



## Research Paper:

# The Structural Model of Militancy/Peacefulness Morality Association With Psychological Wellbeing



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## ABSTRACT

**Background and Objectives:** People are always looking for new ways to achieve a good and healthy life. They associate such a life with wellbeing and happiness. The World Health Organization defines health as a form of wellbeing, in which each person identifies his or her abilities and plays a role in society effectively. Many studies have shown the correlation between moral virtues and psychological wellbeing. This research aims to study the role of militancy/peacefulness morality in predicting psychological wellbeing among university students.

**Methods:** This research was a correlational study. The sample size was calculated based on Kline guideline. We included in our study 530 (226 males and 304 females) undergraduate students in humanities, engineering, basic sciences, art, and architecture. They were selected by random cluster sampling method from different faculties of Shiraz University, Shiraz City, Iran, from January to September 2019. Then, they responded to Ryff's psychological wellbeing scale and researcher-made militancy/peacefulness scale. The obtained data were analyzed using structural equation modeling in AMOS software.

**Results:** Their Mean±SD total scores of wellbeing and militancy were 21.62±4.54 and 52.75±10.15, respectively. The results of analytical statistics showed that militancy/peacefulness (such as hatred, mischief, slander, and stupidity) is a negative predictor of psychological wellbeing. The obtained results of this analysis also showed that the final model of the study has good fitness.

**Conclusion:** Considering the findings of this study, we recommend teaching peaceful behaviors in universities by using educational workshops in the field of moral virtue.

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## Introduction

The most important goal of human knowledge in the field of humanities is helping people to have a better life. By proposing numerous theories, psychologists and sociologists have sought to develop proper mechanisms for assisting people to acquire calmness and avoid affliction [1]. Deci and Ryan defined wellbeing as the result of two approaches of hedonism and eudemonism. They explained wellbeing from two different viewpoints. The first one is based on hedonism, in which wellbeing is synonymous with positive emotions affluence on negative emotions and life satisfaction that is called hedonic wellbeing. However, eudemonism considers wellbeing comprehensively. According to this view, wellbeing refers to living based on the original goals, flourishing the talents, finding meaning in life, and struggling continuously for personal and moral growth [2].

Ryff, as one of the influential people in the field of psychological wellbeing, proposed the model of psychological wellbeing or positive mental health. This model is widely noticed in the world [3]. In this attitude, wellbeing means the effort for promotion, shown in the transcendence of a person's talents and abilities [4]. According to Ryff, psychological wellbeing is trying to flourish in intrinsic human abilities. Many factors have adverse effects on wellbeing. These factors include aggression, hostility, and pugnacity. The people with high hostility are not usually aggressive, and they do not even expect this behavior from others. Such persons are more likely to react to failures and unpleasant discomforts. Failure is a kind of mental feeling created when the person is not allowed to achieve a goal. Hostile people become angry quickly, even with small failures. In such situations, they might get sad. They may become even impolite, uncooperative, hostile, and pugnacious [5].

Many studies have shown that hostility is a strong predictor for cardiovascular and inflammatory diseases [6, 7]. So, it can threaten health and wellbeing. The ethical traits have been discussed in the references of Islamic moralities (such as *Kimiya-e-Sadat*, *Akhlagh-e-Naseri*, and *Meraj-al-Sadah*). Most philosophers consider moral traits as sustainable and firm features that can be both primary and secondary traits of a person, originating from repetition and practice [8]. These sustainable traits lead to appropriate behavior [9]. Generally, a moral trait is stated as the tendency and preparedness of a person for thinking, feeling, and behaving morally [10]. Thus, moral traits have positive and negative effects on ethi-

cal behavior. Militancy is the opposite of peacefulness. It consists of moral traits, which are manifested as aggression [11]. Some studies found aggression as a negative moral trait affecting wellbeing. Lombas et al. reported a negative correlation between psychological wellbeing and aggression [12]. Costa and McCarey said that despite militancy, agreeableness is related to social behavior. Also, wellbeing and neuroticism have a strong negative correlation with five personality factors [13]. Haren and Mitchell showed in their study that highly neurotic people, in stressful situations, use passive strategies such as avoidance, self-blaming, ambitious thinking, mental rumination, and methods based on interpersonal hostility such as hostile reaction and emotional release. These strategies lead to negative emotions and reduction of wellbeing in people [14]. Since militancy/peacefulness is a new perspective for investigating one of the essential traits of a human being and there are not enough studies in this regard, the current research has investigated the role of militancy/peacefulness morality in predicting psychological wellbeing among students.

