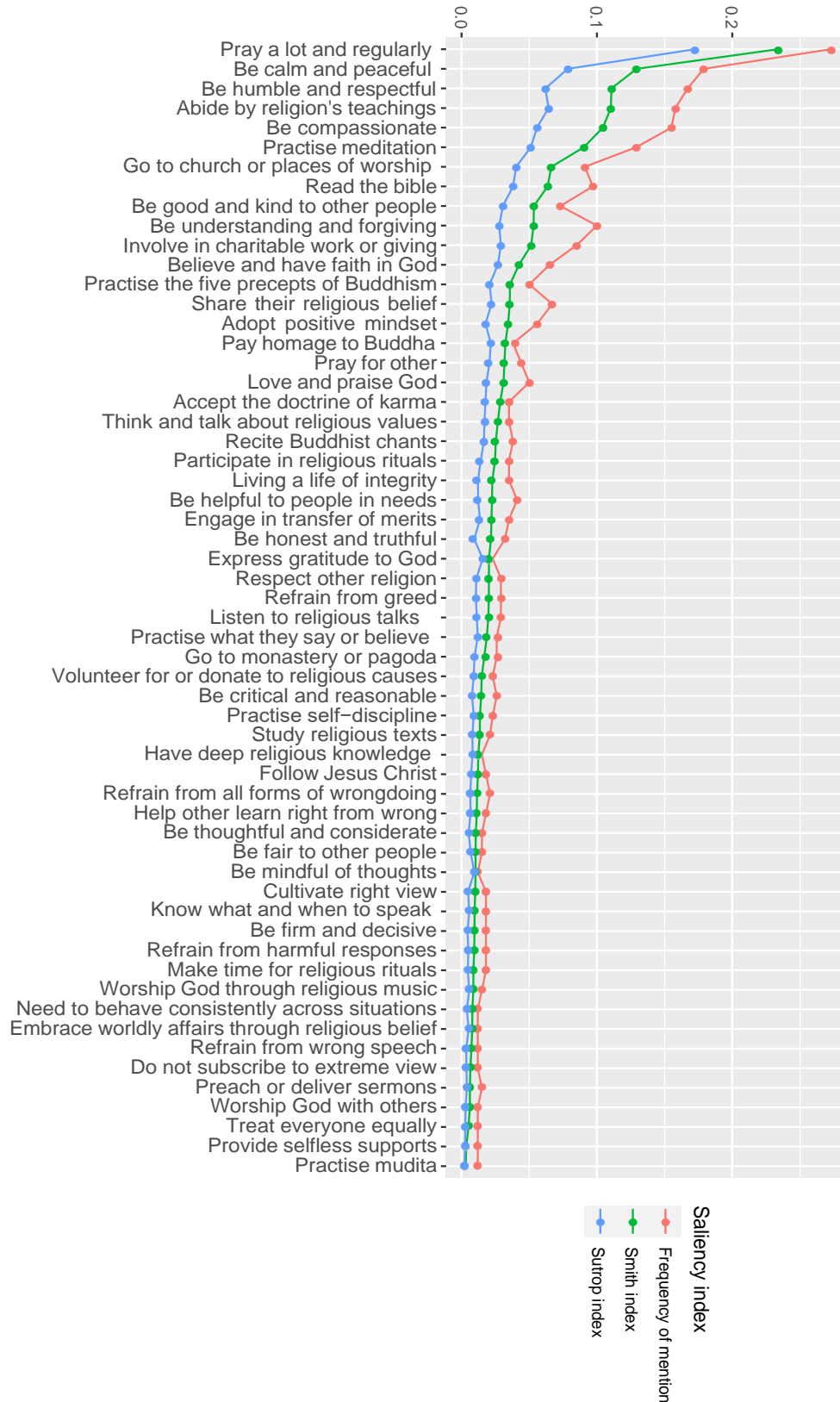
B2. Subscale Reliability Statistics for the Christian Religious Internalization Scale (CRIS) and Buddhist Religious Internalization Scale (BRIS)

SRQ-R	Subscale	Cronbach's α	McDonald's ω
CRIS	Identification	.61	.63
	Introjection	.71	.71
BRIS	Identification	.61	.64
	Introjection	.75	.76

