

THEORY OF MIND AS A UNIFYING CONSTRUCT OF RELIGIOUS COGNITION AND EUDAIMONIC WELL-BEING AMONG CHRISTIAN ADOLESCENTS

*Leema Jacob and K. Jayasankara Reddy**

Abstract: Theory of mind (ToM) is the ability of an individual to identify or predict others' emotions, thoughts, and beliefs. In the context of religious cognition and eudaimonic well-being, ToM can be understood as the cognitive process through which individuals interpret and understand religious experiences, knowledge, behaviour, attitudes, and beliefs. These variables are known for sustained psychological and religious consistency in an individual's life. Eudaimonic well-being, on the other hand, refers to the long-lasting effects on individuals' mental and spiritual health, enabling them to find purpose and meaning in life, depending on the individual, religion, and society. ToM is an emerging aspect of cognitive neuroscience, rapidly expanding its field to evolution, brain imaging, and religious cognition. The period of adolescence is when adolescents are put into a turbulence of terrible confusion about their identity, beliefs, and autonomy. A thorough understanding of ToM based on religious cognition will foster adolescents' spiritual and mental health. This article connects ToM to religious cognition and the eudaimonic well-being of adolescents in Christian traditions. We propose that ToM could illuminate the relationship between religious

* Ms. Leema Jacob is a Research scholar, Department of Psychology, Christ University, Bengaluru, India. ORCID: 0000-0002-2065-228X. E-mail: leema.jacob@res.christuniversity.in

Prof. Dr. K. Jayasankara Reddy is from the Department of Psychology. At present he serves as the coordinator - Centre for Research and the Faculty in charge - Cognitive Neuro Lab, Christ University, Bangalore, India. ORCID: 0000-0002-6071-0472.

Email: jayasankara.reddy@christuniversity.in

cognition and eudaimonic well-being and provide a deepened understanding of these variables in psycho-spiritual therapy. This article also reveals the healing role of ToM on religious cognition and eudaimonic well-being during adolescence and the importance of focusing on spiritual and mental health as developmental assets that can potentially influence them in the future.

Keywords: Theory of Mind (ToM), Eudaimonic Well-being, Adolescence Christian Adolescents, Mental Health, Religious Cognition, Social cognition.

1. Introduction

The scientific curiosity in knowing the development of beliefs about one's own, others and god's mind has grown increasingly in the past decades. It is becoming an essential area of research in the cognitive science of religion, in which theology and psychology have significant coverage (Heiphetz 122; Spelke et al. 560). The study of the ToM involves attributing states of mind to humans and other supernatural powers like God (Di Dio et al. 16). It is also known as social cognition. Recent studies supported the notion of religious cognition and investigated the role of ToM in fostering the eudaimonic well-being of adolescents in faith formation (Devine 4). Theory of mind is the capacity of a human to investigate or mentalize others' behaviour, thoughts, and actions. This has been studied for forty years as a neurological function where individuals can predict others' mental status, such as thoughts, intentions, emotions, desires, and underlying behaviours (Heiphetz et al. 561; Mahy et al. 70; Beaudoin et al. 3). The development of theory of mind begins in late childhood and peaks at the period of adolescence. Only recently, researchers turned their focus from an individual perspective of the theory of mind to a new concept that focuses on knowing God's mind and other paranormal objects (Valle et al. 115). Christians consistently use ToM to explain human and supernatural actions in their spiritual life (Van Eyghen 127; Heiphetz et al. 560). This approach links religious cognition and eudaimonic well-being as the after-effect of the so-called "theory of religious mind" (Wigger15; Di

Dio et al.18). Regardless of any other religion in Christianity, children and adolescents are taught about the existence of an extraordinary entity, God, who is powerful, has knowledge of everything, and is omnipresent in his transcendental nature (Potvin 43; Goeke-Morey et al. 750; Skerrett 966). The present study aims to deepen adolescents' understanding of God's mind by focusing on religious cognition and eudaimonic well-being.

1.1 Eudaimonic Well-being and Religious Cognition

The concept of eudaimonic well-being is consistently found to be grounded on the aspect of psychological well-being, which is described as being content with life and experiencing an abundance of positive emotions, the absence of any psychopathology, marked with more significant academic functions and social skills and being in a stage with a strong foundation of future (Khan 350). Psychological well-being has two types of facets. The first refers to the extent to which adolescents experience positive emotions and feelings of happiness or joy (hedonic). Sometimes, the hedonic aspect of psychological well-being among individuals is called subjective well-being (Diener 35). Hedonic or subjective well-being possesses two components. They are affective (positive and negative affect) and cognitive (satisfaction with life) components. The second part refers to eudaimonic well-being, which means the purposeful aspects of mental well-being. In this study, the researcher focuses more on eudaimonic well-being and its dimensions (Ryff 914) because there is an inevitable need to focus on the purposeful aspect of mental well-being among adolescents today.

According to Ryff, six dimensions are identified as part of eudaimonic well-being. They are autonomy, positive relations with others, environmental mastery, personal growth, purpose in life, and self-acceptance. These dimensions work as essential factors in the theory of mind development of an individual in their adolescence period. Self-acceptance is having a positive attitude or impression about oneself. Environmental mastery helps adolescents master managing environmental activities and everyday affairs. Positive relationships with others indicate the ability to engage in meaningful relationships that include

affection, empathy, and intimacy. Personal growth is welcoming new experiences and identifying improvement in behavior modification of self over time. The purpose of life is to have a firm goal orientation and conviction that gives meaning in life. Autonomy indicates that adolescents are independent and regulate their behavior independently of other pressures.

