

## Introduction

- Meaning in life (MIL) is an important component of health, and research has consistently tapped religion as a source of MIL (Abeyta & Routledge, 2018).
- Religiosity is also predictive of meta-emotional skills, emotional understanding (Chesser et al., 2018) and emotion-regulation (Wilken & Miyamoto, 2020).
- Meta-emotional skills of clearly understanding (Abeyta et al., 2015) and being able to regulate emotions are key for maintaining MIL (Von Tongeren et al., 2018).

**Do meta-emotional skills of attending to emotions, repairing emotions, and understanding emotions help explain the link between religion and MIL?**

## Method

### Participants

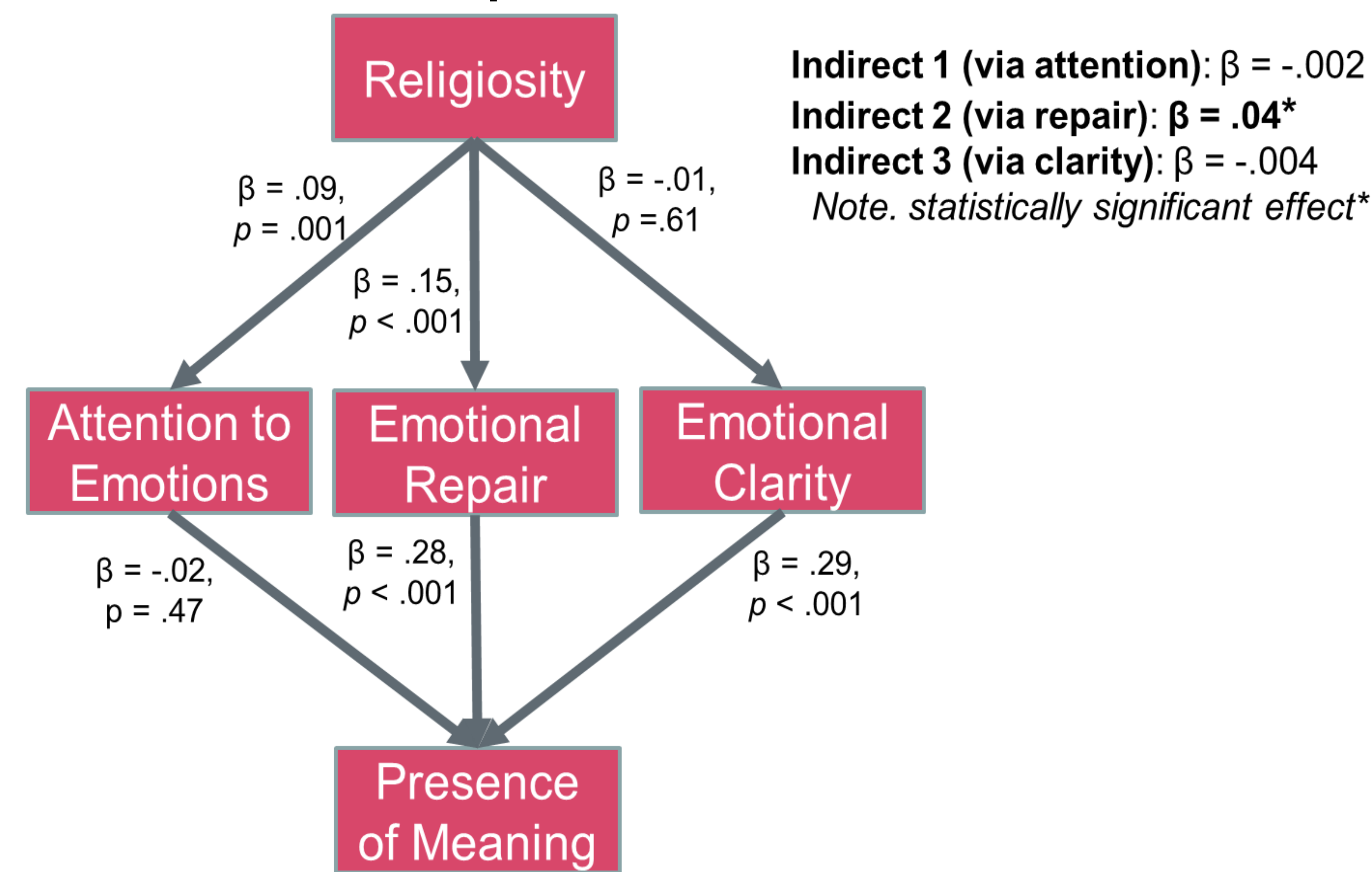
- 1164 undergrads (631 men;  $M_{age} = 19.33$ ,  $SD_{age} = 1.38$ )
- 969 Christian, 13 Muslim, 8 Buddhist, 7 Hindu, 54 Agnostic, 46 Atheist, 67 “other”