## Methods

This correlational research was performed using structural equation modeling. The research population included the bachelor students of Shiraz University, Shiraz City, Iran, from January to September 2019. The sample size was calculated based on Kline guideline. He indicated that 10 to 20 participants per estimated parameter would make a sufficient sample [15]. Therefore, the participants in this study consisted of 530 bachelor students (226 boys and 304 girls) in humanities, engineering, basic sciences, art, and architecture. They were selected through the random cluster sampling method. First, 22 classes were randomly chosen out of 9 faculties of Shiraz University, and all students in the classes participated in the study. The inclusion criteria were undergraduate students, lacking physical and psychological diseases, and not using psychiatric drugs. The exclusion criterion was the incomplete completion of the questionnaire. It is worth noting that before the study, the informed consent form was completed by the respondents, and they were assured of the confidentiality of their responses. This research project used the following instruments.

### Militancy/peacefulness scale

This researcher-made scale was developed after searching the literature in Islamic moral texts. This scale includes 19 items, scored on a 5-point Likert-type scale from absolutely correct (score 5) to absolutely incorrect (score 1). The validity of this scale was assessed by con-

struct validity. The factor analysis results through principal components or varimax rotation confirmed the existence of hatred, mischief, slander, and stupidity in this scale. To check the reliability of the scale, the Cronbach  $\alpha$  value was used. Its coefficients for the whole scale were 0.83 and for the components of hatred with 6 items 0.68, sadomasochism with 6 items 0.74, defamation with 4 items 0.63, and stupidity with 3 items 0.52.

### The scale of psychological wellbeing

In this study, to evaluate psychological wellbeing, we used 18 questions from the Scale of Psychological Wellbeing (SPWB) of Ryff. This inventory is scored on a 5-point Likert scale (from absolutely disagree to absolutely agree). Ryff's wellbeing has 6 main factors, and each one is expressed in 3 items: self-acceptance (having a self-positive attitude), positive relations with others (making a warm and intimate relationship with others and the ability of sympathy), autonomy (the sense of independence and the ability of resistance against social pressures), purposeful life (having a goal in life and realizing it), personal growth (the sense of continues feeling), and environment mastery (the ability of a person for managing the environment) [16]. Marhamati and Yousefi showed that the validity and reliability of this scale are acceptable. The internal consistency of the subscale ranges from 0.79 to 0.82, and the Cronbach  $\alpha$  coefficient is 0.72 for the total score of scale [17].

The predictor variable in this study is militancy/peacefulness, and criterion one is psychological wellbeing. To analyze data, we used the indicators of descriptive statistics of mean, standard deviation, and the Pearson corre-

lation coefficient. For inferential analysis of data, we used structural equation modeling in AMOS v. 22 software.

### Results

The current study's findings are presented in two sections of descriptive data, and the path analysis obtained data. Descriptive findings of mean, standard deviation, and correlation matrix of militancy/peacefulness and psychological wellbeing are presented in Tables 1 and 2. According to Table 2, the total score of militancy has a negative and significant correlation with wellbeing ( $P=0.006$ ,  $r=0.27$ ). Mischief has the strongest correlations with wellbeing ( $r=-0.31$ ,  $P=0.008$ ) then hatred ( $r=-0.24$ ,  $P=0.005$ ) and slander ( $r=-0.15$ ,  $P=0.004$ ).