The eudaimonic view posits that the psychological well-being of adolescents consists of more than just happiness. For them, well-being is not an outcome or end state but a process of fulfilling adolescents' potential (Ryan and Deci 145). It depends on positive functioning and developing capacities and virtues. Eudaimonic well-being is a philosophical concept rooted in ancient Greek Aristotle's philosophy, which can only be achieved through perfect religious cognition. It centres on true well-being and gives long-lasting well-being for individuals rather than simply pursuing hedonic happiness. Furthermore, Eudaimonic well-being is defined by Ryff as having a clear sense of purpose in life, which can be achieved through activities and pursuits that align with individuals' values and morality (Ryff 914). It contributes to the great good of oneself and others. It focuses on the long-lasting aspect of well-being, whereas hedonic well-being is generally known as subjective well-being, which relates to immediate gratification and pleasure (Arslan et al.1269). This type of well-being is often associated with living life meaningfully and purposefully, with autonomy, self-actualization, and self-transcendence. However, they are of the age of confusion and worries about developing a fuller identity; adolescents use the theory of mind to find the relationships between religious cognition and eudaimonic well-being in their spiritual practices and beliefs (Van Dierendonck 228; Díaz et al. 250).

Understanding the link between religious cognition and psychological well-being in the light of the theory of mind requires theoretical acumen as well as advanced reviews of empirical science. Religious cognition can be explained in terms of ToM perspective that deals with individuals' perception of God and the supernatural power that influences and guides them throughout their lives (Di Dio et al. 16). Research in neuroscience reveals that religious belief and theory of mind result from

complex neural activities of the brain that have a significant role in cognitive development. A study conducted by Justin Barret 2012, posits that religious cognition is a result of the “agency detection device” (ADD) because ‘it is prone to find agents even on very modest evidence of their presence, and the detected agents are sometimes believed to be supernatural’ (Barret 767). Humans can scan their environment for the presence of other agents who can satisfy their spiritual needs (Geertz 26). Jesse Bering has developed the explicit social account of religious cognition and tried to connect religious cognition to the theory of mind responsible for human cognition. He writes: “The presence of an existential theory of mind (EToM) suggests that individuals perceive some nondescript or culturally elaborated (e.g., God) psychological agency as having encoded communicative intentions in the form of life events, similar to a person encoding communicative intentions in deictic gestures” (Schjoedt et al. 202).

Religious cognition and eudaimonic well-being involve a complex interplay among the brain regions underpinning cognitive control, social reasoning, social motivations, and ideological beliefs. Psycho-spiritual therapists recently studied the relationship between religious cognition and well-being in intervention programs in psycho-spiritual therapies. For example, ‘Religious Cognitive-emotional Therapy (RCET)’ is a new initiation widely used in psycho-spiritual therapies in cooperation with other psychotherapies for mental health among adolescents who have a solid religious sense of Christianity (Rajaei 135). This proves that religious cognition positively relates to eudaimonic well-being among the youth, and there must be more research on theoretical aspects in this area.

Thus, religious cognition encompasses the individuals’ thoughts and individual experiences of God and supernatural power (God), and it includes the interplay between people’s ‘gut level’ and ‘head level’ experiences of God. Religious cognition and related studies are rare compared to other cognition aspects despite the Christian faithful’s contemporary significance (Henderson et al. 238). In this study, we review the evidence indicated by ToM, which involves a complex interplay between

religious cognition and eudemonic well-being among adolescents.

1.2 Adolescents and Religion

Erik Erikson, the proponent of psychosocial development, states that adolescence is a significant period of the human lifespan as a transition period between childhood and adulthood (Sokol 14). One of the vital features of this stage is characterized by identity development, in which adolescents develop the ability to think about abstract concepts, predict others' behavior, engage in social perception, emotion management, and other executive functions. Adolescence is also characterized by increased autonomy, a visible sign of eudaimonic well-being, leading to more interactions with family, peers, and others in their society. ToM is the ability of adolescents 'to represent and attribute mental states to themselves and others.' These adolescent changes affect their views on religion and its accompanying beliefs and religious practices (Valle et al. 112). In this period, they search for meaning and purpose in life. They become more critical of religious ideologies taught during catechism classes, as by their parents and religious affiliations. As a result, adolescents scrutinize some religious ideas at a young age. Social interactions, which are said to be the primary function of ToM and life experiences during this stage, are also critical in developing religiosity. Adolescents raised in a joint family with parents and grandparents who possess typical religious practices are likelier to adopt improved religious practices in the future (Cooper et al. 117). Similarly, adolescents' belief system is strongly affected by peers and society. Researchers found that more religious adolescents have friends who follow the same religious beliefs. They also improve their mental well-being and are less likely to engage in criminal and delinquent behavior. Since the theory of mind is a trainable cognitive function (Salas et al. 76), more efforts can be made to develop training interventions for adolescents regarding religious cognition. However, recent research evidence emphasizes that these variables play an essential role in Christian adolescents coping with stresses in day-to-day life, including those due to the developmental array of their entire lifespan—for example, adolescents with behavioral issues like alcohol or drug addiction,

ToM skills which are characterized by religious cognition involvement may help them to modify their behavior patterns and attain healthy habits and life in success ahead. Any research based on the period of adolescence is crucial in every era.