Appendix C

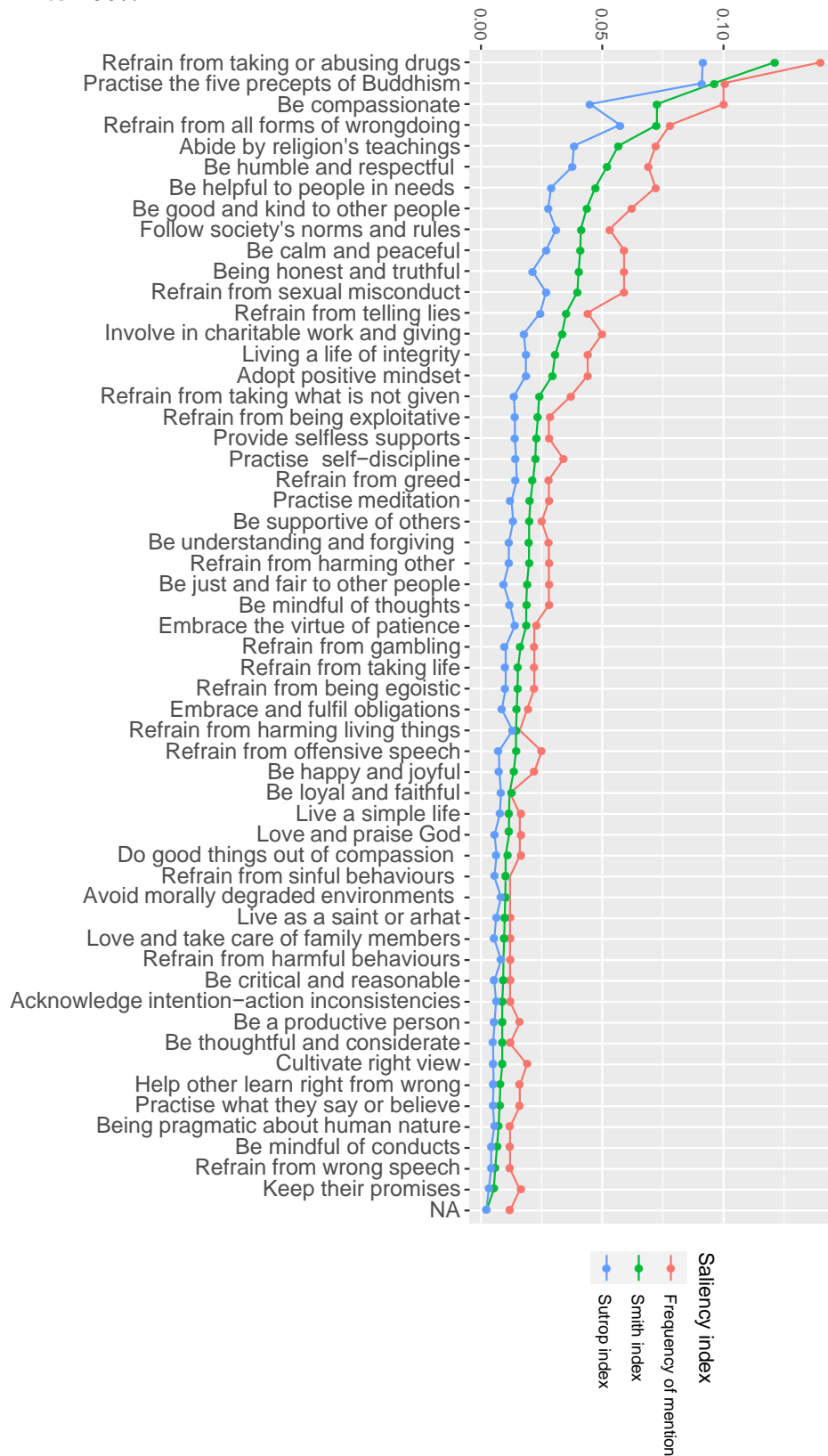
Study 2: Supplementary Figures

C1. Cultural Saliency of Cited Items for the Domain of Religiosity with the Plotted Items
Range from 1 to 100%



AGENTIC REGULATION AND MORAL SANCTITY/PURITY

C2. Cultural Saliency of Cited Items for the Domain of Sanctity/Purity with the Plotted Items Range from 1 to 100%



AGENTIC REGULATION AND MORAL SANCTITY/PURITY

C3. Cultural Saliency of Cited Items for the Domain of Morality with the Plotted Items Range from 1 to 100%