To investigate the predictive role of militancy/peacefulness in wellbeing, structural equation modeling was used, in which wellbeing was the endogenous covert variable and militancy/peacefulness with four indicators of hatred, mischief, slander, and stupidity was the exogenous covert variable. The final model of the study is shown in Figure 1.

The results showed that the related path coefficients to the measurement model of covert structures are high. The order of coefficients in the model for the components of aggression was between 0.41 and 0.76 and for wellbeing between 0.44 and 0.61. All path coefficients were also significant. Figure 1 shows the effects (coefficient  $\beta$ ) of militancy on wellbeing. According to the results, militancy is the negative predictor of wellbeing ( $\beta=-0.32$ ,  $P=0.006$ ). The obtained results of this analysis also showed that the final model of the study has good fitness. The value of CMIN/DF (Chi-square index nor-

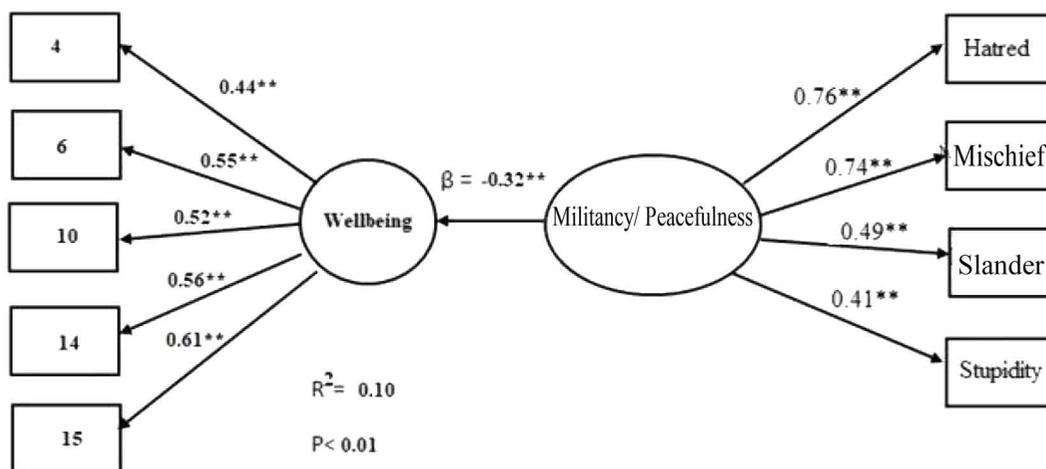


Figure 1. The structural model of the correlation between militancy/peacefulness and wellbeing

**Table 1.** Related descriptive statistics to research variables

Component	Mean±SD	Minimum	Maximum
Hatred	16.99±3.86	7	29
Mischief	14.59±4.26	6	29
Slander	11.96±2.91	4	20
Stupidity	9.20±2.55	3	15
Total score of militancy	52.75±10.15	26	82
Total score of wellbeing	21.62±4.54	7	30



malized to the degree of freedom) is equal to 2.66, the value of GFI (goodness of fit index) is equal to 0.98, the value of RMSEA (Root Mean Square Error of Approximation) is equal to 0.04, and the value of PCLOSE (probability of close fit) is equal to 0.59. Therefore, the calculated indices values are in the acceptable range.

## Discussion

This study aimed to investigate the role of militancy/peacefulness in predicting psychological wellbeing. To achieve this goal, 530 bachelor students of Shiraz University were selected, and they were asked to respond to the research tools. The results indicated that militancy/peacefulness predicts psychological wellbeing negatively. These results are consistent with the theoretical studies of Lombas et al. [12], Taghvaeinia and Mirzaei [17], and Aghababaei [18]. To explain the negative correlation between pugnacity and wellbeing, we should consider that the infrastructure of aggression is hostility and conflict with others. Aggression is its behavioral manifestation and is identified with the components of hatred, mischief, slander, and stupidity. However, psychological wellbeing

is identified with the factors of self-acceptance, positive relationships with others, autonomy, purposeful life, personal growth, and environmental mastery.