The development of religious cognition among Christian adolescents is considerably silent. Fowler describes adolescence as a period of 'synthetic conventional' faith that advances higher mental activities such as ToM, interpersonal perspective-taking, and religious cognition. This enables adolescents to understand faith and beliefs better and more sophisticatedly (Goeke-Morey et al.749).

2. Method

The present article employed a narrative review. Research articles were taken from three databases, PubMed, Research Gate, and Science Direct, using the PRISMA procedure (Figure 1) during the period of 2000 to 2023. The literature review of this study was based on a few inclusion and exclusion criteria:

2.1 Inclusion Criteria

- Articles on ToM, religious cognition, eudemonic well-being, and Christian adolescents
- Articles published from 2000 to 2023
- Restricted English language.

2.2 Exclusion Criteria

- Articles with only abstract
- Case series and case report
- Duplicated articles

2.3. Procedure

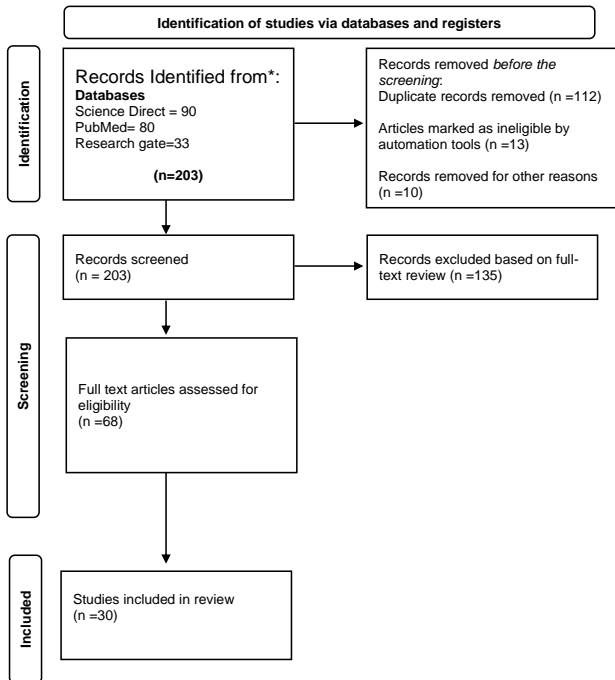
There were 203 articles in the initial search process, and 135 were excluded from the current study because they did not follow the inclusion criteria. There was an independent study selection analysis of the articles. Eventually, 30 articles were selected for the final study per the inclusion criteria, as shown in the PRISMA flowchart (Figure 1). The purpose of this study is to connect ToM, an emerging scientific term in neuroscience, to a theological view of God and divinity. This review recommends the need to focus

on religious cognition among adolescents’ well-being and do further research on this topic.

3. Results

A total number of 30 articles were selected on the inclusion and exclusion criteria in this narrative review. The research articles were categorized based on their topic related to the research title. They were the theory of mind, religious cognition, eudaimonic well-being, the period of adolescence, mental health, and adolescents in the Christian religion. The summary of the article used in this research article is given below in Figure 1.

Figure 1
PRISMA flow chart for narrative review



3.1 Adolescents in Christianity

Adolescents today are modestly less likely than their parents to identify with the Christian faith. One of the survey results indicates that 63 percent of U.S. Christian adolescents ages 13 to 17 identify as Christian, whereas their parents are 72 percent

(Mitchell 65). This religious affiliation and Christian faith pattern are similar across various demographic groups, irrespective of gender, color, and culture. To another extent, several research posit that Christian religious cognition inhibits adolescent substance use and, bad habits, risky behavior patterns, and increases their eudaimonic well-being, especially in religious communities where they share religious values and beliefs (Li et al.1233). As the selected articles clarify, the capability to interpret and understand others regarding psychological states is crucial for promoting psychological well-being among adolescents. Theory of mind provides this knowledge and understanding of God in oneself and others. The period of adolescence is in which they thrive and earnestly work to achieve their full potential. Theory of mind plays a vital role in developing the religious cognition of adolescents as they process information about people's perceptions of God (Ryff 914).

Few articles supported that religious cognition helped Christian adolescents realize their full potential. This may contribute to the Theory of mind and eudaimonic well-being (EWB). Adolescents with social and religious adjustment issues display poorer performance on Theory of Mind tasks (Valle et al.112). It makes it all the more curious to understand what aspects of ToM are in the phase of adolescent life that views a critical aspect of religious cognition and eudaimonic well-being. Thus, the Theory of Mind can unify the fostering of psychological well-being (PWB), especially eudaimonic well-being (EWB). At the same time, effective ToM can enhance religious cognition among adolescents and vice versa. The importance of having ToM, religious cognition, and respect for other religions among adolescents today cannot be overstated (Heiphetz et al.122). Young people in every religion must promote religious freedom and human rights; the above-mentioned variable enables them to do so.