### Procedure and Materials

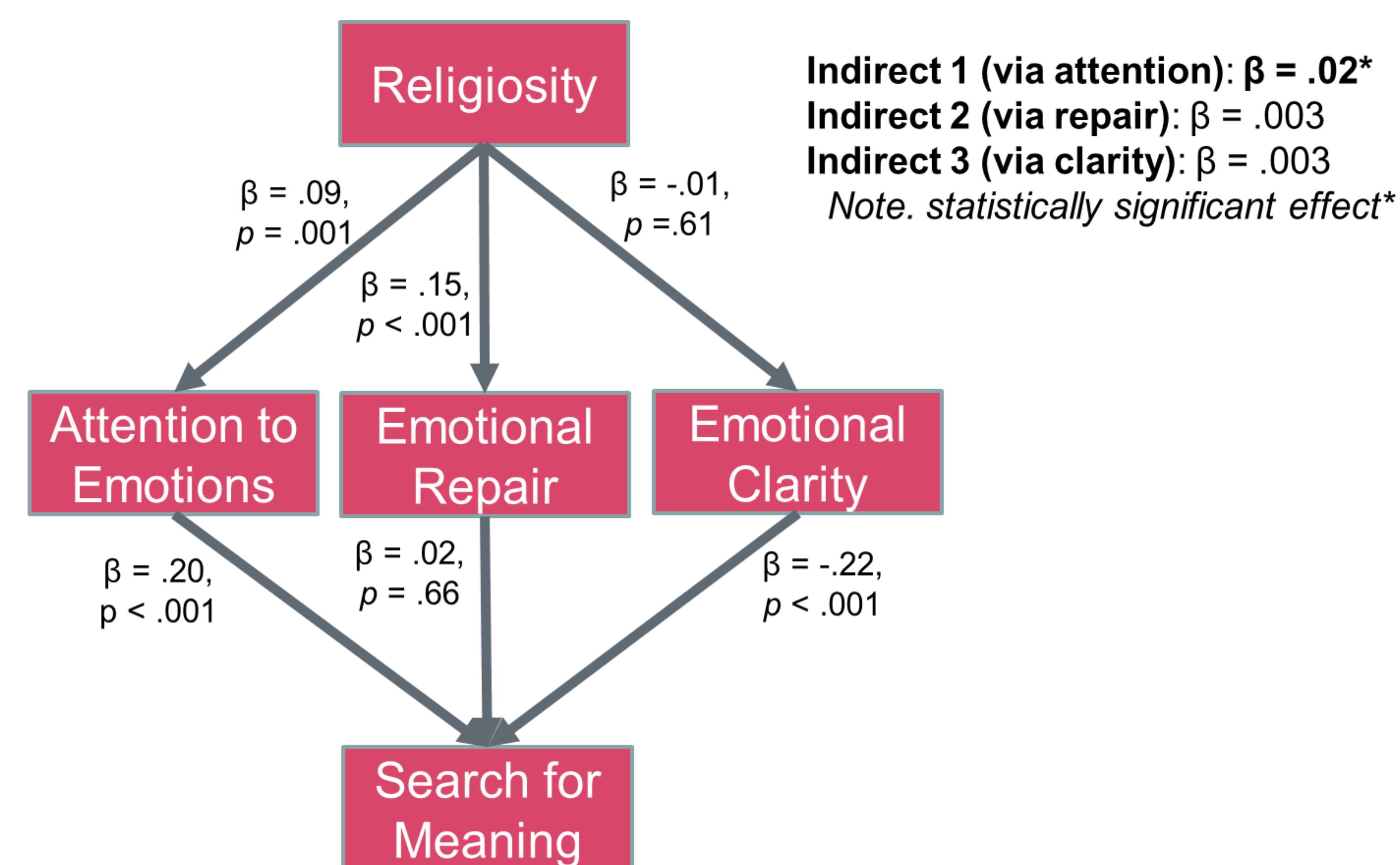
- Participants completed a questionnaire that contained all materials.
- 1. Religiosity:** 5-items on the importance of religion (Koenig & Büssing, 2010; “How important are religious beliefs in your day-to-day life?”; 1 = not very important, 6 = very important;  $\alpha = .91$ ;  $M = 3.63$ ,  $SD = 1.38$ )
  - 2. Meta-emotional skills:** The 30-item Trait Meta-Mood Scale (Salovey et al., 1995) assesses three domains:
    - 1. Attention to Emotion** (e.g., “I pay a lot of attention to how I feel”, 1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree;  $\alpha = .84$ ;  $M = 3.63$ ,  $SD = 0.57$ )
    - 2. Emotional clarity** (e.g., “I am usually very clear about my feelings;  $\alpha = .83$ ;  $M = 3.43$ ,  $SD = 0.61$ )
    - 3. Emotional repair** (e.g., “When I become upset I remind myself of all the pleasures in life, 1 = strongly disagree;  $\alpha = .77$ ;  $M = 3.74$ ,  $SD = 0.68$ ).
  - 3. MIL:** 10-item meaning in life questionnaire (Steger et al., 2006) assesses 2 dimensions:
    - 1. Presence of MIL** (e.g., “My life has a clear sense of purpose”; 1 = absolutely untrue, 7 = absolutely true;  $\alpha = .90$ ;  $M = 4.71$ ,  $SD = 1.27$ )
    - 2. Search for MIL** (e.g., “I am looking to find my life’s purpose”;  $\alpha = .93$ ,  $M = 5.23$ ,  $SD = 1.27$ ).

## Results

### Association between Religiosity and Presence of MIL via Meta-emotional competencies



### Association between Religiosity and Search for MIL via Meta-emotional competencies



## Discussion

### Key Take-Home Messages:

- **Presence of MIL:** Positive views about one’s ability to repair negative emotions helps explain the link between religiosity and presence of MIL. Clarity and attention dimensions did not mediate the religiosity and MIL relationship.
- **Search for MIL:** The tendency to attend to emotions helps explain the link between religiosity and search for MIL. Clarity and repair dimensions did not mediate the religiosity and MIL relationship.

### Significance of findings

- Meta-emotional skills may help explain the robust association between religiosity and MIL.
- Findings are consistent with research that religion provides guidance for desired-end states of emotions, which in turn promotes emotion regulation (e.g., Vishkin et al., 2020).
- Findings are consistent with the research that meta-emotional skills are important for attaining and maintaining MIL (e.g., Abeyta et al., 2015; Von Tongeren et al., 2018).

### Unanswered questions

- Cross sectional design limits causal conclusions.
- Do different religions encourage different competencies?
- Could findings be extended to related non-religious constructs like faith in science, political engagement, and doomsday preparation?

## References

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