In the research model, hatred and hostility are essential indicators of aggression in reducing wellbeing. This finding is consistent with the studies which consider hostility as a powerful predictor for health. Accordingly, Larsen and Bass stated that highly hostile people get angry and emotional arousal with small failures [5]. They are vindictive and revengeful. There is a network of negative and unpleasant thoughts about others around them. Therefore, such traits in a hostile person can have a negative relation with life satisfaction as the most important index of wellbeing. The affluence of positive emotions on negative ones is another component of wellbeing [19]. People who hate others highly and feel mentally hostile with them have a psychological mood that leads to negative emotional arousal. So, this trait also has a negative correlation with wellbeing [20].

Mischief is the second strong component of aggression. It can sometimes be self-directed. The person con-

**Table 2.** Correlation between research variables

Component	1	2	3	4	5	6
Hatred	1					
Mischief	0.56**	1				
Slander	0.41**	0.31**	1			
Stupidity	0.27**	0.36**	0.36**	1		
Total score of wellbeing	-0.24**	-0.31**	-0.15	-0.01	1	
Total score of militancy	0.80**	0.81**	0.67**	0.61**	-0.27**	1

\*\* P<0.01.



tinuously bothers himself with inefficient self-aggressive thoughts. Mischief sometimes emerges as bothering others and sadistic behaviors. This mischief is very similar to physical aggression and is the opposite of warm and intimate correlation with others and the ability of sympathy with them in wellbeing. World Health Organization defines health as the mood of wellbeing; accordingly, people identify their ability and can effectively play a role in society [21]. This definition negatively correlates with the behavior of annoying people who cannot find a good connection with the people of their society and do not usually have desired psychological performance.

Slander is the third component of militancy. Slander emerges as hidden gossip, accusation, and lying. A kind of hostility is hidden in this behavior. These people show their hostility by lying about others and slandering them, through which they cover their disability. Deci and Ryan define wellbeing as living based on original goals, flourishing talents, finding the meaning of life, and continuing the effort for personal and moral growth [2]. Moreover, Ryff believed that wellbeing realizes the talents and abilities of a person [16]. If slander, disgust, and lack of individual abilities to cope with problems are considered the infrastructure of defamation, it is the opposite of wellbeing, referring to flourishing the abilities. Therefore, the negative relation between militancy and wellbeing can be explained.

Stupidity is the other component of aggression. It is identified with ridiculing others, talking to them ironically, dirty jokes, and ignoring the moralities in the community. Instead of face-to-face encountering, such people show their hostility by ironic words and scumbag and induce a kind of ignorance to others while this feature is also based on disability and low self-esteem. These beliefs are linked with a network of negative emotions, and when there is an affluence of negative emotions on positive ones, wellbeing is being threatened [4]. Therefore, the negative relation between militancy and wellbeing can be explained.

The strength of this study was the definition of militancy/peacefulness as a new construct in the field of moral traits and assessment of its relationship with wellbeing. The limitation of the present study was the absence of a literature review because of idea novelty.

## Conclusion

The findings of this study supported that hatred, mischief, slander, and stupidity are essential components of militancy that affect psychological wellbeing. So,

teaching pacifism indicators which are the opposite of aggression components, can positively impact people's psychological wellbeing. To improve the mental health and psychological wellbeing of the community, training courses in this field are recommended to be provided and implemented as training packages in target groups such as school and university students. Also, research about the effect of this training is recommended.

## Ethical Considerations

### Compliance with ethical guidelines

The participants were informed of the purpose of the research and its implementation stages. A written consent has been obtained from the subjects.

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### Authors' contributions

Conceptualization and Supervision: Farhad Khormaei; Methodology: Maryam Ghaemi; Investigation, Writing – original draft, and Writing – review & editing: All authors; Data collection: Farhad Khormaei, Maryam Ghaemi, and Parvin Yadollahi; Data analysis: Farhad Khormaei and Parvin Yadollahi; Funding acquisition and Resources: Farhad Khormaei, Parvin yadollahi and Maryam Ghaemi .

### Conflict of interest

The authors declared no conflict of interest.

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