3.2 ToM, Religious Cognition, and Eudaimonic Well-being

Understanding ToM as a unifying factor in religious cognition and eudaimonic well-being requires thorough theoretical and empirical acumen. The primary objective of this narrative study was to discuss the role of ToM as a unifying factor for religious

cognition and eudaimonic well-being. The observations derived from Table 1 draw attention to these aspects. The recent research on the theory of mind and religious cognition among adolescents in Christianity, with the help of typical scientific tools like functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI), shows that to interpret the feelings of God and his intention, adolescents rely mainly on some of the brain regions responsible for emotions and higher-order mental activities (Kapogiannis et al. 4875; Rim et al. 306). The prefrontal lobe, amygdala, Hippocampus, and region of superior colliculi divine the feelings and intentions of other people. Here, a connection between God and man is established, explained through physiological science relating to ToM. Adolescence is the period in which they infer the mind of God by comparing or inputting their own mind in place of God's mind to make themselves confident and hopeful about the desire of God for them (McNamara et al. 113). This idea provides a strong foundation for inferring religious cognition and mental health among Christian adolescents.

Adolescents' beliefs light up the brain region of those involved in imagination, theory of mind, and memory. A few selected articles emphasized that the Theory of mind is the recognition that other living beings can have their own thoughts, feelings, and intentions (Wigger 568). The existing research reviews posit that the mind and brain function in tandem to allow individuals to have a more robust belief system that guides their cognition and overall well-being, especially eudaimonic (Garland et al.293). Furthermore, ToM illuminates the relationship between religious cognition and, thus, eudaimonic well-being and could provide a positive outlook toward spiritual life in helping people in psycho-spiritual therapy. ToM research focuses more on empathy, a central aspect of Christian belief and practice that fosters the eudaimonic well-being of adolescents (Nakkawita and Heiphetz 312; Migdal and MacDonald 274). Cognitive science of religion (CSR) is a new field that attempts to understand the reason for initial acquisition, recurrence, and continued transmission of religious concepts and beliefs (Barrett 42). ToM study attempts to provide an empirical solid bridge that connects

religious cognition and eudaimonic well-being among Christian adolescents.

Of course, as all know, the Christian religion is constructed on a well-defined set of humane rules and regulations for acquiring spiritual well-being among the faithful in every aspect of their lives. This promotes the purpose of life and personal growth over time. The word eudaimonia comes from the Greek Aristotelian philosophy, which means self-truth (self-awareness) and striving for excellence in one's own unique potentialities (Ryff 914). Eudaimonia involves the religious experience of capable adolescents to be divine. Later, a significant contribution to finding meaning in life relied on the existential approach by Frankl, who explained the concept of eudaimonic well-being. According to Ryff, eudaimonic well-being comprises six essential adolescent dimensions. They are of autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relations with others, purpose in life, and self-acceptance.

Few articles suggest that the interaction between ToM, eudaimonic well-being, and religious cognition is a complex and context-dependent matter of factors. Religious cognition, faith, and practices can contribute significantly to the eudaimonic well-being of many adolescents in the Christian religion (Yoon et al. 135; Montero-Marín et al. 12). It gives them a sense of purpose in life and moral guidance, whereas others find eudaimonic well-being through secular means, such as personal growth and meaningful relationships (Ross et al. 472; Salavera et al. 2742; Arslan 1269). ToM abilities work on both categories to give unified results in adolescents' overall mental health and religious cognition. A few articles posit that eudaimonic well-being and theory of mind are interrelated because ToM can contribute to adolescents' ability to develop and maintain positive relationships, engage in altruistic behaviors, and show empathetic concerns, which are the subject matter of ToM. These factors give adolescents a sense of purpose, meaning, and fulfillment in every religion (Alexander et al. 220). Table 1 below will explain the detailed structure of article selection and variables discussed in this study.

Table 1*Summary of the articles included in the narrative study*

No	References	Title of the study	Variable discussed	Data accessed from
1	Barret (2014)	Why would anyone believe in God?	ToM	PubMed
2	Beaudoin et al. (2020)	Systematic review and inventory of theory of mind measures for young children.	ToM	PubMed
3	Devine (2016)	Theory of mind	ToM	Science Direct
4	Di Dio et al. (2018)	Growing Up Thinking of God's Beliefs: Theory of Mind and Ontological Knowledge.	ToM	Science Direct
5	Geertz (2014)	Origins of Religion, Cognition and Culture	Religious Cognition	PubMed
6	Airenti (2015)	Theory of mind: a new perspective on the puzzle of belief ascription	Religious cognition	Research Gate
7	Estrada et al. (2019)	Religious education can contribute to adolescent mental health in school settings	Eudaimonic well-being	ResearchGate
8	Boyd (2008)	Have We Found the Holy Grail? Theory of Mind as a Unifying Construct	Eudaimonic well-being	PubMed

9	Sokol, (2009)	Identity Development Throughout the Lifetime: An Examination of Eriksonian Theory	Christian Adolescents	ResearchGate
10	Barrett (2007)	Cognitive Science of Religion: What is it and why is it? Religion Compass	Religious cognition	ScienceDirect
11	Nakkawita and Heiphetz (2021)	The Cognitive Science of Religion: A Case for the Importance of Adolescence	Adolescents	PubMed
12	McNamara et al. (2021).	God's mind on morality	ToM	PubMed
13	Wigger (2016)	'Children's Theory of God's Mind: Theory-of-Mind Studies and Why They Matter to Religious Education'	ToM	ResearchGate
14	Ryff (2021)	Spirituality and Well-Being: Theory, Science, and the Nature Connection	Eudaimonic well-being	PubMed
15	Rim et al. (2019)	Current Understanding of Religion, Spirituality, and Their Neurobiological Correla	Religious Cognition	PubMed
16	Kapogiannis et al. (2009)	Cognitive and neural	Religious Cognition	ResearcGate

		foundations of religious belief		
17	Garland et al. (2015)	'Mindfulness Broadens Awareness and Builds Eudaimonic Meaning: A Process Model of Mindful Positive Emotion Regulation'	Eudaimonic well-being	PubMed
18	Migdal and MacDonald (2013)	Clarifying the Relation Between Spirituality and Well-Being	Eudaimonic well-being	ResearchGate
19	Yoon et al. (2014).	Religiousness, spirituality, and eudaimonic and hedonic well-being	Eudaimonic well-being	ResearchGate
20	Montero-Marín et al. (2019)	Religiosity and Meditation Practice: Exploring Their Explanatory Power on Psychological Adjustment	Religious Cognition	PubMed
21	Ross et al. (2020).	Adolescent Well-Being: A Definition and Conceptual Framework	Adolescents	PubMed
22	Arslan (2023)	Psychological Well-Being and Mental Health in Youth: Technical Adequacy of the Comprehensive Inventory of Thriving	Adolescents	PubMed

23	Salavera et al. (2020)	Eudaimonic Well-Being in Adolescents: The Role of Trait Emotional Intelligence and Personality	Eudaimonic well-being	PubMed
24	Alexander et al. (2021)	The neuroscience of positive emotions and affect: Implications for cultivating happiness and wellbeing	Well-being	ScienceDirect
25	Willard and Norenzayan (2013)	Cognitive biases explain religious belief, paranormal belief, and belief in life's purpose	ToM	ScienceDirect
26	Marek and Walulik (2021)	What Morality and Religion Have in Common with Health? Pedagogy of Religion in the Formation of Moral Competence	Religion	PubMed
27	Koenig (2012)	Religion, Spirituality, and Health: The Research and Clinical Implications	Religious cognition	PubMed
28	Behere et al. (2013)	Religion and mental health	Eudaimonic well-being	PubMed
29	Wilhoit (2018)	Self-Compassion as a Christian Spiritual Practice	Adolescents	ScienceDirect

30	Hollarek and Lee (2022)	Current understanding of developmental changes in adolescent perspective taking	Adolescents	ScienceDirect
----	-------------------------	---	-------------	---------------

4. Discussion

This narrative article proves that individuals need a theory of mind to understand and attribute to mental status, such as intentions, beliefs, desires, aspirations, emotions, and attitudes toward oneself and others around him or her (Willard and Norenzayan 382). This is a kind of prophecy that people make use of in their day-to-day lives. It develops during late childhood and peaks at adolescence. This enables Christian adolescents to recognize or predict that others have their own emotions, feelings, thoughts, and perspectives, which may vary from one's own. Theory of mind skills is an essential part of human life for social cognition, empathy, and affective interpersonal interactions. Adolescents in the Christian religion try to understand God's mind, which is primarily a function of ontological knowledge of God. This is rather than social cognitive functions (Di Dio et al.17).

A few articles reviewed in this study reported that religious cognition is a backbone in shaping successive family formation among Christian adolescents (Eggebeen and Dew 112). Also, these variables powerfully shape adolescents' values, attitudes, and behavior in all aspects of their lives. This makes adolescents in Christianity more unique. From a Christian perspective, religious cognition can be defined as a set of cognitive processes and mental functions related to religious beliefs, rituals, experiences, and practices. As reviewed in the selected articles, religious cognition in Christianity encompasses several aspects, such as belief in God, ethical and moral reasoning based on Christian principles, religious rituals, interpretation of the Bible and other teachings, and unique experiences of adolescents in their spiritual lives (Marek and Walulik 3132).

Thus, religious cognition is part of ToM skills for adolescents, which are fundamental to understanding the belief in God and divinity (Koenig).

These cognitive and spiritual variables positively correlated with the overall well-being of adolescents in every religion, particularly Christianity, as discussed in this article. Eudaimonic well-being can be explained by discussing common concepts generally observed in ToM and religious cognition.

- ToM enables adolescents to comprehend the beliefs, rituals, practices, and unique experiences of others within a religious context (Behere et al. 187). It promotes them to develop enhanced mental well-being through moral codes and religious mindsets.
- Interpreting the Bible and other related sacred texts in Christianity enables them to explore the unconditional love, compassion, and empathy of God, self, and others (Wilhoit 1234). A developed and matured ToM among adolescents can nurture an understanding of the intentions of these characteristics.
- Empathy is an inevitable part of ToM and can facilitate compassion towards others and the suffering humanity around him or her in a religious context (Roberts 819). When adolescents accurately attribute their mental states to other individuals, they are more likely to be compassionate with their attitudes, religious beliefs, and struggles, enhancing the more profound sense of eudaimonic well-being and deeper understanding.
- Moral and ethical reasoning in religious cognition often involves powerful religious principles among Christian adolescents (Koenig 18). Theory of mind can be explained here based on respecting the moral perspectives of others and predicting others' behavior.
- Adolescents with mature ToM can promote positive and enhanced social interactions (Hollarek and Lee 10308). Understanding the current situation of a fellow being in any circumstances will foster eudaimonic well-being, and it helps them to navigate interfaith dialogues and collaborations effectively in society.
- Adolescents with increased religious cognition and ToM abilities showed reduced criminal delinquency and aggression and opted for a peaceful way of life in their further living conditions (Brooks et al.15).

ToM can be explained as a unifying factor in religious cognition and eudaimonic well-being among the Christian youth population in Christianity. These variables are complex and

multifaceted and significantly impact young people who strive for their identity and purpose in life. Reviews show that there can be individual differences in beliefs, traditions, and culture. While ToM can facilitate a deeper understanding of religious cognition and eudaimonic well-being, it does not dictate one's belief. However, it somewhat improves one's capacity to be involved in respecting other religions in a more empathetic and inclusive manner.

5. Conclusion

Religious cognition and eudaimonic well-being are the byproducts of the theory of mind among adolescents, which makes them capable of acquiring mental and physical health. The youths in Christianity who regularly practice religious rituals were found to have better cognitive functioning than others who were involved less in religious activities. As observed in this article, the cognitive science of religion specifies that this area of the young population in every religion should be explored more in the future in the area of theory of mind. The findings highlight the possibility of making policies and developing new psycho-spiritual platforms where ToM, religious cognition, and eudaimonic well-being are promoted for mental health among adolescents. By carefully examining these results, every religion can adapt and undertake new methods to improve the basic qualities of their adolescents based on the theory of mind. Those adolescents with fully developed ToM and religious cognition usually possess high quality in every religion, which helps them to navigate complex and interlinked challenges in their life in faith and promote mental health.

References

- Airenti, Gabriella. "Theory of Mind: A New Perspective on the Puzzle of Belief Ascription." *Frontiers in Psychology*, vol. 6, Frontiers Media, Aug. 2015, <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2015.01184>.
- Alexander, Rebecca, et al. "The Neuroscience of Positive Emotions and Affect: Implications for

- Cultivating Happiness and Wellbeing." *Neuroscience & Biobehavioral Reviews*, vol. 121, Elsevier BV, Feb. 2021, pp. 220–49. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.neubiorev.2020.12.002>.
- Arslan, Gökmen. "Psychological Well-Being and Mental Health in Youth: Technical Adequacy of the Comprehensive Inventory of Thriving." *Children (Basel)*, vol. 10, no. 7, Multidisciplinary Digital Publishing Institute, July 2023, p. 1269. <https://doi.org/10.3390/children10071269>.
- Barret, Justin, L. "Why Would Anyone Believe in God?" *Choice Reviews Online*, vol. 42, no. 06, Association of College and Research Libraries, Feb. 2014, pp. 42–3375a. <https://doi.org/10.5860/choice.42-3375a>.
- Barrett, Justin L. "Cognitive Science of Religion: What Is It and Why Is It?" *Religion Compass*, vol. 1, no. 6, Wiley-Blackwell, Sept. 2007, pp. 768–86. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1749-8171.2007.00042.x>.
- Beaudoin, Cindy, et al. "Systematic Review and Inventory of Theory of Mind Measures for Young Children." *Frontiers in Psychology*, vol. 10, Frontiers Media, Jan. 2020, <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2019.02905>.
- Behere, Prakash B., et al. "Religion and Mental Health." *Indian Journal of Psychiatry*, vol. 55, no. 6, Medknow, Jan. 2013, p. 187. <https://doi.org/10.4103/0019-5545.105526>.
- Boyd, Jeffrey. "Have We Found the Holy Grail? Theory of Mind as a Unifying Construct." *Journal of Religion & Health*, vol. 47, no. 3, Springer Science+Business Media, May 2008, pp. 366–85. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10943-008-9169-y>.
- Cooper, Sara, et al. "Factors That Influence Parents' and Informal Caregivers' Views and Practices Regarding Routine Childhood Vaccination: A Qualitative Evidence Synthesis." *The Cochrane Library*, vol. 2021, no. 10, Elsevier BV, Oct. 2021, <https://doi.org/10.1002/14651858.cd013265.pub2>.
- Brooks, Skylar J., et al. "Parental Religiosity Is Associated With Changes in Youth Functional Network Organization and Cognitive Performance in Early Adolescence." *Scientific Reports*, vol. 12, no. 1, Nature Portfolio, Oct. 2022, pp. 12–18. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-022-22299-6>.

- Devine, Rory T. "Theory of Mind." *Springer eBooks*, 2016, pp. 1–9.
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-28099-8_560-1.
- Di Dio, Cinzia, et al. "Growing up Thinking of God's Beliefs: Theory of Mind and Ontological Knowledge." *SAGE Open*, vol. 8, no. 4, SAGE Publishing, Oct. 2018, p. 215824401880987.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244018809874>.
- Díaz, Darío, et al. "The Eudaimonic Component of Satisfaction With Life and Psychological Well-being in Spanish Cultures." *PubMed*, vol. 27, no. 3, National Institutes of Health, Jan. 2015, pp. 247–53. <https://doi.org/10.7334/psicothema2015.5>.
- Diener, Ed. "Subjective Well-being: The Science of Happiness and a Proposal for a National Index." *American Psychologist*, vol. 55, no. 1, American Psychological Association, Jan. 2000, pp. 34–43. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066x.55.1.34>.
- Eggebeen, David J., and Jeffrey P. Dew. "The Role of Religion in Adolescence for Family Formation in Young Adulthood." *Journal of Marriage and Family*, vol. 71, no. 1, Wiley-Blackwell, Jan. 2009, pp. 108–21.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-3737.2008.00583.x>.
- Estrada, Crystal Amiel M., et al. "Religious Education Can Contribute to Adolescent Mental Health in School Settings." *International Journal of Mental Health Systems*, vol. 13, no. 1, BioMed Central, Apr. 2019, <https://doi.org/10.1186/s13033-019-0286-7>.
- Garland, Eric L., et al. "Mindfulness Broadens Awareness and Builds Eudaimonic Meaning: A Process Model of Mindful Positive Emotion Regulation." *Psychological Inquiry*, vol. 26, no. 4, Taylor and Francis, Oct. 2015, pp. 293–314.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/1047840x.2015.1064294>.
- Geertz, Armin W. "Origins of Religion, Cognition and Culture." *Routledge eBooks*, 2014,
<https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315728988>.
- Goeke-Morey, Marcie C., et al. "Adolescents' Relationship With God and Internalizing Adjustment Over Time: The Moderating Role of Maternal Religious Coping." *Journal of Family Psychology*, vol. 28, no. 6, American Psychological Association, Jan. 2014, pp. 749–58.
<https://doi.org/10.1037/a0037170>.
- Heiphetz, Larisa, Jo Ann Lane, et al. "How Children and Adults

- Represent God's Mind." *Cognitive Science*, vol. 40, no. 1, Wiley-Blackwell, Mar. 2015, pp. 121–44. <https://doi.org/10.1111/cogs.12232>.
- Heiphetz, Larisa, Elizabeth S. Spelke, et al. "The Development of Reasoning About Beliefs: Fact, Preference, and Ideology." *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, vol. 49, no. 3, Elsevier BV, May 2013, pp. 559–65. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jesp.2012.09.005>.
- Henderson, Andrea, et al. "Religious Involvement and Cognitive Functioning at the Intersection of Race–Ethnicity and Gender Among Midlife and Older Adults." *The Journals of Gerontology: Series B*, vol. 77, no. 1, Oxford UP, Feb. 2021, pp. 237–48. <https://doi.org/10.1093/geronb/gbab034>.
- Hollarek, Miriam, and Nikki Lee. "Current Understanding of Developmental Changes in Adolescent Perspective Taking." *Current Opinion in Psychology*, vol. 45, Elsevier BV, June 2022, p. 101308. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.copsyc.2022.101308>.
- Kapogiannis, Dimitrios, et al. "Cognitive and Neural Foundations of Religious Belief." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America*, vol. 106, no. 12, National Academy of Sciences, Mar. 2009, pp. 4876–81. <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.0811717106>.
- Khan, Yasmin. "Psychological Well-Being (PWB) of School Adolescents Aged 12–18 Yr, Its Correlation With General Levels of Physical Activity (PA) and Socio-Demographic Factors in Gilgit, Pakistan." *PubMed Central (PMC)*, 1 June 2015, www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/pmc4524305.
- Koenig, Harold G. "Religion, Spirituality, and Health: The Research and Clinical Implications." *ISRN Psychiatry (Online)*, vol. 2012, Hindawi Publishing Corporation, Dec. 2012, pp. 1–33. <https://doi.org/10.5402/2012/278730>.
- Li, Spencer D., et al. "The Relationship Between Christian Religiosity and Adolescent Substance Use in China." *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, vol. 19, no. 18, Multidisciplinary Digital Publishing Institute, Sept. 2022, p. 11233. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph191811233>.
- Mahy, Caitlin E. V., et al. "How And Where: Theory-of-mind in the

- Brain." *Developmental Cognitive Neuroscience*, vol. 9, Elsevier BV, July 2014, pp. 68–81. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.dcn.2014.01.002>.
- Marek, Zbigniew, and Anna Walulik. "What Morality and Religion Have in Common With Health? Pedagogy of Religion in the Formation of Moral Competence." *Journal of Religion & Health*, vol. 60, no. 5, Springer Science+Business Media, May 2021, pp. 3130–42. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10943-021-01279-6>.
- McNamara, Rita Anne, et al. "God's Mind on Morality." *Evolutionary Human Sciences*, vol. 3, Cambridge UP, Jan. 2021, <https://doi.org/10.1017/ehs.2021.1>.
- Migdal, Lori, and Douglas A. MacDonald. "Clarifying the Relation Between Spirituality and Well-Being." *Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease*, vol. 201, no. 4, Lippincott Williams and Wilkins, Apr. 2013, pp. 274–80. <https://doi.org/10.1097/nmd.0b013e318288e26a>.
- Mitchell, Travis. "1. Religious Affiliation Among American Adolescents | Pew Research Center." *Pew Research Center's Religion & Public Life Project*, 9 July 2021, www.pewresearch.org/religion/2020/09/10/religious-affiliation-among-american-adolescents.
- Montero-Marín, Jesús, et al. "Religiosity and Meditation Practice: Exploring Their Explanatory Power on Psychological Adjustment." *Frontiers in Psychology*, vol. 10, Frontiers Media, Mar. 2019, <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2019.00630>.
- Nakkawita, Emily, and Larisa Heiphetz. "The Cognitive Science of Religion: A Case for the Importance of Adolescence." *Adolescent Research Review*, vol. 6, no. 3, Springer Science+Business Media, Jan. 2021, pp. 309–22. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40894-020-00145-y>.
- Norenzayan, Ara, et al. "The Cultural Evolution of Prosocial Religions." *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, vol. 39, Cambridge UP, Dec. 2014, <https://doi.org/10.1017/s0140525x14001356>.
- Potvin, Raymond H. "Adolescent God Images." *Review of Religious Research*, vol. 19, no. 1, Springer Science+Business Media, Jan. 1977, p. 43. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3509579>.
- Rajaei, Ali Reza. "Religious Cognitive–Emotional Therapy: A New Form of Psychotherapy." *PubMed Central (PMC)*, 1 Jan. 2010, www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3430504.

- Rim, James I., et al. "Current Understanding of Religion, Spirituality, and Their Neurobiological Correlates." *Harvard Review of Psychiatry*, vol. 27, no. 5, Lippincott Williams and Wilkins, Sept. 2019, pp. 303–16. <https://doi.org/10.1097/hrp.0000000000000232>.
- Roberts, Jessica. "Empathy Cultivation Through (Pro)Social Media: A Counter to Compassion Fatigue." *Journalism and Media*, vol. 2, no. 4, Multidisciplinary Digital Publishing Institute, Dec. 2021, pp. 819–29. <https://doi.org/10.3390/journalmedia2040047>.
- Ross, David A., et al. "Adolescent Well-Being: A Definition and Conceptual Framework." *Journal of Adolescent Health*, vol. 67, no. 4, Elsevier BV, Oct. 2020, pp. 472–76. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jadohealth.2020.06.042>.
- Ryff, Carol D. "Spirituality and Well-Being: Theory, Science, and the Nature Connection." *Religions*, vol. 12, no. 11, Multidisciplinary Digital Publishing Institute, Oct. 2021, p. 914. <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel12110914>.
- Ryan, Richard M., and Edward L. Deci. "On Happiness and Human Potentials: A Review of Research on Hedonic and Eudaimonic Well-Being." *Annual Review of Psychology*, vol. 52, no. 1, Annual Reviews, Feb. 2001, pp. 141–66. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.psych.52.1.141>.
- Salavera, Carlos, et al. "Eudaimonic Well-Being in Adolescents: The Role of Trait Emotional Intelligence and Personality." *Sustainability*, vol. 12, no. 7, Multidisciplinary Digital Publishing Institute, Mar. 2020, p. 2742. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su12072742>.
- Salas, Eduardo, et al. "The Science of Training and Development in Organizations." *Psychological Science in the Public Interest*, vol. 13, no. 2, SAGE Publishing, June 2012, pp. 74–101. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1529100612436661>.
- Schjoedt, Uffe, et al. "Highly Religious Participants Recruit Areas of Social Cognition in Personal Prayer." *Social Cognitive and Affective Neuroscience*, vol. 4, no. 2, University of Oxford, Feb. 2009, pp. 199–207. <https://doi.org/10.1093/scan/nsn050>.
- Skerrett, Allison. "'Closer to God.'" *Urban Education*, vol. 51, no. 8, SAGE Publishing, Aug. 2016, pp. 964–90. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0042085914549365>.

- Sokol, Justin T. "Identity Development Throughout the Lifetime: An Examination of Eriksonian Theory." *Graduate Journal of Counseling Psychology*, vol. 1, no. 2, Jan. 2009, p. 14. publications.marquette.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1030&context=gjcp.
- Valle, Annalisa, et al. "Theory of Mind Development in Adolescence and Early Adulthood: The Growing Complexity of Recursive Thinking Ability." *Europe's Journal of Psychology*, vol. 11, no. 1, PsychOpen, Feb. 2015, pp. 112-24. <https://doi.org/10.5964/ejop.v11i1.829>.
- Van Dierendonck, Dirk, and Krishna Mohan. "Some Thoughts on Spirituality and Eudaimonic Well-being." *Mental Health, Religion & Culture*, vol. 9, no. 3, Taylor and Francis, June 2006, pp. 227-38. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13694670600615383>.
- Van Eyghen, Hans. "Is Supernatural Belief Unreliably Formed?" *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion*, vol. 85, no. 2, Springer Nature, May 2018, pp. 125-48. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11153-018-9671-4>.
- Wigger, J. Bradley. "Children's Theory of God's Mind: Theory-of-Mind Studies and Why They Matter to Religious Education." *Religious Education*, Taylor and Francis, May 2016, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00344087.2016.1169879>.
- Wilhoit, James C. "Self-Compassion as a Christian Spiritual Practice." *Journal of Spiritual Formation and Soul Care*, SAGE Publishing, Dec. 2018, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1939790918795628>.
- Willard, Aiyana K., and Ara Norenzayan. "Cognitive Biases Explain Religious Belief, Paranormal Belief, and Belief in Life's Purpose." *Cognition*, vol. 129, no. 2, Elsevier BV, Nov. 2013, pp. 379-91. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cognition.2013.07.016>.
- Yoon, Eunju, et al. "Religiousness, Spirituality, and Eudaimonic and Hedonic Well-being." *Counselling Psychology Quarterly*, vol. 28, no. 2, Taylor and Francis, Oct. 2014, pp. 132-49. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09515070.2014.968528>.